

The
Mystery
of the
Dead Sea
Scrolls



The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Universal Call to Holiness

“For I, the Lord, am your God; and you shall make and keep yourselves holy because I am holy... Since I, the Lord, brought you up from the lands of Egypt that I might be your God, you shall be holy, because I am holy.” Lev 11,44-47

The Scrolls

1. The Sacred Scriptures: The words of everlasting life
2. Teachings on the understanding of Holy Scriptures - commentaries, Peshar
3. Rules for community life
4. The spiritual battle of the Children of Light

History of the Scrolls

- The discovery
- The study of the scrolls
- The preservation of the scrolls
 - Shrine of the Book
- What the scrolls can teach us
- Language
 - Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Nabataean-Aramaic
- Canon of Scripture, Holy and Inspired Writings

Cliffs and Caves at Qumran



Entrance to one of the caves



Qumran

- Monastic Community
- Preparation for the coming of the Messiah
 - Two comings of the Messiah
- A community of light and holiness
- Ritual purity

Overview of Site, Cistern



Qumran, Looking South



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Interior of the Ruins



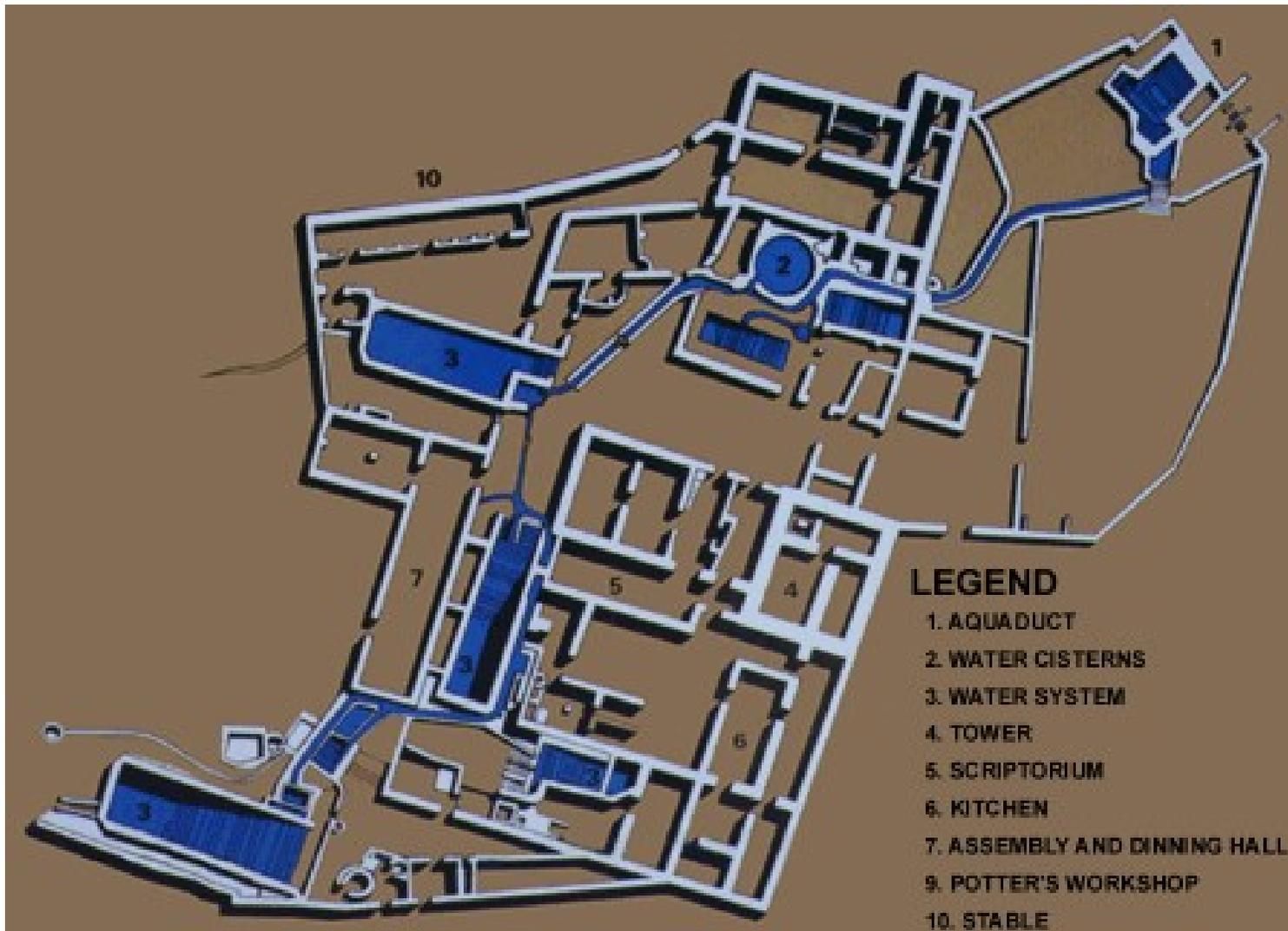
Ritual Bath



Aqueduct to Qumran



The Layout of Qumran



The Great Isaiah Scroll



Fragment of War Scroll

Fragment of War Scroll (1Q28) containing Hebrew text from the War of the Sons of Belial.

Fragment 1 (top left):
ביום כ
אראל ברוחם
והתחיל את קומו
ע וברוחם של

Fragment 2 (top right):
אראל ועש
בשם אל עליון
לעלפי שי וברוחם
בלאנו קומיו

Fragment 3 (middle right):
יום
1

Main Fragment (center):
וברך אתכם אל עליון הארץ אלובם ומתחיל לכם את
אוצרו הטוב אשר בשמים לחורגו על ארצכם
שם. לנד סלור סור וידו וכלקוש ביעת. לתת לכם מ
ימות ואן תרוש ויצדו לרוב והארץ תע כב לכם מ
יעם ואכלתו ודושנתם ואן משפלה בארצכם
לא כחילה ש. סן ורדיון לוא היאה בתבואתו
שול בשתכם ומוד רעד שפתו מ
ר בארצכם מא אל עינתו וכלאנו
בשיתכם ויש קומיו קרא עלובם

Fragment 4 (bottom right):
1
1

Fragments of Community Rule



Why are the DSS important?

- For the TEXT of Scripture
- For the CANON of Scripture
- For the INTERPRETATION of Scripture
- For the BACKGROUND of Christian faith and practice

The Text of Scripture

- Before Qumran:
 - Masoretic Text (MT)
 - Oldest extant copies late tenth cent. AD
 - Septuagint (LXX)
 - trans. 250 BC
 - Oldest extant copies late 4th cent. AD
 - Vulgate
 - trans. late 300's, early 400's AD
 - Oldest complete copy 8th cent. AD

The Text of Scripture

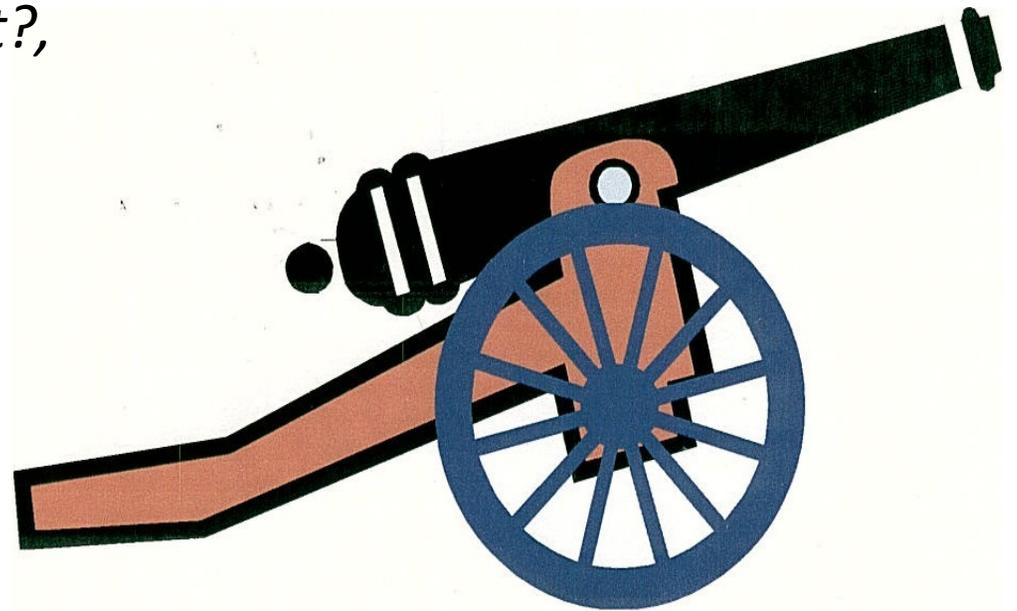
- Qumran:
 - Large chunks of Hebrew text from as early as the *second century BC!*
 - Changed the view of the LXX, the Bible of the early Church
 - Generally confirmed the accuracy of transmission
 - Hebrew/Aramaic of Deuterocanonicals

The Essenes

- Josephus
- Philo of Alexandria
- Pliny the Elder - attests to a community of Essenes living near the Dead Sea

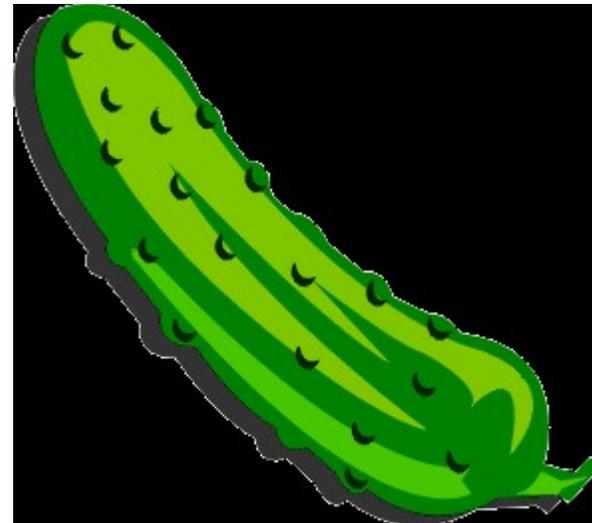
The Canon of Scripture

- Protestant claim: Jewish canon of today was canon of Jesus
- Qumran evidence: broader canon
 - *Jubilees, 1 Enoch, Tobit?, Sirach?*
 - Temple Scroll?



The Canon of Scripture

- No consensus on “canon” in Jesus’ day
- Non-Catholics (Protestants and Jews) in a theological pickle.



II. Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls

- Three Major Sects in Judaism:
 - Sadducees
 - Pharisees
- Paul was a Pharisee
 - Essenes
- Qumranites were Essenes

Sadducees

- Wealthy Elite
- Controlled the Temple
- Only accepted the Five Books of Moses
- No afterlife or spiritual world
- Not popular with the rest of Jews
- Collaborated with the Romans to keep power

Pharisees

- Very influential with the common people
- Accepted the Law, Prophets, and Writings as inspired
- Tried to get everyone to live by priestly purity
- Believed in afterlife and spiritual world
- Became Rabbinic (modern) Judaism

Essenes

- Stressed personal holiness/asceticism
- Practiced celibacy
- Accepted lots of inspired books
- Reknowned and respected for holiness
- Kept to themselves
- Expected the Messiah soon
- Regarded the Temple as defiled

Paul and the DSS

- So what does Paul the Pharisee have to do with the Essene scrolls from the Dead Sea?
- The DSS shed light on at least 2 aspects of Paul's writings:
 - Soteriology (doctrine of salvation)
 - Ecclesiology (doctrine of Church)

Paul's Soteriology

- **Gal. 2:16:** Yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified.

Catholic vs. Protestant

- Protestant: “Works of the Law” are good works, indeed, any human effort to obey God.
- Catholic: “Works of the Law” means obedience to the Old (Mosaic) Covenant, especially its rituals

4QMMT

- 4QMMT: “Miqtsat Ma’asei ha-Torah”
- “Precepts of the Works of the Law”
- A letter from the Essenes to the Pharisees about ritual purity
- The only use of the phrase “works of the law” in ancient literature outside of Paul

The End of 4QMMT

- Now, we have written to you some of the **works of the Law**, those which we determined would be beneficial for you and your people, because we have seen that you possess insight and knowledge of the Law. Understand all these things and beseech Him to set your counsel straight and so keep you away from evil thoughts and the counsel of Belial. Then you shall rejoice at the end time when you find the essence of our words to be true. And it will be **reckoned to you as righteousness**, in that you have done what is right and good before Him, to your own benefit and to that of Israel

What are “Works of the Law”?

- Purity of liquids poured from one container to another
- Impurity of bones and animal hides
- Dogs in Jerusalem (big no-no!)
- Skin diseases
- Keeping away from Gentiles
- Blind and deaf not allowed in Temple

The Implications

- Catholic position vindicated: “Works of the Law” seems to be an idiom for the cultic and ritual observances of the Mosaic law, *not a reference to good works in general*

Paul's Ecclesiology

- The Problem: Paul's teaching on the Church, especially in Ephesians and the Pastoral epistles, is "too developed"
- For that reason, many scholars dispute Paul's authorship of these books.

Is Paul's View of the Church "too developed"?

- What Paul says about the Church has many parallels with what the Qumranites said about their community
- **Excerpts from *The Community Rule***
 - (Known as 1QS or 1QSerek ha-Yahad.)
 - (*Serek means "rule" and Yahad means community*)
 - *The language of the Community Rule sometimes sounds like St. John the Evangelist:*
 - 1QS 1:9 "He [the supervisor of the community] is to teach them both to love all the Children of Light ..."

The rules for initiating a person into the community included a three-year process:

- 1QS 1:16 “All who enter the Yahad’s Rule shall be initiated into the Covenant before God, agreeing to act 17 according to all that He has commanded and not to backslide because of any fear, terror or persecution 18 that may occur during the time of Belial’s dominion.”

If a person backslid after joining they were excommunicated:

- 1QS 2:16 “He shall be cut off from all the Sons of Light because of his apostasy ...”

The Community had clear office holders, analogous to bishops, priests, deacons:

- 1QS 2:19 They shall do as follows annually, all the days of Belial's dominion: the priests shall pass in review 20 first, ranked according to their spiritual excellence, one after another. Then the Levites shall follow, 21 and third all the people by rank, one after another, in their thousands and hundreds 22 and fifties and tens. Thus shall each Israelite know his proper standing in the Yahad of God, 23 an eternal society. None shall be demoted from his appointed place, none promoted beyond his foreordained rank.

The Holy Spirit active in the community is the only final means for forgiveness of sin:

- 1QS 3:6 “For only through the spirit pervading God’s true society can there be atonement for a man’s ways, all 7 of his iniquities; thus only can he gaze upon the light of life and so be joined to His truth by His holy spirit, purified from all 8 iniquity.”

Observe the connection between the Holy Spirit and sprinkling of water:

- 1QS 4:20. By His truth God shall then purify all human deeds, and refine some of humanity so as to extinguish every perverse spirit from the inward parts 21 of the flesh, cleansing from every wicked deed by a holy spirit. Like purifying waters, He shall sprinkle each with a spirit of truth, effectual against all the abominations of lying and sullyng by an 22 unclean spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit, one is restored to Adam's pre-fall justice or "glory":

- 1QS 4:22 Indeed, God has chosen them for an eternal covenant; 23 all the glory of Adam shall be theirs alone.

The Qumran Community celebrated a sacred meal together daily:

- 1QS 6:4 [At the sacred meal,] “The men shall sit before the priest by rank, and in that manner their opinions will be sought on any matter. When the table has been set for eating or the new wine readied for drinking, it is the priest who shall stretch out his hand first, blessing the first portion of the bread or the new wine.”

*The Community was ruled by an “overseer”
(In Hebrew mebaqqer, which in Greek would
be episkopos, from which we get the English
bishop):*

- 1QS 6: 11 ...During the session of the general membership no man should say anything except by the permission of the general membership, or more particularly, of the man 12 who is the **Overseer of the general membership.**

The process of joining took time especially before one could share the meal. Speaking of a prospective member, it says:

- 1QS 6:16 “If he does proceed in joining the party of the Yahad, he must not touch the pure food 17 of the general membership before they have examined him as to his spiritual fitness and works, and not before a full year has passed.”

The penalty for offending the whole community was to be barred from the common meal:

- 1QS 6:24 These are the rules by which cases are to be decided at a community inquiry. If there be found among them a man who has lied 25 about money and done so knowingly, they shall bar him from the pure meals of the general membership for one year ...

The Community had a theology of “redemptive suffering”:

- 1QS 8:3 They are to preserve faith in the land with self-control and a broken spirit, atoning for sin by working justice and 4 suffering affliction.

- Compare St. Paul:

Romans 8:15 ...When we cry, “Abba! Father!” **16 it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

Look at the parallel between Jesus' healings with "spit" and "mud" and this final line from the Community Rule:

- 1QS 11: 20 Who, indeed, is man among Your glorious works? 21 As what can he, born of a woman, be reckoned before You? Kneaded from dust, his body is but the bread of worms; he is so much spit, 22 mere nipped-off clay —and for clay his longing. Shall clay contest, the vessel plumb counsel?
- Compare John 9:6-7: "As he said this, [Jesus] spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Similarities: Church and Qumran

- Presence of the Holy Spirit
- Sacred meal of Bread and Wine
- Water for atonement
- The community as Temple
- The restoration of Adamic privileges
- Threefold hierarchy

Does this undermine Christianity?

- Some say it does
- But the Christian claim is: “We are the fulfillment of the Old Testament”

Paul on the Old Testament

- **Rom. 1:1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God **2** which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, **3** the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ...
- **Rom. 15:4** For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.
- **1Cor. 15:3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve

Qumran Confirms Church's Claim

- Faithful Jews could read the Scriptures and accurately perceive many things about the eschatological community of God
- Why else does Jesus rebuke the disciples so frequently?

Part III: John and Qumran

- Parallels of Language and thought

- Dualism

- 1QS 1:9-10: He is to teach them both to love all the Children of Light-each commensurate with his rightful place in the council of God-and to hate all the Children of Darkness, each commensurate with his guilt

- John 12:36: While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

Dualism

- **1QS 3:20** The authority of the Prince of Light extends to the governance of all righteous people; therefore, they walk in the paths of light.
- **1 John 1:6** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; **7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,** we have fellowship with one another

The Spirit

- **John 14:16** And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, **17 even the Spirit of truth, ... you know** him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.
- **1QS 3:17** He created humankind to rule over **18 the** world, appointing for them two spirits in which to walk ... These are the spirits **19 of truth and falsehood. Upright** character and fate originate with the Habitation of Light; perverse, with the Fountain of Darkness.

Celibacy

- **Rev. 14:4** It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes;
- **(Matt. 19:12** For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.”)

- **CD 7:4** In short, for all who conduct their lives **5 by these** laws, in perfect holiness, according to all the instructions, God's covenant stands firm **6 to give them life for** thousands of generations. BUT if they live in camps according to the rule of the land *and marry **7 women and*** beget children, then let them live in accordance with the Law, and by the ordinance

The Take-Away Point

- John is NOT:
 - Gnostic
 - Greek
 - Quasi-Platonic
 - Late, second century AD

- John IS:

- Authentically Jewish
- First century AD
- Palestinian (Holy Land)

- In other words:

- DSS tend to confirm John as what it claims to be: a document from a first-century Jew

John, Passover and DSS

- A set of curious facts:
- The anointing at Bethany in John vs

Synoptics:

- **John 12:1** Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.
- **Mark 14:1** It was now two days before the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth, and kill him;

- Jesus instructions for the Last Supper
 - **Luke 22:10** He said to them, “Behold, **when** you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters,

- Apparent conflict of date of Passover:
 - **Mark 14:12** And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they celebrate the passover, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the passover?”
 - **John 19:13** When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. **14 Now** it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour ...

The mystery begins to unravel:

- The Essenes had a different calendar
 - **4Q252 2:2** **That day Noah went out from the ark, at the end of an exact year, *3 three hundred and sixty four* days,**
 - **4Q394 f3_7i:1 (A19)** **[On the twenty-eighth of the month is] a Sabbath. The month continues with the day after [the]S[abbath (Sunday), the second day, and an [addi]tion [of the third day.] The year is complete: three hundred si[xty-four] days...**

The mystery unravels ...

- The Essenes lived in celibate community:
 - **CD 7:4** In short, for all who conduct their lives **5** by these laws, in *perfect holiness, according to all the instructions*, God's covenant stands firm **6 to give them** life for thousands of generations. BUT if they live in camps according to the rule of the land *and marry 7 women and beget children, then let them live in* accordance with the Law, and by the ordinance

The mystery unravels...

- Essene Passover was always on a Tuesday
- They celebrated without a lamb
- *The traditional site of the Cenacle is in the Essene quarter of Jerusalem*

Suddenly we can explain:

- Different dates of Bethany anointing
- Strange dude carrying water
- Different days identified as Passover
- The archeology of the Cenacle
- The several trials and events Jesus undergoes between his arrest and crucifixion

The upshot ...

- Jesus celebrated the Last Supper on a Tuesday with the Essenes
 - He died on Friday while the lambs were being sacrificed for the Temple
- Passover on Saturday
- John is not just making stuff up

Positives for the Catholic Faith from the Dead Sea Scroll

- Increased respect for the Septuagint (LXX), the early Church's OT
- Some Protestant arguments for canon defeated
- Catholic understanding of Paul's "works of law" vindicated
- Paul's view of Church not late

- John's unique language is authentic, not late, Greek influenced
- John's date of Passover is not a mistake
- Christian practice of celibacy and communal life rooted in Old Covenant practice

The Book of Enoch

- The mysterious character of Enoch from Genesis
 - Enoch lived three hundred years after the birth of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. the whole lifetime of Enoch was three hundred and sixty-five years. Then Enoch walked with God, and he was no longer here, for God took him. Genesis 5,22-24
- The Nephilim
 - When men began to multiply on earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of heaven saw how beautiful the daughters of man were, and so they took for their wives as many of them as they chose. Then the Lord said: “My spirit shall not remain in man forever, since he is but flesh. His days shall comprise one hundred and twenty years. At that time the Nephilim appeared on earth (as well as later), after the sons of heaven had intercourse with the daughters of man, who bore them sons. They were the heroes of old, the men renown. Genesis 6,1-4

The Watchers

In the [Books of Enoch](#), the first [Book of Enoch](#) devotes much of its attention to the [fall of the Watchers](#). The [Second Book of Enoch](#) addresses the Watchers (Gk. *egrégoroi*) who are in fifth heaven where the fall took place. The [Third Book of Enoch](#) gives attention to the unfallen Watchers.^[9]

The use of the term "Watchers" is common in the [Book of Enoch](#). The *Book of the Watchers* (1 Enoch 6-36) occurs in the Aramaic fragments with the phrase *irin we-qadishin*, "Watchers and Holy Ones", a reference to Aramaic Daniel.^[10] The Aramaic *irin* "watchers" is rendered as "angel" (Greek *angelos*, Coptic *malah*) in the Greek and Ethiopian translations, although the usual Aramaic term for angel *malakha* does not occur in Aramaic Enoch.^[11] The dating of this section of 1 Enoch is around 2nd-1st Century BC. This book is based on one interpretation of the [Sons of God](#) passage in Genesis 6, according to which angels married with human females, giving rise to a race of hybrids known as the [Nephilim](#). The term *irin* is primarily applied to disobedient Watchers who numbered a total of 200, and of whom their leaders are named, but equally Aramaic *iri* ("watcher" singular) is also applied to the obedient archangels who chain them, such as Raphael (1 Enoch 22:6).

In the [Book of Enoch](#), the Watchers ([Aramaic](#) עִירִין, *iyrin*) are angels dispatched to Earth to watch over the humans. They soon begin to lust for human women and, at the prodding of their leader [Samyaza](#), defect en masse to illicitly instruct humanity and procreate among them. The offspring of these unions are the [Nephilim](#), savage giants who pillage the earth and endanger humanity. Samyaza and his associates further taught their human charges arts and technologies such as weaponry, cosmetics, mirrors, [sorcery](#), and other techniques that would otherwise be discovered gradually over time by humans, not foisted upon them all at once. Eventually God allows a [Great Flood](#) to rid the earth of the Nephilim, but first sends [Uriel](#) to warn [Noah](#) so as not to eradicate the human race. The Watchers are bound "in the valleys of the Earth" until [Judgment Day](#). ([Jude](#) verse 6 says that these fallen angels are kept "in everlasting chains under darkness" until Judgement Day.)

New Testament Monasticism

- Desert Fathers flee into the desert
- From the Desert Fathers Cassian, Athanasius, Basil bring the rule of life for monastic communities
- Benedict the Father of Monasticism for the West
- Basil the Father of Monasticism for the Eastern Orthodox

Monastic Practice in the Church

- Separation from the world
- Celibacy and Evangelical Counsels, Vows
- Communal life
- Prayer revolving around the Psalms
- A way of life that anticipates the Kingdom, future coming of Christ