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Baptism in the Intertestamental Period with Special Emphasis on the Qumram Community

Walter Wifall

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BAPTISM IN THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

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Walter R. Wifall, Jr.

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Approved by: Walter R. Roehrs
Advisor

Reader

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CHAPTER I

The recent manuscript discoveries made in the area known as Wadi Qumran in southern Palestine have touched off a number of heated discussions and speculations by theologians, archeologists, and writers as to the importance of these texts in interpreting the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Some men have argued that these writings come from a period some five to six centuries after the life of Christ, but most scholars date them as from approximately the time of Christ and the destruction of the temple. If the latter conclusion is correct, their meaning for and connection with the beginnings of Christianity is an obvious topic for discussion.

The ascetic group which inhabited this harsh region on the edge of the Dead Sea and left these documents behind have given us a description of their daily life and ritual which held their community together and gave it its reason for existence. These writings reveal that they were a sectarian group which had separated itself from the rest of Judaism in anticipation of the coming kingdom of God.

As a part of their preparation, these sectarians devoted themselves to the study of the Old Testament and to the many interpretations that had been written on the Old Testament during the intertestamental period. They also kept themselves ritually pure by taking part in those priestly actions allowed by the Old

Testament laws apart from the temple; namely, water lustrations and the communal meal. Through this emphasis on legal interpretation, ritual purity, and communal life they appear to have considered themselves ready and worthy of the Lord's anticipated coming.

It will be the purpose of this paper to examine in particular the water lustrations practiced by this eschatologically-oriented group to see to what extent these washings were considered as a medium of God's grace and forgiveness. We shall also note whether one washing in particular took preference over the others as a means of induction into the life of the community.

To clarify these questions regarding Qumran lustrations and throw light on their possible connections with actual baptisms being practiced at this same period, we shall consider the historical and ideological background of the Qumran sectarians. This background includes actual references to lustrations and to terms used by Judaism and the New Testament Church in connection with baptism, the Pseudepigrapha and their influence on Qumran baptismal thought, rabbinic proselyte baptism, the baptism of John the Baptist, and, finally, the baptism of the New Testament. We shall conclude by making a comparison of the similarities and differences apparent in the "baptisms" of both Qumran and the New Testament, and attempt to point out clearly the uniqueness of each of these communities and the further questions which this study has raised.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the year 1945 an Arab shepherd accidentally discovered a cave on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, about seven to ei eight miles south the present Jericho. The manuscripts found in this cave and in subsequent diggings in others nearby, created quite a stir upon their discovery and translation. Men like E. Wilson[1] and Dupont Sommer[2] came out in radical endorsement of the finds as revolutionary discoveries which would transform previous views of the Old and New Testaments. Even Dr. William Albright said of the documents or scrolls: "They bid fair to revolutionize our approach to the beginnings of Christianity."[3]

If such importance is attached to these scrolls, then perhaps we should do well to examine who wrote them and what relation these writings have to the Jewish and Christian communities with which they appear to be at least in part contemporaneous.[4]

These discoveries were made in the Jordan Valley, some four miles from the main highway into the hills along the Dead Sea.

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[1] E. Wilson, The Scrolls from the Dead Sea (New York: Oxford U. Press, 1955).

[2] A. Dupont Sommer, The Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952).

[3] Geoffrey Graystone, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Originality of Christ (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), p. 4.

[4] F. Cross, The Ancient Library of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1958).

There on a plateau spur is situated Wadi Qumran. Nearby are wadis Murabbaat and Mird, where other findings have been made. By digging near these caves, archeologists have found that this area had once been settled and later abandoned. The general outline of guildings found at Wadi Qumran suggests that community had stayed there, probably the very community which produced and preserved the scrolls.[5]

Within the general confines of this area, a square eighty by eighty meters, there were found seven large cisterns fed by a canal running from the foot of the wadi. The first of these cisterns is rather small and circular, but the rest are large, having seven steps leading down into them. The system of steps were, no doubt, useful in the dry season for easier access to the receded water level, but they possibly also had more significance, since the pools were probably also used for bathing and ritual cleansing.[6]

Besides these wells, there were located in the compound workshops and silos for storing grain and fruits, a large oven, a stable for pack animals, and a large main building. In this building the diggers have pieced together a scriptorium, a kitchen, and a large meeting room, generally agreed to have been a

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[5]J. Milik, Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959), p. 46.

[6]Ibid., p. 46.

worship hall for the group which stayed here.[7]

Who were these people and when did they occupy this Qumran complex? From the nature of the ruins of the old walls and potsherds, the earliest date appears to be near the eighth century B.C. F.M. Cross suggested that this site might coincide with one of those described in II Chronicles 26:10, which tells of King Uzziah's digging many wells and erecting towers in the desert. Qumran to him admirably fits this description.[8]

Judging by the coins and other artifacts found, a new group, the first major group and that with which we will be concerned, took the site over and remodeled and expanded it sometime during the reign of John Hyrcanus, 135-104 B.C. This settlement lasted until a violent conflagration--earthquake and fire--leveled the buildings and dropped the plateau some 50 centimeters. This destruction could possibly have been caused by the earthquake described by Josephus in his Antiquities as occurring in the Jordan Valley in 31 B.C.[9]

A second phase of occupation took place after the death of Herod the Great and the increase in political oppression under his successor Archelaus. The walls and buildings were reconstructed

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[7] Ibid., p. 48.

[8] F. Cross, "A Footnote to Biblical History," The Biblical Archeologist, XVIII (1956), 12-17.

[9] Milik, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

and strengthened against further quakes, although the community was not quite as large as the first. The coins most generally found from the debris are those of Agrippa I, 37-44 A.D.

The end of this occupancy appears to have come about 68 A.D. Josephus says in his Wars that at this time the Legio X Frentensis and Legio XV Apollinarius were campaigning in the Jordan Valley and were destroying many major Jewish defensive points. Roman arrow heads and Roman coins minted at Dora, the army mint, found in the ruins, give evidence that this group was destroyed by the Roman armies and the site of their community occupied by outpost troops. Such a Roman occupancy is further verified by other Roman coins dating from near 90 A.D.[10]

There appears to have been one final Jewish residence on this site at the time of the revolt by Bar Cochba in 132 A.D. However, this group soon faded out and appears to have no special value for the purposes of investigations.[11]

On the basis of the above, we have the general dates of 135 B.C. to 68 A.D. as the time when Qumran flourished. The next question that arises is: who are the people that lived there? According to F. Cross, the evidence is very strong that the community is the same as that spoken of by Josephus, Philo, and Hippolytus, and identified by them as belonging to a Jewish group called the

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[10] Ibid., pp. 53-54.

[11] Ibid., p. 56.

Essenes.[12] Milik also says that this settlement must have belonged to these Essenes because the information given by the above ancient sources, including Pliny the Elder, fits the buildings at Qumran. Furthermore, no other important ruins to match their description have been found in extensive diggings from Jericho to Ain Gedi.[13] The only inconsistency in this identification seems to be that Josephus in his Wars II describes the Essenes as scattered from town to town, "practicing almsgiving and a measure of hospitality."[14] But Josephus also goes on to describe some members of this sect who did not comply with its common rule, but practiced marriage and belonged to another order of the Essenic movement. It is therefore suggested that Josephus is here referring to a so-called Damascus group, which is also generally considered Essenic, and that the so-called Zadokite or Damascus Document found in Cairo in 1896 was produced by the adherents of this sect.[15] If this is the case, then the descriptions of the Essenes, especially those by Philo and Josephus, become very important in our interpretations of the material brought to light at Qumran.

The books and fragments of books unearthed at Qumran by 1956 came from at least sixty different sources. Since then the number has increased. However, it is the type of materials in

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[12] F. Cross, op. cit., p. 59.

[13] Milik, op. cit., p. 57.

[14] Josephus, Loeb Classical Series, Translated by H. J. Thackeray (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1927), p. 370.

[15] Graystone, op. cit., p. 13.

which we are particularly interested. According to a summary by B. Metzger, most of them are parts of the Old Testament, some are taken from the Pseudepigrapha of the intertestamental period, some are Greek manuscripts of books like Mark, John and the Acts, and the rest sectarian writings. Those found dating from our period of interest are parts of the Old Testament, the Pseudepigrapha, and the sectarian manuals, psalms, and commentaries.[16]

Theodor Gaster has collected and published a translation of these sectarian writings brought out of the caves explored up to 1957. These books and hymns appear to be truly sectarian in character, reflecting the impact which the Old Testament and Pseudepigrapha had on the thoughts and rules of this particular community. It is these sectarian writings with which we shall deal in the second chapter. They are: the Manual of Discipline; the Zadokite Document; a Formulary of Blessings; the Book of Hymns; the Oration of Moses; commentries on Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Psalm 37; The War Scroll; and the short tracts--The New Covenant and The Coming Doom.[17]

From the above works, commentators have concluded that the Qumran sect taught a form of novitiate baptism, practiced an initiatory oath, and held common meals in the building mentioned

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[16]Bruce Metzger, "New Light from Old Manuscripts," Theology Today, XIII (1956), 75.

[17]Theodor Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., (1957).

above.[18] It is on these points that we shall focus attention in order to ascertain the extent of Qumran's spiritual and sacramental consciousness.

Josephus and Hippolytus also give us valuable corroborative material on these aspects of the religious life of this sect. The former states that,

> a candidate anxious to join the Qumran sect is not immediately admitted. For one year, during which he remains outside the fraternity, they prescribe for him their rule of life . . . having given proof of his temperance during this probationary period, he is brought into closer touch with the rule and is allowed to share the purer kind of holy water, but is not yet received into the meetings of the community. For after this exhibition of endurance, his character is tested for two years more, and only then if he is found worthy, is he enrolled in the society; but before he may touch the common food he is made to swear tremendous oaths.[19]

He also states that the assembly and meal were only for the initiated, "repairing to the refectory as to some sacred shrine."[20]

There also appears to be a rather extensive order of washings and lustrations set up for the initiated members. As Josephus says in the quote above, after one year the candidate is allowed to share in the purer water. In a subsequent discussion, he mentions that senior members had to purify themselves on contact with their juniors, and that in the schismatic sects, wives and husbands

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[18] John Allegro, The Dead Sea Scrolls (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956), p. 160.

[19] Josephus, op. cit., pp. 374-376.

[20] Ibid., p. 373.

were purified in ritual baths.[21] Hippolytus also states that defilement from contact with the lapsed called for another ablution.[22]

Frank Cross and others believe that the above information, together with the description of the actual rituals in the Manual of Discipline and Damascus Document, give a picture of the core of the Essenic sacramental teaching, centering around baptism and the communal meal. However, the writings of Qumran indicate that the baptism at the end of the initiatory period makes use of a form of daily lustrations which appears to be not only for communal purity but is also a symbol of repentance for remission sins.[23] This initiatory baptism bears a close resemblance to New Testament baptism and is of central importance in a comparison of the Jewish and Christian communities at the time of Christ.

It was noted above that an elaborate water system has been uncovered within the Qumran compound. No less than seven reservoirs were found within the walls. The Jordan River which is nearby also could easily have been used for baths and initiatory baptisms, as was the case in the Baptist's washings in this very area.[24]

This community was set up, according to its manuals, as an

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[21] Ibid., pp. 384-385.

[22] Hippolytus, Ante-Nicene Fathers (New York: Christian Lit. Co., 1896), V, 136.

[23] F. Cross, The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1958), p. 177.

[24] Ibid., pp. 149-150.

Israel in miniature. Organized by divisions, even as the original tribes of Israel, it was under the Mibaqqer of Overseer and his council. Qumran functioned as a community in the full sense of the term, holding and sharing its property in common. But above all, its members considered themselves the true and legitimate people of God.[25]

Since they considered the priests in Jerusalem to be lax in their duties, these priests insisted on fellowship and a common meal as evidences of the "complete and blessed Life."[26] They desired to show the love of God in true religious purity. For this reason they insisted on daily ablutions and celibacy as tokens of a strict moral life. They likewise avoided anointing with oil, which they considered defiling, and wore garments of white to give further evidence of their inward cleanliness.[27]

This stress on cleanliness and moral purity appears to have been called forth by Qumran's sense of the imminence of the Messianic Kingdom. Israel had to be prepared for the Messiah's coming, and this task fell naturally on those devoted to watchfulness and constant piety. The Essenes felt themselves to be the true remnant of Israel, those who reaffirmed the covenant made at Sinai between Jahwe and his people. They were purified to be God's true

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[25]Graystone, op. cit., p. 117

[26]Philo, Loeb Classical Series, Translated by F. H. Colson (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1941), p. 91.

[27]Hippolytus, op. cit., p. 134.

inheritance, his new elect and chosen.[28]

Israel had the law already; it was Qumran's task to bring it to the light from the darkness in which it lay during this period under the priests and Pharisees. The Torah could be correctly expounded only by the truly "enlightened" men. Therefore these sectarians exercized themselves spiritually and prayed for direct conversation with God, so that its members could become eternal members in God's Messianic community.[29]

Interesting light is also thrown on Qumran's Messianic expectations by comparing its writings with several Old Testament prophecies. In his vision in chapter 47, Ezekiel had seen a life-giving stream issuing forth from the temple in Jerusalem and giving fertility to the desert regions to the south bordering on the Dead Sea. In the vision the stream joins the Dead Sea at Ain Feshka, making its water fresh from there to Ain Jide. On the basis of Father de Vaux' work, Ain Feshka has been identified with En-Eglaim, the very place over which Qumran had been built. Isaiah had said, "in the wilderness prepare a way". The Manual of Discipline applies this passage to itself in its consciousness of the last days. By the choice of its site the community possibly wanted to indicate that it knew just where in the wilderness to prepare for the Messiah's coming.[30]

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[28]Gaster, op. cit., p. 4.

[29]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[30]William Farmer, "The Geography of Ezekiel's River of Life," The Biblical Archeologist, IXX (1956), pp. 18-21.

By their recent work on the western side of Qumran, in the present valley of Buquiah, Cross and Milik have found further evidence of the intensity of Qumran's Messianic expectations. This area is used today only for shepherding and grazing by the Arab nomads, although here and there a Byzantine monastery yet remains. Through the work of the spade this valley has been identified with the Valley of Achor or Valley of Trouble, to which the prophets refer in their description of Jahwe's new kingdom. Hosea prophetically proclaims, "and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope," and Isaiah says, "and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down."[31] Here we have further evidence that Qumran was not chosen haphazardly as the site of this community, but that its members owed its sense destiny to a close contact with the Old Testament Scriptures.

Finally, what does the above mean for Qumran's daily activity and constant performance of ritual to set itself off as the distinct Israel? Did their constant use of ablutions have more of a meaning for them than merely ritual purification? To this question we will now turn by reviewing references and remarks in their sectarian writings which bear the marks of terms used specifically for baptism in the Jewish and, especially, the early Christian communities.

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[31] Frank Cross, "A Footnote to Biblical History," pp. 12-16.

CHAPTER III

THE QUMRAN MATERIALS

We will first examine the Dead Sea texts for those terms and concepts which are also found in Judaism and Christianity in connection with baptism. Some of these appear in the description of the rites themselves by which a candidate was received into the Qumran community. Others are encountered in the portrayal of the new life of the fully initiated members and suggest that they received these spiritual powers and insights as a result of the initiatory rites.

Those who belonged to the Qumran sect thought of themselves as the "elect" and the "perfect". We should expect to find these terms in such an exclusive community. However, it is interesting to note that these terms are used also in the New Testament to designate those who had been baptized. For instance, Paul speaks of Christians as τέλειοι . The Mandaean baptist sect likewise refers to its members as ἐκλεκτοὶ .[1]

In Qumran, moreover, a man became a member of the elect by his own free will. To become truly perfect, he was to grow in the knowledge of God's Torah. It is for this reason that the Torah teacher of righteousness is given such eminence in the scrolls.[2] The truly elect are described as those "who fear God, do his will,

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[1]Theodor Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1957), p. 99.

[2]Ibid., pp. 6, 29.

keep his commandments, hold fast to his holy covenant, and walk blamelessly in his truth."[3]

In order to conduct themselves in this God-pleasing way, the members had to be trained and "enlightened" in the commands and mysteries which God has given his elect. The hymn of the initiants tells us that God has bestowed knowledge on his chosen in order to give them inheritance and communion with the sons of heaven for all time to come.[4] To gain this knowledge and to effect this eternal communion with the saints, the community prescribed a period of instruction or initiation before granting the full rights of membership.

Children had to undergo a ten year period of instruction and study in the sect's Book of Study, before they were eligible for community membership at the age of twenty.[5] The full-grown candidate announced to the inspector his intent to join the group. He then was examined publicly regarding his intellectual capacity and his moral character, the two criteria upon which ranking in the community was based. If he passed these tests, he then began a one year probation.[6]

After a year of testing and instruction, the novice was again formally examined regarding his spiritual condition. If he passed

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[3] Ibid., p. 87.

[4] Ibid., p. 120.

[5] Ibid., p. 9.

[6] A. Dupont Sommer, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes (London: Valentine-Mitchell and Co., 1953). p. 89.

the examination, he received access to the "purification of the many." This cleansing consisted of daily ablutions which the members performed to attain ritual purity. However, the novice did not receive his full rights as a member until he had passed another year of probation.[7]

After this second year the candidate appears to have undergone another ritual cleansing, whether self-administered or at the hands of a fellow priest is unclear. Only after this "baptism" was he admitted to full community privileges, including participation in the common meal.[8]

From the Manual of Discipline's description of initiation we also note that at this baptism which concluded the candidate's instructional and probationary period, he received a white robe, like that of the other members, and swore to renounce the devil and his works and to do God's will for the rest of his life.[9] The neophyte at this time was admonished to hate evil, love good, and to walk in light and the covenant of grace.[10] Some outstanding commentators, such as Oscar Cullmann,[11] see this particular

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[7] Ibid., p. 90.

[8] Jean Danielou, "Le Communaute de Qumran et l'Organization de l'Eglise Ancienne," Revue d'Histoire et de la Philosophie Religieuses, XXXV (1955), 106.

[9] Ibid., p. 106.

[10] A. Dupont Sommer, The Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 47.

[11] O. Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," J.B.L., LXXIV (1955), 216.

lustration as an integral part of initiation and a sign of acceptance into the Qumran fellowship.

This initiatory rite has a striking similarity to Christian baptism and therefore we proceed to determine to what extent the concepts attached to baptism in Christianity and Judaism also form the basis of this particular lustration in the Qumran community.

The expressed purpose of baptism in the Christian Church is to bring a man new life and destroy the old, as Paul states in Romans, chapter six. As indicated, the Essenes were also looking for the new life in the barren surroundings of the Dead Sea area. There they attempted in an ascetic fashion to die to the flesh and to receive new life in communion with God.[12]

They also considered the world of their time to be travailing in the pangs of a new birth, the birth of the coming Messianic Age. Their age was regarded as a time of turmoil which would preceed the glorious kingdom of God. They described it in terms found also in the Talmud and in Matthew 24:8.[13] For the present, says the Manual of Discipline, God has apportioned good and evil in equal measure, but in the final age He will make all things new. Then men will receive their fate of birth or death according to the good or evil way they have followed.[14]

The Essenes gave expression to their hope for this renewal

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[12] Gaster, op. cit., p. 8.

[13] Ibid., p. 23.

[14] Ibid., p. 46.

in highly poetic form. In their hymns they say that God had placed his holy spirit on all beings when He created them and that He constantly recreates those who follow his ways. This idea appears to be somewhat similar to the expression found in the rabbinic morning prayer which states in connection with God's chosen people, "He reneweth everyday the work of creation."[15]

The Essenes thought of this renewal also personal and individual in nature rather than merely communal. In hymn III 3-18, the "enlightened" writer describes himself as heavily pressed like a woman in travail, but he rejoices that through God's instruction he will be delivered and brought forth, as a new creature. Speaking of renewal, the writer of hymn XL 3-14 explains that God in his pardon grants men to know his truth. Thereby He enables them to purge themselves of transgressions and to free themselves from taint and filth. Although man is a worm, through God's pardon and his own understanding of God's will, he can lift himself out of the "dust" to stand before God in whose presence he will be forever renewed among the spirits of knowledge.[16]

This rebirth is also often figuratively connected with water and nature in the Qumran writings. For instance, the exegesis of Qumran scholars associates the Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 with Psalm 68:26, where God is described as dispensing his blessings through draughts in his divine fountain.[17]

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[15] Ibid., pp. 115, 222.

[16] Ibid., pp. 135-36, 178.

[17] Ibid., p. 36.

In other references these sectarian scholars described this fountain as God's law, for men schooled in the law are said to like trees in Eden, well-watered and rooted forever. Those who are nourished by the Torah, eat of the true tree of life, drink of the water of holiness and stand as eternal trees in the Garden. Men can drown in the "mire of this world" but revive in the "quickening flood" of God's law. But those who follow Belial shall fade and die. The followers of Belial are those who reject the commandments; they are the uncircumcized, the unclean, and the profane. Similarly, new life in God appears to be associated with the law in the hymns. The initiated or non-profane, namely, the Qumran brotherhood, possess this life in the law.[18]

In an article on these hymns, Erick Sjoeberg[19] finds a connection between the entrance of the newborn candidate into the sect and his being called from the dead and the dust into everlasting community, purified from sin. Man is portrayed in this context as not only dust and wind but, likewise, as sinful and unclean. Consequently, the hymnwriters offer praise to God for his grace and forgiveness and thank him for having found rebirth within the sect. God has granted this new life by bestowing knowledge of himself through the sect's mysteries and by granting his spirit to strengthen and increase the sect's wisdom and

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[18] Ibid., pp. 155, 166.

[19] Erik Sjoeberg, "Neuschoepfung in den Toten-Meer Rollen," Studia Theologica, IX (1955), 131-132.

purity.[20]

Besides the idea of new birth and death to the sinful world, the Qumran scrolls reveal that the Essenes had also other concepts to express the change in their nature which they thought took place by their becoming members of God's true children. One of these concepts is God's cleansing of his elect. At the end time God will cause light to triumph over darkness; He will purge the "whole fabric" of man and by his holy spirit cleanse man from all the effects of wickedness; like waters of purification "He will sprinkle upon him the spirit of truth to cleanse him from all abomination."[21]

In the Hymn of the Initiates we are told that God's goodness "will shrive my iniquities; His righteousness will cleanse me from the pollution of man and the sin of mankind."[22] However, in the Manual of Discipline the writer makes it clear that only "by uprightness and humility can sin be atoned, only by subjection to God's ordinances can flesh be cleansed."[23] But at the same time it is God's help that is really needed to cleanse man's spirit from its taint; it is through God's acting in his law that man can cleanse his heart from its errors. The whole act of cleansing and constant purity is also symbolized outwardly in the white

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[20] Ibid., p. 136.

[21] Gaster, op. cit., p. 45.

[22] Ibid., p. 121.

[23] Ibid., p. 43.

garments worn by each member of the community.[24]

Qumran also associated its new life with God's light. We are by now familiar with Qumran's dividing the world into two realms which consist of the opposing forces of light and darkness. We meet this dichotomy in the Manual of Discipline, chapter four, and throughout the War Scroll, and find that it typifies the struggle between God and Belial, the good and the evil. Qumran thought of itself as a unique group, for it had possession of the true, inner enlightenment. God had given this inner power of discernment to every creature at the time of creation. But since men had rejected the light and God, some special servants of God had to preserve His light and favor. Qumran could achieve this purpose by its insight into and preservation of the Torah, until the Messianic kingdom dawned and God's true light would beam down upon his elect seven times as strong as any present luminary. The latter expectation has a parallel in the rabbinic legend found in Sanh. 91b.[25]

God's truth as found in the law was called "light" by the Qumran writers. Hence the Hymn of the Initiants says that God enlightens the bowed down with sound doctrine. The members called themselves "Sons of Light," for they had by their entrance among the elect received illumination, God's power, and entrance into God's secrets and mysteries. The initiant thanked God for having illuminated his face by the light of His covenant, and the already

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[24] Ibid., pp. 126, 191.

[25] Ibid., pp. 12, 23, 24.

initiated hymnist proclaims that God's everlasting light shines on his servants, who seek to walk after His truth.[26]

These "enlightened ones" greeted one another with the blessing "the Lord make his face shine upon thee," connecting this part of the blessing with Psalm 36:9 which reads: "For with thee is the well-spring of life; in thy light do we see light."[27]

Since these sectarians regarded themselves "Sons of Light," it is interesting to note that the second century Mandaeans, a baptizing sect, also called themselves the Illuminati. Similarly, Christ, in John 12:36, called his disciples "sons of light."[28] However, according to the Manual of Discipline, the Qumran Illuminati were to "love the children of light" and to "hate the children of darkness."[29]

Finally, Qumran also spoke of the seal of the new life which God bestows on his chosen creatures, namely his purifying and strengthening holy spirit. They thought that God's cleansing from all the effects of wickedness in the final age would be performed by his holy spirit. When certain men, namely, those of the Qumran brotherhood, would become perfectly holy in their dealings with one another, so that not a single word of the law of Moses would be transgressed, then the holy spirit would "rest on a firm foundation." At that time all guilt and sin would be forgiven.

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[26] Ibid., pp. 13, 119, 142, 145, 199.

[27] Ibid., p. 106.

[28] Ibid., p. 329.

[29] Ibid., 39.

The Zadokite Document states that God has always preserved mankind through his elect. But among these few He has anointed some to reveal his holy spirit in preparation for this coming kingdom.[30]

In connection with the purificatory washing found in the Manual of Discipline, the writer states that not through the water, but "only through the holy spirit can he [a Qumran] member] achieve union with God's truth and be purged of all his iniquities." And a hymn writer gives thanks to God for his new found strength, because God has "wafted over me his holy spirit that I cannot be moved."[31]

The reception of the holy spirit in Qumran is not only related to purification but also to other terms specifically connected with baptism in both Judaism and Christianity. We read, for instance, that God has "wafted his spirit on his servant, illuminating the dark places of his heart." A more striking passage from one of the hymns unites in the same context a number of baptismal concepts with the gift of God's spirit. It states:

> Through thy holy spirit, through mystic insight, thou hast caused a spring of knowledge to well up within me, a fountain of strength, pouring forth waters unstinted . . . thou hast put an end to my darkness, and the splendor of thy glory has become unto me a life everlasting.[32]

Although in somewhat allegorical language, this Qumran writer connects God's spirit and strength in much the same way as the

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[30] Ibid., pp. 45, 56, 63.

[31] Ibid., pp. 42, 160.

[32] Ibid., pp. 183-189.

New Testament links spirit with δύναμις (cf. Luke 1:17). The spirit is also quite clearly connected with water of life, eternal light, and life everlasting, similar to the associations made in both proselyte and New Testament baptisms.

Of interest as possible additional ritual elements are the terms "God's Name" and "circumcision." In the "formulary of blessing for rulers" the writer states that by God's holy Name He gives power to the rulers over their enemies. To the hymnist, it is God's Name and glory that shed light upon him and give Him strength and health. In the latter passage we can again see a group of baptismal concepts being joined in the mind of the writer.[33]

Found less frequently, but just as pertinent, is the brief mention of circumcision in the Zadokite Document. This sectarian scroll states that Abraham was circumcized the day he attained true knowledge.[34] To the Israelite this day meant his birth into the Jewish community; to the Essene the day was the time of his entrance into the brotherhood, into true knowledge of God's covenant. The evidence available does not appear to allow us to speculate at this point to what extent the Essenes symbolized this new estate by a rite replacing circumcision. However, in Colossians, chapter two, Paul likewise compares and contrasts baptism and circumcision as the means of entering into the two covenants made by God with man.

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[33] Ibid., pp. 92, 171.

[34] Ibid., p. 85.

Let us now look at the type of community in which these scrolls were written and these lustrations performed. It appears that Qumran was not only an ascetic group but also a schismatic community within Judaism. Their retreat from Jerusalem seems to have been a deliberate attempt to avoid the temple and the priests in power during this period. Hence we find that the Essenes did not participate in the rituals and ceremonies at Jerusalem, but replaced them with an emphasis on a spiritual, non-sacrificial growth in monastic isolation.[35] The members maintained a close communion, forming assemblies of small groups within the community, similar to the later, Hellenistic monastic groups.[36]

The community appears to have been under the leadership of a priestly class, led by the Aaronic teacher of righteousness. The only sacrifices performed at Qumran, however, were lustral; these alone were lawfully performed away from the temple, which the Qumran priests considered at this time as polluted by evil men. They found the prescriptions for their daily rites and purifications in the priestly codes of Leviticus 14 and Numbers 19.[37]

The community believed that it either alone or to a particular degree possessed God's spirit, and that after repentance,

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[35] J. Mantey, "Baptism in the Dead Sea Manual of Discipline," The Review and Expositor, LI (1954), 522-523.

[36] Dupont Sommer, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 41.

[37] W. H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," Interpretation, IX (1955), 37-38.

this spirit would cleanse each member inwardly from sin. Lustral washing and continual repentance and washings would cleanse away the taints of the flesh.[38]

According to the Manual of Discipline, the members also took part in communal sharing of all their wealth, and pledged "holy poverty," a form of asceticism, in order to concentrate on spiritual communion with God. At least a large number of the group were actually priests who had defected from the temple at Jerusalem. The organization of the community was administered by an inner group of twelve laymen and three priests. This group's theological tendenz appears to be a part of a widespread movement at this time, especially in the diaspora, to spiritualize the sacrifice and to share in the praise rather than the altar of Jahweh.[39]

Some men, like Dupont-Sommer, sought to trace the Iranian, dualistic influences in this community and have attempted to classify Qumran as just one of the groups under the spell of this philosophy at the time.[40] Others have seen in their emphasis on initiation and the spirit a relation to Greek Orphic rites and Neo-Pythagorean philosophy.[41] We shall, however, confine our

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[38] S. Johnson, "The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts," Z.A.T.W., 66 (1955), 102-108.

[39] Ibid., pp. 108-114.

[40] Dupont Sommer, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes, p. 99.

[41] T. F. Glasson, "Orphism and Qumran," New Testament Studies, 3, (1956-57), 69-71.

attention to emphases which in Qumran are parallel to rabbinic proselyte baptism, John the Baptist, and the baptism of the New Testament community. It appears far more probable to the writer that there would be an interaction between Qumran and the latter movements than with culturally-foreign strains of thought.

In the first place, Qumran ablutions were contemporary with proselyte baptism of the first century A.D. and earlier. Both washings were outward signs indicative of an inner instruction and repentance.[42] In rabbinic tradition water was sometimes the symbol of the Torah, to designate its cleansing, thirst-satisfying, and life-promoting powers.[43]

Furthermore, Qumran had a mission similar to that of John the Baptist. Both the Manual of Discipline and Mark, chapter one, describe their respective missions in the words of Isaiah 40, "a voice crying in the wilderness." Men like K. G. Kuehn of Goettingen see in the baptismal and environmental similarities of the two "a most striking parallel."[44] R. Brown in his comparison of John and Qumran states: "John the Baptist definitely points to a Qumran background."[45]

Of more immediate concern to the study of the New Testament

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[42] J. Mantey, op. cit., p. 525.

[43] R. Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospel and Epistles," C.B.Q., XVII (1955), 573.

[44] Dupont Sommer, The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes, p. 151.

[45] R. Brown, op. cit., p. 573.

is the similarity of much of the Qumran literature to parts of New Testament Scripture. In making a comparison between the two, R. Grossouw finds parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Acts two, the Apostle John's emphasis on light versus darkness, and Paul's doctrine of justification.[46] Other commentators, such as Albright, F. Braun, and J. Spica see scroll influence on the Pauline corpus and Hebrews and, perhaps, on the whole New Testament.[47]

Roland Murphy made a detailed comparison of the scrolls with the whole New Testament. Of his findings, the following seem to point to similarities between the two in the areaof our study: the struggle of flesh and spirit - Romans 8:6-9, M.D. 4:16-18; stewards of the mysteries - I Corinthians 4:1, IQH 2:13; and inheritance with the saints in light - Colossians 1:12 (a baptismal context), M.D. 11:7; hearts sprinkled, bodies washed - Hebrews 10:22, M.D. 3:6-12; God's spirit, like blood, sprinkled upon his chosen - I Peter 2:9, War Scroll 10:9f.; and the chrism of truth and light - I John 2:27, I QHab. 3:13. (M.D. - Manual of Discipline; I QH - Hymns; I QHab. - Habakkuk Commentary).[48]

The above comparisons indicate that Qumran, to some degree, was in the same thought and culture pattern as the Jewish community at a time when proselyte baptism was practiced and the

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[46] R. Grossouw, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament," Studia Catholica, XXVI (1951), 289-299.

[47] R. Brown, op. cit., p. 572.

[48] R. Murphy, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament Comparisons," C.B.Q., XVIII (1956), 263-272.

canonical writings of the New Testament Church were being composed. But even before these scrolls were found, scholars like R. H. Charles recognized another body of literature as linking the Church of Christ to the Old Testament. Scholars now believe that these writings also had considerable influence on the Qumran community; they are the intertestamental Pseudepigrapha. Since such a large array of fragments from this corpus has been found at Qumran, we now turn to them to see their influences in helping to form the Qumran ideas of the "new birth" and the coming Messianic kingdom.

CHAPTER IV

PARALLELS IN THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

In the first chapter we have seen that the members of the Qumran community had in their possession the books of the Old Testament as well as their own Biblical commentaries and sectarian manuals. From their stress on the law and ritual purity and their demand that some from their sect be constantly engaged in Torah research, we can infer that the Old Testament served as the model for the community's thought and life. Qumran traced its call as a Messianic forerunner back to the writings of both Isaiah and Ezekiel and produced hymns in a lyric style reminiscent of the Old Testament Psalter. However, there were other Jewish writers in the second and third centuries before Christ who were composing exhortations and writing Old Testament interpretations for their brethren. These writings have come to be known as the Pseudepigraphs. We shall now examine them for forms and expressions parallel to those of Qumran.

The pertinent pseudepigraphic writings which according to the best information available, are contemporaneous with Qumran and partially with Christ and the early Church are the following: (a) 200-101 B.C. : Testament of the Twelve, I Enoch without the Similitude chapters, and Jubilees; (b) 100-1 B.C. : I Enoch Similitudes, and Psalms of Solomon; (c) 1-100 A.D. : II Baruch,

IV Esdras, and the Sibylline Oracles.[1]

These writings apparently were not the products of the contemporary religious leaders of the Orthodox Jewish community, but came from the pens of now unknown teachers, who issued their works under the names of ancient heroes of the faith.[2]

According to R. H. Charles, these writers most likely resorted to pseudonymity because of the fact that from third century B.C. the law promulgated by Ezra had become absolute. The rabbis considered the Torah complete and in its final form for all time to come. Therefore a new interpretation could hope to find a hearing only if it was advanced under the name of an Old Testament hero of the faith who had lived before Ezra. By resorting to this device, these writers not only repeated Old Testament truths but also challenged and expanded them, especially in the areas of ethics and eschatology.[3]

Some of the emphases appearing in these Pseudepigrapha are also found in the sectarian writings of Qumran. The Sabbath, the laws of conduct, the calendar, and the idea of two Messiahs which find prominent mention in the Dead Sea Scrolls, also play a prominent part in the pseudepigraphic writings of Jubilees, The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sibylline Oracles, the Psalms

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[1]R. H. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and New Testaments (London: Oxford U. Press, 1956), pp. 220-222.

[2]Ibid., p. 160.

[3]Ibid., p. 42.

of Solomon, IV Esdras, and II Baruch.[4] In the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, which in many respects in the closest in thought to the Qumran scrolls, there are references also to Belial as the personal embodiment of evil and leader of the forces of darkness over against the angels of God's light. This opposition of light and darkness was mentioned in the preceding chapter as the possible outline for the instruction given to candidates entering the Qumran community. In their praise of the "new life" the Odes and Psalms of Solomon offer material suitable for instructional purposes similar to that of the Qumran hymnists. Enoch 30:14f. portrays God's instructing Adam after the creation as to the ways of light and darkness.[5]

The word raz or "secret" is used more than forty times in the Qumran manuscripts. The sectarians claimed to possess an arcane or hidden knowledge of the Torah, which they hoped would give them special spiritual privileges in God's dawning kingdom. I Enoch and IV Esdras also maintain that they have arcane counsel that the reader must possess in his preparation for the end times.[6] However, it appears that the pseudepigraphic writers only rarely, as in the Testament of the Twelve, give their instruction an ethic of love and duty to one's neighbor. In this respect they were

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[4]H. Rowley, Jewish Apocalyptic and the Dead Sea Scrolls (London: The Athlone Press, 1957), p. 8.

[5]K. Kuhn, "Die Palaestine gefundenen hebraeischen Texte," Zeitschrift fuer Theologie und Kirche, XLVII (1950), 197-206.

[6]E. Vogt, "Mysteria in Textibus Qumran," Biblica, XXXVII (1956), 247.

much like the members of Qumran who restricted their love to the members of their own community.

The pseudepigraphic writers appear to have associated this secret enlightenment more with the new spiritual birth which God offers through his Word than with a formal plan of instruction. In IV Esdras 14, Ezra says that the world lies in darkness and stands in need of God's law. He asks for God's holy spirit that he might write down the revelations God has given him that others might read and live. God answers this request by promising Ezra to "light the lamp of understanding in his heart." Further on in the chapter, God gives Ezra a cup of water the color of fire to drink. After he had drunk it, his heart was filled with wisdom and understanding from on high.[7]

I Enoch speaks of the coming kingdom of God when all the powers of heaven shall give a seven-fold light[8] and also states that the Lord of spirits has caused his light to appear on the face of the holy, righteous, and elect.[9] More striking is the Testament of Levi's description of the Torah as the φῶς εἰς φωτισμὸν πάντος ἀνθρώπου .[10] This is the same type of sentiment we have seen in the previous chapter to have been voiced repeatedly by Qumran hymnists. And II Baruch, 77, supports the law-oriented

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[7]R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), II, 662-663.

[8]I Enoch 91:16

[9]I Enoch 38:4.

[10]Testament of Levi 14:4.

sentiments of Levi when it says that a lamp will not be wanting nor a fountain run dry if God's Torah is present among his people.

The Pseudepigrapha as well as Qumran adopt the Old Testament picture of the Lord's Messiah as a bearer of the Spirit. As we have seen, Qumran also believed itself to be the bearer of this spirit, especially in the person of its teacher-Messiah figure. It portrayed its members as receiving this spirit through initiation into the secrets of God's law and believed that each member would receive an increased measure of the spirit according to his zeal in studying that law.

Similarly, I Enoch states in chapters 49 and 62 that God's spirit was to be poured out upon his Messiah.[11] In Psalms of Solomon 18:42 the resting of God's spirit on the Messiah is associated with the blessings of the age to come. In the Testament of Levi, chapter 18, the high priest opens the gates of paradise and gives the saints to eat, so that the spirit of God rests upon them. And in II Baruch, 22, it says that the heavens opened up and power came down upon Baruch. In the previous chapter we called attention to the association between God's spirit and power in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[12]

Qumran also offers some striking parallels to the references to lustrations and spiritual purity found in these Pseudepigrapha. As we have seen, after the rite of initiation in Qumran its members

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[11] I Enoch 49:3, 62:2.

[12] Supra, p. 23.

claim to live in a spiritual condition which involves cleansing from sin, the rebirth to a new life, and the coming Messianic light. In the Sibylline Oracles 4:24 ff. the writer likewise praises a group of men, very similar to the Qumran priests, because they had repudiated all temples and altars and avoided murder and dishonest gain. He calls on all men to repent, to avoid bloodshed and violence, and to wash their bodies in running rivers. It is important to note that the writer connects the idea of repentance with washing in water.

I Enoch offers a number of passages dealing with cleansing and the powers of the new age. In chapter ten the writer says that a flood will come at the end time to cleanse the earth from all pollution, sin, and godlessness so that the children of men will become righteous and adore God. One of the Similitudes, chapter 48, describes a fountain of righteousness and wisdom for all the thirsty among the holy and elect. The Son of Man, chosen before the world by the Lord of spirits, is revealed to the righteous in their drawing from this fountain: "he shall be a light to the gentiles." Following this revelation, chapter 90 says that period after the gentiles have been converted and the righteous resurrected in the New Jerusalem, the believers will be as sheep, white like the "lamb" with wool "abundant and clean."[13]

The Odes of Solomon in chapters six and thirty speak of a stream going forth from the temple, similar to that of Ezekiel 47.

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[13]Charles, Pseudepigrapha, pp. 11, 195, 216, 259-260.

It contains living water for the whole world and gives refreshment to the wilderness and light to the eyes. A. Harnack considers these passages to be references to second century Gnostic baptism, although J. Rendall Harris finds this conclusion to be unwarranted on the basis of such scant evidence.[14] Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that Qumran used very similar terms to describe the spiritual condition of its initiates. In this instance, Harris is probably correct in asserting that the writer had reference to "wisdom" rather than to a water baptism. The picture of the stream would then be similar to the statement given in Enoch 49 that "wisdom" is poured out like water and that in God's "Elect One" there dwells a "spirit of wisdom."[15]

In the description given in the eighteenth chapter of the Testament of Levi of the sign of the spirit and the outpouring of wisdom in the last days, there occurs the idea of the new priest of this end time. Of this priest it is said, "God's spirit of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon him in the water."[16] Although this last phrase may be a later Christian interpolation, as suggested by Charles, some men today see it as part of the original text. If it is original, this text, coupled with the Testament of Judah, offers a direct parallel to the Qumran theory of the two Messiahs and possibly also to

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[14] J. R. Harris, The Odes of Solomon (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1909), pp. 96-97.

[15] Charles, Pseudepigraph, p. 217.

[16] Testament of Levi 18:5.

the idea of the mediation of God's spirit through the rite of initiation.[17]

The Testament of Asher states in the third verse of chapter seven, that the Most High shall visit the earth as a man and break the head of the dragon "in the water." Contrary to the mission of Qumran's Messiah, this man will save both Israel and the gentiles. This emphasis on universality is found often in the Testament of the Twelve, as witness the Testament of Benjamin 9:4: "The spirit of God shall descend upon the gentiles as fire poured forth."

Water and fire are connected in I Enoch 56:1-2 and 57:8 13. There, as in Qumran, the writer uses the Old Testament picture of the Day of the Lord to portray the flood waters turning into fire to destroy the wicked. In IV Esdras 14:39-40 fire and water are connected with wisdom. However, the most striking passage connecting water, fire, and salvation is found in II Baruch 53-54. Here the writer describes a cloud of waters covering the earth, over which stands a lightening bolt which illuminates and heals where before there had stood waters of destruction. In chapter 54 God creates and sustains with his fountain of light. Charles shows that at this period the lightening bolt was a symbol for the Messiah who destroys and heals through water and light. This explanation is supported by a fuller treatment of the picture of

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[17] H. Rowley, op. cit., p. 13.

lightening given in II Baruch 74.[18]

Pseudepigraphic writers also closely connected washing and the Messianic kingdom with expressions of a new world and rebirth. I Enoch 25:4-6 speaks of a tree of life situated in the New Jerusalem. Those who wash their garments possess this tree as their own source of life. Access to this tree is equivalent to passing through the gates of this heavenly city, where God's rule will be perfectly carried out among his saints.[19]

The Jewish nation after being oppressed by the Egyptians and Assyrians, the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, at this time again expressed its yearning for Jahweh's intervention and its freedom to serve him. The writer of IV Esdras offers his prayer for deliverance and records God's promise to overthrow the Roman sovereignty and to build a new kingdom for his people. In describing God's coming kingdom, the writer uses pictures reminiscent of the first Eden. But now God has chosen out of such a large world and all its people just "one vine, one planting ground, one river, one dove, one sheep and people."[20] The Testament of Levi says that the Messiah will open paradise to the righteous. He will give the saints to eat of the tree of life and bestow on them power to tread on evil spirits and, especially, Beliar. Finally, it will be the Messiah's will that through the

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[18]Charles, Pseudepigrapha, pp. 510, 518.

[19]I Enoch 90.

[20]Charles, Pseudepigrapha, p. 571.

Jews all nations shall be saved.[21]

The sign of Jahweh's covenant people, circumcision, and the revelation of his presence, his Name, apparently receive only scant mention in this Pseudographic collection. In Jubilees 3:8-14 the writer states that at creation, God, after circumcising Adam, imposed upon him the forty day purification period required by law before he was allowed to enter into the garden of Eden. And in I Enoch 48:7 we read that the righteous are saved "in the Messiah's Name," similar to the description of God's saving "Name" given by the Qumran hymnist in the previous chapter.[22]

We have seen that there are parallels, at least in form, between the Qumran and pseudepigraphic materials. The pseudepigraphic writers, however, appear to have emphasized God's law and the spiritual life rather than any ritual or washing with water. For the actual Jewish baptismal practices of the period, we must turn our attention to proselyte baptism and examine it for possible connections with the "new life" and forgiveness of sins.

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[21] Testament of Levi 14 and 18.

[22] Supra, p. 23.

CHAPTER V

RABBINIC PROSELYTE BAPTISM

Rabbinic commentaries, such as found in the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds and the various Targums on Old Testament Scriptures, were not fully completed until somewhere near the seventh century of our era. However, scholars generally recognize that the underlying material to which these writings bear witness goes back to the rabbinic decisions of the first century A.D. and earlier. It is evident that the Dead Sea interpreters, coming from the same period, used midrash, pesher, and other hermeneutical methods similar to those employed by the rabbis in their interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures, as the sectarian Habakkuk Commentary clearly indicates.[1] T. F. Torrance, G. Moore, and others also argue from evidence taken from and written about these rabbinic commentaries that the practice of proselyte baptism must go back at least to the time of Christ and probably earlier.

The proof which Torrance adduces that this rite was in general practice in the Jewish community at this time is the following: (1) Tertullian in his book De Baptismo assumes that pre-Christian Greek lustrations were copied from the Jews. Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho appears to presuppose already by the second century A.D. a definite tradition of Jewish baptism.

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[1] W. H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," Interpretation, IX (1955), 75.

(2) The famous discussion on baptism between Hillel and Shammai, recorded in the Mishnah, contains an allusion to the making of an offering in the temple by the newly baptized, indicating that the temple had not been destroyed and that the discussion must be placed before 70 A.D. Torrance goes so far as to say that the lustrations portrayed in the pre-Christian Zadokite fragments were similar to proselyte baptism.[2] Even the first century Greek philosopher, Epictetus, states that the full convert to Judaism "has been baptized and made his choice."[3] The early dating of proselyte baptism therefore appears to be based on rather convincing evidence.

The idea of baptism and outer washing has its source in the Old Testament. Leviticus 14 and Numbers 19 prescribe a bath of the entire body for an Israelite who has been polluted through contact with leprosy, a corpse, or other unclean things. God commanded the people also to wash their garments at Sinai, a prescription which the rabbis later applied to the whole body.[4]

Among the prophets, Isaiah 1:16 urges men to "wash . . . and cease to do evil;" Ezekiel 36:25 promises that God will "sprinkle

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[2]T. F. Torrance, "Proselyte Baptism," New Testament Studies, I (1954-55), 154.

[3]W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism (London: S.P.C.K., 1957) pp. 4-5.

[4]Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C.H. Beck' sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), I, 102.

clean . . . from all idols;" Zechariah 13:1 speaks of a "fountain for David . . . for sin;" and the writer of Psalm 51:7 asks the Lord to "wash me and I shall be whiter than snow."

The rabbis attempted to give their baptismal rite early validation by demonstrating that it had a patriarchal origin. In this way many Old Testament passages, not specifically referring to a purification, were interpreted as sanctioning proselyte baptism. For instance, they said that Genesis 12:5, although it speaks of the souls that Abraham and Sarah had "gotten," really means that the souls were "made," that is, they were "made new-born proselytes."[5] The bathing of Pharaoh's daughter in the Nile was explained as her baptism to cleanse her from her "father's idols."[6] In this connection, Rabbi Jehoshua comments that the sprinkling of the people at Sinai in Exodus 24:8 proved the existence of Old Testament baptism; "for," he said, "where there was sprinkling of blood, there was also baptism."[7]

Proselyte baptism frequently was performed during the Paschal season, even as early Christian baptism often took place on Quasimodogeniti and Pentecost Sundays. By stipulating this time for the initiation of the proselyte candidates, the Mishnah could establish a connection between the baptismal ceremony and

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[5]A. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1956), II, 746.

[6]Ibid., pp. 746-747.

[7]The Babylonian Talmud, Edited by Rabbi I. Epstein (London: The Soncion Press, 1936), XVI, 304.

the passing through the Red Sea (Exodus 12), the Sinai law covenant (Numbers 9), and the crossing of the Jordan (Joshua 5), since all of these events according to tradition took place within the period from the Passover to Pentecost.[8] Moore adds that the proselyte was entitled to eat of the Passover after his baptism. A similar privilege was granted in Qumran where the newly-initiated member could for the first time partake of the common meal.[9]

This Jewish baptism was called the tebilath gerim or "bath of the gentiles." It was meant especially for the non-Jew who, apart from the Torah, was considered totally unclean.[10] If a gentile wished to partake of the Israelite blessings, he had to become a προσήλυτος or a naturalized citizen in the Jewish πολιτεία or community. One of the requirements for entrance into this body was submission to a tebilah.[11]

At the time of his baptism the proselyte was required to confess his unworthiness to be accepted as a fellow Israelite and to promise obedience and help to his new people. Children were to be baptized together with their parents, although their status as a Jew was not determined until they made a final decision at the "age of discretion."[12] The unbaptized children of

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[8]T. F. Torrance, op. cit., p. 152.

[9]G. F. Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1958), I, 327.

[10]Strack-Billerbeck, loc. cit.

[11]Moore, op. cit., p. 327.

[12]Torrance. op. cit., p. 151.

proselytes, born before their parents became Israelites, were considered "bastards and foreigners" until they too had been circumcized and immersed in the tebilah.[13]

The complete initiatory process by which a proselyte entered Judaism consisted of circumcision, immersion, and presentation of an offering in the temple. This three-fold requirement seems to have been rather general, since it is found in both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds and also in the works of later commentators, such as Maimonides in the twelfth century.[14] The rabbis found an analogy to this procedure in the circumcision, baptism, and sacrificial sprinkling of Israel in the desert. Rabbi Eliezer b. Jacob compared the process which the individual proselyte underwent through the same three acts with the entering of the "fathers" at Sinai into a covenant with God.[15]

Since in some instances, however, it was difficult for a candidate to fulfill all three of these requirements, only one or two of them were demanded as of absolute necessity. For instance, to some of the early rabbis baptism appears to have been of at least the same validity as circumcision. As the candidate was reminded of the law before his circumcision in Yeb. 46b, so he was again reminded before his baptism.[16] Hillel, moreover,

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[13]The Babylonian Talmud, op. cit., p. 304.

[14]Torrance, op. cit., p. 150.

[15]Strack-Billerbeck, loc. cit.

[16]Torrance, loc. cit.

argued against Shammai that baptism should be postponed until seven days after the candidate's circumcision. Strack and Billerbeck consider this delay not as an indication of the difference between the two rites, but as emphasizing their equality.[17] Furthermore, since women could not be circumcized and the destruction of the temple by the Romans obviated the offering, baptism assumed an even greater importance. As a result, baptism and circumcision, both of equal validity, appear to be the two indispensible initiatory rites at the end of the first century A.D.[18]

In some circles, however, especially that of the school of Hillel, baptism seems to have gained a superior status to circumcision. In some cases it may even have taken its place altogether. The rabbis abolished circumcision as an absolute requirement in instances where this operation had caused death to previous male children in a given family.[19] Later the tebilah alone was regarded as necessary to complete the conversion of all women. Finally, men like R. Jehoshua b. Hyrkanos, a Hillelite at the end of the first century, recognized also the male proselyte as having attained full rights as an Israelite merely by baptism without insisting on circumcision. His view, however, was only a minority opinion and did not gain general favor.[20] It does, however, show the importance

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[17] Strack-Billerbeck, loc. cit.

[18] Moore, op. cit., p. 332.

[19] Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., p. 103.

[20] Ibid., p. 105.

which baptism had gained by this time due to the rabbinic zeal for new converts.

But although Judaism in the first and second centuries of our era seems to have been extremely desirous of new proselyte members, certain conditions had to be met before the candidate was admitted to the community. One of these requirements was instruction in the Torah. The catechumen would not be accepted as a candidate until he had first showed at least an elemental knowledge of Judaism and its laws. Then he had to undergo a more thorough training under Jewish teachers.[21] References from the Talmud show that part of the instructions consisted in a re-enactment of the Israelite exodus into the "promised land." The candidate performed this ceremony, and brought its action to a climax by receiving Israel's Torah.[22]

The Jewish catechetical instruction which led up to the baptism appears to have proceeded in five stages. The first consisted of a test of the candidate's previous knowledge of Judaism and his willingness to partake of the Jews' minority lot. If he gave evidence of his knowledge and professed his unworthiness to share in Israel's sufferings, his character was found acceptable and no other tests applied.[23] The rest of the instruction consisted of study of the practical Levitical laws and of moral conduct in

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[21] A. Benoit, Le Bapteme Chretien au Second Siecle (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), p. 14.

[22] D. Daube, The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism (London: The Athlone Press, 1956), p. 121.

[23] Ibid., p. 114.

general, such as charity and the giving of alms. In the final two stages the candidate was threatened with damnation if he did not perform his duties and promised the reward of life in the world to come if he remained faithful.[24] The latter two elements are very similar to the threats and eschatological promises found in the Zadokite Document, chapter 9:50ff.

The content of the proselyte catechetical instruction appears to have been taken mainly from the Old Testament, and was based on the Shema, the ten commandments, the moral and ritual actions of Leviticus 19, and the wisdom of Ben Sirach. The distinction between the ways of life and death was emphasized just as the Old Testament speaks of the "path of life" and the "path of death," the first portrayed particularly by Jeremiah and the second in Proverbs.[25] Among the Qumran manuscripts the Zadokite Document appears also to have a similar catechetical-type of instruction based on Leviticus 19.[26]

At the time of baptism, the candidate was taken to a place having running water sufficient for his immersion. In special cases, however, the rabbis made allowances for the temperature in determining the amount of the water to be used. Usually only

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[24] Ibid., pp. 127-133.

[25] Philip Carrington, The Early Christian Church (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1957), I, 481.

[26] Ibid., pp. 482-484.

infants were immersed by others.[27] The adult candidate submerged himself to the waist in the water. At this point three teachers of the law recapitulated the candidate's training in the "two ways." They did this by reading to him portions from the law in raised voices at a distance from the place of baptism.[28] After this recitation, they subjected him to the "heavy" and "light" commands, which had been learned by the candidate as a summary of his total instruction.[29] Following the candidate's acceptance of these commands and swearing to keep them, he was immersed or immersed himself entirely. His conversion was considered complete when he emerged from the waters.[30]

In his study of the Jewish antecedents of the Christian sacraments F. Gavin points out several other interesting rules which were observed in proselyte baptism of the third century. He finds it very probable that the candidate for instruction and baptism was closely interrogated by teachers of the law as to his reasons for wishing to become an Israelite and as to the conditions existing in his marital life. Among the many excluded from becoming Israelites were panderers, adulterers, idolaters, soldiers, magicians, and many others. The catechumenate was

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[27] A. Benoit, op. cit., p. 16.

[28] Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., p. 110.

[29] Daube, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

[30] Benoit, op. cit., p. 14.

scheduled to last for three years, but could be shortened if the candidate were an apt student. At the time of baptism, the candidate had to declare himself pure before he could partake of the rite. A woman could not enter the water with any jewelry or hair dressing and, if menstruant, had to wait until her period had ceased.[31] Although some of the material for this Jewish baptismal code comes from early second century Tannaitic materials, it appears that Gavin's information is based mainly on third century writers. The examples he uses are from writers such as Hippolytus and from random parallels out of the Talmud, not necessarily connected to baptism. However, this information on proselyte baptism shows its similarities to Qumran initiation practices in its extended instruction period and restriction of the actual rite of initiation to those of a certain social stratum and moral character.

In their exegesis the rabbis of this period accented God's remoteness and strength. God's voice and breath were hypostasized to make them the intermediary forces in his relation with the created world. For instance, in the Onkelos Targum on the creation story in Genesis one, God's spirit does not "hover" over the waters, but it "blows" on them and creates life. The same writer also says that God's voice "walks" in the garden and that man becomes a "speaking spirit."[32] In a Haggadah on Genesis 1:1, the "spirit of

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[31] F. Gavin, The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments (London: S.P.C.K., 1928), pp. 44-48.

[32] Targum Onkelos, Torah, Tome I (New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1938), pp. 1-2.

God" is expected to become manifest in the form of a bird at the time of Messiah's coming and to spread his wings over and bestow God's grace on Israel.[33] However, some competent modern exegetes, such as Edersheim, see in the "brooding" picture of Genesis 1:2 an accent on God's closeness to his creation rather than on his assuming the form of a dove or bird.[34]

The above type of exegesis was also applied in the description of proselyte baptism in an attempt to give this rite a theological, spiritual interpretation. R. Akiba in Yoma 8:9 in the Mishna says: "Who makes you clean? Your Father in heaven. O Lord, the hope (miqwe means also "pool") or Israel; as the miqwe cleanses the unclean, so does the Holy One cleanse Israel."[35] This cleansing receives some ethical content from its further connection in the Mishnah to the sprinkling of Ezekiel 36:25, which had come to be applied to that performed on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest immersed himself on behalf of the people.[36] This "baptism" of the High Priest was a later, rabbinical interpretation of the actual Biblical prescriptions.

After coming out of the cleansing waters of his baptism, the proselyte was considered a new-born child. According to

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[33] G. Lampe, The Seal of the Spirit (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1951), p. 31.

[34] Edersheim, op. cit., p. 287.

[35] Daube, op. cit., p. 107.

[36] Torrance, op. cit., p. 153.

R. Jose, all of his former sin was washed away.[37] The unenlightened sinner was considered "dead" by the rabbis, while the proselytes were people who had "risen from their graves."[38] Yeb. 47b calls baptism a tebilah we alah or a "submerging and coming up," and thereby connects death and resurrection. Baptism is compared with Joshua's coming through the waters of the Jordan into the "promised land," reminding us of Josephus' remarks concerning the first century pseudo-Messiah, Theudas, who attempted to cross the Jordan River dryshod.[39] In this connection, we should note, however, the remark by Strack-Billerbeck that the new creation in the rabbinic sense does not have the connotation of an ethical renewal. To the rabbis rebirth belonged primarily to the future kingdom, when the New Spirit or Heart would begin. On account of this accent on the future, forgiveness was thought of as symbolized in proselyte baptism but not mediated through it.[40] W. Bousset supports this opinion by charging that "proselyte baptism was as little sacramental as was circumcision." However, W. F. Flemington warns against too strong a symbolic interpretation because it tends in an un-Jewish manner to dichotomize body and spirit in its purely emphasis on the relation between God and man.[41]

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[37] Moore, op. cit., p. 335.

[38] Daube, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

[39] Ibid., pp. 111-112.

[40] Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., II, 421.

[41] Flemington, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

The idea of "bringing to the light" receives less emphasis in proselyte baptism. As an expression of this thought, it may be significant that baptism was performed at the break of day, However, this time may have been chosen merely for practical reasons, since a legal act such as new citizenship could be performed only during the daylight period when the law courts were officially open.[42] According to Philo and Justin Martyr, initiation into the faith of Israel was described as a "coming out of darkness into the light." This change took place when the candidate completed his training by entering the tebilah.[43]

Baptism "in the name," similar to the saving "Name" of God in Qumran, found its place in the rite in reference to the setting free of both Jewish and gentile slaves by their Jewish masters. When this action was performed, the slave could be baptized "in the name" of his freedom.[44] On the other hand, the master could also baptize his servants, male and female, into his service. In this instance the baptism was performed in the name of the "service" and the slave was related to his master by an obligation of faithful obedience in his position.[45]

In Gerim 1:7 in the Mishnah the expression occurs: "baptized in the name of heaven." By this phrase the proselyte was placed into a personal relation to God as a faithful dependent. Baptism

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[42]Torrance, op. cit., p. 151.

[43]Ibid., loc. cit.

[44]Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., I, 1054.

[45]Ibid., p. 1055.

"into the Name" is also found in the possibly Jewish section of a second century catechism known as the Didache. The German scholar E. Heitmueller believes that a phrase from the ninth chapter of this manual: "in the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost," is an early Jewish reference to proselyte baptism.[46] This Jewish origin of the Didache is highly debatable, however, and the reader should take care to accept it as an interesting conjecture rather than highly possible or probable.

Once the candidate had been brought to the light, cleansed, renewed, and placed under the Name of the God of Israel, he became a full member of the Jewish community and subject to all of its laws. As R. Chyja says in Yeb. 46b: "A presbyter needs three witnesses . . . at law." In the same way the proselyte needed three rabbis or lawyers to witness His baptism and confession of faith and to certify him as a member of good standing in the community.[47] The proselyte had not only accepted the God of Israel, but now had also adopted the customs of God's people. He was expected to live under the whole law as a natural-born Jew. Proselyte women could marry their own close relatives and even into a priestly family, while children born to a proselyte family were considered fully Jewish and needed only to be circumcized. The new citizenship effected by baptism was, therefore, taken seriously

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[46] Benoit, op. cit., p. 15.

[47] Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., p. 113.

by the Jewish community.[48]

We have seen baptism as it was practiced in Israel at the time when the Qumran community was flourishing; now we shall examine two other baptisms being performed at this time, yet differing in some respects from the proselyte type described above. These are the baptisms of John and of Jesus and the New Testament, in that order.

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[48] Daube, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

CHAPTER VI

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

This chapter will attempt to show certain points of comparison between the baptism of John and that of the Qumran community and the relation of John to Jesus as it leads us into the following chapter on baptism in the New Testament Church.

Several pertinent questions may be asked about the life of John the Baptist as it is recorded in the Gospel accounts. For instance, why did John, born of priestly parents, grow up in the desert regions south of Jerusalem? Commentators have suggested that John's aged parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, died before the boy had grown up or became too old to care for him properly. Others speculate that John was adopted by the Qumran community and invited to spend the customary ten year novitiate there. Still others make him a member of the Essenes at-large of the non-marrying type mentioned by Josephus in his Wars.[1] The latter suggestion presupposes John's adoption as a small boy and would account for his familiarity with the region along the Jordan, down near the Dead Sea.

Like the "true sons of Zadok" at Qumran, John was also inimical to the priests from Jerusalem. This hostility could have arisen from the fact that he had been reared by Essenes. To men

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[1] A. S. Geyser, "Short Notes--the Youth of John the Baptist," Novum Testamentum, II (1956), 71.

like Geyser[2] and Brownlee,[3] John's Essenic-Qumran background is also suggested by his wearing such an unpriestly garment as camel's hair, his baptizing the penitents rather than sending them to Jerusalem to sacrifice, and by his accent on the Messianic kingdom. Brownlee can go so far as to say that almost all the materials found in the Gospels pertaining to John the Baptist coincide with known practices of the Essenes.

It has been shown above that the Dead Sea community considered itself the "voice in the wilderness" described in Isaiah 40. John's mission is described by the same term in the New Testament.[4] The Qumran covenanters carried out this role near the Dead Sea, where they placed the mouth of the "river of life" in Ezekiel's picture of the new kingdom. John the Baptist likewise preached and baptized at Aenon and Bethany, both on the highways of the lower Jordan leading up into Judea.[5]

John's baptism in particular has some resemblances to that found in Qumran. Since the priests in their position apart from the temple could offer only lustral sacrifices, in accordance with Numbers 19, John likewise restricted his demands to baptism. As baptism was part of the initiation into the Qumran community in preparation for the coming kingdom, so the purpose of John's

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[2] Ibid., p. 70.

[3] W. H. Brownlee, "John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls," Interpretation, IX (1955), 71.

[4] Ibid., p. 74.

[5] Ibid., p. 89.

baptism was a preparation for the end time.

On the other hand, men like Rowley[6] point to radical differences between John and the viewpoint and practices of the Qumran sectarians.

It is true that the Essenes separated themselves from the Jewish community to prepare for the coming Messianic kingdom, and thereby indicated that they were more aware of its eminent appearing than their contemporaries. John, however, was even more insistent on this point than the Essenes, for he preached "the one who comes after me."[7] Wheras in Qumran the candidates had to undergo at least a two year probation before their "baptism" and acceptance into full fellowship, there is no evidence of a training period imposed on those whom John baptized.[8] On the contrary, John's baptism had to be done immediately, for God was coming to claim his true Israel.

John's message meant that not only the gentiles, as in proselyte baptism, but also the Jews, had to repent and receive God's forgiveness. For God's New Israel was to be something else than a restored nation.[9] The Jews had shown by their sins that

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[6]H. H. Rowley, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), p. 15.

[7]Manual of Discipline 3:6, John 1:15.

[8]Rowley, op. cit., p. 16.

[9]W. F. Flemington, The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), p. 17.

they, too, were aliens from God's true Israel. All men had to repent or God would destroy them with the "fire" of his wrath.

This message differed from that of Qumran in that the former was meant for sinners and not for the upright and "enlightened." The Essenes regarded lustral washing, the common meal, and the right of commentary on the Old Testament as privileges of those who by their upright lives showed that they were a part of the "elect." Their initiatory rite was considered to give the candidate the community's formal permission to take a full part in these special privileges. The sin washed away in the initiatory baptism was regarded as the candidate's unenlightened past before he had truly understood the Torah.

Not even the rabbis appear to have asked for a confession of sins and such thoroughgoing repentance as John. Men like Strack and Billerbeck therefore conclude that John's baptism was entirely new, since for the first time baptism was connected with forgiveness of sins.[10]

The difference between Qumran and John becomes apparent when we note his relationship to the New Testament Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Gospel writers portray John as a "forerunner" or new Elijah preparing the way of the Lord." To point out his close connection with Jesus, Luke in his Gospel mentions similar aspects in the births and accompanying circumstances of Jesus and John.

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[10]Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), I, 112.

A. S. Geyser would go so far as to find an early Bar-Mizwah story for John in Luke, chapter one, similar to the story of the twelve-year old Jesus.[11] If this interpretation is correct, it would establish another parallel in the early lives of the two.

W. F. Flemington sees in the fourth Gospel an accent on the closeness and personal witness of John to Jesus and the former's acknowledgement of Jesus as the true Messiah sent from God. Intended for the people in Ephesus where John the Apostle is said to have resided, this emphasis was to show those who knew only the "baptism of John" that the baptism in the name of Christ is of even greater effect.[12]

In Matthew and Luke the stress is more on the difference between the baptisms of Jesus and John. John is quoted as saying that he baptizes with water while the Messiah will baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire."[13] Mark 1:8 on the other hand, omits the reference to fire, leading many commentators to feel that the word "fire" has been a later Christian addition to the text. Such a conclusion, however, forgets that the Holy Spirit and fire are associated as marks of the early church in Acts two. In the context of the Matthew and Luke sections, however, fire seems to be the means of destruction and purgation, as it was in the message of the Old Testament prophets. John therefore promises

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[11]Geyser, op. cit., p. 73.

[12]Flemington, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

[13]Matthew 3:11, Luke 3:16.

the penitent that the Coming One will baptize them with the Holy Ghost, but will pour the fire of his wrath on those who do not repent and accept God's baptismal call.

This baptism of fire is somewhat similar to the fire that is to destroy the torrents of Belial described in the sectarian writings. However, the New Testament portrays an eternal punishment by fire of those who deny the Messiah. Qumran and the Iranian, dualistic sects thought of the fire as a final destroyer of the wicked at the coming of the end time, leaving no room for eternal punishment.[14]

Thus we can see that John considered his baptism to be in line with the actions of God's true prophets of old. As Ezekiel had foretold that God would "sprinkle the spirit of truth as purifying water,"[15] so now John preached God's coming judgment and prepared a people fit by baptism to meet God through the remission of their sins.

Qumran had also called its members to spiritually cleanse themselves in preparation for the final kingdom of God. However, their cleansing was not so much a response to the prophetic call to repentance for forgiveness of sins as it was a priestly washing for ceremonial purity. Qumran's baptism was for its own members. They considered their own particular group to be already

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[14]Brownlee, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

[15]Ezekiel 36:25-26.

the "remnant" whom God would come to establish forever. John was willing to baptize all men, so as to have a penitent people ready to accept the mercies of a gracious God, rather than to show Him the pious works they had performed to merit his favor.

In his preaching of God's law to turn sinners to repentance and in his promise through word and rite that God was coming to claim his own, John stood on the threshhold of that dawning kingdom. Yet his message lacked the accomplished fact of God's final and complete action of delivering man from sin. John was the instrument to give this saving action of God its final purpose and direction when he baptized Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VII

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BAPTISM IN QUMRAN AND THE BAPTISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

In this chapter we shall look at the writings of Qumran and the New Testament to find similarities in terminology in general and in reference to baptism in particular. In this examination we will consider the instructions for initiation given by both sources, the types of communities found in Qumran and the early Church, and the actual baptisms performed by each community at the end of the initiation period. By a study of the terms and actions which the two communities attached to their baptisms we shall attempt to see the meaning which the rite had for each.

Some of the most striking parallels to the Qumran documents are found in the Gospel of John, and then to a lesser degree in the Johannine epistles. Both Qumran and John's Gospel appear to contain a type of dualism which is to some degree ethical and eschatological rather than a physical dualism found in the Eastern religions. One of the leading ideas in the sectarian theology is the concept of light versus darkness or goodness versus evil. Already in the prologue to John's Gospel this idea of "light" coming into a world lying in darkness appears. The ideas of being "enlightened," "reborn," and coming to "know" that Light are also very similar in form to the expressions found in the Qumran hymns and <u>War Scroll</u>.

John also seems to be familiar with the many types of lustrations and purifications required by the Jewish law of his time.

In his portrayal of the ministry of Christ, he uses pictures of Christ purifying the sick and the sinners so that they might again be well. He mentions the changing of the water of purification into wine, the water of life for the Samaritan woman, the healing pools of Bethesda and Siloam, and the washing of the disciples' feet at the last supper.[1] Similar references to water and purificatory actions in the material of Qumran were pointed out above.

Parallels to Qumran, similar to those mentioned above in chapter two, are also found in the Pauline epistles. The battle between light and darkness appearing in the Damascus Document and War Scroll, is also mentioned by Paul. He states in Romans 13:12: "Put off the works of darkness and gird on the arms of light," and in II Corinthians 6:14: "What is there in common between Christ and Belial?" Here we have expressed the same opposition of God and Belial so often found in the Qumran hymns.

Paul on trial before Agrippa II in Acts 26 gave a confession of his faith and described his mission and his call from Christ in these words: "I send you as an envoy among the gentiles to open their eyes, that they pass to light from darkness and from the power of Satan to that of God, so that by faith in me they receive remission of sins and the heritage of the saints." Even the last phrase, "the heritage of the saints," is found in the Manual of Discipline 11:7.[2] Other Pauline parallels to Qumran

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[1]John 2,4,5,9, and 13.

[2]Jean Danielou, "Le Communaute de Qumran et l'Organisation de l'Eglise Ancienne," Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses, XXXV (1955), p. 94.

will be discussed later in connection with the ideas of purification, light, and the new birth, as they relate specifically to the rite of baptism.

Other New Testament books also contain similarities to Qumran. William Albright,[3] Jean Danielou,[4] Theodore Gaster,[5] and others find most of them in the books of Hebrews, James, I Peter, and Jude. Hebrews is cited for its references to the temple and the new priesthood; James for its ethical, legal stress and phrases like "Father of lights"; I Peter because of its sacrificial and apparent baptismal references; and Jude for its angelology and other inter-testamental thought. These examples indicate that both Qumran and the New Testament were moving in a similar world of thought.

We now turn our attention specifically to parallels in connection with the rite of baptism.

As we have seen, in both the Manual of Discipline and proselyte baptism a period of instruction preceded the actual reception into the community. Usually the candidate was taught how to interpret the Old Testament and how to behave over against the other members of the community. In both Qumran and proselyte instruction, it appears that the training was divided into sections called

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[3]Raymond Brown, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Johannine Gospels and Epistles," C.B.Q., 17 (1955), p. 206.

[4]Danielou, op. cit., p. 107.

[5]Theodor Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1957), pp. 15-17.

"light" and "darkness," and the rules to be followed or avoided were grouped under one of these headings. Scholars have pointed out that perhaps this same method is reflected in some New Testament writers, but this form of teaching cannot be definitely established until the second century A.D.

Since I Peter is considered by many recent commentators as a baptismal homily, they use it as a possible first century A.D. source for such a comparison. F.W. Beare, for instance, calls it: "An exposition of the significance of baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, a body of instruction and exhortation respecting the character and conduct which should accompany and flow from their profession of Christian faith."[6] Sellwyn traces the exhortations to a Christian life in chapter 2:11 to 3:12 back to the virtues found in Psalm 34 and Proverbs 3. He calls them "catechetical virtues" which were enumerated in a baptismal form as a part of Christian worship and with the design to establish a Christian social code.[7]

But Peter also calls his readers the "elect" in chapter 1:1 and God's "inheritance" in chapter 1:4. In addition, we note that these moral and civic injunctions above are given to those who have been "sprinkled," become "reborn" and "new-born babes," and have, like Noah, been delivered through the waters of baptism;[8] all of

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[6]F. W. Beare, The First Epistle of Peter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), pp. 52-53.

[7]E. G. Selwyn, The First Epistle of Peter (London: McMillan and Co., 1952), p. 19.

[8]I Peter 1:3, 2:2, and 3:20-23.

these terms have been met above in the sectarian writings. Thus Peter connects moral and civic virtues with the new life in Christ and bases his instruction concerning this new life on the Christian's baptism.

In the Pauline epistles we find the same type of expressions to denote the Christian life as those in I Peter, Colossians I speaks of our deliverance from the "dominion of darkness" to share "in the inheritance of the saints in light," because we are a new "creation" in Christ. Chapter two calls our baptism into Christ's body a new "circumcision." In the following section, beginning in chapter 3:18, Paul begins his list of exhortations or instructions. These precepts are for the most part very similar to those found in I Peter, and like the Jewish baptismal instruction, they include directives for the treatment of slaves.[9]

It is Paul's aim in the epistle to present the love of husband and wife and the proper relation of parents to their children and of masters to servants as a result of and evidence of their new lives in Christ, which began in their baptism. This new obedience applies as much to the children as to the adults.[10] Paul apparently takes for granted that they too had been baptized and were now to act in a Christ-like way just as their parents.

The epistle to the Ephesians also contains several terms which appear to refer to Christian baptism and instruction. "Sealing

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[9] E. Kaeseman, "Eine Urchristliche Taufliturgie," Festschrift-R. Bultmann (Stuttgart-Koeln: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1949), p. 142.

[10] Col. 3:20.

with the spirit" is one phrase probably referring to baptism. These words had been used by the rabbis to describe circumcision, but they came to be used often by the Christian community as a description of bpatism. This phrase is found in connection with those who had heard the Gospel in chapter 1:13. Chapter 2:11 makes the comparison of the new and old circumcisions which come under the two covenants made by God with man. Paul in Colossians 2 compares baptism in Christ with Old Testament circumcision. It appears that he could have had reference to baptism also here in the second chapter of Ephesians.

In Ephesians, chapter three, Paul speaks of "putting off" the old nature and "putting on" the new Christ; this change occurs in our bap tism into Christ according to Romans 6. And, finally, a short Christian hymn in chapter 5:14 addresses the new Christian as one who "arises from the dead" and who receives "light" from Christ. All of these references show that baptism was the springboard for Paul's admonitions regarding the Christian life.

Based on the baptismal references above, Paul elaborates his Haustaufel or list of duties for regenerated Christians in their daily lives.[11] Here again, this new behavior is focused in their birth in Christ and reception of his Spirit. Paul differs from Qumran and the rabbis in that the instruction he gives in the above epistles follows the baptism of those whom he is addressing, while the two former gave instruction before their baptism of initiation.

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[11] Kaeseman, op. cit., p. 141.

We must turn to the book of Acts to find an example of instruction prior to baptism.

Since an Essenic community was located "beyond Damascus," according to the Damascus Document, O. Cullmann finds a possible connection between the "Hellenists" spoken of in Acts 6 and the Damascus covenanters who had similar teachings.[12] Both of these groups accented the idea of the "new temple" and attempted to replace the old temple ritual with their own liturgies.

Since Paul experienced his conversion near Damascus, and then spent some time in that city, both before and after his baptism, some argued that he possibly spent this time with Hellenist Christians who had come from this Damascus group of Qumran covenanters. The instruction they gave Paul in the elements of the Christian faith was based on Christ Jesus. They considered Him to be the Messianic fulfiller of their Qumran hopes. This interpretation could possibly be behind Paul's confession of faith which he delivered before Agrippa, mentioned above.[13] Whether Paul had associated with converts from Qumran, or not it is probable, on the basis of Acts 9, that he did receive instruction while in Damascus. Some of this training could have been reflected in the epistles which he later wrote or dictated.

A rather striking argument in favor of early Christian

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[12] O. Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," J.B.L., LXXIV (1955), p. 222.

[13] Danielou, op. cit., p. 98.

pre-baptismal instruction similar to that of Paul is found in the catechetical training given in the Didache.[14] This Christian manual of the early second century is a valuable commentary because its teaching is also based on the "two ways" of light and darkness, here connected with baptism in the Name of the Trinity.

This manual is not only relevant for the study of New Testament baptism, but also for Jewish, proselyte baptism. If only two passages from the first six chapters of instruction, 1:3 and 2:1, are omitted, the book is as Jewish in its ethical stress as Christian. This similarity has led men like Benoit, Polster, and Taylor, who have studied the problem of synagogue instruction, to say that this manual was originally Jewish and that it was borrowed by the early Christian Church for its catechetical instruction.[15] If the Didache did come from a Jewish source, then perhaps the New Testament Church also used its contents for the purpose it had been written--as instruction before baptism.

However, since the Jews probably also used their catechisms in connection with actual synagogue worship, the New Testament Church probably used the Didache for a similar, post-baptism purpose.[16] The difference in accent between Judaism and the New Testament appears to be that the latter connected the Christian's ongoing life with his baptism. Judaism and Qumran on the other hand

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[14] Ibid., p. 99.

[15] Andre Benoit, Le Bapteme Chretien au Second Siecle (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953), pp. 22-23.

[16] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

stressed the preparation for baptism and tied the daily life to the law.

Since a catechumen was instructed with a view toward his reception into the Church, we should look for a similar purpose in Qumran training. We find this parallel in the initiation and reception of candidates at Qumran. The candidate in both instances was received into a community which had its own rules and practices and which, to a certain extent, was set apart from those people not included in its membership. We can see that the outward, economical statuses of both Qumran and the early church portrayed in Acts, were somewhat similar. When new members joined these communitites, they shared their goods by transferring them to a common treasury. In this way they pledged to devote themselves more to spiritual service than material gain. Even the first Christian group of 120 disciples, headed by the twelve apostles, was very similar in structure to the Qumran groups of ten, each headed by one priestly leader.[17]

We have seen in the study of Qumran that the sectarians considered themselves the "heritage of God," his "elect," and his "called ones." These terms were often applied also to the Christian community, as a cursory reading of the first epistle to the church at Corinth will show. As Qumran priests had rejected the temple and its polluted services, so Paul in this epistle calls

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[17]Sherman Johnson, "The Dead Sea Manual of Discipline and the Jerusalem Church of Acts," Z.A.T.W., LXVI (1955), pp. 108-111.

each member in Christ an individual temple which is filled by the Holy Spirit. Paul also speaks of law suits between Corinthian Christians, of their baptism, and of their common meal in language similar to that of the Qumran manuals.[18] In the Manual of Discipline similar rules and activities are found for the members in regard to their lives in common.

Because baptism and the swearing of the oath of fidelity were necessary to induct a man into a community, Qumran, Judaism, and the Christian Church required witnesses at these ceremonies. In this way, the community could guarantee the faith of the baptized, receive his confession of faith, and attest the fact and legality of his baptism. After this rite had been performed in the Church, the new member was permitted to partake of the Eucharist of the New Testament Church. Similarly, the candidate in Qumran was allowed to participate in the common meal and the proselyte was given the right to eat the Passover.[19]

Final acceptance into the Qumran community and into Judaism was made when the candidate swore that he would be loyal to God, God's law, and the community which possessed that law. It is clear from Hippolytus' "Apostolic Tradition" that the third century the Christian community also practiced a baptism in which the baptized was asked in successive order whether he believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Hippolytus records

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[18] Gaster, op. cit., p. 14.

[19] Benoit, op. cit., p. 19.

the Christian confession "saying all these things" in connection with baptism; this phrase is almost the equivalent of those found in the Didache and Gerim 1:5 in the same baptismal context.[20]

However, it is possible that the confession "Jesus Christ is Lord," found in various places in the Pauline writings, was also used in connection with baptism and reception into the Church at the time these epistles were written. In that case, the confession made by Timothy "in the presence of many witnesses," recorded in I Timothy 6:12, could possibly have been his baptismal confession of faith in Jesus Christ.[21] The existence of this confession is further supported by a study of O. Cullmann. He finds on the basis of writings from Ephiphanius that the phrase "What is to prevent?" and the answer "Nothing prevents" were parts of the early Christian baptismal rite already in the second century A.D. These very phrases are found in connection with baptism in Acts 8:36, 10:47, and 11:17. A further confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God was later added to the first reference in Acts. As a result, Cullmann conjectures that this question and answer were parts of a baptismal ritual performed already in the early New Testament Church.[22]

This argument is supported by both the writer of the Didache

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[20] Ibid., p. 18.

[21] R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, Translated by Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 134.

[22] O. Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament (London: S.C.M. Press, 1956), p. 134.

and Justin Martyr. These men seem to infer that in the earliest period of the Church this confession of faith followed immediately after the apostolic preaching, but that later, perhaps even already in Hebrews 6, some extended instruction preceded baptism.[23] It appears that as the Church continued to await its Lord's returning, its structure more and more took on the lines of a permanent community, and as a result extended its required period of instruction before baptism.

At least by the second and third centuries A.D., the New Testament Church used terms in the actual rite of baptism found in Qumran initiation and proselyte baptism. In the works of the writers from this period we find baptism associated with the terms "new birth," "light," "new circumcision," and "purification," as was the case in Qumran and Judaism.

Irenaeus, who received his early training in Ephesus where John is said to have written his Gospel, emphasizes the "new birth" as God's gift to man in Christ. In commenting on the pool of Siloam incident in John 9, Irenaeus writes that it was a pool of regeneration for the blind, like the bath of baptism; and "by faith we know baptism is the mark of eternal life and regeneration in God."[24]

Baptism was defined as a purifying act, offering forgiveness of sins in both Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. It was also

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[23]Bultmann, op. cit., p. 134.

[24]Benoit, op. cit., p. 197.

the new circumcision in that it, too, sealed the baptized, but sealed them now under the Name and power of Christ. And, according to Barnabas, the heart of the believer has by virtue of the Name of Christ, become a temple in which God is dwelling.[25]

Φωτισμός or bringing to the light, is also a common concept often connected with baptism in these early Christian writings. The writers of I Clement and the Shepherd of Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Methodius of Lisia, and Chrysostom are just a few of the more notable examples of those who describe baptism as φωτισμὸς . For example, Clement says: "Having been baptized, we are illumined; having been illumined, we are made sons; we, the baptized, have erased our beclouding sins, the condemnation of darkness, by the living Spirit; this is one grace of illumination, to be no longer the same as before, to have cleansed the way."[26]

Chrysostom also mentions in one statement φωτισμός and a number of other ideas associated with baptism by the early church: "Baptism is release to the imprisoned, the pardon of debts, the death of sin, the new birth of the soul, a garment of light, an inviolable seal, and the chrism of sonship."[27]

Thus there is ample evidence, at least from the apostolic

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[25] Bultmann, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

[26] R. Seeberg, Text-Book of the History of Doctrines (Grand Rapids: Baker-Book House, 1956), I, 145.

[27] Ibid., p. 299.

fathers, that phrases which made up part of the instruction and ritual of purification at Qumran and which were associated with proselyte baptism in Judaism, were also associated with baptism into Christ.

But in the New Testament itself we also find other similarities in describing what takes place in the baptismal washing. Qumran spoke of its baths of purity as a replacement for the ritual sacrifice of the temple. In somewhat the same manner the New Testament also speaks of its washing of baptism in connection with a sacrifice. Sacrifice is associated with purity through water in both communities to describe the spiritual cleansing received by the participants in their baptisms.[28] In Qumran the sacrifice was performed when the participant apparently baptized himself, though the immersion may also have been done by another. In the Church baptism brought the benefits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and appears to have been administered at all times by an officiant.

But Christian baptism also has powers of renewal and regeneration. It enables man to be purified in both flesh and spirit. In the thought of Qumran the flesh will also be purified once and for all in the coming kingdom of God; for the present it had to be constantly cleansed, so that the whole man would be holy by the standard of the law. So also those baptized into Christ have neither escaped the flesh nor been freed completely from the struggle

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[28] O. Betz, Le Secte de Qumran et les Origines du Christianisme (Lovanne: D. de Brouwer, 1959), pp. 194-195.

with powers of evil.[29] But while the Christian remains in the world, he has been purified from his sins in Christ; this "washing of water with the Word" is not a removal "of dirt from the body, but a calling on God with a purity of conscience." For the Christian baptism means that he daily grows, through the sanctifying of his body and spirit, into the likeness of Jesus Christ.[30]

According to Ephesians 5:14, conjectured to be a baptismal hymn, this baptismal resurrection from the dead implies also a waking from the darkness of sleep and a coming to the light.[31] The results of baptism are elsewhere described as "casting away the works of darkness for the armor of light" and "having one's eyes enlightened (πεφωτισμένους) by the Spirit."[32] Since Christ is the Light of the world, many interpreters understand the "light shining out of darkness for a <u>photismon</u> of God's glorious wisdom in Christ" to be a reference to the benefits of baptism.[33] Likewise, those who have received instruction and and have tasted of the Spirit are called the φωτισθέντες in Hebrews 6.

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[29] W. Davies, "Paul and the Dead Sea Scrolls - Flesh and Spirit," Edited by K. Stendahl (New York: Harper and Bros, 1957), p. 162.

[30] I Cor. 6:11, Eph. 5:2, I Pet. 3:21.

[31] Kaeseman, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 141.

[32] Romans 13:12, Ephesians 1:18.

[33] Alan Richardson, <u>An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament</u> (New York: Harper and Bros., 1958), p. 68.

The final reward for those who have been baptized and remained in the faith is that they will enter with Christ's other saints into the new paradise. There the Lamb will disperse all darkness and they will live in his baptismal light alone (φωτίζειν) eternally.[34]

The center of this new creation in the New Testament is Christ. God's image in this act of φωτισμός, according to II Corinthians 4, is visible only in Christ. Men regain their lost glory and honor only "with" the suffering and glorification (συμπάσχειν and συνδοξάζειν) of Christ.[35] Thus, anyone who is "in Christ" is a new creature, according to II Corinthians 5:17; but to be "in Christ" comes through "being baptized into Christ" according to Galatians 3:27. It is the Logos, Christ, who is the new light and life of the world in John 1. That is why the Christian's light and life derives from baptism in Christ. Paul emphasizes that the newness of a man's creation in Christ and his actual participation in Christ's death and resurrection is brought about by one baptism. Through the unique act of baptism, the life of the Church is bound up eternally with the once-for-all "baptism" of her Lord on the cross.[36]

Qumran also portrayed its members as entering into a new life through their initiation. The meaning and status given to their lives were now intimately connected to the law. The task of the

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[34]Revelation 21:24.

[35]Richardson, op. cit., p. 66.

[36]W. Davies, op. cit., p. 177.

member was to renew his relation with that law daily, through his study and constant maintenance of ritual purity.

In addition to referring to its renewing powers, the New Testament portrays baptism as a chrism, even as Qumran had spoken of a daily outpouring of the spirit of truth. The anointing in the Church is the same as that revealed at the baptism of Jesus in the descent of God's Holy Spirit. John had proclaimed that baptism in the Name of Jesus gives not only Jesus himself but also his Holy Spirit, as several New Testament passages declare.[37] Some commentators have remarked that the early Church had difficulty to associate baptism by water with the doctrine of the Spirit, until Tertullian in his treatise "On Baptism" showed the relation of water and spirit to have a parallel in the creation story in Genesis 1:1.[38] However, Paul places washing and the Holy Spirit together in Titus 3:5. He says that this Spirit gives the water its power of regeneration. Furthermore, it is this Spirit of Christ which distinguishes the Christian baptism from that of John in Acts 19.

Those who have been "enlightened" according to Hebrews 6 do not only receive the "crucified Christ" for their new lives but also the Holy Ghost; and those "who have been brought to the light" according to Ephesians 1 receive this gift by Christ's Spirit. The circumcision of the "new man" is his sealing by this Spirit,

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[37] Acts 2:18, I Cor. 6:11, Gal. 3:26-27.

[38] Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, p. 13.

so that Christian baptism becomes truly a "Spiritual circumcision."[39]

The New Testament considers baptism to be also a personal "mark" of those belonging to God's new covenant, even as the initiated in Qumran were set off by rank. We recall that John the Baptist regarded all people as proselytes by requiring all to submit to a baptism of repentance. At that time, even in Judaism, circumcision seemed to be giving way to baptism as the means for entering into covenant relationship with God. In the New Testament, terms like σφραγίς (seal) and "holy children," formerly connected with the Old Testament circumcision and covenant, are now applied to the new covenant in Christ. Christian baptism took over the functions of both circumcision and proselyte baptism and gave a Christian his mark in God's community.[40]

The symbolism of "marking" based on Old Testament references is also found in the Qumran writings. In the prophecy of Ezekiel 9, the remnant are to be marked with the sign of the letter tau on their foreheads at the coming of God's kingdom. The members of the eschatologically-oriented communities, described in the Damascus Document 19:10 and Revelation 7 and 9, adopted this Old Testament idea of marking to show that they belong to God's people at his final appearing. To be "marked with the Name" is explained by the Shepherd of Hermas to mean to be "marked with the sign of the cross." The Damascus covenanters may have retained the sign

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[39] I Cor. 1:22, Eph. 4:30.

[40] Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament, pp. 62-65.

of the tau, but early Christian practice called for the placing of the mark of the cross on the forehead of the catechumens being baptized. It has been conjectured that John meant the "mark of the Name" to signify that the saints in paradise, portrayed in Revelation 22:4, had been baptized (φωτίζειν).[41]

As the members of both Qumran and the Church were to be marked with the tau or cross, so they were also exorcized and enjoined to renounce evil at the time of their initiation. Bultmann sees in the New Testament an exorcism of evil spirits in connection with the laying on of hands and imparting of the Holy Spirit in baptism, described in Acts 8 and Hebrews 6. He bases this hypothesis on the New Testament emphasis that where the Spirit is, there is also light and the Name of Christ, which contains the power to overcome Satan and darkness. The baptismal liturgy need only be performed in Christ's Name and Satan and his hosts are put to flight.[42]

By the time of Justin Martyr in the second century, baptism alone was considered to have the effect of driving out the demons and gaining the victory for the baptized. For Justin, baptism itself was the actual exorcism, while for the later western Church baptism and exorcism were separate acts, though closely connected in the liturgy.[43]

Those who underwent the rite of baptism in the Church became

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[41] Danielou, op. cit., p. 101.

[42] Bultmann, op. cit., p. 139.

[43] Benoit, op. cit., pp. 182-183.

servants who were to follow the Christ to whom they were joined. In confessing that "Jesus Christ is Lord" at the time the water was poured over his head, the candidate was professing that he would live according to the teachings he had received in his instruction through the power which was now given him in his baptism.[44] Being baptized into Christ's Name meant to be consecrated to that Christ in worship and service. And as Christ had been baptized into death, so the Christian was baptized into a new life of suffering for Christ.[45] The Qumran members likewise were committed to fight and die for their community.

Finally, on a baptismal Sunday such as Quasimodogeniti, the new saints of light could also put on the white robes of priestly purity like the priests of Qumran. This action also symbolized their purity and new status by "having put on Christ" the true light and life of God.[46]

We have seen that Qumran and the Church performed a number of similar actions in connection with baptism. Both communities described their baptisms by the terms "new birth" and "light," required a pre-baptismal training period, and connected other ritual actions with the actual baptism. These factors could be taken as evidence of the equivalence of the baptisms practiced in Qumran and the Church; however, we have also alluded to some

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[44]Bultmann, op. cit., pp. 134, 137.

[45]Benoit, op. cit., p. 37.

[46]Richardson, op. cit., p. 346.

dissimilarities among the parallels. The following chapter will elaborate these fundamental differences.

CHAPTER VIII

BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BAPTISMS OF QUMRAN AND THE CHURCH

We have seen that the baptisms which we have been studying have quite a number of parallel aspects, both as to terminology and practice. We have also pointed to some obvious differences that lie behind both the meaning and the performance of the rites. Many scholars today, however, feel that the similarities between the baptisms practiced in Qumran and the New Testament Church are far greater than the differences. Since they see a development of the idea and practice of baptism during the two-hundred year period covered in this paper, they hold that the baptisms of Qumran and the New Testament have a common origin and therefore also have identical features and meanings.[1] In this chapter we shall review the baptismal parallels on which such arguments rest and attempt to show the basic differences that lie behind the outward similarities. In this comparison we shall examine particularly the initiation-instruction in connection with baptism in Qumran and the New Testament, the communities to which entrance was gained by baptism, and the baptismal rites themselves in both groups.

We have seen that in Qumran and the New Testament, the initiants received instruction in connection with their washings to prepare them to live in keeping with the standards of purity

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[1] A. Dupont Sommer, The Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952).

of each group. This requirement for training in connection with baptism was also met in the acceptance of proselytes into the Jewish community at-large.

We have already pointed out that both the Qumran and rabbinic instructions accented training prior to baptism. At this time a candidate was taught the meaning of the Old Testament Torah, according to the explanation given by the community into which he was entering. Once he had mastered at least a minimum amount of knowledge from the law and was able to relate it to his daily life, the candidate was considered ready for admission to the community.

The New Testament on the other hand stresses the life after baptism. The rules for life given by Paul and Peter are addressed to those who already were baptized. Their emphasis was on the actual meaning of baptism itself for life rather than on an understanding of and obedience to the law. It appears that only as the Church continued to await for its Lord that it began to use extended instruction before baptism. Yet even in the later catechetical manuals, such as the Didache, the training was always related to the baptismal rite as the central, meaningful act.

Qumran apparently allowed the candidate to take part in ablutions during part of the period of his instruction. He received this privilege after his first year of probation, so that baptism appears to have been a step on the way up toward full membership, achieved only after the second year of training.

The length of this pre-baptism period of instruction varied in the New Testament. Often baptism was performed after only a

brief exposition of the Gospel of Christ. The New Testament Christians learned that their washing connected them with the cross of Christ. Hence, the New Testament rite was not dependent on the behavior or attitude of the candidate in regards to the law, as in Qumran. Furthermore, Jesus repudiated the necessity of purifying the body with regular ablutions. As. H. H. Rowley asserts, there is no evidence that Jesus demanded his followers to baptize themselves daily or before each Eucharist meal, as was done in the sectarian community.[2]

This stress on the Torah and letter-perfect obedience to its demands also gives us a clue as to the type of community into which Qumran initiated its members. As seen in the Manual of Discipline and the Zadokite Document, a candidate was admitted to Qumran only upon recommendation of a member and upon the condition that he pass a satisfactory period of initiation. If he was banished or excommunicated at any time after his reception into the community, he was cursed and not allowed to return to the fellowship.[3]

A rigid class system was observed in the brotherhood. According to their seniority and proficiency in the law, the members were ranked as priests, levites, laymen, and proselytes. This order of rank was strictly enforced in the yearly review and

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[2]H. Rowley, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), p. 15.

[3]Theodor Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1957), pp. 51-55.

promotion and at the sect's common meal.[4] This system revealed the exclusive Jewish, priestly influence behind the sect's philosophy.

Women were not allowed to share in the strictest and most holy life found at the center of the movement in Qumran. They were eligible to take only the lesser vows, restricted to those living outside the community.[5] The maimed, crippled, and others with bodily defects could not join the fellowship of these "dignitaries" of God, for they were unclean and defiling to the pure.[6] Furthermore, a man remained unclean "so long as he rejects the government of God and refuses the discipline of the community."[7] This legalistic restriction is evident also in the provision that they forgive only their brothers in the community. Outsiders and gentiles were not only excluded from forgiveness but were to be held in hatred.[8]

The instructions found in the New Testament provide for an expanding community living at-large under the governments in control during that period. The structure of the Christian community is the body of Christ and its power is the washing in the Holy Spirit, who conveys to the baptized members the very life of that Christ. Thus all who are baptized into Christ become his "sons," regardless

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[4] Ibid., p. 82.

[5] Bruce Metzger, "New Light from Old Manuscripts," Theology Today, XIII (1956), p. 84.

[6] Gaster, op. cit., p. 309.

[7] Ibid., p. 42.

[8] Ibid., p. 60.

of their sex or social-economic background.[9] The Christ preached in the New Testament came for the "mean and outcast" as well as for the priests and healthy.[10] Christ's purpose was to defeat Satan and rule over all creation. He wishes to share this victory with all men, not to make it a mystery of a particular sect, in which passwords and secrecy become the means to salvation.[11] The New Testament Christian is assured a place in God's kingdom which has come in Christ and in which the Christian becomes a member through his baptism. Therefore he can also forgive all men because God has forgiven him all sins in Christ.

The New Testament community need not follow any particular outward form, but can adapt itself to the circumstances in which its members live. Since Christ's kingdom is within his people, no outward form is necessary as a mark of those that have become part of Him through their baptisms. Therefore different types of Christian communities are shown in the New Testament itself. Only the early church in Jerusalem had a community-type structure in any way comparable to Qumran, and we know of its existence for only the first few years after Christ's ascension.

We have seen that the actual ceremony of induction into both Qumran and the Church appears to be somewhat similar. Both rites

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[9] Gal. 3:26-27.

[10] M. Channing-Pearce, "The Christian Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls," The Hibbert Journal, LV (1956), p. 48.

[11] R. Murphy, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1956), p. 93.

included a number of elements which served to sever the candidate from his past associations, induct him into the new community, and place into his possession the sacra which will mark him as a full, practicing member of the new fellowship.

The rite of initiation into Qumran is described in the Manual of Discipline from chapter 1:16-5:24. This section may be regarded as a baptismal locus since it contains both the rite itself and the demands of moral behavior expected from the new member. The act of immersion or purification is mentioned in both the first verses of chapter three and in chapter five.

During the ceremony the priests recited God's bounteous acts toward his people Israel, while the Levites recounted Israel's rebellion and countless sins against God. All the candidates entering into the Qumran covenant fellowship were then required to confess their sins and to profess their reliance on God's mercy. Thereupon the priests pronounced the Aaronic benediction over the candidates and proclaimed an extended exorcism and curse on Belial and those who refused to accept God's rule as found in the community.

But we have difficulty finding the actual baptism in the midst of the instruction, confession, oaths, and exorcisms which made up the initiation. It is hard to ascertain just how this particular washing stood out among the other elements and how it differed from any of the other ablutions performed from after the first year of the candidate's training. Baptism appears rather to have been just one among the other acts performed to make the

candidate suitable for community membership. It appears to have marked just one stage on his steady climb toward perfection in the knowledge of the law, which demanded constant purity by ritual ablution.

Proselyte baptism was possibly closer to Christian baptism, in that it was performed only once. It was a definite rite, holding a position on a level with circumcision for entrance into Judaism. Contrary to Christian baptism, however, proselytes tebilah was to be performed only on gentiles and could be omitted in the case of children born to preselytes after their having become Jews. Furthermore, leading scholars of Rabbinic writings such as Strack, Billerbeck,[12] and Edersheim[13] see proselyte baptism as merely a symbolic, Levitical washing in conformity with the law, and with no moral or ethical importance attached to it. Although, as seen in chapter four above, the question whether sacramental importance was attached to this rite is warmly debated, it would appear to the writer that Strack-Billerbeck is probably correct. Sectarians such as those at Qumran apparently were opposing the spiritually dead, legal and political orthodoxy of proselytism.

In the New Testament on the other hand, the actual baptism stands at the center of the other attendant elements. The

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[12] Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), I, 711.

[13] A. Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1956), I, 273.

instruction, confession, naming, and exorcizing were done in connection with the washing or immersing, so that all actions focused on what was happening in this one act. This centrality can be seen from the constant New Testament references to the time when the Christians were "buried" or "died" or were "brought to the light" in Christ, and many other phrases which describe just what occurred at the moment of baptism. Justin Martyr even equated the power of exorcism with the act of baptizing itself. This stress becomes especially clear in the Didache[14] and the third century rite described by Hippolytus,[15] when the distinctive baptismal elements have taken formal shape around the central act of immersion or sprinkling.

This New Testament rite is performed only once and has lasting effects on the person undergoing it. Baptism in Christ means not merely an outward washing or sign of purity, but it is the actual death of the sinful nature of the one baptized. In Luke 12:50 Jesus is pictured as seeing his true baptism taking place in his death on the cross; the cross is where washing and sacrifice are connected in the New Testament. Thus Paul, the foremost apostle of Christ's ministry to the Gentiles, equates "was crucified for" and "baptized," clearly showing those baptized to

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[14] Didache, The Library of Christian Classics, Edited by Cyril Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), I, 174.

[15] F. Gavin, The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments (London: S.P.C.K., 1928), p. 50.

to be purely recipients of a gift rather than actors in their baptisms.[16] To be baptized in the New Testament sense means to be "buried with Christ," to die to the nature of the Old Adam, and to die daily to this world held under the power of Satan.

Furthermore, this water is a washing containing the forgiving Word itself and a sealing, offering the presence of the Spirit of God. By contrast, Qumran ablutions did not cleanse from sin apart from obedience to the law. As Oscar Cullmann put it, the strength of Qumran lay in its organization; that of the New Testament lay in the presence of the Holy Spirit.[17]

We have seen that the relationship between the baptisms in Qumran and the New Testament is not as close as it may appear. There are fundamental differences between the two in their ideas concerning instruction, community, and ritual. The basic difference behind them all is that Qumran was based on the law while the New Testamont Church is based on Jesus Christ. Our last chapter will show what meaning these stresses (the Torah and the new Torah, Christ) had for the communities and the baptisms discussed above.

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[16] O. Cullmann, Baptism in the New Testament (London: S.C.M. Press, 1956), p. 13.

[17] O. Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity," J.B.L., LXXIV (1955), p. 226.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter we shall attempt to show the basic differences in all of the baptisms discussed above.

Although baptism was commonly practiced at the time of Christ, it appears that only the baptisms of Qumran, John, and the Church contained a predominantly religious significance.

Rabbinic Judaism showed its zeal in gaining converts and proselytes throughout the diaspora. But the proselyte was brought into a community which had grown largely formal and stable. Judaism had lost its expectant outlook for a radical change and installation of God's new rule. As a result, proselyte baptism was considered the final step of induction into the Jewish community, rather than the convoyer of the forgiveness of sins.

However, John, Qumran and the New Testament were very serious in their conviction that their age was in the "end times." All three were ready and preparing to be ready for the imminent coming of the kingdom of God. But they differed as to their concept of just what the kingdom of God is and their preparation for it.

John the Baptist had both a sense of the last days and a desire to see all men repent and be baptized, but he could baptize only with a view toward the coming Messiah. Therefore his baptism was meant to prepare for God's kingdom through repentance. Connected to this baptism of repentance was God's promised forgiveness

on the basis of his covenant of old. John at this time could only point to the new covenant of God and the gift of his Spirit.

Qumran was readying to be found "in Torah" or according to God's law when his Messiah arrived. They considered their lives imperfect as long as this age remained, but trusted that their loyalty to God's will in his law would merit his favor on the final day. For these reasons, the Qumran baptism of initiation was one of the many baptisms which the member would undertake in order to be found under the law on the last day.

In a sense, Qumran baptism was more than a sign or ritual in that God's forgiveness was considered to be granted to the truly pure and orthodox. But this baptism was performed synergistically or in a legally correct manner. Washing was not considered effective in itself apart from strict obedience to the Old Testament law and the rules of the community. The ablution was regarded as just one of the many prescriptions to be followed by a Qumran priest in order to be truly worthy of God's covenant mercy. To Qumran, God would fulfill his covenant promises if only his people would first be found true to their part in that agreement.

They considered this type of obedience possible only for those set apart and diligent in the study of the law. As a result, Qumran had lost the missionary zeal of Judaism and was content to keep its superior knowledge and purity bottled up within a closed community. In this context the act of baptizing became a vindication of personal righteousness rather than an act of penitence and dependence on God's mercy.

The New Testament Christians also possessed an awareness and expectation of the last times. However, contrary to both John and Qumran, they were already in the kingdom of God. The reason for this double stress in the life of the Christians was that their Messiah, Jesus Christ, had come, completed his work, and had left them. By their baptisms, these Christians received an inheritance in his visible kingdom--the Church. However, they also realized that this age would not fully pass away until the return of their Lord. For this reason, they lived daily in the strength of the once-for-all baptismal grace God had given them. At the same time, they hoped for a completely new life with their risen Lord, which they would receive when He returned.

Thus New Testament baptism is a killing rather than a vindicating of the "flesh." It is a daily dying to the old nature and a growing in the new. This is done by the Christian's relying solely on the forgiveness of God for Christ's sake. Therefore the Christian must constantly return to the source of his new life (Christ) by repentance and the reception of forgiveness through the hand of faith. The baptized always knows that he can plead for God's mercy in view of the covenant bond and gift of the Spirit which he received in his washing with the Word. And because God grants this Spirit through baptism, Christians possess the power to proclaim God's love and his news of Christ for all men. It is this gracious and universal message of God in Christ which distinguishes Christian baptism from all the others of this period.

This paper has left a number of areas of baptismal study untouched or alluded to just briefly. The relation of baptism and priesthood could be further investigated on the basis of materials from both the Old and New Testaments and Qumran. A study also could be made of the sacramental value of Old Testament ablutions and the dependence of Qumran upon the Old Testament in its baptismal practices.

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