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Jintae Kim

Liberty University, jkim33@liberty.edu

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Recommended Citation

Kim, Jintae, "The Concept of Atonement in the Qumran Literature and the New Covenant" (2010). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 374.

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THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT IN THE QUMRAN LITERATURE
AND THE NEW COVENANT

Jintae Kim

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA

Since their first discovery in 1947, the Qumran Scrolls have drawn tremendous scholarly attention. One of the centers of the early discussion was whether one could find clues to the origin of Christianity in the Qumran literature.¹ Among the areas of discussion were the possible connections between the Qumran literature and the New Testament concept of atonement.² No overall consensus has yet been reached among scholars concerning this issue.

On the one hand, William H. Brownlee and Dominique Barthélemy assert that they have found evidence from the Qumran literature that the New Testament concept of the atoning value of Jesus as the suffering Messiah may have had its roots in Judaism.³ Robert Eisenman arrives at

1. M. Black, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Doctrine* (London: Athlone Press, 1966), p. 14; J. Carmignac, 'Les citations de l'Ancien Testament, et spécialement des poèmes du serviteur, dans les hymnes de Qumrân', *RevQ* 2.7 (June 1960), pp. 357-94; J. Coppens, 'Les affinités qumrâniennes de l'épître aux Hébreux', *NRT* 94 (1962), pp. 128-41; O. Cullmann, 'The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research into the Beginnings of Christianity', *JBL* 74 (1955), pp. 213-26; J. Daniélou, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* (trans. S. Attanasio; Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1958); J.L. Teicher, 'The Damascus Documents and the Origin of the Jewish Christian Sect', *JJS* 2 (1951), pp. 115-43; B. Thiering, 'Suffering and Ascetism at Qumran, as Illustrated in the Hodayot', *RevQ* 8 (1974), pp. 393-405. See the review of the scholarship for the first fifty years by George J. Brooke, 'The Scrolls and the Study of the New Testament', in Robert A. Kugler and Eileen M. Schuller (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls at Fifty: Proceedings of the 1997 Society of Biblical Literature Qumran Section Meetings* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), pp. 61-76.

2. Paul Garnet, 'Atonement Constructions in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls', *EvQ* 46 (1974), pp. 131-63; *idem*, 'Atonement: Qumran and the New Testament', in James L. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), III, pp. 357-80.

3. W.H. Brownlee, 'The Cross of Christ in the Light of Ancient Scrolls', *The*

an interesting suggestion that there may be an esoteric relation between Qumran's 'New Covenant in the land of Damascus' (CD 6.19; 8.21; 19.33-34; 20.12) and the cup of the new covenant in (his) blood (Lk. 22.20; 1 Cor. 11.25; cf. Mt. 26.28; Mk 14.24), thus indicating that the origin of the New Testament concept of atonement is somehow related to the Qumran community.⁴

On the other hand, Paul Garnet studies the use of the term *kipper* and its cognate *kopher* in the Qumran literature and concludes his findings saying, 'We have seen nothing in the scrolls that resembles the sacrificial death of Christ in the New Testament either in the content or the extent and importance of the idea'.⁵ Crispin Fletcher-Louis presents a similar view: 'However, judging by the language the respective communities use for self-identification, there was no real substantive contact and influence, only shared interest in similar biblical texts. If there was contact, then the earliest Christians have formulated their theology in a conscious polemic against Essenism.'⁶

Garnet, however, goes further: 'It by no means follows that this detailed knowledge about Palestinian Judaism that we now have from the DSS is useless for understanding NT salvation ideas, including atonement'.⁷

It is not within the scope of this paper to make a definitive statement about the relationship between the New Testament concept of atonement and the Qumran community in general. Rather, this paper will be focused on the peculiar use of the phrase הַבְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה (the New Covenant) in the Qumran literature that is not known to have been used in any other

United Presbyterian 28.12 (1953), pp. 10-11; *idem*, 'The Servant of the Lord in the Qumran Scrolls', *BASOR* 132 (1953), pp. 8-15; *idem*, 'Messianic Motifs of Qumran and the New Testament', *NTS* 3 (1956-57), pp. 12-30, 195-210; D. Barthélemy, 'Le grand rouleau d'Isaie trouvé près de la Mer Morte', *RB* 57 (1950), pp. 530-49 (546-49).

4. Robert Eisenman, 'An Esoteric Relation between Qumran's "New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" and the New Testament's "Cup of the New Covenant in (his) Blood"?'', *RevQ* 21 (2004), pp. 439-56.

5. Garnet, 'Atonement: Qumran and the New Testament', p. 371.

6. Crispin Fletcher-Louis, review of *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (STDJ, 46; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), edited by James R. Davila, in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 15 (2008), pp. 401-403 (401).

7. Garnet, 'Atonement: Qumran and the New Testament', p. 378.

literature of the Second Temple period or of the early rabbinic period.⁸ In the New Testament, we find the fusion of the concept of atonement with the concept of eschatological forgiveness as promised in Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy in connection with the atoning death of Christ (Lk. 22.20; 1 Cor. 11.25; Heb. 8.6-13; 9.15-28; 1 Jn 2.2; 12-14).⁹ Moreover, several books of the New Testament, 1 John in particular, spiritualize the cultic atonement ritual by declaring that eschatological forgiveness is now available for Jesus' sake (2.12) to those who enter and remain in the new covenant community by confessing him as the Son of God (4.15; 5.5) and the Christ (2.22; 4.2; 5.1). The same idea is expressed in 1 Cor. 10.16 (cf. 1 Jn 1.3, 6, 7), in which Paul describes the eucharist as a participation (κοινωνία) in the body and blood of Christ, that is, in Christ himself. More specifically, Paul describes it as a participation in the benefits of his atoning death.¹⁰ The word κοινωνία is further applied to the community of believers as the body of Christ in v. 17. Paul returns to the matter of eucharistic celebration in 1 Cor. 11.25, which clearly

8. S. Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews* (JSNTSup, 44; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), p. 35.

9. Jintae Kim, 'The Concept of Atonement in 1 John: A Redevelopment of the Second Temple Concept of Atonement' (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2003), pp. 7-8; *idem*, 'The Concept of Atonement in Early Rabbinic Thought and the New Testament Writings', *JGRChJ* 2 (2001-2005), pp. 117-45 (126).

10. James D.G. Dunn acknowledges the link between Christ's death and the idea of the new covenant, but discounts its importance in Pauline thought by saying that the link lay somewhat on the periphery of his thought (J.D.G. Dunn, 'Did Paul Have a Covenant Theology? Reflections on Romans 9:4 and 11:27', in Stanley E. Porter and Jacqueline C.R. de Roo [eds.], *The Concept of the Covenant in the Second Temple Period* [JSJSup, 71; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003], pp. 287-307 (296-97). According to Dunn, 'the tradition with which Paul was familiar, and which he no doubt celebrated regularly, portrayed the death of Jesus as the sacrifice (cf. Exod. 24:8) which established a new covenant, or the new covenant (Jer. 31:31), between God and the followers of the Christ Jesus'. Paul's emphasis on the death of Christ and its atoning function is found in other passages such as Rom. 3.25-26 (Kim, 'Atonement in 1 John', p. 8; D.J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [NICNT, 6; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], p. 28). Daniel S. ben Ezra finds another demonstration of the immense influence of Yom Kippur on the development of the early Christian *imaginaire* of Jesus' death and its atoning function in Rom. 3.25-26, the apex of the theology of justification (Daniel S. ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century* [WUNT, 163; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2003], pp. 197-205).

connects this fellowship with the new covenant fellowship established by Christ's blood. Thus, the word *κοινωνία* is used by both Paul and the author of 1 John to refer to both the new covenant fellowship between Christ and believers and the new covenant community of believers.

I would suggest that this way of interpreting Jeremiah's new covenant is built upon a Jewish eschatologizing of forgiveness as evidenced at Qumran, where the community identified itself both as the new covenant (CD 19.35; cf. 6.19; 8.21; 19.33-34; 20.12; 1QpHab 2.3) and as the true temple (1QS 5.6, 21-22; 8.5-6, 8-9; 9.6) with spiritual sacrifices.¹¹

The community at Qumran spiritualized the national and corporate hopes of Israel by identifying the true Israel not with the biblical Israel, but with the spiritual descendents of Abraham, who have kept God's precepts (CD 3.2-20; 7.12-13). The Qumran community considered Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy to be fulfilled in the history of their own times or in the inner life of the community by identifying itself with the new covenant community, where the gifts of divine forgiveness and eternal life were available. Qumran covenanters used the term *קָהָל* for their new covenant community (1QS 1.1, 12, 16; 2.22, 26; 3.6, 12; 5.1; 8.1, 5).¹² The term is translated with Greek *κοινωνία* (cf. 1 Cor. 10.16;

11. Though scholars have not reached consensus on the origin of the *Damascus Document*, they agree that the document was dear to the heart of the Qumran community. We know the *Damascus Document* existed by the second century BCE. See Shemaryahu Talmon, 'What's in a Calendar? Calendar Conformity and Calendar Controversy in Ancient Judaism: The Case of the "Community of the Renewed Covenant"', in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins. II. The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), pp. 25-58 (52). Philip R. Davies takes the view that the document was composed elsewhere and later appropriated by the Qumran community (P.R. Davies, *The Damascus Document* [JSOTSup, 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982], pp. 202-204). Thus, E.P. Sanders feels comfortable with the very careful use of the *Damascus Document* in discussing the Dead Sea Scrolls and he is happy to call both the *Damascus Document* and the other main Scrolls 'Essene' (E.P. Sanders, 'The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps and Differences', in Timothy H. Lim *et al.* [eds.], *The Dead Sea Scrolls in their Historical Context* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000], pp. 7-43 [41]).

12. M.E. Boismard, 'The First Epistle of John and the Writings of Qumran', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *John and Qumran* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), pp. 156-65 (160); R.E. Brown, *Epistles of John* (AB, 30; New York: Doubleday, 1982), p. 170; Shemaryahu Talmon, *The World of Qumran from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989), pp. 53-60. According to Talmon, the term *קָהָל* is a biblical word that

1 Jn 1.3, 6, 7) by both Josephus (*War* 2.122-123) and Philo (*Prob.* 75-91) to express the idea of community among the Essenes.¹³

In the Qumran literature, we find an important use of the phrase הברית החדשה that is not known to have been used in any other literature of the Second Temple period or of the early Rabbinic period. The Qumran writings are full of covenantal expressions, including several uses of the term הברית החדשה. The phrase is found several times in the Damascus Document (6.19; 8.21; 19.33-34; 20.12)¹⁴ and once in *Habakkuk Peshar* (1QpHab 2.3), where ברית (covenant) has to be supplied to fill in a lacuna before החדשה (new).¹⁵ Thus, with reference to divine forgiveness in the New Testament, the Qumran literature is primarily important because the community identified itself as the new covenant community, where divine forgiveness is available. This way of eschatologizing new covenant forgiveness is distinct from other Second Temple literature in two ways: (1) The true Israel is no longer identified with the biblical Israel, but with the spiritual descendents of Abraham, who have kept God's precepts (CD 3.2-20; 7.12-13); (2) Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy is considered to

was used to mean 'covenant' or 'congregation' in the Qumran scrolls.

13. This identification of the term *κοινωνία* with the Hebrew *קָהָל* is based upon the two assumptions made by Frank M. Cross and André Dupont-Sommer (F.M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 3rd edn, 1995], pp. 66-87; A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* [trans. G. Vermes; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1961], p. 44): (1) The Qumran covenanters were the Essenes described in Josephus and Philo; (2) Philo's term *κοινωνία* is a translation of *קָהָל*. The Essene origin of the Qumran community is supported by many scholars: W.H. Brownlee, 'John the Baptist in the New Light of Ancient Scrolls', in K. Stendahl (ed.), *The Scrolls and the New Testament* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 33-53; Cullmann, 'Significance of the Qumran Texts', pp. 213-26; J. Murphy-O'Connor, 'The Essenes and their History', *RB* 81 (1974), pp. 215-44; H. Stegemann, *The Library of Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); H. Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran* (trans. E.T. Sander; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), pp. 241-42; G. Vermes, *The Dead Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Books, 4th edn, 1995), p. 22; Sanders, 'Dead Sea Sect', p. 41; Talmon, *World of Qumran*, pp. 61-67. According to Sanders, 'Josephus' description of the Essenes seems compatible with the Scroll (the Qumranians had moved to Jerusalem during Herod's reign, and Josephus' source was probably written when Herod was king)'.

14. The *Damascus Document* will hereafter be called CD (referring to the Cairo Genizah copy).

15. Lehne, *New Covenant in Hebrews*, p. 43; M.P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretation of Biblical Books* (CBQMS, 81; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979), p. 13.

have been realized in the history of their own times or in the inner life of their sect.¹⁶ Thus, examination of the Qumran writings that used the phrase הברית חדשה is in order, so that we may provide a reference point to the concept of atonement in the New Testament.

An Examination of the New Covenant Passages

CD 6.18-19

As stated, the phrase הברית חדשה is found several times in CD and once in *Habakkuk Pesher*. The first passage to examine is CD 6.18-19 and its larger context, the primary importance of which lies in the nature of the new covenant mentioned in this passage:

... to keep the Sabbath day according to the exact interpretation, and the festivals and the day of fasting, according to what they had discovered, those who entered the new covenant (הברית חדשה) in the land of Damascus.¹⁷

The nature of the new covenant will become clearer when this passage is read in its immediate context in CD. Both Christian and Jewish scholars in general seem to agree that by calling the community ‘the New Covenant’, the author of CD (19.35) had in mind the prophecy of Jer. 31.31 and considered the community as its fulfillment.¹⁸ R.F. Collins, however, objects to this identification primarily for two reasons:¹⁹ (1) Jer. 31.31-34 is not quoted here, nor in the rest of the extant literature of Qumran; (2) The rigid and legalistic notion of covenant that is implicit in the use of the expression ‘New Covenant’ and its association with the

16. Cross, *Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 156.

17. Hereafter the English translation of Qumran literature, including CD, is taken from Martinez’s new translation (F.G. Martinez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* [ed. F.G. Martinez; New York: E.J. Brill, 1996], II). For the consonantal texts of CD, I have used Rabin’s critical texts (C. Rabin, *The Zadokite Document* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954]).

18. Ringgren, *Faith of Qumran*, p. 201; Cross, *Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 157; F.F. Bruce, “‘To the Hebrews’ or ‘to the Essenes’?”, *NTS* 9 (1962–63), pp. 217-32 (220); Brownlee, ‘Messianic Motifs’, p. 16; D. Flusser, ‘The Dead Sea Sect and Pre-Pauline Christianity’, *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4 (1957), pp. 236-65 (236); Martin G. Abegg, ‘Covenant in the Qumran Sectarians’, in Porter and de Roo (eds.), *The Concept of the Covenant*, pp. 81-97 (84); David Noel Freedman and David Miano, ‘People of the New Covenant’, in Porter and de Roo (eds.), *Concept of the Covenant*, pp. 7-26 (23-24); Talmon, ‘What’s in a Calendar?’, p. 27.

19. R.F. Collins, ‘The Berith-Notion of the Cairo Damascus Document and its Comparison with the New Testament’, *ETL* 39b (1963), pp. 555-94 (572).

Torah and the calendar is a persistent one in Qumran texts, but it does not seem to correspond to the characteristics of Jeremiah's new covenant.

These objections do not seem to be groundless. However, the Qumran communities or the community described in CD did not interpret literally the part of the prophecy that says that the new covenant will be made 'with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'; they saw it as a designation of the 'true Israel', the remnant that God promised to raise up after exile, according to Leviticus 26.²⁰ For the covenant community, all the eschatological prophecies in the Old Testament find their fulfillment in their community. Thus, they have no problem identifying the remnant in Leviticus 26 with the beneficiaries of Jeremiah's new covenant blessings. The question then is: in what sense did the author of CD argue for its fulfillment? The context of CD 6.18-19 provides an answer.

CD 6.18-19 is part of a larger context, CD 6.11b-8.9, which provides the main points of the community's *halakhah*. The *halakhah* is primarily concerned with the proper observance of Sabbaths, feasts and fasts by those who enter the new covenant in the land of Damascus. The context of this particular *halakhah* is directly related to the origin of the new covenant community and the blessings in it described in 5.20-6.11, which repeats the account of redemptive history described already in 1.1-2.13 and 2.14-3.20. This redemptive history revolves around the doctrine of the two covenants: the covenant with Israel and the new covenant with the remnant.²¹

The first account (1.1-2.13) tells about the original election of the remnant from the ruins of the old covenant and the desertion by God of the remainder of Israel. The narrative runs from the sins of pre-exilic Israel to the arrival of a 'Teacher of Righteousness' who brings knowledge of God's deeds to a 'congregation of traitors' (1.3-12). Thus, the first account emphasizes the knowledge of God brought by the Teacher, and the congregation of traitors is contrasted with the congregation of the Teacher. The second account (2.14-3.20) repeats the same history, but places more emphasis on divine forgiveness and eternal life as blessings of the new covenant, and, as Moses did in Deuteronomy, challenges the

20. Flusser, 'Dead Sea Sect', p. 236.

21. Talmon finds the self-identification of the Covenanters with the new covenant of Jeremiah 'in their vicarious re-experience of biblical Israel's "three-stage" past history: exile—as in Egypt and Babylonia; sojourn or wanderings in the desert—as after the Exodus from Egypt; conquest of the land—as in the days of Joshua' (Talmon, 'What's in a Calendar?', p. 27).

initiates of the covenant to choose either divine forgiveness or divine wrath. The third account (5.20–6.11) deals with the same period, but places more emphasis on the new *halakhah*. Thus, the focus of redemptive history is on the broken covenant in pre-exilic times and the new covenant in postexilic times. This may explain why the Qumran community uses the phrase ‘new covenant’. As Flusser says, the Qumran community may have been ‘attracted by the eschatological content of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31, especially as the prophet says that the new covenant will be different from the old broken one, and it saw in itself the “true Israel”, walking in perfection (1QS 9.8; cf. 8.20; CD 20.2, 5, 7)’.²² Cross seems to be right when he says that in the prophecies of the Old Testament the Qumran covenanters

saw predicted the events of their own day, and where the prophets spoke of the last days and their signs (and even where they did not), the sectarian commentators discovered fulfillment in the history of their own times or in the inner life of their sect.²³

I have argued that the Teacher and his followers understood their community as the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s new covenant prophecy. This argument is strengthened when Jeremiah’s new covenant categories are compared with the divine blessings in the new covenant in CD. Jeremiah’s new covenant categories are the knowledge of God, divine forgiveness, the abiding presence of the Torah, and eternal fellowship with God. The new covenant in CD involves three divine blessings, each of which is equivalent to one of the new covenant categories in Jeremiah: (1) the gift of knowledge of the ‘hidden matters’ (CD 3.14) and diagnosis of the problem of the first generation; (2) the gift of divine forgiveness (3.18; 4.9-10); and (3) the gift of a safe home (3.19-20) and eternal life (7.4-6; 19.1). These blessings of the new covenant community also appear in the *Community Rule*: (1) divine forgiveness in terms of cleansing and purification (1QS 4.20-22); (2) knowledge of God (4.22); and (3) restoration of the glory of Adam (4.23). The new covenant categories also appear in the thanksgiving *Hymns*, where the hymnist gives thanks to God for the gifts of knowledge, divine forgiveness and the indwelling Spirit. A similar doctrine is found in 1QH 19.9-14, where salvation as a divine gift is described as (1) the gift of knowledge, (2) the gift of divine forgiveness in terms of purification from sin and (3) eternal fellowship

22. Flusser, ‘Dead Sea Sect’, p. 236.

23. Cross, *Ancient Library of Qumran*, p. 156.

in the community (union with the sons of truth, in the lot of God's holy ones, in an everlasting community, with the perpetual host and the everlasting spirits). Thus, divine forgiveness is a prerequisite for entering the covenant community, which is also the community where heavenly fellowship is available here and now. These three categories correspond to the new covenant categories in Jer. 31.31-34.

First, the divine blessings in the new covenant in CD begin with the revelation of the knowledge of 'hidden matters' (נסתרות) to the remnant of Israel, concerning which Israel had gone astray (CD 3.14). The problems of the first generation concern primarily incorrect interpretation of the law, which governs how to observe the Sabbath and feasts.²⁴ This revelation is to be followed by a human response of obedience, which necessitates the formation of a code of legal ordinances, a *halakhah*, and the study of the law (CD 6.4-8). The new covenant is founded on doing what 'the exact interpretation (פרוש) of the law' prescribes (CD 6.14), and that means observing the Sabbath 'as interpreted' (כפרוש) and keeping the festivals and the Day of Atonement (6.18-20).²⁵ In *Habakkuk Pesher*, the new covenant is identified with the teachings of the Teacher of Righteousness, which primarily have to do with knowledge of the deeds of God for the last generation through the Teacher of Righteousness (CD 1.11-12) and the eschatological predictions (1QpHab 2.8). The parallel expression in the *Rule of Community* directly identifies this knowledge with the knowledge of the Most High (1QS 4.22).

Secondly, CD 3.18 states, אֵל כִּפֵּר בְּעַד עֲוֹנָם וַיִּשָּׂא לַפִּשְׁעֵם ('God atoned for their failings and pardoned their sins'). God, who pardoned the first members by establishing the new covenant with them, will also pardon (לְכִפּוּר) those who will join the covenant later (4.9). The motive for divine forgiveness comes from God's own nature, for he is willing 'to atone for persons who repent from wickedness' (2.4-5). Furthermore, divine forgiveness is said to be the purpose of giving the new covenant (CD 4.9-10) and is also emphasized as a mark of the members of the new covenant community in the *Rule of Community*. Note the triple expression of divine forgiveness and the double expression of cleansing in 1QS 3.6-10:

For, by the spirit of the true counsel concerning the paths of man *all his sins are atoned* so that he can look at the light of life. And by the spirit of holiness

24. Abegg, 'Covenant in the Qumran Sectarians', p. 86.

25. Joseph M. Baumgarten, 'Yom Kippur in the Qumran Scrolls and Second Temple Sources', *Dead Sea Discoveries* 6 (1999), pp. 184-91 (184-86).

which links him with his truth he is *cleansed of all his sins*. And by the spirit of uprightness and of humility *his sin is atoned*. And by the compliance of his soul with all the laws of God his flesh is *cleansed* by being sprinkled with cleansing waters and being made *holy with the waters of repentance*. May he, then, steady his steps in order to walk with perfection on all the paths of God, conforming to all he has decreed concerning the regular times of his commands and not turn aside.

With reference to the theme of divine forgiveness, four motifs can be detected from the passages: (1) the Spirit (of true counsel, of holiness, of uprightness and of humility) as mediator of divine forgiveness; (2) obedience to the laws of God, as interpreted by the community, as the condition for divine forgiveness; (3) the blessing of divine forgiveness in terms of atonement and cleansing; and (4) the new covenant community as the realm where divine forgiveness is available.

Thirdly, CD 3.19-20 states that God has built for them a safe home (בֵּית נֶאֱמָר) in Israel, so that those who remain steadfast in it will acquire eternal life and all the glory of Adam (cf. 1QS 4.23: ‘and to them shall belong all the glory of Adam’). What is meant by a safe home is not certain, but, when it is considered in its present context and as an allusion to 1 Sam. 2.35, it would seem to refer to the new covenant community, which was established only after the Exile. For all those who join the community and walk in their teaching, the covenant of God is the guarantee that they will be saved from all the nets of the pit (CD 14.1-2) and that they shall live a thousand generations (7.4-6; 19.1). Thus, the community is the realm of divine blessings, where all three divine gifts are available to its members.

The new covenant in Damascus is not totally different from the old covenant. The remnant is contrasted to the Israel of the old covenant by their holding fast to the commandments and by their continuing fidelity. They will join an everlasting covenant, foreshadowed by the three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) who were faithful to the covenant (CD 3.2-4). This establishment of the new covenant with the remnant is based upon the promise of God in the first covenant, that is, the Sinai covenant (CD 1.4; Lev. 26). Thus, the new covenant in the land of Damascus is a renewed covenant, which, however, is on a different footing from the old covenant:²⁶ (1) it has its own *halakhah*, which is the only *halakhah*

26. Craig A. Evans, ‘Covenant in the Qumran Literature’, in Porter and de Roo (eds.), *Concept of the Covenant*, pp. 55-80 (79-80); Abegg, ‘Covenant in the Qumran Sectarians’, pp. 84-89; Michael O. Wise, ‘The Concept of the New Covenant in the

accepted by the community;²⁷ (2) the beneficiaries of the new covenant are described as the true Israel with ‘Judah’ as their label, in contrast to those of the first one, labeled as ‘Ephraim’ (CD 7.12-13). They may be labeled differently: the congregation of traitors and the children of Abraham (CD 3.2-4). Thus, the true Israel is no longer identified with the biblical Israel, but with the spiritual descendents of Abraham, who have kept God’s precepts (CD 3.2-20).

CD 8.20-21; 19.34; 20.11-13

The next passages to be examined are three passages in CD:

This is the word which Jeremiah spoke to Baruch, son of Neriah, and Elishah to Giezi his servant. All the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus (8.20-21).

And thus, all the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus and turned and betrayed and departed from the well of living waters, shall not be counted in the assembly of the people and shall not be inscribed in their lists, from the day of the session of him who teaches of the teacher

Teacher Hymns from Qumran (1QHa, x-xvii)’, in Porter and de Roo (eds.), *Concept of the Covenant*, pp. 99-128 (163); Freedman and Miano, ‘People of the New Covenant’, pp. 21-23; George W. Buchanan, ‘The Covenant in Legal Context’, in Porter and de Roo (eds.), *Concept of the Covenant*, pp. 27-54 (46); Talmon, ‘What’s in a Calendar?’, p. 58.

27. According to the majority of Jewish scholars, the issue of the calendar was the primary reason that the people of the New Covenant separated themselves from mainstream Judaism (Talmon, ‘What’s in a Calendar?’). In the center of the calendar issue is the observance of the solemn fast of Yom Kippur according to the Covenanters’ solar calendar (Baumgarten, ‘Yom Kippur’, pp. 184-86). Baumgarten suggests further that, like the author of *Jubilees*, the Covenanters of CD had a particular concept about the nature of Yom Kippur as ‘the Day of Affliction’ (CD 6.18-19; cf. *Jub.* 34.19). The ritual and the imagery of Yom Kippur played an important role in the portrayal of Christ’s death as the atoning sacrifice in the New Testament. Ben Ezra has examined all the relevant literature for clues to the impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity. He concludes: ‘Yom Kippur had a decisive influence on the formulation of the early Christian myths of the atoning death of Christ and his permanent intercession in the heavenly holy of holies. Three major typologies depict Jesus as scapegoat and sin-offering goat (*Barnabas*), high priest, veil and sacrifice (Hebrews) and *kapporet* (Romans)... All three of these texts used earlier Yom Kippur traditions, making Yom Kippur one of the first cultic imageries to be used in the formation of the Christian mythology... 1 John compares Jesus to the atonement, using Yom Kippur imagery... This interpretation belongs to a later stage in the development of Christian Judaism, probably the end of the first century’ (ben Ezra, *Impact of Yom Kippur*, pp. 225-26).

(19.33-35).

... for they spoke falsehood about the holy regulations and despised the covenant of God and the pact which they established in the land of Damascus, which is the first covenant. And neither for them nor their families shall there be a part in the house of the law (20.11-13).

All three passages warn against the danger of apostasy. The primary importance of these passages for our purposes is their emphasis on remaining in the covenant community as a condition for salvation. Both CD 8.21 and 19.34 focus on the same concern. Their immediate context is this: 'Thus will be judgment of all those entering his covenant but who did not remain steadfast in them; they will have visitation for destruction at the hand of Belial' (CD 8.1-2; cf. 19.13). Then the history of the broken covenant is mentioned, and the members of the community are identified as heirs of the fathers' covenant. The judgment on these traitors of the new covenant is reiterated in CD 19.32-35:

And like this judgment will be that of all who reject God's precepts and forsake them and move aside in the stubbornness of their heart. And thus, all the men who entered the new covenant in the land of Damascus and turned and betrayed and departed from the well of living waters, shall not be counted in the assembly of the people and shall not be inscribed in their lists, from the day of the session of the teacher.

The history of the broken covenant of Israel becomes a mirror image of the situation of the community. Thus, entering the covenant community is one thing, but remaining in it is another. To have divine forgiveness and eternal life secured, one must both enter the covenant and remain in the covenant. The community is the realm of salvation and eternal fellowship, in which one must remain to have assurance of salvation.

CD 20.11-13 contains the last use of new covenant language in CD. The passage promises the same eschatological judgment for 'everyone who enters the congregation of the men of perfect holiness and is slack in the fulfillment of the instructions of the upright' (20.2). Interestingly, their sins are described as idolatry, 'for they have placed idols in their heart and have walked in the stubbornness of their heart' (20.9). The judgment covers even the families of the defectors in CD 20.13, for 'neither for them nor their families shall there be a part in the house of the law'.

1QpHab 2.1-10a

The last passage to be examined is 1QpHab 2.1-10a. This passage interprets Hab. 1.5. The גוים (nations) in the Hebrew text have become

בגד (traitors) in the pesher, which uses the term to describe three types of traitors:²⁸ (1) the traitors with the Man of Lies, who do not believe in the words of the Teacher of Righteousness as coming from the mouth of God; (2) the traitors of the new covenant, who are not faithful to the covenant of God (the new covenant) and have dishonored his holy name; and (3) the traitors in the last days, who will not believe the predictions of the Priest concerning the final generation, even though he has been given God's special revelation about how to interpret the prophetic message. The context is clearly polemical and apologetical. The purpose of *Habakkuk Pesher*, as explained by Brownlee, is true of this passage.²⁹ Habakkuk 1.5 is used as a proof text (1) to vindicate the Teacher of Righteousness and his followers against their opponents, by showing that the work and sufferings of the Teacher and the evil and blasphemous works of the Man of Lies have all been prophesied in Scripture; and (2) to strengthen the faith and endurance of the Teacher's adherents and warn the wavering of the dangers of apostasy. The context of this passage is similar to that of the three CD passages (8.20-21; 19.34; 20.11-13), but two important elements come to the fore in *Habakkuk Pesher*. In CD, the first blessing of the new covenant was the knowledge of 'hidden matters' (relating to the issue of the calendar), and the sins of Israel were primarily violations of these truths. However, 1QpHab 2.1-10a emphasizes the words of the Teacher of Righteousness and the eschatological predictions of the Priest. Of these two, the first one is of primary interest to this study.

Of particular importance is the fact that the words of the Teacher of Righteousness now assume the same authority as the words of God. As we may recall, in CD 1.11 God raised up the Teacher of Righteousness for the remnant who sought him with a perfect heart, in order to tell the deeds of God to the last generation. 1QpHab 2.1-10a states that it is faith in (and obedience to) his word that marks one as belonging to the community; he is the source of authority (from the mouth of God). He is (1) an interpreter of the words of the prophets (7.4-5; cf. 1QpPs^a I, 27), (2) the founder of the elect of God (cf. 1QpPs^a II, 5) and (3) the Priest

28. The same word בגד is used in CD 8.5 (= 19.17) as a description of those with whom the community is contrasted, and in 19.34, of defectors from the community. The first group of traitors in *Habakkuk Pesher* seems to be identical to the former, and the second to the latter. *Habakkuk Pesher* seems to depend upon CD in interpreting Hab. 1.5 as attested in the pesher.

29. W.H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (SBLMS, 24; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 35-36.

(cf. 1QpPs^a II, 19). His task is to instruct, to make known the mysteries of God, and his teaching imparts the saving knowledge to the chosen ones so that they will be saved from judgment (cf. 1QpMic 10.6-9). According to 1QpHab 8.1-2, God will free from punishment those who observe the law on account of their deeds and because of their loyalty to the Teacher of Righteousness.

Summary and Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion, we have examined the passages in the Qumran writings that used the phrase *הברית חדשה* in relation to the concept of atonement in the New Testament. Our examination of the Qumran literature identified two distinctive elements in comparison to other Second Temple writings. First, the community at Qumran spiritualized the national and corporate hopes of Israel by identifying the true Israel not with the biblical Israel, but with the spiritual descendents of Abraham, who have kept God's precepts (CD 3.2-20; 7.12-13). Secondly, the Qumran community considered Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy to be fulfilled in the history of their own times or in the inner life of the community by identifying itself with the new covenant community, where the gifts of divine forgiveness and eternal life were available. We find these two elements in the New Testament concept of atonement (Mt. 26.26-29; Mk 14.22-25; Lk. 22.15-20; 1 Cor. 11.25; Heb. 9.15; cf. 1 Jn 2.2, 12; 4.10, 14), but the difference is that according to the community, the 'true' Israelites are a subset of physical Israel (hence a remnant), not an overlapping set as in the New Testament.