

The Apocalyptic Tradition



Qumran and the Dead Sea Caves (Ulrich and VanderKam)

6.1 The Essene Origins of the Messiah

Our knowledge of the Essenes comes from two sources. The first is commentaries of ancient historians, in particular Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C. - A.D. 40), the elder Pliny (A.D. 23-79) and Flavius Josephus (A.D.37-100) who had visited the Essenes in person. Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves above the ruins of the ancient monastery at Qumran, this limited knowledge has been vastly expanded, with a variety of ancient texts, some probably written by the community which has widely come to be identified with the Essene movement. These writings have had a watershed impact on our understanding of the origins of Christianity and of the transitional writings underlying the emergence of Christianity from Jewish ideas.



Fig 6.1: From the Dead Sea Scrolls (Avi Yonah)

The Essenes through the Eyes of the Ancient Historians:

The writings of the ancient historians make clear the Essenes were a pious sect of Jews who shared their property in a manner which foreshadows the habits of the early Christians in Acts, who retired from the worldly life and were predominantly a male monastic order who shunned marriage and sexual relations. Communal life, asceticism, celibacy, striving for purity, meditation on the Law and the prophets, substitution of baptism and the sacred meal for the Temple sacrifices, silence - such are the characteristics of this pre-Christian monasticism.

Philo (Works 6.79-83) said: 'They are the servants of God, abstaining from animal sacrifices and endeavouring to make their thoughts truly worthy of men devoted to the priesthood.' He pictures them as fleeing from the life of the towns, holding their wealth in common and never making weapons 'nor anything which could be used for war. All are free and help one another.' Their only stud-

ies are those which relate to the existence of God and the origin of the universe, but they zealously apply themselves to moral precepts and are guided by the laws of their ancestors, which the human mind could not have devised without the aid of divine inspiration. They study these at all times but particularly on the seventh day. He affirms, according to Eusebius, 'that the Essenes never ate meat and that they renounced marriage'. Pliny notes: "They lead a solitary life different from that of all other men. They have no wives, having renounced the love of women. ... Their ranks are swelled by the arrival of fresh converts ... [a] nation in which no children have been born but whose expansion is the result of penitence" (Steinmann 19).

Josephus, who had visited the Essenes relates: "They show greater charity towards each other than do any other people. They recoil from pleasure as from something sinful; moderation and detachment from natural desires are virtues to them. They scorn to marry but adopt other people's children. When these are old enough to be taught, the Essenes treat them as their own and train them in their ways. They do not exclude marriage and its issue, but they themselves, mistrusting the fickleness of women, are convinced that no woman remains faithful to one man" (Steinmann 23).

"They despise wealth and hold all goods in common. Those who become members place their fortune at the disposal of the order, so that there are neither rich nor poor among them. ... Oil they consider impure. If one of them has been inadvertently in contact with oil, he must wash his whole body. They keep their skins dry and are always dressed in white. ... There are numbers of them to be found in each town. Those who come from other places may use another's goods as if they were his own. ... When they travel, they take nothing except arms to protect themselves against robbers. ... Their clothing and sandals are only discarded when they are completely worn out" (Steinmann 23).

Josephus (Jewish War II, viii, 2-13) also notes practices of ritual baptism in water and the sharing of a sacred meal, which similarly foreshadows the Last Supper and Christian Communion: "There is no ordinary conversation before sunrise, when they are sent out by those in charge to work, each at his own occupation, until the fifth hour. Then they meet together at the same place, gird themselves with linen and wash their bodies in cold water. After this bath, they gather in a room where no stranger has the right to enter. Then, in a state of purity, they go into the refectory as into a holy place. ... The priest recites the prayer before the meal, nor may any begin until this has been said. After the meal the priest says further prayers. ... On their return [at evening], they dine in the same way. They do not swear. They consider this worse than perjury" (Steinmann 25).

"First, there is a probationary year, ... followed by a baptism with pure water and a two-year novitiate. Finally, there is the profession and the taking of the vow - mainly of absolute secrecy regarding all that concerns the order. Those who break their vows are expelled from the community. Since it is only lawful for them to eat food prepared by Essenes, the excommunicate sometimes dies of starvation. Blasphemy-even abusing the name of the Legislator - is punishable by death. The Sabbath is strictly observed" (Steinmann 25).

He also makes clear that they, like many gnostics, regard the physical as corrupt and the soul as immortal: "For them, the human body is corruptible and transitory, but the immortal soul endures for ever. In a similar manner to the description of the Tibetan Buddhist *bardo*, it wanders through thinnest ether and then unites itself to a body, as though attracted into a prison by some enchantment of nature. When it escapes from

the bonds of the flesh, it rejoices as if freed from some long slavery and ascends to the Heights. ... There are some among them who develop skill in predicting the future by schooling themselves to interpret the sacred books, to perform special purifications and to apply the teaching of the prophets. They are rarely mistaken in their predictions" (Streinmann 24).

He finally notes divergences in their strict rule which appears to be a facet of the historical evolution of the sect: "There is also another order of Essenes whose way of life, customs and laws are the same as those described earlier but who differ on the question of marriage. They think in effect that to deny themselves issue, the most important thing in life, and not to marry, would be the swiftest means of making humanity disappear altogether, if everyone were to follow their example. For three years they prove their wives and only marry them if they have shown their ability to bear children, by purifying themselves three times during that period. When they become pregnant, the men have nothing more to do with them, thus proving that they do not marry for pleasure, but solely to have children. The women wear linen clothes when they bathe while the men gird themselves with loin-cloths. Such are the customs of this order" (Steinmann 24).

In fact the sect appears to have tolerated marriage in its earlier phases and become more strictly monastic in later times. In addition, the community spent periods of exile, such as the period at Damascus, during which its rules accommodated to the changed circumstances. As noted there were also Essene followers outside the community proper who had not necessarily committed to the stringent versions of the vows of the monastic community.

Shemaryahu Talmon ... argues on the basis of the most recent research that: "The male members resident in Qumran ... apparently did not bind themselves to lifelong celibacy, and they understood their frugal life not as a principle of faith but as a conditional situation.... So we can surmise that a man between twenty or thirty complied with the biblical command to beget offspring and then lived as a celibate in Qumran for ten years" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 255).

The Religious Watershed Flowing from the Scrolls and Qumran

The discovery of the monastery at Qumran and the Dead Sea scrolls profoundly extended our knowledge of the group there, which is generally identified as Essene. The new picture which emerged was of a group which provided a much closer bridge than realized or expected between previous Jewish thought and the teaching attributed to Jesus and which in many ways clearly anticipated many of the beliefs and practices which had until then been claimed to be the very marks of distinction of Jesus and the Christian teachings as a new revelation of God in history.

The view of the community from the Damascus rule echoes that found in the ancient historians: "Charity and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit are taught as doctrines. Provision is made for marriage. As for traitors to the Covenant, they are excluded 'until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and of Israel'. (29:12b) The Covenant of Damascus is interpreted as the Eternal Covenant. ... Baths must be of sufficient depth and be taken in clean water. The Sabbath must be observed with the utmost rigour. They offer burnt sacrifices. No married man may live with his wife within the city of the sanctuary. Those possessed by spirits are regarded as soothsayers and sorcerers. Nothing is to be sold to Gentiles and the food taboos of this law are to be observed. The communities are divided into groups of ten people under the direction of the priest. Each camp has its 'overseer' who enjoys complete authority. A supreme overseer con-

trols the whole hierarchy. The communal holding of goods is not absolutely adhered to. The taking of the oath of the Covenant alone grants access to the religious secrets of the community. The feast days are fixed in accordance with the Book of Jubilees. A man may not nullify the testimony of his wife. (Steinmann 28).

Not only did the group share its possessions as the early Christians did, practice non-violence and baptism for the remission of sins, and opposition to the established priesthood in Jerusalem, but it fully anticipated the apocalyptic eschatology of the Christian end of days, the philosophy of Light and Darkness so outstanding in John, celebrated a sacred repast which came to look uncannily like the model for the Last Supper and held a tradition in which not only were transcendental Messiahs expected but were an institutional title of the leading officiants at the sacred repast. Finally, in the name of the Teacher of Righteousness, the sect had already had a messianic figure who appears to have already lived out the Suffering Servant role, tortured and apparently killed by his enemy the Wicked Priest and expected to have returned in triumph when this enemy in turn met his just deserts.

Before the discovery of the Scrolls, Christianity appeared to be a radical paradigm-shift from the ancient Jewish view of a jealous and vengeful Yahweh, who became the forgiving God the Father, who through the Messiah Jesus, would separate the faithful from the sinful at the end of time, and who celebrated this new revealed and inclusive father-God in the innovative eschatology and practices of the Christian movement. The divine nature of Jesus was naturally manifested in the original nature of this break, as God acting in history to reveal his true and essential nature.

After the discovery of the Scrolls, we find that, not only the communion of bread and wine was already presided over by no less than two Messiahs, but that the conflict of God and Satan, the doctrine of peace and humility, the realization of the Suffering Servant in a contestation with the priesthood of Jerusalem, and even significant aspects of Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, now appear, rather than being startlingly original, to be derivative modifications of Essene practice.

The result of this at first appeared to be an unexplained delay in translating the documents, which were held in large part by Christian and Jewish scholars. On May 26 1950 M. Dupont-Sommer disclosed that the teacher of Righteousness was in some respects the exact prototype of Jesus, particularly as a martyred prophet, revered by his followers as the suffering Servant of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah."

"Everything in the Jewish New Covenant heralds and prepares the way for the Christian New Covenant. The Galilean Master, as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation of the Teacher of Righteousness. Like the latter, He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbour, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observance of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations. Like him, He was the Elect and the Messiah of God, the Messiah redeemer of the world. Like him, He was the object of the hostility of the priests, the party of the Sadducees. Like him, He was condemned and put to death. Like him, He pronounced judgment on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put him to death. Like him, at the end of time, He will be the supreme judge. Like him, He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return. In the Christian Church, just as in the Essene Church, the essential rite is the sacred meal, which is presided over by the priests. Here and there, at the head of each community, there is the overseer, the 'bishop.' And the ideal of both Churches is essentially that of unity,

communion in love - even going so far as the sharing of common property."

"All these similarities - and here I only touch upon the subject - taken together, constitute a very impressive whole. The question at once arises, to which of the two sects, the Jewish or the Christian, does the priority belong? Which of the two was able to influence the other? The reply leaves no room for doubt. The Teacher of Righteousness died about 65-53 B.C.; Jesus the Nazarene died about A.D. 30 In every case in which the resemblance compels or invites us to think of a borrowing, this was on the part of Christianity. But on the other hand, the appearance of the faith in Jesus-the foundation of the New Church - can scarcely be explained without the real historic activity of a new Prophet, a new Messiah, who has rekindled the flame and concentrated on himself the adoration of men" (Wilson Edmund 85)

Uta Ranke-Heinmann much more recently takes a very unambiguous position: "For two thousand years Catholic theologians have been busy pointing out the unique and unheard of features of the person of Jesus. In the process they infallibly hand out things that either are not true (the virgin birth in the biological sense or miracles as violations of the laws of nature) or that have been done or suffered in exactly the same way by others. To a careful, unbiased observer, this sort of perspective leaves Jesus with not one feature uniquely his own." (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 254)

Such conclusions have aroused much opposition. According to Edmund Wilson, Jewish and Christian scholars were reluctant to admit the implications of the scrolls because of their religious biases. This has resulted in both Jewish and Christian scholars, such as Solomon Zeitlin (Wilson Edmund 126) and Robert Eisenman (VanderKam 185) questioning the antiquity of the Scrolls themselves. Jewish scholars were supposedly anxious lest the authority of their traditional Masoretic text be shaken, or that Christian teachings would be seen to flow naturally from Jewish thought. The Christians on the other hand were equally evasive, partly inspired by the fear that the uniqueness of Christ was imperilled.

At stake is the contest between divine revelation and the culturally-relativistic view of religion as a social phenomenon. In Wilson's words: "It would seem an immense advantage for cultural and social intercourse - that is for civilization - that the rise of Christianity should, at last, be generally understood as simply an episode in human history rather than propagated as a dogma and divine revelation. The study of the Dead Sea Scrolls - .. cannot fail, one would think, to conduce this."

The defensive response of Christian scholars has been predictable. To attempt a polemical distraction against the humanist critics (Wilson Edmund 126), acknowledging that the Scrolls do in fact provide a key historical foundation for Christianity (Vanderkam 184), while insisting that this background does not in any way effect the transcendental claims of Christianity - primarily the direct claim to Jesus' unique status as revealed kingly and priestly Messiah who has in religious history also been claimed as rising from the dead (Brownlee 143) and to view the Essenes, like John the Baptist as mere forerunners pointing to the great messiah to come. This retreat into divine dogma as a defence is telling, despite the obvious poetry and power, radical vision and inclusiveness of Jesus' ascribed teachings. Wilson notes: "We can feel behind the pages of his followers the fire and dynamic force, the power to melt and to magnetize, of an extraordinary personality. But we know also that the rites and the precepts of the Gospels and Epistles both are to be found on every other page of the literature of the sect. "

Even VanderKam (184) who attempts to discredit Dupont-Sommer's writings as "spec-

ulations which strongly influenced Edmund Wilson" with the claim that "at the same time other scholars were going about the patient labour of establishing just what the points of contact and difference were" quotes Frank Cross as a definitive authority: "Contrary to the tendency of New Testament theologians to assume that the 'eschatological existence' of the early Church, that is its community life lived in anticipation of the Kingdom of God, together with the forms shaped by this life, was a uniquely Christian phenomenon, we must now affirm that in the Essene communities, we discover antecedents of Christian forms and concepts" and VanderKam himself concedes "There is no doubt that the Qumran covenanters and the early Christians shared a similar eschatological outlook. Both must be regarded as eschatological communities in the sense that both had a lively expectation that the end of days would come soon and ordered their communal beliefs and practices according to this article of faith."

Vanderkam (184) illustrates the selective process of double-think by citing Krister Stendahl's review of thirteen studies of the sect, which selectively excludes Dupont-Sommer's writings, only to have Stendahl again concede that the Scrolls add so much to Christianity's background that "they rescue Christianity from false claims of originality" and lead us back to a "new grasp of its true foundation" paradoxically closing this final concession by restating the fundamentalist apology "in the person and events of its Messiah". It should be noted here that Dupont-Sommer's "Essene Writings from Qumran" ranked highly enough to be translated into English by Dr. Geza Vermes, a pioneer of Qumran research and compiler of "The Dead Sea Scrolls in English". Edmund Wilson similarly claims to have been misrepresented by virtually every reveiver except for Toynbee and Albright (Wilson Edmund 130). Although other scholars questioned the veracity of Dupont-Sommer's initial translations, in the broad light of the works as they emerged, this overall picture remains valid (Wilson Edmund 99).

I would like to go farther and state unequivocally that it is essential for the future well-being of religious insight that the unique status of Jesus as the one and only lightning rod of God in history be relaxed. There is little hope for any meaningful evolution of the human visionary tradition while all responsibility for our actions and all capacity to address the ultimate reality continues to be so short-circuited by the Christian dogma of the uniqueness of Christ as Man-God. It is for this very reason that the Scrolls are of immense value.

A number of people have ornamented the debate with more adventurous far-flung ideas. Dupont-Sommer claimed the Teacher of Righteousness was probably crucified, raised from the dead and appeared in judgement over the city of Jerusalem when on the day of atonement in 63 BC the legions of Rome under Pompey captured the city and put many of its inhabitants to the sword (Brownlee 128). John Allegro suggested that the Gospel personalities were myths disguising the real identity of an Essene messiah and apostles (Wilson Edmund 165). Barbara Thiering claims John the Baptist was the Teacher and Jesus the Wicked Priest, and J. L. Teicher claims Paul was the Wicked Priest (VanderKam 185).

Views of the History of the Sect

The Essene community dates at its earliest beginning from the early second century B.C., around the time of the Maccabean Revolt, and suffered repeated setbacks in the course of its three-century existence. Before the purely monastic stage, to which the rule of Qumran bears witness, as we have noted, there appears to have existed a less rigid community which allowed its members to marry. Mention of this community is made by Josephus and more particularly by the so-called 'Damascus Document'. This

text, which was found in the genizah (storeroom) of the Cairo Synagogue and published for the first time in 1810, is also a product of the Essenes.

Brownlee (130) asserts that the Teacher of Righteousness arose shortly after the Maccabaeans gained victory according to the following scenario: John Hyrcannus 135-105 BC turned from the devout hasidim (holy ones) to the Sadducees. When he was rebuked by the Teacher, he persecuted the Teacher and inveigled the Pharisees into supporting him. His son Alexander Jannaeus 103-76 BC persecuted the Teacher who fled to the region of Damascus "They drove me from my land like a bird from its nest; and all my neighbours and friends are driven far from me". The Syrians of Damascus were themselves engaged in battle with Jannaeus. Alexander led his army to the Teachers retreat on the Day of Atonement which was held according to the Essenes solar calendar and thus was not on the same day as the Sadducees. Although it is similar to the Sumerian calendar and they believed it to be very ancient, its emergence is believed to have occurred around 600 BC.

Dupont-Sommer by contrast cites Aristobalus II 67-63 BC as the time of the Wicked Priest. Aristobalus had an uncle called Absalom, whose name is mentioned in the Commentary as the house of the Wicked Priest. Although the time of Daniel 9 (165 BC) could also refer to the murder of Onias, although this would predate the monastery at Qumran according to Edmund Wilson (66).

A date for the Commentary of Habakkuk is given by Dupont-Sommer as 41 BC three years after Julius Caesar's death (Wilson Edmund 64). There is continuing debate surrounding his identity and exact time and whether the apocalyptic events had happened or were prophesied to occur in the future.

Qumran was destroyed by earthquake (from Josephus in 31 BC) and was not rebuilt until the turn of the century, after the death of Herod the Great, from coins discovered, about 4 B.C. It then flourished until destruction by the Romans in 68 AD.

Their dangerously aggressive eschatological scenario ... probably led the Qumran sect to take an active part in the assaults of the Zealots on the Romans and, above all, in the Jewish War (A.D. 66-70), which led to the downfall of Israel in the ancient world. Josephus specifically mentions that John the Essene was appointed a major commander between Jerusalem and the sea coast. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 260)

Tacitus (d. A.D. 120) noted: "The majority [of the Jews] firmly believed that their ancient priestly writings contained the prophecy that this was the very time when the East should grow strong and that men starting from Judea should possess the world.... There were arms for all those who could use them.... Men and women showed the same determination; and if they were to be forced to change their home, they feared life more than death" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 261)

At their end, the Essenes faced a day of reckoning truly as terrible as the Crucifixion and the martyrdoms with similar fortitude and resolution: "The war with the Romans tried their souls through and through by every variety of test. Racked and twisted, burned and broken, and made to pass through every instrument of torture in order to induce them to blaspheme their lawgiver or to eat some forbidden thing, they refused to yield to either demand, nor ever once did they cringe to their persecutors or shed a tear. Smiling in their agonies and mildly deriding their tormentors, they cheerfully resigned their souls, confident that they would receive them back again" (Josephus Jewish Wars).

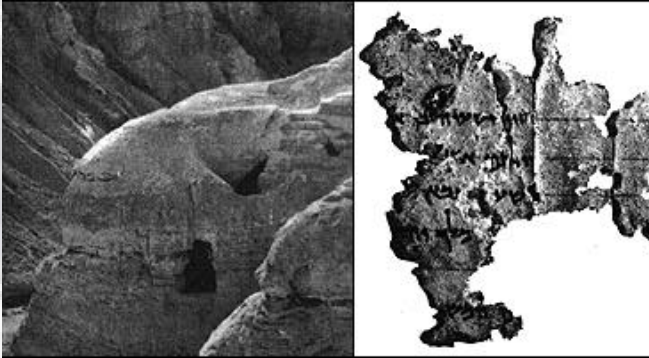


Fig 6.2: Caves of the Scrolls. A fragment of Isaiah from Qumran (Allegro 1956, Steinmann)

The Impact of the Understanding on Apocryphal Transitional Texts

With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls the apocryphal documents of the intertestamental period now became understandable as the transitional literature between Judaism and Christianity. "The invocation of the Saviour-Messiah becomes more important and pressing than .. in the canonical books; and the new writings more and more take the form of apocalypses - that is , of supernatural visions which reveal past, present and future under the guise of a phantasmagoria of symbolic persons and animals , divine and diabolical beings, celestial and infernal phenomena." (Wilson Edmund 61).

The Judaic Law of the Pentateuch had come to be conceived as the final and supreme revelation of God ... there was now no room for independent representatives ... such as the post-Exilic prophets. As Zechariah made clear in his parable of the Foolish Shepherd, "a man could, or ought to be put to death for setting himself up as a prophet." (Wilson Edmund 62). Thus the names of pseudonymous authors were used, of Isaiah or even ancient Enoch. At Qumran have been found fragments of the book of a commentary on Habakkuk, Isaiah, Daniel , Tobit, Jubilees, Enoch, a book of Lamech, and of the Testament of Levi. Valuable information about the Messianic doctrine of the Community is to be found in these books. In them is expressed the expectation of a Judgement by God in the end of days.

The Manual of Discipline exhorts people to live the divine life, develops the divine covenant and divides humanity into two camps, the party of the Divine Covenant and Belial or Satan. Israel or the Party of the Covenant is divided into military-style groups. The rule provides punishment for different offences, blasphemy, lying, scandal, anger, vengeance, negligence, indecency, gossiping during assemblies, or rebellion. The punishments consist of temporary or permanent excommunication. All those who transgress even the slightest commandment of the Law must be cutoff from the community. If the misdeed is involuntary the punishment is still severe-a further two years' probation. Blood sacrifices are forbidden and particular attention is paid to the fixing of the feast days.

There are numerous allusions to the mysteries and to the revelations made to the sons of Zadok, concerning:

1. A mystical 'knowledge' regarding purity and spiritual illumination, the result of celibacy, mortification of the flesh, prayer, and rites such as baptism and the sacred meal.

2. A symbolic explanation of the Law bypassing Levitical code concerning blood sacrifices and the sanctuary rites. The use of the solar Jubilees calendar. The dates of Essene feasts were thus different from those at Jerusalem.

3. Prophecy of the immediate future in apocalyptic terms: 'Until the coming of the prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel' (Manual 9:11).

As Wilson notes, one of the most impressive pieces of Old Testament literature in support of the Christian claim that the advent of Jesus as Messiah had been prophesied is the Suffering Servant of the second Isaiah 53 "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, who has been wounded for our transgressions," and yet by whose stripes we are healed." Scholars have proposed the Suffering Servant as Israel, one of the Isaiahs or Jeremiah. Dupont-Sommer suggested that Second Isaiah may date from a period as late as that which is dealt with in the literature of the sect and may refer to the Teacher of Righteousness himself. These later chapters had long been assigned to the Babylonian Exile, but it had been admitted that still later additions were possible. He suggests further that "many passages of the Old Testament involving an Anointed One or of a Prophet carried off by a violent death must be examined with a fresh eye, particularly Daniel, Zechariah and Psalms; and he says of the passages in Second Isaiah called "Songs of the Servant of Yahweh". Certainly the apocalypses of Daniel, despite apparently referring to the Babylonians are currently identified with Antiochus in the 160s BC. (Cohn 171).

Brownlee (204) notes that the addition of a single letter in the Isaiah Scroll changes the accepted meaning of Isaiah 52:14 "his appearance [that of the 'Servant'] was so marred beyond semblance," to "I so anointed his appearance beyond anyone (else)," and this for the first time makes plausible the beginning of the following verse, a passage over which editors have always stumbled- "So that he startled many nations," (Revised Standard) to "so shall he sprinkle many nations" (King James). But if the Suffering Servant of the Lord was anointed instead of marred, it would be natural that he should, in turn, have the mission of sprinkling the nations. A definite Messiah is implied in the Dead Sea scroll. Brownlee, like Dupont-Sommer, associates this passage with the Messianic references in Zechariah and Daniel (9-24-27: the "Anointed One," who is to be "cut off").

This would seem to make it probable that Jesus 'intended to give his life [as] a ransom for many in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy"- prophecy which was cherished and elaborated in the literature of the sect. Jesus may thus have found prepared for him a special Messianic role, the pattern of a martyr's career, which he accepted and to which he aspired. This is consistent with Jesus' statements in the gospels claiming they have killed the prophets throughout history.

The pre-Christian "Martyrdom of Isaiah" may also refer to the Teacher. He is sawn in two by the agents of Belial for saying he has seen God - which Moses said it was impossible to do and live - and that he now knows more than Moses. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewal in the Holy Spirit" - manual of Discipline 3:5.

The Testaments Of the Twelve Patriarchs, a late apocryphal work assigned to the end of the second century BC, also connected with the doctrine of the sect, suggests further prophecies in the vein of the suffering redeemer. Fragments have been found in the caves: "And now I have learnt that for seventy weeks ye shall go astray, and profane the priesthood, and pollute the sacrifices. And ye shall make void the law, and set at nought the words of the prophets by evil perverseness. And ye shall persecute righ-

teous men, and hate the godly; the words of the faithful shall ye abhour. [And a man who reneweth the law in the power of the Most High, ye shall call a deceiver; and at last ye shall rush (upon him) to slay him, not knowing his dignity, taking innocent blood through wickedness upon your heads.] And your holy places shall be laid waste even to the ground because of him. And ye shall have no place that is clean; but ye shall be among the Gentiles a curse and a dispersion until he shall again visit you, and in pity shall receive you [through faith and water]" (Wilson Edmund 87).

Light and Darkness

Persian Zoroastrian influence, particularly the monistic version in which Zurvan (time) (Cohn 1993 193) created both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainu, has left a clear mark on the Jewish heritage. The Persian king Cyrus was himself proposed as the chosen messiah or anointed one for his kind treatment of Jews in fostering the return from exile. The natural affinity between the two patriarchal visions caused a degree of cultural assimilation of Persian ideas into Jewish thought responsible for the opposition of darkness and light and the eschatology of the cosmic renovation in the end of days. This was not a belief adopted by the Essenes alone, for the while the Sadduces continued to follow the simple Jewish belief that they would go down to Sheol, to exist as pale disembodied shades, and rejected the resurrection of the dead, the Pharisees accepted the apocalyptic vision of the resurrection of Daniel. Rabbi Hillel in particular in the time of Jesus taught that the dead were kept in heaven or hell until the day of judgement, a specifically Persian notion. On the other hand, the Pharisees never accepted a great Satan, Belial or Mastema in opposition of God as did the Essenes (Cohn 1993 220-6).

One of the Essene's most important doctrines is the morality of the Two Ways, quite unknown to the ancient Hebrews - the Way, Spirit and Children of Darkness and of Light, a perspective in which light and darkness are opposed as order and chaos, in a manner indicating links to the Zoroastrian cosmic renovation, and gnostic sentiments exemplified later by Manichaeism. It is very consonant with aspects of the gospel of John previously thought to be 'Hellenistic', and more generally with the Gospels' increasing emphasis on the battle between the powers of satan and God.

"The Messiah or Teacher of Righteousness, is opposed to a Demon of Evil, most frequently known as Belial. The way of Good leads to salvation; the Way of Evil to torment. There is to be a Last Judgement at the end of time - equally unknown to ancestral Judaism when the Messiah shall divide the world" (Wilson Edmund 71). He, the Elect One shall save the People of the New Covenant and avenge their wrongs. In the meantime they must keep themselves holy through the sacred repasts presided over by the priest and purgation by baptism.

"[The God of Knowledge] has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness. The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray and until his end, all their sins, iniquities, wickednesses ' and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God ... But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succour all the sons of light. For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their

ways. And he loves the one everlastingly and delights in its works for ever; but the counsel of the other he loathes and for ever hates its ways" (Manual of Discipline 3:18-21).

"For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions. Truth abhors the works of falsehood, and falsehood hates all the ways of truth. And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments for they do not walk together" (Manual of Discipline 4:16-18). However, God has "ordained an end for falsehood, and at the time of the visitation he will destroy it forever"

Two works of light and darkness in the Dead Sea Scrolls are "The War of the Children of Light against the Children of Darkness" and the "Commentary on Habakkuk". The latter appears to date from around 41 BC about the time of Julius Caesar's death. The term kittim used for the oppressor appears historically consistent with the Romans and their allies. The Commentary on Habakkuk is of particular significance in relation to the Teacher of Righteousness which we shall consider in the next section.

Some scholars believe, in the light of the scrolls, that the Gospel according to John, which hitherto was thought to have been written late and under Hellenistic and gnostic influence, derives strongly from the sect and is thus the most, not the least, Jewish of all the Gospels.

At the beginning of John, we find the conflict between Light and Darkness, and thereafter many such phrases as "the spirit of truth," "the light of life," "walking in the darkness," "children of light," and "eternal life," which occur in the Manual of Discipline. And you have also, in the Manual, a passage that parallels almost exactly the description of the Logos ("Word") which stands at the beginning of John and which has hitherto been thought to derive from the Gnostics. Manual 11:11 reads, "And by his knowledge everything has been brought into being. And everything that is, he established by his purpose; and apart from him, nothing is done." John 1.2-3: "He was in the beginning with God; and all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."

Similarly, the passage of 2 Corinthians 6: 14-15: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" sounds very much like Qumran - the light and darkness, the exclusive group, the name Belial which occurs only here in the whole New Testament, but several times at Qumran.

The Role of the Teacher

The Teacher of Righteousness is described as a figure in the history of the sect, who in at least some of the scrolls is claimed to have already fulfilled the attributes of a messianic figure. The title being one "of Righteousness" occurs also in the Zadokite fragments and as a messianic name in Enoch as "The Righteous One".

According to Edmund Wilson (65) The Commentary on Habakkuk refers to the struggle between the Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked Priest, or Prophet of Untruth, who persecutes the Teacher "swallowed him up in the heat of his anger" has "dared to strip him of his clothing" and has struck him "in the execution of iniquitous judgements" when "odious profaners have committed horrors on him and vengeance on the body of his flesh". But later on the resting of the Day of Atonement the Teacher of Righteousness "appeared in splendour to them for the purposes of swallow-

ing them up" and that in the sight of he and his counsel "was given into the hands of his enemies to abuse with smiting".

Brownlee (145) notes that it had already been suggested that the Qumran sect believed in the coming of three eschatological figures of Messianic significance: a prophet, a priest, and king. Although initial identifications in the texts were for a coming Messiah, this Prophet, according to Vermes, was none other than the Righteous Teacher, the author of the Hymns. Although future in the Manual of Discipline, the passage in the Manual may be older and reflect an earlier point of view in which the Teacher had not yet become identified with the coming Prophet. That the theme was applied to the Teacher of Righteousness, however, is clear from the Hymn passages quoted in following sections.

This passage ascribed to the Teacher of Righteousness indicates his secret source of inner knowledge:

*My eyes have gazed
on that which is eternal,
on wisdom concealed from men,
on knowledge and wise design
[hidden] from the sons of men;
on a fountain of righteousness
and on a storehouse of power,
on a spring of glory
[hidden] from the assembly of flesh.
God has given them to His chosen ones
as an everlasting possession,
and has caused them to inherit
the lot of the Holy Ones*

Habakkuk 2:1-2 states: "I will take my stand to watch, and station myself on the tower, and look forth to see what he will say to me, and what I will answer concerning my complaint. And the Lord answered me: "Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets, so he may run who reads it." The Commentary explains the passage: "God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end. And as for that which He said, 'That he who reads may read it speedily' ["so he may run who reads it" in Habakkuk 2:2]. Interpreted, this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of His servants the Prophets" (Habakkuk Commentary 7:1-5).

Brownlee (138-143) defines the roles of the Teacher as five-fold:

1. To fulfill the title of Teacher of Righteousness: - moreh - teacher, guide and rain. As a "guide," his function was "to lead" God's people "in the way of His heart." As "rain," he appears as a fruitful source of the word of God following Isaiah 55:10: "And thou O my God hast placed in my mouth (teaching) like an autumn shower of rain".
2. To interpret the prophets: The Habakkuk Commentary describes him as "the priest in [whose heart] God put [understand]ing to explain all the words of his servants the prophets." These explanations of the teacher were all concerned with the fulfillment of prophecy in the interpreter's own day or in the not distant future. In this role the Teacher was like Daniel, who was able to interpret not only dreams and the mysterious handwriting on the wall, but also Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years in Daniel 9."
3. To enact a new covenant: "I do thank Thee, O Lord; for my face Thou enlightenedest for Thy covenant's sake. Yea, from [evening until morning] do I seek Thee; and as the sure dawn for [per]fect illumination] hast Thou appeared to me." This reminds us both

of Moses descending radiant (or horned) and Jesus face in 2 Corinthians 4 "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

4. To build the congregation of God's people: "Its interpretation concerns the priest, the Teacher of Righteousness whom ... God has established to build for him the congregation of [His elect]." (Commentary on Psalm 37). Similar to Jesus' promise to Peter, "On this rock I will build my Church."

5. To be the servant of the Lord: Isa 40-55 sets out the well-known theme of the Suffering Servant.

a. Set apart as a spokesman from youth as in Isaiah 49 "I have called thee from thy mother's womb" and Isaiah 53 "grown up as a young sprout".

"For Thou hast known [or loved] me from my father and from the womb Thou hast sanctified me, and from the body of my mother Thou hast bestowed kindness upon me, And from the breasts of her who conceived me have Thy compassions come to me, and in the bosom of my nurse ... And from my youth hast Thou appeared to me in the wisdom of Thy Law, and by Thy fixed truth hast Thou supported me, and by Thy holy spirit hast Thou delighted me. (IQ H ix, 29-32)

b. He possessed the Servant's gift of teaching: One of the Hymns declares: "My tongue is like that of Thy (the Teacher's) disciples."

c. He fulfilled the Servant's ministry of consolation: This is already apparent in the preceding reference; and it is probably to be seen in the following fragmentary passage echoing Isa 61:1:

"According to Thy truth a herald of glad tidings . . . Thy goodness, to herald glad tidings to the poor according to Thy abundant compassions. (IQ H XViii, 14)

d. He was endowed with the Spirit like the Servant of the Lord: Echoing Isa 42:1 we have:

"I, Thy servant, know the Spirit which Thou hast put within me." (IQ H Xiii, x8f.)

" As for me, Thy servant, Thou hast favored me with the Spirit of knowledge. (IQ H xiv, 25)

" Thou hast shed Thy holy Spirit upon Thy servant." (IQ H XVii, 26)

e. He suffered like the Servant: Isaiah 53:3 is echoed in a fragmentary passage of the Hymns speaks of him: ". . dwelling with diseases; and I underwent trial with plagues, And I was as a man forsaken, despised . . ." (IQ H Via, 26f.)

The Perspective of 1 Enoch and Jubilees on the Essenes

1 Enoch, composed between the 3rd century BC and the 1st century AD and Jubilees are works which were warmly held by the Essenes, which in the case of Enoch was also until the time of Jerome and Augustine, numbered among the Christian apocrypha, but rejected from the Hebrew canon. Eleven copies of Enoch were found at Qumran and twelve of Jubilees. Enoch was the immortal seventh patriarch who was mythically taken up to heaven or sacrificed as Moses was Gen 5:24 "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." He has ancient parallels with the seventh king in the Sumerian king list and the seventh Sumerian sage. The Book of Jubilees similarly singles out Enoch as the one chosen by God "to foresee and foretell the future right down to the Day of Judgement" (Cohn 1993 177).

Both 1 Enoch and Jubilees are unmistakable products of Hellenistic civilization. A world view so encyclopaedic that it embraced the geography of heaven and earth, astronomy, meteorology, medicine was no part of Jewish tradition - but was familiar to educated Greeks, but attempting to emulate and surpass Greek wisdom, by having an integrating divine plan for destiny, elaborated through an angelic host with which Enoch is in communication through his mystical travels. (Cohn 1993 178).

More clearly than in the Hebrew Bible, these works tell of a last judgement which is to occur at the consummation of time. "On the day of great condemnation ... judgement is executed on all who have corrupted their ways ... for every creature and for every kind" - Jubilees. Even rebellious stars are punished with fire. This message purports to be not inconsistent with the Sinai law, (for example even the [male] angels were circumcised), but being much older, and for all mankind. Sinfulness is presented as a form of disorder, an offence against the divinely appointed order of the universe. The Jewish lunar calendar was believed to be erroneous by comparison with solar calendar of the Jubilees putting the heavenly sabbath and other rituals out of alignment because the "great eternal light which for ever and ever is named the sun" appointed the heavenly course of time. Many of these factors are consistent with Persian influence, including the sun worship and the conflict between order and disorder.

These works consequently include a form of the devil mastema, which unlike the Old Testament shaitan of Job is a genuinely evil chaos entity, accompanied by a host of angels tarnished by cavorting with women (Cohn 1993 182): Gen 6:2 The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." God had to send the flood to destroy the resulting race of giants, similar to the Titans who tore apart Dionysus. These spirits were locked away in the earth, but Mastema persuaded God to keep out one in ten to tempt humanity until the judgement and to commit all forms of transgression.

In the Day of Judgement all such spirits will be consigned to eternal torment and humanity renewed in spirit back to the generations of Adam:

*"And the days will begin to grow many and increase amongst the children of men
till their days draw nigh to a thousand years ...
And there will be no old man ...
For all will be as children and youths"*

The Tree of Life, fragrant and wonderful to behold will be returned to the centre ground, and the New Jerusalem will be built by God - just as later described in Revelation.

However when the righteous dead are mentioned in 1 Enoch or Jubilees, they seem to be destined for a blissful existence as disembodied souls, a notion so un-Jewish that it is presumed to be a Greek idea. No particular sect is identified in these works although they were used extensively at Qumran.

The Essene Messiahs and the Age of Renewal

The Hebrew word messiah, or 'anointed', is an Old Testament term for kings, high priests, and others. It developed into a label for an ideal savior-figure, who would liberate Israel from all foreign domination and make it the ruler of the world. By the beginning of the Christian era, this hope had taken on enormous intensity, and it grew continually until the downfall of the Jewish nation in A.D. 70.

In the Essene view, toward the end of the struggle, which will mark the beginning of new heavenly-earthly life ... two messiahs will arise. One will be a high priestly mes-

siah from the house of Aaron, and the other, a royal messiah from the house of David. "They shall depart from none of the counsels of the Law to walk in the stubbornness of their hearts, but shall be ruled by the primitive precepts in which the men of the Community were first instructed until there shall come the Prophet and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel" (Manual of Discipline 9:9-11, see also the Rule of the Congregation). The more prominent messiah is the priestly one the messiah of Aaron. The second and apparently lower-ranking messiah is the lay one the messiah of Israel. (Vanderkam 196). Both will have their retinue, the high priestly messiah a sacerdotal one, the messianic king a band of military followers. The royal messiah will be the longed-for son of David. He will found the Kingdom of God by intervening in the final battle and victoriously concluding it. He will liberate the Holy Land and establish the dominion of Israel. At the center of this pacified world will be Qumran-Israel. The priestly messiah will forgive sins and open up Paradise (Damascus Document 7:20-21; Rule of the Community 1QS 5.20-26). The priestly messiah and the priests will not take part in the final battles, but they will spur on the others through shouts and trumpet blasts: "And they shall not come to the midst of the slaughter lest they be defiled by unclean blood; for they are holy and they shall not profane the oil of their priestly anointing with the blood of a nation of vanity" (War Scroll 1QM IX:7-9). (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 260). The idea of two Messiahs conforms to and may have influenced certain aspects of rabbinical thought (Steinman) and occurs in the Kabbalah.

Both messiah figures bear the title "Son of God," (4Q Florilegium 10-11). The place of dominion of the high priestly messiah is heaven, the royal messiah's is earth. The high priestly messiah takes precedence over the royal messiah. This is especially clear at the messianic banquet, where he blesses bread and wine. The next in rank after him is the royal messiah (Rule of the Congregation 1QSa 11:11-21). (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 260) With the return of the exiles to Jerusalem and the emergence of Zerubbabel and Joshua ben Jehozadak as political ruler and high priest, respectively, these hopes were to some extent realized and may have become the historical model upon which the Essene idea was based. Cyrus also in the same process became the Lord's anointed for aiding the Jews (Isa 45:1).

Although the texts do say the elect will be saved in the end of days and speak of a Teacher enduring both refining torment of purification and torment and death at the hands of the Wicked Priest, we do not see a messiah atoning for the sins of others and by his death saving sinners, as in the case of the Christian messiah. Jesus is portrayed as a spiritual, if not biological Davidic messiah, and also the son of God and savior. The gospels assign to him the offices filled by the two Qumran messiahs. The New Testament also speaks of Jesus as a priestly messiah after the order of Melchizedek as in Hebrews.

In Luke 1:32-35 the angel who appears to Mary declares "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." The child will be called "holy, the Son of God". The relevant portion from Qumran reads: "[He] shall be great upon the earth, [O King! All shall] make [peace], and all shall serve [him. He shall be called the son of the [G]reat [God], and by his name shall he be named. He shall be hailed the Son of God and they shall call him Son of the Most High and his kingdom will be a kingdom forever." Vanderkamp (197) notes "this is not simply a matter of one title found in two texts; it is an entire context that has striking similarities: The individual in question will be great, son of God (a title found in the Hebrew Bible), son of the Most High (a new

title), and his kingdom will be etemal".

In the Testament of Levi is to be found a highly significant picture of the role of the priestly Messiah: "And after their punishment shall have come from the Lord, the priesthood shall fail. Then shall the Lord raise up a new priest. And to him all the words of the Lord shall be revealed; ... And his star shall arise in heaven as of a king. Lighting up the light of knowledge as the sun the day, And he shall be magnified in the world. He shall shine forth as the sun on the earth, And shall remove all darkness from under heaven, And there shall be peace in all the earth. The heavens shall exult in his days, And the earth shall be glad, And the clouds shall rejoice; And the angels of the glory of the presence of the Lord shall be glad in him. The heavens shall be opened, And from the temple of glory shall come upon him sanctification, With the Father's voice as from Abraham to Isaac. And the glory of the Most High shall be uttered over him, And the spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him. For he shall give the majesty of the Lord to His sons in truth for evermore; And there shall none succeed him for all generations for ever. And in his priesthood the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth. And enlightened through the grace of the Lord: In his priesthood shall sin come to an end, And the lawless shall cease to do evil. And he shall open the gates of paradise, And shall remove the threatening sword against Adam. And he shall give to the saints to eat from the tree of life, And the spirit of holiness shall be on them. And Belial shall be bound by him, And he shall give power to His children to tread upon the evil spirits. And the Lord shall rejoice in His children, And be well pleased in His beloved ones for ever. Then shall Abraham and Isaac and Jacob exult, And I [Levi] will be glad, And all the saints shall clothe themselves with joy." (18, 1-14, Charles, Pseudepigrapha, pp. 314-15.)

The Psalms of Solomon, which expressed the piety of the Pharisees, envisaged a kingly messiah descended from David, rather than a priest (Grollier, Steinmann): "Behold, O Lord, and raise up among them a king, the Son of David. In the time that thou knowest, even thou, O God! To rule over thy servant Israel. Gird him with strength to crush the unrighteous rulers. Purge Jerusalem of the heathen who oppress, excluding the sinners from the inheritance by wisdom and by righteousness; so that the pride of the sinful may be broken in pieces like the potter's vessel; so that their substance may be broken with a rod of iron, so that the sinful Gentiles may be destroyed by the word of his mouth; so that at his rebuke the nations shall flee from before his face. ... Then he will gather the holy people and lead them with righteousness, he will govern the tribes of the people sanctified by the Lord his God. He will not suffer iniquity to continue among them, and no man knowing evil may dwell with them; ... He will judge the peoples of the nations with wisdom and justice. And he will have the heathen to serve him beneath his yoke. He will glorify the Lord in the sight of the whole world, he will purify Jerusalem by sanctification as it was of old, so that the nations will come from the ends of the earth to behold his glory, bringing her weary sons as an offering ... The Lord is his king and his hope. All powerful through his hope in God, he will therefore pity all the nations before him in fear; for he will subdue the earth by his word for ever. He will bless the people of the Lord in wisdom with gladness. He will be pure of sin, to rule over countless nations, to recover the nations and destroy the sinners, by the might of the word. In the strength of God he will not weaken, for God has made him strong by his holy spirit, and wise by the gift of enlightened counsel, and strength and righteousness; ... He is powerful in his works and strong in the fear of God, he feeds the flock of the Lord in faith and righteousness, he will not suffer any of them to be afflicted in their pasture; he will lead them all as equals, and there will be none proud amongst them ... May God bring it to pass! ... The

Lord is our king for ever and ever!" (Psalms of Solomon, 17: 23-51)

The Teacher of Righteousness and the sages who followed him had always looked forward to a final struggle in which a central role would be reserved for the sect itself. Under the command of the Prince of the Congregation, the 'sons of light' would achieve victory in Jerusalem, then to the east and finally over Rome, while a cosmic battle occurred simultaneously in heaven, the whole lasting some 40 years. This would be followed by the messianic age. In some scrolls, 'Prince of the Congregation' is identified as the Davidic Messiah, who rules Israel as king under the guidance of a priest-Messiah, 'interpreter of the Law' 'who shall teach righteousness at the end of days'. There are hints of a more fundamental transformation, sometimes called 'the Renewal' having the characteristics of the day of judgement, accompanied by bodily resurrection as in Daniel. Sinners will be plunged into eternal torment but the righteous will be rewarded with 'healing, great peace, long life and fruitfulness ... eternal life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light' (Cohn 1993 193) .

In addition to Jesus, several of the zealots were also pronounced messiah. Akiva, the famous rabbi who had had fixed the canon of the Hebrew Bible and had gotten the Song of Songs accepted into the Bible c132 AD pronounced the Zealot Bar Kochba as the Messiah, announcing that he saw in Bar Kochba the fulfillment of the prophecy in Numbers 24:17: "A star shall come forth out of Jacob" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 264). This quote clearly claims military annihilation of the enemy. . . .Unlike Jesus, Bar Kochba was thus a 'kingly' messiah in the sense of a political and military leader. The fact that Bar Kochba was not of the house of David was, in Akiba's eyes, of no consequence. His disciple Rabbi Shimon ben Joachai later reported: "When my teacher had seen Bar Kochba, he said, 'This is the king, the Messiah.' Rabbi Jochanan ben Tortha replied to him: 'Akiba, grass will grow out of your jawbones (out of your grave), and the son of David (the Messiah) will still not have come'" Akiba and his supporters were later executed. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 265, Wilson I 122).

In the Books of Enoch, the figure of the Messiah coalesced with the apocalyptic "Son of Man," a supernatural judge and savior appearing at the end. (Grollier)

6.2 The Bread and the Wine

The Qumran texts, too, describe a special meal that involved the basic elements of bread and wine. The Manual of discipline refers to the meals of the group: "And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the first-fruits of the bread and new wine" (6:4-6)

The Last Supper is a passover meal, except in John, where Yashua becomes the paschal lamb next day. John's difference could be associated with the Qumran calendar.

The clearest statement about a special meal at Qumran comes from the Rule of the Congregation (1QSa) (which was originally part of the Manual of Discipline):

[The ses]sion of the men of renown, [invited to] the feast for the council of the community when [at the end] (of days) the messiah [shall assemble] with them. [The priest] shall enter [at] the head of all the congregation of Israel, and [all his brethren the sons of] Aaron, the priests, [who are invited] to the feast, the men of renown, and they shall sit be[fore him, each] according to his importance. Afterwards, [the messiah] of Israel [shall enter] and the heads of the [thousands of Israel] shall sit before him [ea]ch according to his importance, according to [his station] in their encampments and their journeys. And all of the heads of the [households of the congregation,

[their] sag[es and wise men,] shall sit before them, each according to his importance. [When they] meet at the] communal [tab]le [to set out bread and wi]ne, and the communal table is arranged [to eat and] to dri[nk] wine, [no] one [shall extend] his hand to the first (portion) of the bread and [the wine] before the priest. For he shall] bless the first (portion) of the bread and the wi [ne and shall extend] his hand to the bread first. Afterwa[rds,] the messiah of Israel [shall extend his hands to the bread. [Afterwards,] all of the congregation of the community [shall bless, ea]ch according to] his importance. [They] shall act according to this statute whenever (the meal) is ar[anged] when as many as ten [meet] together" (Rule of the Congregation 2: 11-22)."

This meal, eaten in the presence of the two messiahs postulated at Qumran, was only for those who were ritually pure (compare 1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Lawrence Schiffman argues that the Qumran meals were nonsacral or, cultic in nature; rather, "[these meals, conducted regularly as part of the present-age way of life of the sect, were pre-enactments of the final messianic banquet which the sectarians expected in the soon-to-come end of days. Again, the life of the sect in this world mirrored its dreams for the age to come. But however the meal of the Qumran covenanters is interpreted, its messianic character, the prominence of bread and wine, the fact that it was repeated regularly, and the explicit eschatological associations do in fact remind one of elements found in the New Testament words about the Lord's Last Supper (Vanderkam 195).

"Whenever as many as ten shall gather together for a banquet, they shall take their seats in order of precedence, and the priest and the messiah shall preside. The company may not touch the bread and the wine till the priest has blessed them and taken some - after which the Messiah first takes some, then the others in order of rank."

Note Luke 22:21: "But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. ... And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. ... but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." This passage has Jesus appear to be deliberately inverting Essene protocol.

The Didache or Doctrine of the Two Ways was initially an early Christian text, but reflects strongly the Manual of Discipline. "You have the baptism ... and you have the sacred repast, which involves broken bread and a cup of wine but at which the wine represents "the Holy Vine of Thy son David" and the bread "the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy child".

The Christian atonement is missing here and although attributed to Jesus may thus have arisen later. The bread and wine are also blessed in the Jewish Passover, but this is a family affair, whereas the Christian Communion in the tradition of the Last Supper had only men.

Prefiguring the Sermon on the Mount and other Sayings and titles of Jesus

There are many sayings of Jesus, particularly those involving the Sermon on the Mount, which clearly display an Essene derivation. Elaine Pagels (1993 64) following Krister Stendahl even describes Matthew as "a kind of 'community rule' considerably more liberal than that of the Essenes." Despite this, in other New Testament passages Jesus appears to overturn Jewish law, such as breaking the sabbath. Jesus confirms this contradictory position in Matt 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be

fulfilled." This clearly indicates that his mission does manifestly appear to be abrogating the law but not in (Essene) essence. Of course the social historians view such as Pagels (1993) is that Matthew may represent a construction of the time by the unnamed New Testament author viewing the society of the late first century, rather than being necessarily Yeshua's own words.

The promises of the Sermon on the Mount are anticipated in several places: "And they who have died in grief shall arise in joy; and they who were poor for the Lord's sake shall be made rich; and they who are put to death for the Lord's sake shall awake to life" (Wilson Edmund 89). The "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3) is found in the War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness (14:7) but in no other ancient text. Likewise, the sermon's teaching that oaths should be avoided as unnecessary since one's word should suffice (Matthew 5:33-37) echoes the great emphasis on truth in the scrolls (for example, Manual of Discipline 2:24,26 calls the group "the community of truth") and perhaps explains Josephus' statement that the Essenes were excused from taking the oath of loyalty to Herod. The duty to turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:38-39) is found at Qumran in the Manual of Discipline (10:17-18) but not elsewhere. Finally, the antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount ("You have heard that it was said . . . , but I say unto you . . . ") are reminiscent of the way in which the still-unpublished halakhic letter (4QMMT) introduces disagreements between the sect and its opponents: "You know . . . We think/say" (Vanderkam 188)

Meekness, mercy and forgiveness reverberates in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs almost to the same degree as in the Gospels themselves. There occurs here the first known conjunction - echoed in Mark 12.19-31 - of Deuteronomy's 6.5 "love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," etc. and Leviticus's 19.18 "love thy neighbour as thyself". To love one's "neighbour" or "brother" turns up also in The Book of Jubilees and the Zadokite fragments; and the great rabbi Hillel of the Talmud, who flourished in the first century B.C. and thus belongs to the same general period, is supposed to have said to a Gentile who had come to him and challenged him to convert him by teaching him the whole of the Torah during the time that he, the Gentile, could stand on one foot: "What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellow; this is the whole law." is a close inversion of Christ's invocation to do unto others that which you would they should do unto you (Wilson Edmund 89).

How do we reconcile The War of the Children of Light, which is full of soldierly weapons, with Philo's first-century statement that the Essenes do not produce these and the equally contradictory statements of Jesus who says "I have not come to bring peace but a sword" but then says to "Turn the other cheek"? Edmund Wilson (95) suggests the defiance of the Teacher of Righteousness, the pacifism of Philo's Essenes, and the turning of the other cheek of Jesus may mark successive stages of the adjustment of the Jews to difficult circumstances, just as the Jewish God has been modulated from the savage and revengeful Yahweh, to the God of mercy and love. On the other hand war against darkness and Belial and speaking with a sharp uncompromising tongue "the sword from the mouth" does not involve physical arms.

The sword that Jesus is bringing is the zeal for his own gospel, which will "set the son against the father and make a man's foes those of his own household." Yet there remains a contradiction between forgiveness and renunciation of the world and combativeness and worldly ambition. The contradiction between promising to "the poor in spirit" "the kingdom of heaven," and to "the meek" that "they shall inherit the earth." In the supposedly much earlier Testaments - in the passage already quoted, which seems obviously a prototype of the Sermon on the Mount - the "poor" are to be made

"rich."

"There are over seventy words," it seems, "which are common to the Testaments and the Pauline Epistles, but which are not found in the rest of the New Testament." The most striking parallel, perhaps, is that between Matthew 25:35-36 and a passage from the Testament of Joseph, 1:5-6. It is impossible to doubt that the former is an imitation of the latter or that both were derived from a common source (Wilson Edmund 89).

*I was sold into slavery, and the Lord of all made me free:
I was taken into captivity, and His strong hand succoured me.
I was beset with hunger, and the Lord Himself nourished me.
I was alone, and God comforted me:
I was sick, and the Lord visited me:
I was in prison, and my Lord showed favour to me;
In bonds, and he released me.... TESTAMENTS*

*For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
I was naked and you clothed me,
I was sick and you visited me,
I was in prison, and you came to me.... MATTHEW*

The Zadokite fragments refer to the "well of living water" that saves, anticipating Jesus with the woman of Samaria at the well and the belly of living waters of John.

The Holy Ghost is prefigured in the Manual of Discipline and in many other Essene passages, both as a sublimation of baptism at the end of time and as a grace already given by God to the elect: "And then God will purge by His truth all the deeds of man, refining for himself some of mankind in order to abolish every evil spirit from the midst of his flesh and to cleanse him through a Holy Spirit." ... "and by Thy holy spirit hast Thou delighted me"

The Habakkuk Commentary similarly prefigures the notion of living by faith "But the just shall live by his faith" in Habakkuk 2:4b: "Interpreted, this concerns those who observe the Law in the House of Judah, whom God will deliver from the House of judgment because of their suffering and because of their faith and fidelity towards the Teacher of Righteousness" (Habakkuk Commentary 8:1-3). "The righteous live by their faith" is a characteristic Christian position noted of Paul in Galatians 3:11 to annul the law "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident for the just shall live by faith".

The Genesis Apocryphon (1 Qap-Gen) (and 1 Enoch 106-107) prefigure the divine birth: In the latter texts, it is suspected that Noah does not have a natural father. His father Lamech suspects that his mother Batenosh has had an extramarital affair with an angel. In Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:35, Mary's conception is through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Vanderkamp 197).

The Letter to the Hebrews describes Melchizedek as a priest to whose order Jesus belonged. The Gospel genealogies (Matt 1: 1-17; Luke 3:23-38), however, show that Jesus is spiritually descended from David rather than the priestly tribe of Levi. In Hebrews, the author fashions an extraordinary portrait of Melchizedek, based on inferences (e.g. his eternity, his superiority to Levi) from a combination of Genesis 14: 18-20 and Psalm 110:4 (Vanderkam 191-2): "For this Melchizedek [king of righteousness], king of Salem [peace], priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything [of the booty]." He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has nei-

ther beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. A text from Qumran (IIQMelchizedek) prefigures a parallel. Melchizedek is presented as an angelic being who raises up God's holy ones for deeds of judgment and who takes divine vengeance on evil. He has superhuman status, which clearly involves living eternally, just as he has in Hebrews. More recently, in another Qumran text, the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, Melchizedek seems to officiate as the heavenly high priest, just as Jesus does in Hebrews.

The thanksgiving hymns (1QH 18:14-15) quote Isaiah 61:1-2 just as Jesus did in Galilee "That according to Thy truth [he may be] / the one who announces good tidings[in th]e time of Thy goodness, [giving them to drink] from the fountain of h[oliness] / [and consoling the co]ntrite of spirit and the afflicted / to (bring them) everlasting joy". The Qumran text is damaged here. Note that Jesus stopped before Isaiah's day of revenge. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 252)

The new covenant declared in the Damascus Document (1QS 4:22) "For God has chosen them for an everlasting covenant" is reflected in the gospels. Matthew 26:28 declares: "This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins". Paul, at 2 Cor. 3:6 says: "God has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code, but in the Spirit". In the Letter to the Hebrews 9:15, Christ is described as "the mediator of a new covenant ". (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 253)

Divorce and Adultery

Both the Qumran sect and Jesus (Mark 10:6; Matt. 19:4) point to Gen. 1:27 ("male and female he created them") to stress monogamy and fidelity, not polygamy and divorce, as being originally God's will. Both groups thus opposed the Jewish practices of polygamy and easy divorce. In the Damascus Document (4.20-5.1) it is said of the enemies of Qumran: "[they] have been caught by lust in two things: by marrying two women during their lifetime, whereas nature's principle is Male and female created He them. And those who entered the ark (of Noah), Two and two they went into the ark." (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 253-4)

When Jesus rejects adultery and divorce, his disciples take this as an infringement of their polygamous interests (Matt. 19:9). Jesus answers: "Not all men can receive this saying". Jesus' wise insight ... was not adopted by the Catholic Church (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 254).

Women were excluded from Qumran from the very beginning. But in Christianity, the hostility to women and sexuality did not come in until after the time of Jesus. Jesus was friendly to women, one might almost say the first and last friend women had in the Christian Church. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 258)

Schalom Ben-Chorin and others contend that Jesus, as a rabbi, must have been married. He refers to the saying of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah (ca. A.D. 100): "Whoever refuses to marry violates the commandment to increase and multiply, and must be looked upon as a murderer who lowers the number of beings created in the image of God" Rabbi Eliezar (around A.D. 90) had a similar comment: "Whoever does not attend to propagation is like one who sheds blood" (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 255).

Love and Hate

Qumran's program was as militaristic as Yeshua's one was pacifistic. The War Scrolls (1QM 11:13-15) deliver the enemies of all lands into the hand of the "poor" to draw

down the reward due to the wicked. The "poor", which implies Qumran bears a notable resemblance to the title of the Ebionite Christians. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 253)

The following surprising words of Jesus probably originated with the Essenes: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). This might be called the Qumran variation on, or preliminary stage of, Christian celibacy: ... In the parallel passage to this saying about hatred, namely, Matt. 10:34-37, hatred of the family is bound up with the sword, just as in Qumran ... : "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

This Essene-like statement of the Gospels conflicts sharply with Jesus' pacifist statement on the Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5:43 : "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you' ... Hatred of the enemy was a basic tenet of the Qumran community. The Rule of the Community says right at the beginning that there the man of understanding" is bidden to "hate all that He (God) has despised" (IQS 1:4).

This hatred will break out in the approaching eschatological war. The end of the world, which the Qumran sect expected to come soon, would be preceded by a war of revenge and retribution, the war of the "sons of light" (the Qumran community) against the "sons of darkness." This war is described in detail in the War Scroll (IQM). In keeping with the rules of Roman warfare, it will be fought with the use of phalanxes. It will go on for forty years. In the first twenty years, all the foreign nations will be conquered; in the following twenty, all other Jews. (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 259). This was conceived as a sequence of successful military campaigns against the great powers. The identity of the children of darkness changed with history from the Jerusalem priesthood to the Romans (Cohn 1993 190), who finally destroyed Qumran for its intransigence in 68 AD.

Resurrection

Josephus tells of Essenes who under torture "cheerfully resigned their souls, confident that they would receive them back again. For it is a fixed belief of them that the body is corruptible and its constituent matter impermanent, but that the soul is immortal and imperishable. "

The Qumran texts too mention "life without end" (Manual of Discipline 4:7 The Damascus Rule [CD] 3:20, etc.).

Author's being raised from sheol (the realm of the dead) to an eternal height may be figurative language for God's delivering him from dire straits to a renewed life, rather than a literal bodily resurrection (see the Hymn Scroll 3:19-22).

Hippolytus, an early Christian writer (c. 170-236) who, like Josephus, describes Essene beliefs, claims that the Essenes did accept the doctrine of the resurrection of bodies.

A Hebrew text from the first half of the first century B.C. reads in part: "And they [those who curse] will be for death [while] the One who gives life will [raise to life the dead of his people" (Vanderkamp 201).

Verdant Fervour for God

Nothing will better illustrate the authentic fervour of the Essenes than this text from the end of the Manual:

My whole mind sings, and each touch of my harp glorifies God, And the string of my lute, his holy will; And, like a pipe, my lips praise his righteous rule. From dawn till night, I am the Covenant of God. In the dusk of evening and in the morning I voice his teachings; In them will I live for ever. I proclaim his judgement upon my transgressions, And my sins are like an inscription graven before my eyes. I hail God as 'My Righteousness! Most High: Creator of my joy!' 'Well of knowledge, Source of Holiness, Glorious Majesty, Strength of Eternal Splendour!' He has chosen all my joy and I rejoice in his judgement upon me. Walking or moving, I bless his name. At my goings out and my comings in, in my sleeping and in my waking, And even upon my bed, I rejoice in him. I open my lips and praise him for all that he has given to men, ... I know that in his hand is the judgement of every living soul, true are his acts. In my anguish I praise him, I rejoice in his salvation alone. I render not evil for evil but repay good to all men, For it is God who judges all souls, He gives to each man his due. I have no desire for evil; the fruits of oppression do not tempt my soul. I plead no cause against the damned until the day of vengeance and wrath. Nevertheless, I turn away from evil men and rejoice not till judgement be rendered. ... I express knowledge shaped by wisdom. By the subtleties of knowledge I establish-borders to enclose firm truth, And an unswerving faith in the justice of God . The teaching of the length of days ... the right. The love of mercy towards the lowly and a giving heart towards the weak, The spirit of understanding for the misguided. To preach wisdom to the faint-hearted, To answer the proud with persuasion, And with a contrite spirit those who bear the sceptre, Who stretch forth the finger, proffer insults and acquire riches. As for me, God is my righteousness, And in his hand are the perfection of my life and the uprightness of my heart. By his righteousness, he blots out my sin, For my light has sprung from the justification of his knowledge. Mine eyes have beheld his wonders and my heart has been illumined by the mystery to come. The Eternal Being upholds me in the way. My steps are upon solid rock and nothing can shake them, For the Truth of God is the rock where I tread and his strength upholds me in the way. ... Blessed be thou my God, who hast opened the heart of thy servant to thy knowledge. Direct all his actions in righteousness, And give to the son of thy servant woman that which it hath pleased thee to accord to thy Chosen, To serve thee among men eternally! ... Who could bear thy glory? What is the son of man among thy wondrous works? How could a child born of woman bear thy presence? For he is made of dust and his body shall be food for worms. He is made but of moulded clay and will return to dust. What could this clay, shaped by the hand, reply? What plan could it understand?

All those who have entered the Covenant, not those who go into the Sanctuary to kindle fires upon the altar in vain, ... may all such strive to act according to the teaching of the Law until the times of evil. May they cut themselves off from the children of corruption.

John the Baptist and Jesus as Essene Deviants

When the Manual of Discipline was first discovered, the purgations by sprinkling that appear in it made the scholars at once think of John the Baptist, and there was even, at first, some idea that he might be the Teacher of Righteousness. John the Baptist is supposed to have been born - perhaps in Hebron - not very far away from the monastery; the "word of God" came to him, says Luke, "in the wilderness," which must have

meant the bald and sub-sea-level mountains that stand between the monastery and civilization; and his ministry, according to Luke, was in "all the regions about the Jordan." He not only had the practice of baptism in common with the members of the sect, but he seems to be following their principles (Luke 3.11) when he preaches to "the multitudes" who have come to be baptized by him: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Jesus, typical of himself, took this command a step further Matt 5:40 "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

Each of the synoptic gospels (Matt 3:3 Mark 1:2 Luke 3:3) quote the second Isaiah 40:3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord." in describing John the Baptist. This use of Isaiah 40:3 is pre-figured in the Manual 8:12-15. Thus like the sect, he expects the Messiah, and like the sect he invokes the Second Isaiah. John's quoted statement concerning the priests from Jerusalem "You brood of vipers" can also be equated with the Essene expression "creatures of the snake" for the agents of Belial (1QH 3:17). Qumran anticipated their baptisms would become purification by the Holy Spirit at the end of time just as John did (Betz in VanderKam 210).

However, unlike the Essenes, John, in the Gospels and Josephus, appears as a lonely ascetic *nabi*, like the desert saint at whose feet Josephus had sat. What, then, was John the Baptist's relation to the sect? Dr. Brownlee suggests that John may have been one of those "other men's children" that Josephus says the Essenes adopted and "moulded in accordance with their own principles." "And the child grew," says Luke (1:80), "and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel."

This would give us an explanation of the otherwise rather unaccountable circumstance that John's childhood was spent in the desert. I have nowhere seen it suggested that John was at odds with the sect; but, in connection with his desert diet of locusts and wild honey, one remembers the expelled Essenes, who resorted to living on grass because they had sworn an oath never to eat any food not prepared by the brotherhood. Josephus, despite having visited the Essenes and mentioning several other figures as Essenes never defines John the Baptist as one, suggesting he was not during the time of his ministry.

It has been suggested that the complete omission of the Essenes from the Gospels was due to some special relation of John and Jesus to the Essene sect, possibly that John seceded from the sect, though he continued to echo its language. Several sayings of Jesus suggest that Jesus may have been deliberately flouting their code (Wilson Edmund 131-2). His flouting of Essene protocol Luke 22:26 "he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" at the last Supper, disrespect for the Sabbath - Mark 2:27 "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.", eating with unwashed hands, dining with sinners such as publicans deemed 'untouchable' to the Essenes, allowing himself to be anointed with oil and expensive spices, assisting at weddings and regarding them as symbols of the highest theological truths when most Essenes were celibates, and failing to eschew the conventional sacrifices at the Temple as the Essenes still did.

But what was the relation of Jesus to the ritual and doctrine of the sect, which the Gospels so persistently echo? Is it also possible that Jesus was a member of the sect during those early years of his life when we know nothing about him, or was his contact with

the Essenes chiefly by way of John the Baptist as suggested by Albright? Bethlehem is not very far from the monastery. The Bedouins were on their way there when they found the scrolls in the cave. John and Jesus, according to Luke, were relatives on their mother's side. Jesus, around the age of thirty according to Luke and little younger than John, came down, we are told, from Galilee in order to be baptized by John, and fasted forty days in the wilderness. Not very long afterwards, apparently, John was arrested by Herod, and then the ministry of Jesus began. We know very little about the first thirty years of Jesus' life. It is notable however that certain Essene initiations require one to be thirty to assume mature office.

Suggested Contrasts Between the Teacher and Jesus (Brownlee 143-151)

1. Unlike Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness was a confessed sinner who gratefully acknowledged his dependence upon the forgiving grace of God.

Comment: While Brownlee contrasts this passage with Jesus, one could equally cite it as a confirmation that the Teacher stood squarely in the tradition of Psalm 22 (p 319) in his "heart melting like wax" and note that elsewhere he has the Holy Spirit poured out upon him.

*"Man is involved in iniquity from the womb;
and to grey old age is in a state of guilty infidelity.
I know that man possesses no righteousness;
the son of man, no perfection of way.
All righteousness belongs to God Most High . . .
As for me, shaking and trembling seized me,
all my bones were crushed,
My heart melted like wax before fire,
and my knees gave way like water plunging down a precipice,
When I became conscious of my own faithlessness
as well as the infidelity of my ancestors.
When the wicked arose against Thy covenant,
the irreligious, against Thy word,
Then I said, "It is because of my transgression that
I am left outside Thy covenant;"
But when I remembered the power of Thy hand
together with the abundance of Thy compassion,
I regained my footing and stood erect,
and my Spirit became strong in confronting affliction;
For I leaned upon Thy loyal love,
Thy abundant compassion;
for Thou dost pardon iniquity." (IQ 1-1 iv, 29-37)*

2. Unlike Jesus, he must suffer in order to be purified from sin.

Thus the Teacher in one of the Hymns seems to be speaking of himself when he says:

*"In order to act mightily through me
before the sons of men,
Thou has wrought marvels with this poor man,
And Thou has put him into a crucible,
that as gold is refined by the action of fire
And as silver is refined in the furnace of the smelters,
so he may be purified sevenfold." (IQ H V, 15f.)*

"At that time, God will purify by His truth all the deeds of a man and refine him more than the sons of men, in order to destroy every perverse spirit from the inner parts of his flesh, and to cleanse him through the Spirit of Holiness from all wicked practices; and He will sprinkle upon him the Spirit of Truth like the water of purification, so as to cleanse him from all untrue abominations and from being polluted by the Spirit of Impurity, so that he may give the upright insight into the knowledge of the Most High

and into the wisdom of the heavenly beings, in order to make wise the perfect of way; for God has chosen them to be an eternal covenant, and all the glory of Adam will be theirs. There will be no more perversity, all works of fraud being put to shame." (IQ S iv, 20-23)

Jesus' High Priestly prayer as recorded in John, He prays: "Sanctify them by the truth; Thy word is truth . . . And for their sake I sanctify myself that they may be also sanctified by the truth. (John 7:17, 19) The language here is so close to that of the Society Manual that one cannot help but recognize their affinity; and yet examination of the theology of the Fourth Gospel makes it clear that when Jesus sanctifies Himself through dedication to His Passion, it is not any subjecting of Himself to needed purification, but is rather a devoting of Himself to the redemption of others whereby they may be truly purified from sin.

Jesus also suffers, and took the baptism of John which is for the remission of sins. The humility of the Teacher despite his messianic status in the Hymns and Habakkuk Commentary should be taken as a positive sign of his integrity, not as a lesser quality.

3. Unlike Jesus, the Essene Master founded a community vowing hatred toward its enemies. The Manual of Discipline indicates that those who joined the sect assumed the obligation: "To love all the sons of light, each according to his lot in God's counsel, but to hate all the sons of darkness, each according to his guilt in provoking God's vengeance!"

In one of their songs they sang:

"I will repay no man with evil's due; (only) with good will I pursue a man; For with God is the judgment of every living thing; and He will reward a man with his due!"

This sounds very Christian, almost like Jesus' Sermon on the Mount; but the reason for forgoing vengeance is that vengeance is a prerogative of God.

By contrast Jesus message is radical: Matt 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

4. Both teachers founded a church - but only Jesus built a church which the powers of death could not overcome. Comment: This is historical hindsight and says little about the intrinsic spiritual attainment of either figure.

5. Unlike Jesus, the Teacher called his followers out of the world, but Christ on the contrary sent His followers into the world. Comment: John the Baptist and several other leaders did likewise. James the Just, the first bishop came very close to calling his followers out of the world.

6. Unlike Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness does not appear to have been "a friend of publicans and sinners."

This is one of the unique charismatic features of Jesus, but beware, for John who was very much the Nazirite baptised publicans and sinners.

7. Unlike Jesus, the Essene Master performed no works of healing, nor in other ways did he engage in acts of compassion among the needy.

But the wider community of righteous ones such as Honi the Circle drawer did perform just such works. Therapeutae were a cultural tradition (Crossan 142).

8. Unlike Jesus, he was at most a prophet, not a redeemer. He may have been regarded

as the expected Prophet and Forerunner of the Messiah, who figured in Jewish expectation. It is possible (though not certain) that he was expected to return at the end of time in order to become the great high priestly associate of the Davidic Messiah, but there is nothing to indicate that a redemptive role was expected of him. Though the Teacher may have been martyred, there was no theology built upon his death as an atonement for sin. We do find evidence of the belief that the good works and the suffering of all righteous people is in some sense atoning.

Some writers would deny that Jesus' original theology was built on atonement in the Jewish Christian tradition. Atonement was central to the Essene messianic role, just as James the Just was said to have callouses like camels for his contrite praying for others.

9. Unlike Jesus, but like John the Baptists New Testament description, the Teacher of Righteousness was simply preparing the way for one far greater than himself.

This opinion is inconsistent with Dupont-Sommer's portrayal of the Commentary on Habakkuk. It is a standard Christian polemic applied to John the Baptist.

10. Unlike Jesus, the Teacher of Righteousness founded a community enmeshed in legalism.

However Elaine Pagels (1995 64) notes Krister Stendahl's description of Matthew as "a kind of community rule", considerably more liberal than that of the Essenes.

11. Unlike Jesus, the Teacher of righteousness has not risen from the dead.

But Christ's resurrection remains unsubstantiated outside Church dogma.

A similar analysis applies to another early Christian work the "Shepherd" of Hermas, where a subservient son of God the Shepherd is not deified by God.

At another extreme, Eisenman attempts to identify Paul as the Wicked Priest and James as the Teacher of Righteousness. While this episode does have interesting parallels, repeated radio-carbon dating at Qumran replicates earlier findings that the date of Qumran is before Christ. It is certainly true that James the Just was a devout one in the Nazirite mold, but Jesus was more charismatic and many-faceted. Paul did journey to Damascus, but this does not mean he was the Wicked Priest. It is true the Sea of Galilee ran red in 66-8 AD, and that the Galileans were Zealots for the cause, but it is also true that Jewish Christians retreated to the east of the Jordan following a prophecy. It is also clear that later Bar Cochba persecuted the Christians and would not have done so had they been the spearhead of the Zealot movement (Ranke-Heinmann 1992).

6.3 Sectarions and Christian Origins

In Galilee, the customs and religious observances were as different from Judea as was the Aramean speech. While Judea had remained independent until the exile the Northern kingdom of Israel had been over-run centuries before by the Assyrians. They were proud and independent, and in the forefront of the resistance movement. It was Judas of Galilee who raised the battle cry against the tax of the census of AD 6-7 "No ruler but God". The Pharisees were not well-established in the north and needed help from Jerusalem to contend with Jesus' teaching (Mark 3:22, 7:1). A Galilean messiah was scorned in Jerusalem and Jesus was regarded as a demon-possessed Samaritan (John 7:40, 51; 8:48). The Galileans remonstrated with him against returning to Jerusalem (John 11:7). Jew more narrowly means Judean, which alters the thrust of gospel polemic significantly (Schonfield 38).

Sectarian communities and the Rechabite and Kenite tribes flourished there, particularly around the Sea of Galilee, Decapolis, Gilead and Bashan, the Gaulan and Hauran and towards Lebanon and Damascus, as is also evidenced by the Essene Damascus Document, where the New Covenant was made. The Essenes did not all live at Qumran and there is every reason to believe that cattered communities were in the northern districts (Schonfield 40).

In the Community Rule from Qumran it is said of the leaders of the Council. "They shall preserve the Faith in the land with steadfastness and meekness, and shall atone for sin by the practice of justice and by suffering the sorrows of affliction ... And they shall be an agreeable offering, atoning for the land and determining the judgement of wickedness, and there shall be no more iniquity."

Since the Messiah was to be the Branch of Righteousness, the holy one who would bring iniquity to an end and reign over a redeemed people, it was not difficult to move from the Son of Man (collective) to the Messiah as the Son of Man (singular), from the Elect Ones of Israel to the Elect One. If the Saints could achieve an atoning work by their sufferings, how much more the Messiah himself. For Jesus, especially with his northern associations, this emerged clearly, and governed the character of his messianic mission. His blood would seal the New Covenant spoken of by Jeremiah, and must be shed for many for the remission of sins. In other words attributed to him, 'Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things, and then enter into his glory (as king)? (Luke 24:26). In the Northern Kingdom the Righteous King could thus join hands with the Suffering Just One (Schonfield 40).

Jesus' followers were called Nazoreans (Nazarenes), and Jesus himself was the Nazorean, a sectarian term (Heb. Notsrim), not connected directly with Nazareth or Nezer (Branch) from the roots of Jesse. The group regarded themselves as 'maintainers' or 'preservers' of the true faith of Israel, as did the Samaritans of Samaria (Shomron), the Shamerine or 'custodians' or 'keepers' of the Israelite religion as opposed to the Judeans (Jews). The same may be said of the pre-Christian Nazareans (Aramaic Natzareya) of Epiphanius, who, like the Samaritans were opposed to the Judean traditions, holding the southerners had falsified the Law of Moses. They were vegetarians and abhorred animal sacrifices, but circumcised and kept the Sabbath and Jewish festivals (Schonfield 207).

There is good reason to believe that the current Mandaeans of the Lower Euphrates, who are also called Nazoreans are heirs to the Nazareans. Their literature reveals that they came from Northern Palestine having left Judea because of persecution as did the Essenes who drafted the Damascus Document. They hold 'Jordan' and 'Hauran' precious pointing to Northern Palestine in 2nd cent BC. They have always been baptisers and hold John the Baptist as their inspiration. There are direct links back to the Essenes including correspondence between the Sidra d' Yahja (Book of John the Baptist) and the Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Epiphanius identifies Nazareans with the Daily Baptists (Schonfield 208). They also conceive of a Light Adam, a figure like the second Adam of the Pauline epistles.

Christians listed Pharisees, Saducees, Essenes, Galileans, Daily Baptists, Masbutheans (Aram. Baptists), Samaritans, among many other followings. Around the time of Jesus there was a diversification of cults many preaching end-of days vision, in Northern Palestine, some of which shared their ideas, particularly under the difficult conditions following the Bar-Cochba revolt. The Talmud states "Israel did not go into captivity [AD70] until 24 varieties of sectarian had come into existence". The Clemen-

tine Recognitions says: "The [Jewish] people was now divided into many sects ever since the days of John the Baptist." It lists the first division as the Sadducees (apparently referring to the Sons of Zadok - Essenes of Qumran) - "These, more righteous than the others began to separate themselves from the assembly of the people" (Schonfield 209).

It is clear from the suspicion of Jesus as a Galilean and a 'demon-possessed Samaritan' that the north was regarded with suspicion as a natural home of heresy, a legacy from the ancient separation of Israel and Judea. "We do not know a good much about the old Israelite religion, but it would appear to have absorbed a good deal from the worship of the Syrians and Phoenicians, and this was not to nearly the same extent eradicated as in the south, by the reforming zeal of Ezra and his successors. Much was carried in folklore and clan and sect tradition to the time of Christ. The Essenes were variously traced to the Samaritans and Rechabites (Schonfield 209).

The Rechabites, like the smithing Kenites, led a bedouin existence as craftsmen and carpenters, possibly living as sects which separated themselves and dwelt in camps in the wilderness, which through northern Arabia linked Syria with Mesopotamia - the 'holy ones of god' just as the Essean-Essene appears to derive from Aramaic Chasya (Gk. Hosios) Saint (Schonfield 210).

"The oldest roots of the primitive Church were in Galilee in the wide sense of 'Galilee of the Gentiles', extending beyond Galilee eastward to include Peraea and the Decapolis (possibly reaching as far as Damascus) and to the north as far as Hermon. The development in Judea and Jerusalem was an inevitable expansion as a result of the events which took place there" (Black 81)

The lack of mention of the Essenes in the gospels and Acts is best explained by the idea that they were included in the framework of this broad generic term. The 'way' of Jesus' Nazoreans was simply the 'Way of the Wilderness' followed by various groups only one of which regarded their Master as the Davidic Messiah.

The Ebionites (or deserving poor ones) one of the first Jewish Christian sects accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the greatest of the prophets but not as the 'virgin born' Son of God and considered that he had normal human parentage. He became one with God in the baptism and remained so until his crucifixion. They did not view Jesus' death as a bloody act of atonement. They interpreted the Eucharist as a memorial of Jesus, substituting a chalice of water for the chalice of blood, and became vegetarians, rejecting the temple sacrifices. They practiced a rigorous asceticism and stressed the binding character of the Mosaic Law. After the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Ebionites settled at Pella in Transjordan but remained outside the mainstream of Christianity. They are often identified with the Nazarenes and followed James and his successors. Eusebius says they "had poor and mean opinions concerning Christ. They held him to be a plain and ordinary man who had achieved righteousness merely by the progress of his character" (Ranke-Heinemann 1992 173, Wilson I 154, Grollier).

Saul's journey to Damascus is best explained by the idea that the primitive Christians had sought refuge with other pre-Christian sects, of whom Ananias who cured Saul's blindness, and who said he was chosen to see and hear the 'Just One' and to wash away his sins with baptism - both Essene in character. After his conversion to Paul, he went into Arabia and later returned to Damascus in a spectacularly clear-cut act of purpose Gal 1:16 "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and

abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." These are the three key players apart from Magdalen.

"Paul's journey would become intelligible if we infer that he stayed with a Nazarean community in the Nabataean country close to Damascus. We could then more readily account for several features of the Pauline doctrine (the Heavenly Messiah and Second Adam) which are still reflected in the literature of the Mandaeans and for passages in the Pauline epistles reminiscent of the Dead Sea Scrolls" (Schonfield 211):

- "He left a remnant of Israel" (Damascus Document, Rom 11:5)
- "God loveth wisdom, and counsel hath he set before him Prudence and knowledge minister unto him Long-suffering is with him and plentifulness of forgiveness' (Damascus Document, Rom 11:32-4)
- And power and might and great fury of fire (all the angels of destruction) for them who turned aside out of the way, and abhorred the Statute, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape of them" (Damascus Document 2 Thess 1:7-9)
- And in a reference to the Essene Children of Light and Darkness: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the lord: walk as children of light" (Eph 5:8).

One has to contrast these Essene themes against Paul's abandonment of the law for the new Christ: Gal 5:4 "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace", manifested in his specific mission to the Gentiles. This is the core of the earliest split in the church among these same three men: Gal 2:11 "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." However it is clear from both the writings of the early fathers who noted that James the Righteous (the Just) was the 'first to be elected to the episcopal throne of the Jerusalem church' (Wilson I 148) and the Gospel of Thomas 12 that Jesus appointed James 'the Lord's brother' and not Peter to lead.

The Epistle of James notably stresses communal living rather than the Christ of faith James 2:14 "Take the case, my brothers of someone who has never done a single good act, but claims he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says 'I wish you well...' without giving them these bare necessities of life, what good is that? ... it is quite dead".

Upon James execution in 62, he was succeeded by Simeon son of Jesus' uncle Cleopas who appears at Emmaus (Luke 24:18) who was also martyred in 106 and by 13 other bishops, including several blood relatives in a dynastic manner similar to the Zealots, until the line was extinguished with the Second Jewish Revolt (Wilson I 150) in which the Christians were oppressed.

The 'Just One' recalls the Teacher of Righteousness of Qumran who had been the leader of the Penitents of Israel the 'student of the Law who came to Damascus" where the Penitents affirmed the New Covenant as prophesied by Jeremiah. The Talmud confirms this with a satirical comment of Elisha going to Damascus to turn his servant Gehazi to repentance Schonfield 211).

The Teacher of Righteousness was also expected to return in the end of days and the passage from Acts 3:14-18 appears to set Jesus into the same role "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just ... and killed the author of life ... But those things which God before

hath showed by the mouth of all his prophets, the Messiah should suffer, he that also fulfilled". The just one is mentioned again in Stephen's stoning Acts 7:52. In Mark Jesus is likewise referred to by an unclean spirit as 'the Holy one of God' an Essene expression (Schonfield 212).

Some of the Essenes followed a Nazirite way of life, refraining from meat and intoxicants. John the Baptist was likewise and his parents are similarly portrayed. Jesus' brother Jacob, who became head of the Jerusalem Nazoreans was a typical Essene sectarian. The Epistle of Jude, standing in the name of another brother, quotes from sectarian Enoch and the Testaments of the Patriarchs (Schonfield 212).

Hegesippus stated that his other brother James the Just was a lifelong nazirite, abstaining from animal food and strong drink. He neither shaved nor cut his hair, never anointed his body with oil or used the public bath. He never wore woolen, only linen garments, and prayed constantly in the Temple for the forgiveness of the people. When he was stoned at Jerusalem the prophecy of Isaiah 3 "Let us take away the Just, because he is offensive to us" was fulfilled. He dies saying "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" as Luke claimed of Jesus. A Rechabite priest present called out 'Cease What are you doing the Just One is praying for you!' (Schonfield 213).

Black (83) says in "Galilee is to be sought in a group of dedicated Nazirites, sectarians who continued the ancient institution of the lifelong Nazirate". "We have every reason to hold that the family to which Jesus belonged was nurtured in this tradition and much of his teaching confirms this. But his reading of the messianic mission led him in many matters to turn his back on it, which may have been a source of friction with his family" (Schonfield 213) (Mark 3:21, John 7:3 etc.).

He relaxed the sabbath observance, proclaiming himself as Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8), drank with winebibbers and publicans (Luke 7:34) and said that nothing enters man shall defile him (Mat 15:11). He proclaimed that all secrets (of the Saints) should be made clear and what was whispered should be proclaimed from the housetops (Matt 10:26) that a candle should not be put under a bushel (Matt 5:15). This would be apostasy to both the Nazareans and Mandaeans, but as he said 'Wisdom is justified of all her children' (Luke 7:35). Yet was indebted to northern ideas even as the suffering one (Schonfield 213).

Jesus possibly mentions the Essenes approach cryptically in : Matt 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

In response to the Pharisees concern for handwashing he said: Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

He sent the disciples out in the manner of "Holy Ones" Mark 6:7 And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.

5:40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy

cloak also.

Luke 22:24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Mark 9:33 they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Matt 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

However he did envisage breaking the law as no bar to the kingdom any more than John:

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Matt 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

"But he seems to have believed there to be all sorts of circumstances in which love should transcend the law to embrace individuals whose sinfulness in Jewish eyes rendered them 'unclean'". This is evidenced in the parable of the prodigal son. (Wilson I 93).

Speaking to women outside one's immediate family was frowned upon, much less being intimately adored by a 'sinner'. The Talmud notes that Rabi Yose was called "You stupid Galilean, have the sages not commanded 'Do not engage in lengthy conversation with a woman!'" for merely asking the way (Wilson I 94).

Mark 2:17 "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

6.4 The Baptist and the Messiah

The relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist is both pivotal to the confirmation of the Jewish aspect of Jesus' mission and also a paradoxical qualification to his divine origin which should require neither baptism nor the remission of sins. They each also stand as two renowned prophets of the Kingdom with ministries in the wilderness. But the parallels and contrasts run deeper. There is an important sense in which John's life of controversial challenge and sacrificial death has key parallels to that of Jesus, but there are other senses in which the two contrast sharply. The predominant descriptions of John from the gospels have the defined purpose of representing John as a forerunner for the Messiah and thus colour strongly our image of John. Was Jesus the inheritor of John's ascetic tradition, the Messiah whom he had prophesied, or were his teachings a deviation, not only from Pharisaic and even Essene beliefs, but even those of John?



Fig 6.3: Church of St. John of Granada 18th Cent (Steinmann 190)

The accounts of Josephus of each of the two tells us something of the forces at work in the biblical descriptions of the two. His description of John, which is generally accepted as genuine tells a straightforward tale of his life in relation to Herod in the context of the war which Herod fought and lost against Aretas of Nabatea after Herod divorced His daughter for his cousin Herodias: "John, that was called the Baptist ... was an honest man, who urged the Jews to practise virtue, righteousness one to another, and piety towards God in order to receive baptism. In effect, God would consider

this baptism acceptable, even though it served not to pardon sins but to purify the body, since the soul had already been purified by righteousness. Many people, impressed by John's words, gathered about him. A group of people had gathered about John and were greatly moved by his words. Herod feared that such powerful oratory would only stir up a revolt, for the crowd seemed ready to follow all this man's counsels. He preferred therefore to make sure of his personal safety before any trouble arose against him, rather than regret, too late, having exposed himself to danger, should there be any sedition. Because of Herod's suspicions, John was sent to Machaerus., and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of his army was sent as a punishment of Herod, and a mark of John's displeasure to him." (Jewish Antiquities 18:116)

By contrast, the passage concerning Jesus is adoringly Christian in flavour, which Josephus as a Jew could not have written with any self-respect, and is widely believed to be a Christian redaction: "Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again at the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him are not extinct at this day" (Jewish Antiquities 18:63). It is likely that Josephus had his own passage at this point, which probably did mention Jesus, but in less glowing terms.

A reconstruction of Josephus' passage by Geza Vermes reads as follows: "At about this time there lived Jesus, a wise man ... He performed astonishing feats (and was a teacher of such people as are eager for novelties?) He attracted many Jews and many of the Greeks ... Upon an indictment brought by leading members of our society, Pilate sentenced him to the cross, but those who had loved him from the very first did not cease to be attached to him ... the brotherhood of the Christians named after him is still in existence ..." The style of this rendition is further supported by a 10th century commentary by the Arabic Christian Agapius "... his disciples ... reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets had recounted wonders." (Wilson I 61)

John's early life is described by Luke in terms of Zacharias's vision in the temple and subsequent inability to speak, of Elizabeth's barrenness and age which reminds us of

those dangerous women, from Sarah on down, who give birth to prophetic lines and her conception and hiding five months saying 1:25: "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men." We finally witness Zacharias being able to speak again immediately he writes the name John for his name. Luke's story also weaves the birth of Jesus with that of John 1:41: "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; ... and [she] said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

It is likely however that Luke's description has been taken from older traditions of John's followers. The Mandaeans, who claim to come from original followers of John have a parallel story of Zacharias and Erishbai. Elizabeth's aged delivery as a barren woman, although it has some resemblance to the virgin birth, fits much more closely the traditional births of Sarah and other matriarchs who late in life give birth to a figure of great significance, without suggesting there was no biological father. It has also been suggested that the Magnificat, which is a prophetic work composed of a series of old testament phrases was originally pronounced by Elizabeth as a traditional thanksgiving for such a mature delivery (Ranke-Heinmann 1992 47).

Luke's testimony of a kinship link between Elizabeth and Mary conflicts with both Mark and John and is probably fabrication. Luke subsequently has John in the deserts 1:80: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

Mark 1:4 gives us a brief description of John's ministry: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey."

Luke 3:2 enlarges this picture to illustrate his teaching: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones (*ebne*) to raise up children (*bene*) unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.", continuing to exhort sharing of possessions by the endowed, exacting no more than required by the publicans and non-violence by the soldiers.

Many of these statements follow the tradition of writers such as Isaiah 6:13 "it shall again be eaten up as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth when it is felled", but the pun about Abraham and the stones looks more like a Christian insertion to support Jesus' purely spiritual link to the Davidic messiahship and contrasts strongly with careful Jewish emphasis on paternity lines. It is conveniently echoed by Jesus' later statement "the very stones would cry out" as he enters Jerusalem.

Luke 3:15 suggests John was also identified as Messiah: "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not". The 4th century pseudo-Clementines (Reognitiones 1.60) emphasize this point of view stating that John's disciples claimed that their master had been greater than Jesus and that John was the true messiah (Betz 208). This is also confirmed in the position of the

Mandaeans who follow John but see Jesus as a heretic. He is also still revered in Samaria.

Each of the four gospels had a characteristic account of Jesus' baptism by John. For what is presumed the oldest of the four, Mark, the baptism is the first passage in the gospel and the very founding event which initiates Jesus' calling to his mission: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

This is very reminiscent of the Essene Rule of Qumran, suggesting an obvious connection between John's teaching and the Essenes, who were an ascetic desert community: "When these things shall come to pass in the Community of Israel, in accordance with their destiny, let them depart from the city of men into the desert to make a highway for the lord as it is written: Prepare ye in the wilderness the way [of the Lord]. Make straight in the desert a highway for our god."

According to one view of the returning prophet Elijah, he would anoint the Messiah-to-be before that individual himself was aware of his identity (Wilson I 83, 87). Did the 'dove' thus descend on Jesus through the vision of John? Morton Smith has noted the common appearance of the descending bird in other mystery initiations. The dove is of course symbolic of Aphrodite.

Mark's passage already stylizes John as a forerunner to prepare the way for the Lord, rather than a teacher with his own following. We are then led immediately again into the classic sequence of statements emphasizing John as a mere herald of Jesus, the unworthy shoe latchets which must be removed for baptism in water Mark 1:7 "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. . And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan."

Luke then adds an adulation likening the Mighty One to a Tammuz-like grain god in the vengeful mode: "Whose [winnowing] fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." This kind of comment would traditionally be made about God himself.

John Spong (1992 114) correctly points out that the consistent description of Jesus' baptism gives it a potential historical status which implies that Jesus was initially a follower of John: "All the evidence points to the fact that this Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, so he was, at one time at least, a member of the Baptist's movement. Jesus wandered into the wilderness after that baptism, debating the various possibilities that might be open to him. When John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus emerged into a public ministry, but with a distinctly different style."

This is succinctly spelt out at Mark 1:10, but in a way glossed to emphasize Jesus' immediate illumination with the "son of godship." However in contrast to Luke's claim of kinship, it is Jesus himself who experiences the dove in a private vision. John does not even explicitly recognise him: "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there

in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God."



Fig 6.4: Fifth century mosaic Santa maria Ravenna (Wilson I 85).

Matthew 3:14 adds an additional emphasis by having John say he is unworthy to carry out the act: "But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."

In John 1:25 the Baptist is portrayed as recognizing Jesus' messiahship as a stranger to all revealed by the divine act: "And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." This time it is John who sees the dove.

This passage of John differs from the other gospels in several significant ways. In John Jesus is a stranger to the Baptist, not his kinsman. The gospel does not say explicitly that Jesus was baptised, just that he came up and John saw the dove descend and he knew him not might suggest the baptism was delayed. This should be considered in relation to Matthew's "John forbad him". In contrast with the synoptics which describe Jesus' mission as lasting only one year, John has three passovers mentioned, suggesting his first meeting with John was earlier and the Cana wedding feast happened before his baptism. The natural ceremony for a sacred king was not baptism but anointing and coronation, although the Essenes practised baptism but regarded oil as unclean. The references to Jesus' baptism fulfill a key purpose spelt out in the triple epiphany - the baptism represents Christ's manifestation to the Jews, just as Cana does to the disciples and the magi do to the gentiles. Turning this around, one could say to need the baptism of John to manifest as a Jew raises serious questions. Was the origin of Jesus' teachings of the 'divine son' further afield in the traditions of Adonis and Dionysus? There is no previous representation of this 'blasphemous' personal incarnation of god in the 'living flesh' in the Jewish tradition beyond Psalm 82. The name Yahweh is replaced by the personal intimate 'daddy' Abba.

John's episode also does not lead to forty days in the desert, but three days later to the marriage at Cana (2:1), represented as Christ's first miracle and manifestation to his own disciples. Without attempting to grace the gospels with historical consistency, one

interpretation of this sequence is that John did not baptise Jesus when he saw the dove descend, and that this baptism occurred at another time up to a year later. It is John's gospel from which we calculate Jesus' mission as spanning three years, and Cana, the baptism and the magi are all celebrated on the Epiphany, the first two from an early date by the Eastern Church (Grollier).

In particular Graves (Oprey 1984 65-7) deduces that John may have given Jesus a separate coronation ceremony later in which he may have become a lamed sacred king in the style of Jacob, consistent with his Talmud characature Balaam the Lame and with ceremonies and traditions described in Raphael Patiai's 'Hebrew Installation Rites'. He sees this as an explanation of "the apparent later cold relations between Jesus and John the Baptist as necessary, just as with Samuel and Saul "and he did no more see Saul until the day of his death" (Sam 15:12) Samuel and David (16:13), Elijah and Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29) and Jehu (2 Kings 9:3).

The Baptism of Jesus by John is the original Jewish-Christian doctrine called Adoptionist, because it follows the traditional pattern of adoption into sonship of God. 2 Sam 7:14 "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men". Ps 2:7 "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." As the virgin birth came into significance, the potential confession of Jesus as a sinner is avoided and John thus defers from baptising as in Matthew.

Certainly many of Jesus' teachings reflects those of John and before him the Essenes. Matt 5:41 "If a man ... would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well" is a conceptual extension of John's "If any man has two tunics, he must share with the man who has none". Both are also characteristic of the Essenes. In Acts 2:45 description of how his followers lived communally after his death : "... all lived together and owned everything in common; they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed". But Josephus tells us of the Essenes: "each man's possessions go into the pool, and as with brothers their entire property belongs to them all". Just as Jesus sent his disciples on their missions "with no haversack for the journey or spare tunic or footwear" in Matt 10:10, so we are told of the Essenes "when they travel they carry no baggage at all, but only weapons to keep off bandits ... Neither garments nor shoes are changed till they are dropping to pieces or worn out with age".

Jesus' teaching did however differ substantially from John's and took it further both from Jewish tradition and that of the Essenes. Under these circumstances it is wise to pause to take stock. John had a great following in Jesus time and is mentioned by Josephus. It is very unlikely that John would have had this following unless he was a religious leader in his own right. It is thus most unlikely that John portrayed his own path as merely to stoop to Jesus' latches. It is equally unlikely that Jesus' path, different as it was from John's simply took over once John entered prison. Jesus' polemic to the crowds in the gospels suggests as much, an active initiative to capture John's following, even before he had been beheaded and certainly once he had. However this is most likely the later polemic of the gospel writers who are writing with the aim of proselytizing Jesus' divinity to John's followers and the Pharisees alike.

6.5 Living Baptists

A question arises as to whether our view of John the Baptist has been distorted by the Christian tradition which has been overlayed over the top of it along with its politics of Jesus' divinity. Another perspective on this situation can be gleaned from a group

called the Nazarenes or Mandaeans from the lower Euphrates, who trace their origin as followers of John who exiled first to Haran and then further south. Although they have also accrued both aspects of the astral ideas of Harran and Persian influence, some authorities attest their heritage to be a genuine ancient pre-Christian tradition.



Fig 6.5: Mandaean baptism - the blessing (Steinmann 126).

"According to their own tradition, the Mandaeans originated in Palestine and went into exile first in Harran and then in Mesopotamia. The teacher of the Madaeans was John the Baptist, himself baptised, while yet a boy by the 'Knowledge of Life'. ... The Mandaeans believe that the upper world is represented by the Great King of light, the Great Life. Inferior to him are countless spiritual beings, some beneficent, others demoniac. The earth was created out of black waters; the Zodiac and the seven planets are the work of evil spirits. The 'Knowledge of Life' and the light-giving powers seek to direct men and women to good actions; the planets and the spirit of physical life incite them to error through Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other 'false religions'. Those who lead a good life pass

after death to a world of light, others undergo torture, but even the most evil will be purified in a great baptism at the end of the world. Baptism in flowing water - yardna (perhaps the mythical Jordan) is the most important ritual, giving them the name Subba or baptisers, performed before all religious ceremonies and daily before sunrise. A second form of sacrament is the sacred meal of fish, pomegranate, coconuts and other fruits and nuts. Most religious occasions are also marked by the drinking of consecrated water and the eating of consecrated bread and of *sa* (phallus-shaped dough)" (Segal 1963 220). These are performed at birth, marriage and particularly death, where punctilious ritual is observed connected with their belief in the afterlife. They hold to planetary influence on the hours and have a seven day induction of priests like the Sabians. Their year consists of twelve months of thirty days each, followed by five auspicious days of *epact*. At the New Year they keep vigil for the spirits of light to return from congratulating the Supreme Being for creation. They utter "Ask and find, speak and listen" like Harranians (p 448), but invoke a formal denial of the powers of the sun and moon contrary to the Sabians. Their dietary habits differ. Their calendar is solar while the Harranian one is luni-solar. Women may own property, divorce is not recognised, a man may have as many wives as he desires. (Segal 1963 219)

Steinmann (128) notes: "Though they are hostile to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, they very frequently practise baptism in running water and a sort of 'consolamentum' or confirmation, given to the dying. They repudiate idolatry and circumcision, while celibacy is absolutely forbidden. They practise a moral code of charity and goodwill. They have sacred books, written in an Aramaic dialect of Babylon and dating from about the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. These are the *Ginza*, or *Treasure*, a collection of various works, the *Qolasta*, a sort of hymn book, and the *Yohn Book*, which contains a legendary account of the Baptist's message, and also some hymns and fragments of teaching from many different sources. The Mandaeans are gnostics ('manda' means Gnosis). According to them, God is the King of Light. Between him and the world there are gradations of aeons called 'Utras', the most elevated of which is Hibil Ziwa. One of their treatises distinguishes between the various powers within the God-

head: 'The Life', 'Joachim', or the second life, and 'Abathur', who gave birth to 'Ptahil' the creator of the world. One of the great aeons is Manda d'Hayye, a kind of saviour of souls. In the time of John the Baptist, according to the Mandaeans, this truth was preached by a sort of Messiah called Anush-Utra. There is a short extract about John the Baptist put into the mouth of Hibil-Ziwa:

"In those days a child shall be born who will receive the name of John; he will be the son of an old man Zacharias, who shall receive this child in his old age, even at the age of a hundred. His mother Erishbai, advanced in years, shall conceive him and bring forth her child. When John is a man, faith shall repose in his heart, he shall come to the Jordan and shall baptize for forty-two years, before Nebou shall clothe himself with flesh and come into the world. While John lives in Jerusalem, gaining sway over Jordan and baptising, Jesus Christ shall come to him, shall humble himself, shall receive John's baptism and shall become wise with John's wisdom. But then shall he corrupt John's sayings, pervert the Baptism of Jordan, distort the words of truth and preach fraud and malice throughout the world. In the day when the measure shall be full, I will come myself [Hibil-Ziwa] to him, I will appear to him in the form of a little child three years and one day old, and I will talk to him of baptism and instruct his disciples. Then I shall tear him from his flesh, carry him in triumph into the world of pure light and baptize him in the clear limpid waters of running Jordan; I will give him garments of glory and cover him in clothing of light, I will stir up in his heart a hymn of praise echoing that which the angels of light raise to their Lord at all times and for all eternity. After the death of John, the world shall fall a prey to error. The Roman Christ shall overthrow the peoples, the twelve seducers shall travel through the world: for thirty years the Roman shall manifest himself to men." (Steinmann 128)

The response of many Christian authors to this frankly anti-Christian attitude, shared by many Jews, that Jesus was a person who perverted the traditions of his countrymen is usually responded to by allegations that the works are more recent inventions. Why then Jesus' concern at John's possible offence? Why then the elaborate Christian polemics to cast John into the light of an unknowing forerunner, when Jesus at the same time depended on John's reputation to substantiate his own with the high priests?

Another aspect of Mandaean teaching consistent with Essene influence is its gnosticism. This can of course be explained by later influences, for example at Harran, a renowned centre of gnostic paganism, but it bears consideration in the light of the suppression of the early Christian gnostics as heretics, Jesus' expressed attitudes against the and many aspects of Jesus Kingdom of God.

6.6 He must Increase, I must Decrease

Graves (1946) draws attention to the marriage proposal in discounting the idea that there was a "quarrel between the Madaeans and Christians" as hinted at in John. However one could consider the obviously diminishing polemic of John by the Christians and the Mandaean accounts of Jesus as malicious and fraudulent, despite receiving John's wisdom.

Spong (1992 115) sees the stylization of John the Baptist as a mere forerunner as an evolving tradition that emerged from the need to describe history in terms of Jesus unique divinity, despite both movements beginning on a comparable footing: "In early Christianity there was no sense of rivalry between these two figures. As the Jesus movement grew, there appeared to be no effort to excise the memory of John the Baptist. However, a clear need to subordinate that movement to Jesus did appear as the years went by. John the Baptist more and more frequently was referred to as the fore-

runner, the voice in the wilderness who prepared the way for Jesus... As the christological debate in the early church focused on the divine nature of Jesus, the work of John the Baptist fitted nicely into its budding theological thought."

At Micah 4:5 we find the reference to the returning Elijah so fondly associated with John. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." This suggests that John is a forerunner for the Lord, but not necessarily in the flesh. John's supporters might have seen him as the final human prophet.

In Mark, John is thus likened to Elijah 9:11 "And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him." By contrast with Luke "A good part of his story focused on Jesus as the new and greater Elijah," and John 1:20 has John not only deny he is the Christ but even Elijah."

In John, even at the beginning Jesus is acclaimed as the primal transcendent: 1:15 "This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

In John, the Baptist denies he is the Christ, whom he calls the Bridegroom: 3:23 "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all."

The statement that he must decrease has been interpreted as a Christian polemic to diminish John, but really John was to be diminished by Salome's dance. The statement can thus be read as midrach prophecy that John is going to meet his doom in announcing the Mighty One to come. Certainly John's imprisonment is the trigger which sets off Jesus' ministry, however whether John's subsequent beheading is the result of an intentional act provoking sacrifice at the hands of the female, as a forerunner to Jesus' ministry of atonement is unclear.

John 4:1 then reports "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus [disciples] made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judaea." If this and John's exhortations are both true, is a little strange that in Acts, a whole group in Ephesus had never heard of Jesus: He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye bap-

tized? And they said, Unto John's baptism."

Later in John 5:31 Jesus declares that it is John's word for him which confirms him, but that though he "was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. ... I have greater witness than that of John".



Fig 6.6: John visited by his disciples in prison

Luke 7:19 and Matthew 11:2 have John ask of Jesus from prison whether he is the chosen one: "Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead

are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, who-soever shall not be offended in me."

Spong notes the way in which this marks a progression of the description to one in which John is now denied even the foresight of realizing Jesus was the chosen one until later. However one could also view it as an attempt by John, now unable to preach in public to assess how far Jesus' teaching had deviated from his own purist approach. Jesus' statement blessing John if he is not offended concedes this point.

Jesus then goes on to preach to those who have been followers of John and to tell them plainly that John's mission was but a shadow and a forerunner to his consummation: Matt 11:7 "And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." He then makes the watershed statement putting John irreversibly in his place: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Spong (115) notes: " John is the last of the old dispensation. He is not even the least in the new dispensation." This is however in part used to express the eschatological idea that the Kingdom itself will transform all. "Yet at some point in history, representatives of the former disciples of John the Baptist must have turned hostile to the Jesus movement, or John's movement must have constituted in later Christian history a potential rival, for the need to ensure the subordinate position for John seemed to grow. ... When one movement has to portray the leader of another movement in such a stance, acquiescing in every detail and extolling the virtues of the head of the rival movement, one may be sure that tension either had been or was now present."

However it is really the superiority of the Kingdom which is the key, rather than John

being inferior, as confirmed in the Gospel of Thomas 46 (Robinson 124).

Jesus said: "Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered (before him). Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will become superior to John."

When in Luke 7:29 this was said, John's followers were pleased: "All the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

Jesus' comment hoping John would not be offended serves to underline the fact that the mission of Jesus had a significantly different style from that of John, which deviated significantly from the ascetic Essene tradition which John adhered more closely to. Luke 7:33 notes: "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

Mark 2:18 specifically has John's disciples questioning Jesus behaviour in the same way as the Pharisees:

"And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

One should note however that John did also baptise publicans Luke 3:12 "Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

6.7 Jochanaan and Salome

We now enter the major episode of John's apparent sacrifice, which parallels Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary. I intentionally use the term 'sacrifice' rather than 'martyrdom', which only gained its meaning subsequently to Jesus' crucifixion. The biblical description is different to that of Josephus who claimed both John's imprisonment and beheading were for political reasons, although the former was sufficient to curtail his political threat. Some writers have tried to suggest this episode is a mythical construct, although the affair of Herodias is quite significant political history.

Mark 6:17 (Matt 14:3) "For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king

said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb. And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place."

We have already noted that this affair with Herod involved not just Herodias and Philip, but also a war with Aretas of Nabatea (p 455), sparked by Herodias's displacement of King Aretas and Queen Shaliqat's daughter. Josephus notes that people thought Herod lost this war as retribution for beheading John. The episode thus in yet another way brings the wicked kingdom of Edom into the picture. What role was John actually playing to accuse Herodias in this way? It certainly served the interests of Aretas's daughter impeccably. John's beheading stands as being during the war because Herod's military leaders are present at the banquet.

Herodias' daughter is named by Josephus as Salome: "But Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest; who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side ; he was tetrarch of Galilee" (Jewish Antiquities 18:136). Both Mariamne and Salome are names identifiable with a role as 'priestess'. This other Herod was a half-brother of Herod Antipas whose mother was Malthace. Josephus does not call him Philip, but because he was only a half brother of Herod Antipas and of Philip the tetrarch of Ituraea whose mother was Cleopatra, the name identities are not strictly in conflict (Hoehner 131).



Fig 6.7: The Climax (Wilde)

John was not rebuking Herod for divorcing his previous wife, nor for polygamy which was acceptable, nor even for marrying his niece, but very precisely and only for marrying his brother's wife. Lev 20:21 "And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless." It is notable however that marrying a niece was forbidden by the Zadokite sect, the Samaritans, but permitted by the Pharisees. There is an Islamic tradition which says that Jesus and John also forbade marriage to nieces (Hoehner 137).

A consistent parallel with Esther is noted throughout this episode, including the midrash 'even unto half the kingdom' which clearly classes the dance as a sacrificial 'descent of Ishtar-Inanna' (p 174), the dance of the seven veils in which the goddess is

stripped naked of her royal finery by the demons of the underworld. "The prompt execution and exhibiting of the victim's head writes Loisy are only in accordance with oriental customs." One can but speculate at the irony of John's beheading for accusing Herodias, when Aretas's daughter, as a princess of Nabataea, came from one of the great bastions of the fertility goddess called al-Uzza the 'mighty one'.

A variety of traditions tell that John's body was buried in Samaria where he is still revered and that his head made its way as far as Constantinople. He was said to have gone down to announce the coming of Christ to the dead. (Parrot 122-7).

The Bridegroom and the Idumaean

When Jesus breaks the sabbath, the Pharisees engage the help of the Herodians. Mark 3:5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him.

Mark and Matthew claim Herod thinks Jesus is John reincarnate: Mark 6:14 And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, that it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

Luke says rather that he saw him as a new phenomenon 9:7: "Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him."

Mark 8:15 has him beware of the bread of Tammuz that is brewing with Herod and the Pharisees: "And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod."

In Luke 13:31 he is later warned of Herod's intentions but sends a message hinting that he will sacrifice himself: "The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

Jesus uses John's legacy to good effect in Mark 11:27: "And they come again to Jerusalem: ... there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, And say ... 'By what authority doest thou these things?' And Jesus answered ... 'The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?' ... And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, 'We cannot tell.' And Jesus answering saith unto them, 'Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things!'"

Later the Herodians are back to try to catch him again: Mark 12:13, Matt 22:15 "And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words," asking whether to give tribute to God or Caesar to which he says to render unto

each their due.

According to Luke, Herod is involved in Christ's mocking during his sacrifice: 23:7 "And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves."

This appeared to be because Pilate had previously carried out a massacre in Herod's territory: Luke 13:1 "Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" By sending Herod Jesus, Pilate was thus deferring to him in a matter he knew would be appreciated and which redressed his previous lack of courtesy. Since Herod returned Jesus, we may assume what he wanted to be able to do was merely 'set him at nought' a ritual Saturnalian humiliation and possible castration, being glad for Pilate to perform the fatal honours through the High Priests.

Pilate notes to the chief priests that Herod has deferred, before formally asking for the release of the one scapegoat of the feast: Luke 23:15 "No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him," thus deftly passing responsibility from Herod back to them in the rite of the feast. Jesus is thus given in sacrifice to the Herodians, the Romans and finally the High Priests and the traditional Jewish festival crowd.