The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible

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Abstract This paper examines various significant aspects of what may be designated the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: its contents and description, scribal conventions, variant readings, use by modern English Bible translations, as well as parabiblical texts and their possible affiliation with the DSS Bible, canonicity, scriptural commentaries, tefillin, and mezuzot. An examination of the DSS biblical texts, which date to nearly a thousand years earlier than previously known texts of the Hebrew Bible, demonstrates a high degree of accuracy in the transmission of our Bible texts. Most variants offer only minor corrections to our biblical texts. Thus the scribes' professionalism overall should give us, as modern readers, confidence that biblical scripture has come down to us in excellent order.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible

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The Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) are arguably the greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century. Since their initial discovery in 1947, the scrolls have been the focus of thousands of books, articles, monographs, and other writings.[1] Two academic journals are dedicated entirely to their study,[2] and academic conferences discuss their significance. The popular press attempts to reveal the scrolls to the public, often with misinformed and sensational approaches; however, one does not need such approaches because the scrolls, on their own, are spectacular. The press, at times, also presents a number of unsolved puzzles—for example, one scroll comprises cryptic texts, or texts appear to be written in code, while another is a mysterious text written backwards. Yet another is a composition written on a copper scroll that details the whereabouts of massive hidden treasures of gold, silver, spices, and precious objects—treasures that presumably once belonged to Herod's temple. Another scroll features some words written in red

1. See, for example, Florentino García Martínez and Donald W. Parry, *A Bibliography of the Finds in the Desert of Judah, 1970–1995: Arranged by Author with Citation and Subject Indexes* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), and the bibliography in this volume, pages 105–16.

2. *Dead Sea Discoveries* and *Revue de Qumran*.

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ink, rather than the standard black ink. Yet still other scrolls depict the name *Jehovah* with four dots or in an ancient form of Hebrew, possibly to protect against improper utterance of this sacred name.

More than twenty percent of the DSS are copies of books from the Hebrew Bible, known in the Christian world as the Old Testament. The biblical scrolls are consequential finds because they show us what the Bible looked like during the century or two that preceded Jesus Christ and his apostles. The scrolls disclose ancient writing styles, the manner in which words were spelled anciently, the formation of the biblical canon, the making of ancient scrolls from leather or papyrus and the linen thread that tied the pieces of parchment together, the consistency and quality of ink used for writing the scrolls, the manner in which the scribes corrected their errors as they copied the text, and their way of creating sense units, or paragraphs. Taken as a whole, the various scribal conventions disclose the nature of the scribal schools that produced the DSS. These conventions demonstrate the high level of competence among the scribes who were producing new copies of the scriptures; the scribes' professionalism should give us, as modern readers, confidence that biblical scripture has come down to us in excellent order.

This paper examines various significant aspects of what may be designated the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, including its contents and description, scribal conventions, variant readings, the use of the DSS by modern English Bible translations, parabiblical texts and their possible affiliation with the DSS Bible, canonicity, scriptural commentaries, *tefillin*, and *mezuzot*.

Contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, also called the Qumran Bible, is a collection of books from the Hebrew Bible. Neither expression—Dead Sea Scrolls Bible or Qumran Bible—may adequately express the contents of the "Bible" used by the Jews who owned this collection of religious texts because we do not know which texts they considered to have religious or canonical authority. That is to say, we do not know for certain which books were included among the sacred texts of the Jewish

Qumran sect. Their Bible may have had more or fewer texts than we have in our Bible. On this, see the section below entitled Parabiblical Texts at Qumran.

Of the approximately 900 different compositions and fragmented texts of the DSS discovered in the eleven Qumran caves, just over 200 represent books from the Old Testament,[3] including, for example, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Isaiah, Jonah, and Daniel.[4] Multiple copies of single works have also been found. For instance, 19 or 20 copies of the book of Genesis have been discovered,[5] 13 of Leviticus, 7 of Numbers, 30 of Deuteronomy, 21 of Isaiah, 36 of Psalms, and 4 of Ruth. Qumran scholar James C. VanderKam notes that "the raw totals [of copies of the biblical books discovered among the DSS] probably also indicate which books were used frequently."[6] Based on the greater number of manuscripts found, Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, for example, were likely held in great esteem by the inhabitants of Qumran.[7] The historical books (i.e., Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, and 1–2 Chronicles) were probably less important to the religious goals of the Jews who owned the scrolls.

3. "Within the Qumran corpus of some 900 texts, the *c.*200 biblical texts constitute 22% (not counting the *tefillin* and *mezuzot*)." Emanuel Tov, "Categorized List of the 'Biblical Texts,'" in *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and An Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series*, DJD XXXIX, ed. Emanuel Tov (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 167.

4. For a listing of biblical texts discovered among the DSS, see Eugene Ulrich, "An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert (Genesis–Kings)," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1 (1994): 113–29; and "An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert (Part 2: Isaiah–Chronicles)," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995): 86–107; see also Emanuel Tov, *Revised Lists of the Texts from the Judaean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

5. It is sometimes difficult, due to the fragmented nature of some of the scrolls, to determine if certain fragments came from a single scroll or from two different scrolls—hence the uncertainty of precisely how many copies of a given book were discovered at Qumran. See Tov, "Categorized List of the 'Biblical Texts,'" 166–67, plus 167 n. 10.

6. James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 31.

7. It is probably more than coincidence that the early Christian community held the same three Old Testament writings—Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah—to be of great value, for they are the most quoted scriptural books in the New Testament.

The following table lists the number of biblical manuscripts discovered among the DSS (as ordered in the Hebrew Bible):[8]

Genesis	19–20
Exodus	17
Leviticus	13
Numbers	7
Deuteronomy	30
Joshua	2
Judges	3
1–2 Samuel	4
1–2 Kings	3
Isaiah	21
Jeremiah	6
Ezekiel	6
Twelve Prophets	8–9
Psalms	36
Job	4
Proverbs	2
Ruth	4
Song of Solomon	4
Ecclesiastes	2
Lamentations	4
Esther	0
Daniel	8
Ezra–Nehemiah	1
1–2 Chronicles	1

With the exception of the book of Esther, a copy of every book of the Old Testament was discovered in the Qumran caves. One theory on that count is that perhaps Esther did not survive the two millennia of decay in the caves. Biblical scholar Lawrence H. Schiffman wrote concerning the book of Esther, "While several explanations are possible for the absence of Esther, the most likely is simple chance. A finding of zero copies is neither surprising nor statistically meaningful,

8. Tov, "Categorized List of the 'Biblical Texts,'" 167–76.

for several other books of the Writings are found in only one or two copies."[9]

The Qumran caves yielded biblical and nonbiblical scrolls. For example, two Isaiah scrolls were discovered in Cave 1; three biblical fragments (Ezekiel 16:31–33; Psalm 2:6–7; Lamentations 1:10–12; 3:53–62) were found in Cave 3; a large number of biblical manuscripts were uncovered in Cave 4 (approximately 15,000 fragments of both biblical and sectarian documents), and Cave 11 produced two fragments of Leviticus (including one written in an old Hebrew script), one of Deuteronomy, one of Ezekiel, and four of Psalms.

Discoveries of nineteen other biblical texts were also made in the Judean desert at Masada (1963–65), Wadi Murabba'at (1951–52), and Nahal Hever (1951–52; 1960–61).

New Testament texts were not discovered among the DSS. The reason for this is twofold: the sect that inhabited Qumran was not Christian, and the texts belonging to the corpus of the DSS were created and copied before the rise of Christianity in the first century AD.

Description of the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible

The state of preservation of the scrolls varies considerably.[10] Due to its beauty and completeness, the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa[a]) is the best-known biblical scroll found at Qumran and was one of the initial scrolls found in Cave 1 in 1947. It was wrapped in a linen cloth and stored in a clay jar. It consists of seventeen pieces of sheepskin sewn together into a single scroll and shows signs of being well used before it was stored away. The scroll comprises fifty-four columns of text that vary in width and average about twenty-nine lines of text per column. Measuring almost twenty-four feet in length and about ten inches in height, 1QIsa[a] is the longest of the Qumran biblical scrolls. The Great Isaiah Scroll demonstrates what a biblical scroll looked like at the time of Jesus and his apostles; perhaps it was similar in appearance to the

9. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 164.

10. P. W. Skehan, "Qumrân: IV. Littérature de Qumran," *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 9 (1978): 805–22, gives a physical description of the biblical fragments.

Isaiah scroll that Jesus read from in the synagogue of Nazareth (see Luke 4:16–20).

The Psalms Scroll from Cave 11, similar to the Great Isaiah Scroll, is in a fair state of preservation; so, too, are several of the nonbiblical scrolls, such as the *Temple Scroll* from Cave 11. For the most part, however, the scrolls that have survived in the caves are extremely fragmented; many of them are no larger than the size of a postcard, and some fragments are as small as a postage stamp. Even the smallest fragment, however, may add to our knowledge.

Before the discovery of the DSS in 1947, scholars relied on medieval manuscripts, often called the Masoretic Text (or, more accurately, Masoretic Texts) for much of their understanding of the Old Testament. Three such manuscripts are the Leningrad Codex B 19a (complete Bible dated to AD 1009), the Cairo Codex of the Prophets (dated to AD 895), and the Aleppo Codex (dated to AD 925).[11] These are considered late editions of the Hebrew Bible, especially since the ancient prophets, such as Moses, Isaiah, and Amos, wrote their books many centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. The biblical scrolls and fragments of the DSS, however, comprise texts that are one thousand years older[12] than the previously known texts of the Hebrew Bible. Most of the biblical texts of the DSS date from 150 BC to AD 68,[13] although fragments from Exodus, Samuel, and Jeremiah have been dated to the middle of the third century BC.[14] Unlike the medieval Hebrew Bible, with its consonantal and vocalization framework and system of notes, accents, chapters, and versification, the biblical DSS

11. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 123.

12. With regard to dating the scrolls, scholars generally agree, based on three scientific methods, that the scrolls were copied between the years 250 BC and AD 70. These scientific methods are (1) paleographic analysis, or the science of deciphering ancient writing styles; (2) a process called AMS, which is similar to the carbon-14 dating system; and (3) archaeologists' discoveries, such as finds of pottery and dated coins.

13. Other texts of the Judean desert have different dates. For example, the texts from Nahal Hever, Wadi Murabba'ṭ, and Masada date from about 250 BC to AD 135.

14. The dates of these three manuscripts are as follows: 4QSam^{b} (ca. 250), 4QJer^{a} (ca. 200), and 4QExod^{f} (ca. 275–225 BC); see David Noel Freedman, "The Masoretic Text and the Qumran Scrolls: A Study in Orthography," *Textus* 2 (1962): 87–102; republished in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text,* ed. Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 196–211.

feature handwritten manuscripts without chapters, versification, vowels, or accents. Additionally, the scrolls contain interlinear or marginal corrections, scribal notations, a different paragraphing system, and special morphological and orthographic features.

Most of the biblical scrolls—approximately 90 percent—are written in Hebrew,[15] the language of the ancient Israelites and the sacred language of the Jews. The scrolls have Hebrew consonants, but no vowels. The scrolls were written without punctuation such as commas, periods, question marks, or semicolons. Hebrew does not use capitalization or uppercase letters. Further, chapters and verses were a later invention, although the scrolls do support evidence of a paragraphing system. About 9 percent of the scrolls were written in Aramaic, a sister language to Hebrew that shares with it the alphabet and numerous grammatical and morphological features. Aramaic was the language adopted by the Jews after their seventy years of exile in Babylon (597–538 BC). A few manuscripts, including the book of Daniel, the apocryphal book of Tobit, a fragment of the book of Job, and fragments of the book of Enoch, are written in Aramaic. Additionally, a small handful of the preserved fragments are in Greek.

The majority of texts are copied on animal skin, although a few texts are written on papyrus. Black ink was the standard color used by scribes, but one scribe used red ink in a number of passages in the book of Numbers.[16]

The overall lengths of the scrolls vary according to the text. For example, as mentioned above, the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^{a}) has 17 sheets of leather and measures almost 24 feet long. Based on reconstructions of existing fragments, one copy of Jeremiah (2QJer) is estimated to have been approximately 30 feet long, and a copy of the book of Samuel (1 and 2 Samuel, comprising a single book) may have extended 55 feet. The lengths of several nonbiblical books are also

15. The majority of the Hebrew manuscripts were written in square Hebrew characters known as Assyrian script or Aramaic script, although several texts were copied in paleo-Hebrew script.

16. 4QNum^{b}: Numbers 20:22–23; 22:21; 23:13; 23:27; 31:25, 28, 48; 32:25; 33:1.

known. The *Temple Scroll* (11Q19), for instance, consists of 19 sheets of leather and is about 28 feet long.

Scribal Conventions and the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible

We have learned much about the history, transmission, and appearance of the Old Testament texts during the last centuries of the Second Temple period from studying the scrolls. For example, we have gained a great deal of knowledge concerning ancient scribal practices,[17] including paragraphing, scribal corrections, and other various marks and notes in the text.[18] We have also gained greater appreciation for the archaic practices of orthography (spelling practices), morphology (form of words), and epigraphy (inscriptions). Our knowledge of the development of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages and scripts has increased considerably.

The DSS reveal much regarding the scribes' or copyists' stylistic methods and conventions as they prepared new copies of scriptural books. These conventions indicate the scribes' high level of professionalism and competence as they transmitted the texts from generation to generation. For example, before the scribes copied the text onto the leather, they created vertical and horizontal rulings or guide dots on the leather to help them maintain orderly and straight lines for the characters. These rulings justified the text on the top, bottom, and right margins (since Hebrew is read from right to left) and gave the composition a professional appearance, which also made it easier to read. The rulings were created with a writing instrument against a straight-edge utensil or, for dry-point rulings, scribes may have employed a sharp bone.

Most leather sheets, with the exception of *tefillin*, were ruled, while papyrus was not because "the horizontal and vertical fibers probably

17. For a comprehensive review of the scribal conventions of the scrolls, see Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

18. See Emanuel Tov, "Scribal Markings in the Texts from the Judean Desert," in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 41–77.

provided some form of guide for the writing."[19] A few documents had double vertical rulings (e.g., 1QH[a] and 4QNum[b]). Guide dots or strokes were used in both biblical and nonbiblical scrolls, although a few scrolls lack evidence of such markings. The dots or strokes were positioned either on the left or the right side of the sheet or column (rarely in the middle), usually at a distance of 0.1 to 1.7 cm from the text's edge. On average, there are twenty lines of text per column, with 4QIncantation (a nonbiblical text) having only four lines per column and 4QPs[r] (a copy of Psalms) having sixty or more lines per column.

A number of different scribal marks or symbols appear in the margins or between the lines of texts of both biblical and nonbiblical scrolls. DSS scholar Emanuel Tov has identified and named about seventy-nine of the different scribal signs. These include *paragraphos* and composite *paragraphos*, paleo-Hebrew characters, section markers, cancellation dots, parenthesis signs used for omission, various cryptic characters, omission or insertion symbols, line fillers, separation dots between words, dots indicating the redivision of words, Tetrapuncta, numbering devices, and others. For example, the Great Isaiah Scroll includes *X*-shaped scribal marks, a hat-shaped symbol, a *Z*-shaped symbol, what appears to be a zero or circle, and other scribal marks. While modern biblical scholars have deciphered the meaning of several symbols, others remain a mystery.

Scribal writing practices in the scrolls indicate a fully developed understanding of sense units, or small but definite literary segments (we would call these sense units *sentences*, *paragraphs*, *chapters*, and the like). Although these early texts lacked both verse and chapter numbering arrangements (a much later development), the scribes set forth methods of identifying small and large sense units, poetical units, and entire books of scripture. To identify these units, scribes utilized special spacing techniques, including paragraphing and text divisions as well as marginal and interlinear notations.

The scrolls' assortment of orthographic features (spelling practices) has revealed much regarding orthography at the turn of the era. Some especially pertinent features include full spelling (with certain

19. Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches,* 57.

consonants—especially *waw*, *yod*, and *he*—serving as vowel markers) versus defective spelling (no such consonants serving as vowel markers). Simple comparisons using English words would be *grey* versus *gray*; or *color* versus *colour*; a more complex example includes *Savior* (American spelling), *Saviour* (British spelling), or *svr* (spelling without capital letters and vowels, comparable to Hebrew orthography).

Variant Readings—The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible versus the Masoretic Text

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible stands as a witness that the Old Testament has been passed down through the centuries with a high degree of accuracy. For this, we must be grateful to prophets, scribes, copyists, and everyone else who was responsible for the Bible's transmission from generation to generation. Book of Mormon prophet Nephi wrote in 2 Nephi 29:4 that we must retain a grateful attitude toward the Jews for the Bible. Nephi reminds us that the Gentiles "shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?"

Despite the fact that the DSS biblical texts bring us one thousand years closer to the original words of the prophets, we still do not have the so-called autograph texts—those penned by the prophets (or the scribes of the prophets) themselves. We possess the apograph texts, copies (or copies of copies of copies) of the autograph texts, which were created several hundred years after the autograph texts. Throughout the history of the texts of both the Old and the New Testaments, various errors (though mostly minor!) have crept in—a fact that scholars have been aware of for centuries.

Scholars have identified variant readings that exist in the Hebrew witnesses of the Old Testament (i.e., the DSS Bible, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Masoretic Text) or in other early translations (i.e.,

the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, or the Syriac Peshitta).[20] Most variant readings are minor and deal with such differences as plural versus singular forms; the use of conjunctions, prepositions, and definite articles; different morphological or lexical forms; and alternative verbal forms (aspects, tenses, active versus passive, etc.). Far fewer in number are major variant readings or those that significantly change the text's meaning. Although major variants do exist in the Old Testament, they are not prominent enough to form the basis for a loss of faith over a conflict of doctrine. To state it differently, there are very few variant readings of consequence that change the meaning of the text, either historically or theologically. Most variants are of a minor nature.

The following four examples illustrate the types of major variants that exist between the DSS Bible and the Masoretic Text:

1. There is a lost passage of scripture (which belongs in 1 Samuel 11:1)[21] that has been discovered in the DSS texts of Samuel. This passage provides details regarding the Ammonite King Nahash and his evil treatment of Israelite warriors.[22] With the restoration of this passage, there is a better transition from the final verse of chapter 10 to the first verse of chapter 11, and the context for the story of King Nahash is now in place. The passage reads:

> And Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, oppressed harshly the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not

20. The best work on the topic is Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of Hebrew Bible*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001); see also P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986). Each of these two works includes serviceable bibliographies.

21. For a discussion of this missing verse of scripture, see Frank Moore Cross, "The Ammonite Oppression of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben: Missing Verses from 1 Samuel 11 Found in 4QSamuel[a]," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 148–58; and Tov, *Textual Criticism of Hebrew Bible*, 342–43.

22. Josephus refers to this incident of King Nahash in *Antiquities* 6.68–71.

> gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had fled from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead. (1 Samuel 11:1)[23]

The paragraph helps students of the Bible understand the situation described in chapter 11 concerning the advancement of Nahash and his troops against Jabesh-gilead and the Israelites. It was the plan of Nahash to make a treaty with the Israelites who were dwelling in Jabesh-gilead, with the condition that he "gouge out the right eye of each person in the city," rendering them helpless in rebelling against him. The story has a happy ending for the Israelites, however, for they rally around King Saul and the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 11:5–7), who slay a number of Ammonites and cause the remainder to flee. Samuel and Saul gave credit for their victory to the Lord.

2. There is a missing verse in Psalm 145 that was rediscovered with the finding of the scrolls. This psalm is an acrostic, or an a, b, c poem, meaning verse one begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the second verse with the second letter of the alphabet, the third verse with the third letter, and so on through the Hebrew alphabet. There are twenty-two letters of the alphabet in Hebrew and Psalm 145 should, therefore, have twenty-two verses, but the Masoretic Text contains only twenty-one verses; the DSS book of Psalms includes this missing verse.[24] The verse that begins with the Hebrew letter *nun* (roughly analogous to our English letter *n*) is the missing verse. It reads, "God is faithful in all of his words, and pious in all of his deeds; blessed is the Lord and blessed is his name, forever, and ever."[25]

3. Another example of a major variant is located in Psalm 22:16, a passage that prophesies of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In this verse, a copyist created an error in the reading of an important word, an error that pertains to a single, short stroke of the stylus or pen (the difference between a Hebrew *yod* or *waw*). The Masoretic Text of the

23. Translation by the author.

24. The missing verse is also found in the LXX; some commentators think the verse was never there in the original (= a partial acrostic) and that later copyists added that verse.

25. Translation by the author.

Hebrew Bible reads, "like a lion, my hands and my feet." The DSS Bible provides the correct reading, which is, "They pierced my hands and my feet." The small (in terms of size) scribal error of the Masoretic Text provided the incorrect reading in a Hebrew manuscript (but compare the Greek Septuagint, which has the correct reading) that has existed for many centuries. It was not until the discovery of the DSS that the correct reading in the Hebrew Bible was revealed to our generation.

4. An important variant is attested in Deuteronomy 8:6, which reads, "And you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by fearing him." This verse indicates that one must keep God's commandments "by walking in his ways" and by "fearing him." The DSS Bible, however, has an important variant reading: "And you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and by loving him" (4QDeut^{a} 8:6). These variants refer to two powerful but different emotions—*fear* and *love*. The variants also set forth a difference in how one understands Old Testament doctrines; in particular, the variants introduce the question of whether one should keep the commandments through fear or through love. The reading of *love* also provides us with an important view of the God of the Old Testament, who is sometimes portrayed as a strict Deity when compared with Jesus Christ and his teachings of love in the New Testament.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible and Modern English Translations

According to Harold Scanlin, a translation adviser for the United Bible Societies, "every major Bible translation published since 1950 has claimed to have taken into account the textual evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls."[26] Since the discovery of the scrolls, modern Bible committees have examined and have integrated variant readings from the DSS either into the actual translation of the Old Testament or as footnotes or endnotes. For instance, *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*, published by the Jewish Publication Society, occasionally utilizes variant

26. Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 27.

readings from the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa[a]) in its English translation or refers to the readings in footnotes. One such example occurs in Isaiah 21:8, where the Masoretic Text (MT) reads *lion* (*'ryh* אריה); 1QIsa[a] reads *the watcher* (*hr'h* הראה), a word that better fits the context of the passage: "and the watcher cried, My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower all day, and I am stationed at my post all night." Because *lion* and *the watcher* in the Hebrew language are graphically similar, a copyist likely made a simple error when copying this word onto a new scroll.

Another example noted in *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* is from Isaiah 33:8, where MT reads *cities* (*'rym* ערים) versus 1QIsa[a]'s *pact* (*'dym* עדים), again an example of graphic similarity. The reading of 1QIsa[a] corresponds well with the parallelism, "A covenant has been renounced, a pact rejected." Isaiah 14:4 provides a third example, one accepted by a number of modern translations, including *Tanakh*, the New International Version, and the New English Bible. In this verse 1QIsa[a] reads *mrhbh* (מרהבה), meaning "oppression." This fits the parallelistic structure, "How is oppression ended! How is the taskmaster vanished." *Tanakh* notes at the bottom of the page, "The traditional reading [of MT] *madhebah* [מדהבה] is of unknown meaning."

The following English bibles have integrated variant readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls: New International Version, Today's English Version, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New English Bible, New American Bible, and, of course, the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible.

Acceptance of alternate readings varies according to the translation committees. By way of example, committees have departed from traditional readings of 1 Samuel for new readings the following number of times:

New International Version: 15
Today's English Version: 51
Revised Standard Version: about 60
New Revised Standard Version: about 110
New English Bible: 160

New American Bible: 230.[27]
The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: all major and many minor variants.

The New International Version provides variant readings of the DSS texts of 1 Samuel on 15 occasions versus the readings of the traditional Hebrew text; the New American Bible provides the readings of the scrolls 230 times over the traditional text. The other versions, as shown on the accompanying list, have also used variant readings from the DSS to varying degrees. The New King James Version (NKJV) (1982), not listed above, provides only one variant reading from the DSS book of 1 Samuel; in fact, it relies on the DSS on only six occasions in the entire Old Testament.[28] Though the number of accepted changes varies, overall the translation committees have examined and subsequently integrated many variant readings of the DSS into their translations.

A very recent translation of the Old Testament, entitled the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible,[29] deserves special attention. While the other English translations of the Bible (listed above) are based on the Masoretic Text and feature selections of variant readings from the DSS, the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible presents a translation of the entire DSS biblical corpus, with the exception of small fragmented texts. This makes the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible unique among modern translations of the Bible. And the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible includes other significant features, such as footnotes that compare readings from the Septuagint and Masoretic Text.

Many of these English translations have gone through subsequent revisions to incorporate the variant readings from the DSS. For instance, the Revised Standard Version (1952) is now the New Revised Standard Version (1990), the New English Bible (1970) was revised to become the Revised English Bible (1989), the Jerusalem Bible (1966) is now the New Jerusalem Bible (1985), and the New American Bible (1970) is currently going through a major revision. Based on various

27. Scanlin, *Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations*, 26.
28. Scanlin, *Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations*, 34.
29. Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

scholars' positive reaction to the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, it is anticipated that the translation committees in future years will continue to accept variant readings from the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls and fragments.

Parabiblical Texts at Qumran

Several parabiblical (Bible-like in character, from Greek *para*, "beside"), apocryphal,[30] and pseudepigraphic[31] texts were excavated from the Qumran caves, including the *Temple Scroll*, the *Book of Noah*, the *Testament of Levi*, the *Heavenly Prince Melchizedek*, the *Beatitudes*, Tobit, Sirach, a letter of Jeremiah (=Baruch 6), Enoch (*1 Enoch*), *Jubilees*, an Elisha apocryphon, the *Words of the Archangel Michael*, the *Words of Moses*, the New Jerusalem texts, *Genesis Apocryphon*, the *Ages of the Creation*, *Reworked Pentateuch*, and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Often, the parabiblical compositions are affiliated with well-known Old Testament characters such as Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Amran, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther.[32] Many of these writings were unknown prior to the time of their discovery and represent new texts to the modern world.

Additionally, there are nine apocryphal psalms that were "completely unknown prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls."[33] These

30. *Apocrypha* refers to the books that are included in the Catholic version of the Old Testament (derived from the Old Greek translation, or Septuagint), but not included in most Protestant Old Testaments, while additional apocryphal books resemble those in the Apocrypha.

31. *Pseudepigrapha* is a scholarly term that refers to several Jewish religious books written or extant between the fourth century BC and second century AD that did not become part of the Hebrew Bible. "One could characterize [pseudepigrapha] as a reverse form of plagiarism: the author does not publish the work of another under his own name; he publishes his work under the name of someone else." VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 36. To our knowledge, three pseudepigrapha are attested at Qumran—*Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

32. For English translations of these texts and others belonging to the same category, see Florentino García Martínez, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), passim; and Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 2004), passim. On the question of whether these books were considered to be authoritative by the Qumranites, see the opposing views of VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today,* 153–57; and Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 162–67.

33. Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 506.

are called the *Apostrophe to Judah*, the *Apostrophe to Zion*, *David's Compositions*, the *Eschatological Hymn*, the *Hymn to the Creator*, the *Plea for Deliverance*, and three of the *Songs against Demons*.

The following examples of parabiblical texts demonstrate how each of these compositions is "Bible-like."

1. *The Temple Scroll* (11Q19). At over twenty-eight feet in length, the *Temple Scroll* is the longest discovered in the eleven Qumran caves. Scholars cannot agree on the date of the scroll's composition, nor are they certain of its author. Many of this scroll's sixty-six columns examine aspects of the future temple that would be built at Jerusalem, such as the temple complex, its construction, and its functions. It also describes the sanctuary and provides its measurements. It describes the holy of holies, chambers and colonnades, the mercy seat, cherubim, a veil, a table, a golden lamp, an altar, and courtyards. The *Temple Scroll* gives details of three square concentric courts—an inner, a middle, and an outer court—that informed temple officiators, workers, and worshippers of three levels of holiness. The innermost court of the temple was the most holy, and as one moved outward, the courts (and the respective ordinances or rituals performed therein) decreased in holiness.

The *Temple Scroll* goes beyond the physical features of the temple to describe the ideal temple society by discussing many topics, including a covenant between God and Israel, purity regulations, priests, priestly dues, Levites, witnesses, sacrificial animals, vows and oaths, judges and officers affiliated with the temple, laws relating to idolatry, crimes punishable by hanging, apostasy, the conduct of war, and rebellious sons. The scroll does not simply repeat the laws on social conduct and temple worship as they appear in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; it blends them into a new, harmonious whole, sometimes adding new material such as festivals of new oil and wine that are not mentioned in the law of Moses. The temple, according to the scroll itself, is "the temple on which I [the Lord] will settle my glory until the day of blessing on which I will create my temple and establish it for myself for all times" (11Q19 XXIX, 7–10).

One important question regarding this scroll is whether it was considered to have religious authority and scriptural value on a par with the books of Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and other biblical books. Some scholars attribute significant religious authority to the *Temple Scroll*. Yigael Yadin argues that the scroll is "a veritable Torah of the Lord."[34] B. Z. Wacholder asserts that the *Temple Scroll* is a new Torah, as opposed to the older Torah (the five books of Moses) and is designed to replace the old.[35] Michael O. Wise maintains that the *Temple Scroll* was authored by the Teacher of Righteousness and represents an eschatological religious law.[36] And Hartmut Stegemann sees it as a sixth book of the Torah, originating before the establishment of the community of Qumran.[37] These views are representative of the opinions regarding the *Temple Scroll*'s relationship to the Torah.

2. *The Book of Enoch* (4QEnoch^{a-g}). The prophet Enoch is scarcely mentioned in the version of the Bible that we use today (as compared to the Dead Sea Scrolls Bible). According to Hugh Nibley, "Aside from brief genealogical notes, all that the Bible tells us about Enoch is that 'he walked with God, and was not' (Genesis 5:25), and he prophesied the coming of the Lord to execute judgment (Jude 1:14)."[38] Enoch, however, holds a prominent place in many of the compositions found among the DSS, such as *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and others. These texts reveal him to be a mighty prophet, a great writer, an eminent astronomer, and one who was granted access to divine books and sacred knowledge. Biblical scholars describe him as

34. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: IES, Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the Shrine of the Book, 1983), 1:390–92, 396–97.

35. B. Z. Wacholder, *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1983).

36. Michael O. Wise, *A Critical Study of the Temple Scroll from Qumran Cave 11* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1990), 167.

37. See Hartmut Stegemann, "The Origins of the Temple Scroll," in *Congress Volume: Jerusalem* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 235–55; and more popularly, "Is the Temple Scroll a Sixth Book of the Torah—Lost for 2,500 Years?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13 (1987): 28–35, republished in *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Hershel Shanks (New York: Random House, 1992), 126–36.

38. Hugh W. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1986), 56 n. 1.

"the colossus who bestrides the Apocrypha as no other"[39] and a figure of "extraordinary strength and pervasiveness."[40]

According to the DSS, Enoch was a great writer, "the first among men that are born on earth who learned writing and knowledge and wisdom."[41] He was granted access to divine books and great knowledge and "observed the heavenly tablets, and read them carefully, and read the book of all the deeds of mankind to the remotest generations."[42] The scrolls identify Enoch as an astronomer. Chapters 72–82 of *1 Enoch* are referred to as Enoch's "Astronomical Book," or "the book of the courses of the luminaries of the heavens."[43] One scholar believes that the sources attribute "the solar calendar of 364 days . . . to Enoch, the original astronomer."[44]

While the scrolls augment the scanty information about Enoch in the Bible (see Genesis 5), our own Pearl of Great Price account of Enoch comprises the most complete and accurate record of this great prophet. Nibley observes that "in giving us a much fuller account than the Bible of how the Flood came about, the book of Enoch settles the moral issue with several telling parts: (1) God's reluctance to send the Flood and his great sorrow at the event. (2) The peculiar brand of wickedness that made the Flood mandatory. (3) The frank challenge of the wicked to have God do His worst."[45] The DSS record many of the iniquities of the people as well as the weeping of God at the necessity of destroying his own creation, just as the Pearl of Great Price does.

A further note of interest appears in the Book of Moses—"out of the blue . . . the name of the only nonbiblical individual named in the whole book—Mahijah (Moses 6:40)."[46] Strikingly, the name *Mahujah* (MHWY—"the semi-vowels *w* and *y* are written very much

39. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 19.

40. G. W. Anderson, "Enoch, Books of," in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1973 ed.), 8:605; cited in Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet*, 56 n. 2.

41. *Jubilees* 4:17.

42. *1 Enoch* 81:1, 2.

43. *1 Enoch* 72:1.

44. James C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1984), 90.

45. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet,* 4.

46. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet,* 277.

alike in the Aramaic script and are sometimes confused by scribes")[47] appears in the Enoch materials in the DSS. In Moses 6:40, "there came a man unto him, whose name was Mahijah, and said to him: Tell us plainly who thou art and from whence thou comest?" This is similar to *4QEnoch Giants* I, 20: "And they summoned MHWY and he came to them: And they asked him and sent him to Enoch."

3. *Beatitudes* (4Q525). A composition that scholars have named *Beatitudes*, discovered in Qumran Cave 4, represents a significant find. A portion of *Beatitudes* is presented here:

> Blessed are those who hold to her (Wisdom's) precepts
> and do not hold to the ways of iniquity.
> Blessed are those who rejoice in her,
> and do not burst forth in ways of folly.
> Blessed are those who seek her with pure hands,
> and do not pursue her with a treacherous heart.
> Blessed is the man who has attained Wisdom,
> And walks in the Law of the Most High.
> He directs his heart towards her ways,
> and restrains himself by her corrections,
> and always takes delight in her chastisements.[48]

This composition forms a genre that recalls three literary types belonging to the ancient world:

a. *Beatitudes* begins several clauses with the formula *Blessed*, a structure similar to the Beatitudes of Matthew 5:3–11; see Psalm 1:1.

b. In *Beatitudes*, wisdom is personified as a woman (the word *wisdom* in Hebrew [*hokmah*] is a feminine noun); those who hold her seek her with pure hands; those who attain her walk in God's law. Personifying wisdom in *Beatitudes* recalls Proverbs 8, where Wisdom is also set forth as a woman: "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the

47. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet,* 278.

48. 4Q525 II, in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 455, formatting by author.

way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city," and so on (Proverbs 8:1–3 KJV).

c. *Beatitudes* sets forth a number of poetic parallelisms that recall various parallelistic structures found in the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and elsewhere. In *Beatitudes*, some of the parallelisms are synonymous and others are antithetical.

4. *Hymn to the Creator.* An Apocryphal Psalm (11QPs[a]). The Psalms scroll that was discovered in Qumran Cave 11 is a significant find, in part because it includes a few apocryphal psalms that are not part of the biblical book of Psalms. The fact that these apocryphal psalms appear among the DSS along with the canonical psalms (i.e., those psalms that are found in our Bibles) suggests that these apocryphal psalms possessed canonical or religious authority for the Jews who owned them. One of these psalms is Psalm 151, which was already known in the Septuagint but is absent from the Hebrew Bible. Psalm 151 deals with King David, his call from the Lord, and his defeat of Goliath. Previously unknown psalms found at Qumran include the *Prayer for Deliverance*, *Apostrophe to Zion*, and *Hymn to the Creator.* The following lines represent a portion of the latter:

> The Lord is great and holy,
> the Most Holy for generation after generation.
> Majesty goes before him,
> and after him abundance of many waters.
> Loving-kindness and truth are about his face;
> truth and judgement and righteousness are the
> pedestal of his throne.
> He divides light from obscurity;
> he establishes the dawn by the knowledge of his heart.
> When all his angels saw it, they sang,
> for he showed them that which they had not known.
> He crowns the mountains with fruit,
> with good food for all the living.[49]

49. *Hymn to the Creator* XXVI, in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 412, formatting by author.

This psalm, with its symbolic forms, figures of speech, and parallelistic structure, reads like many of the canonical psalms of the Bible.

5. *The Seductress* (4Q184). A composition that scholars have named *The Seductress* pertains to a woman who uses her wiles to seduce others into participating in sexual sin. The poem belongs to a genre called wisdom literature, a literary genre which, in the Bible, is demonstrated in the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and other compositions.

Using poetic language, this composition refers to several of the seductress's body parts, including her lips, heart, kidneys, eyes, hands, and legs. For example, "Her *heart* is set up as a snare, and her *kidneys* as a fowler's nets. Her *eyes* are defiled with iniquity, her *hands* have seized hold of the Pit. Her *legs* go down to work wickedness, . . ." The composition also refers to her skirts, clothes, veils, ornaments (i.e., jewelry), and beds.

Similar to harlots of old, the seductress positions herself in places where she can tempt those who pass by: "In the city's squares she veils herself, and she stands at the gates of towns." As a seductress, she employs sweet talk to those who will listen: "She is ever prompt to oil her words, and she flatters with irony." A portion of *The Seductress* appears here:

> She is the beginning of all the ways of iniquity.
> Woe (and) disaster to all who possess her!
> And desolation to all who hold her!
> For her ways are ways of death,
> and her paths are roads of sin,
> and her tracks are pathways to iniquity,
> and her by-ways are rebellious wrong-doings.
> Her gates are gates of death,
> and from the entrance of the house
> she sets out towards the underworld.
> None of those who enter there will ever return,
> and all who possess her will descend to the Pit.
> She lies in wait in secret places.[50]

50. 4Q184, in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 418.

The cited portion of the poem reveals that disaster will come upon those who are enticed into sexual sin; its form is a series of parallelisms that recall similar structures in numerous biblical psalms and hymns. In the first parallelism shown above (lines two and three), *disaster* corresponds with *desolation*, and *all who possess her* parallels *all who hold her*. In the second parallelism (lines four and five), *her ways* is analogous to *her paths* and *ways of death* parallels *roads of sin*. In the third parallelism (lines six and seven), *her tracks* and *her byways* are comparable and *iniquity* and *wrong-doings* are corresponding elements. In yet another parallelism (lines eight through ten), *gates* corresponds with *entrance*, and *death* is parallel to *underworld*.

Do Any of the Parabiblical Texts Have Canonical Authority?

It is well known that the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) comprises a fixed set of scriptural books that have canonical authority for Judaism and Christianity. Less well known, however, is that Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox faiths include different books in their respective versions of the Old Testament. The Jewish and Protestant canons have the same scriptural books, but they are ordered differently. The former orders the books according to three general categories (Law, Prophets, and Writings), and the latter orders them according to a (possible) chronological order. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints uses the same Old Testament books as do Protestants and in the same order.[51]

The Roman Catholic Old Testament, in addition to the books of the Protestant Old Testament, contains Tobit, Judith, 1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch plus a letter of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Youths, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon, as well as additional chapters to the books of Esther and Daniel. The Greek Orthodox Old Testament features a few more books than the

51. The 1979 LDS edition of the Old Testament, which uses the text of the King James Version, incorporates readings from the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) in the footnotes and features a special section at the back of the Bible with excerpts too lengthy for inclusion in footnotes.

Roman Catholic: 1 Esdras, Prayer of Manasseh, 3 Maccabees, and Psalm 151.

With the coming forth of the various DSS parabiblical texts, scholars in recent decades have reassessed the meaning of the canon. They have questioned the scriptural authority of these and other texts that have certain Bible-like qualities, even though these texts do *not* exist in our version of the Holy Bible.[52] For example, Emanuel Tov, editor in chief of the international team of translators of the DSS, has written that "the definition of the scope of the biblical corpus is unclear. . . . The list is limited to the texts which subsequently came to be included in Hebrew Scripture, while the boundaries of that group in the last centuries (165) BCE and the first centuries CE remain open to debate."[53] One recent publication addresses the issue of canonicity head-on. In his article "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls," Qumran scholar James C. VanderKam introduces his article with these words: "As nearly as we can tell, there was no canon of scripture in Second Temple Judaism. That is, before 70 C.E. no authoritative body of which we know drew up a list of books that alone were regarded as supremely authoritative, a list from which none could be subtracted and to which none could be added."[54]

After setting the background and context for his article, VanderKam presents the direction he will take: "The thesis that I would like to defend regarding the second temple period is that while there were authoritative writings, and these were at times gathered into recognizable groupings (e.g., Law, Prophets, Others), the category of revealed literature was not considered a closed and fixed one, at least not for the type of Judaism

52. See especially the following publications: Eugene Ulrich, "The Notion and Definition of Canon," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 21–35; Philip R. Davies, "The Jewish Scriptural Canon in Cultural Perspective," in *Canon Debate*, 36–52; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Formation of the Hebrew Bible Canon: Isaiah as a Test Case," in *Canon Debate*, 53–67; and Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007). See also the bibliographies cited in these publications.

53. Tov, "Categorized List of the 'Biblical Texts,'" 165–66.

54. James C. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Canon Debate*, 91.

for which we now have the most evidence—the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls."[55] VanderKam then examines three individual compositions—*Reworked Pentateuch*, the *Temple Scroll*, and *Jubilees*—in light of the possibility that these three may have had scriptural status for the Jews who possessed them. All three of these compositions fit textual forms of scripture, meaning that they read like scripture. The *Temple Scroll*, writes VanderKam, "reproduces pentateuchal material and generally has a known form of scriptural text,"[56] as do the other two compositions under discussion.

It is not known what books from Qumran were considered to be scripture or hold canonical authority for the Jews who possessed them (the Essenes, according to most scholars). Because of this, several questions remain with regard to those who possessed these scrolls: What books constituted their Bible or scriptural canon? Did they consider all the books of our LDS Old Testament to have equal authority? Did they consider other books, beyond those in the Old Testament, to have canonical authority? Although it is quite probable that these Jews accepted all the books of the Old Testament as biblical and canonical, it is also possible that they accepted other books as scripture—books such as the *Temple Scroll*, *1 Enoch*, the book of *Jubilees*,[57] some of the apocryphal psalms, the *Beatitudes*, and others.

Three notable Qumran scholars of our present day—Martin Abegg, Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich—apparently consider a few of the Qumran parabiblical books to have been biblical books to the Jews who owned them. These scholars include five texts in their Dead Sea Scrolls Bible that have not been part of the traditional Protestant Bible as we know it today—*Jubilees*, *1 Enoch*, Ben Sira (Sirach), Tobit, and the Epistle of Jeremiah. The introduction to their book states, "It is . . . most likely that the Qumran community viewed the books of 1 Enoch and Jubilees as Scripture."[58] VanderKam provides an appropriate

55. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon," 92.
56. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon," 108.
57. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 153–57.
58. Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, xvii.

summary of how we should view the apocryphal and parabiblical books of Qumran: "In view of the evidence from Qumran, we should avoid using the words *Bible* and *biblical* for this period and this community. This is not to deny that group had authoritative writings; the difficulty is that we . . . cannot always be sure which of those writings were authoritative and which were not."[59]

Scriptural Commentaries, *Tefillin,* and *Mezuzot*

In addition to the various books of the Old Testament listed above, the DSS include scriptural commentaries, *tefillin*, and *mezuzot*.

Ancient Scriptural Commentaries. The Jews who owned the scrolls wrote out their interpretations of individual books of the Old Testament[60]—including Isaiah, Habakkuk, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, and the Psalms. These commentaries reveal a striking method of biblical interpretation—the passage of scripture is first quoted and then followed by an interpretation. For example, a passage in the *Commentary on the Psalms* first quotes Psalm 37:10: "A little while and the wicked shall be no more; I will look towards his place but he shall not be there," followed by the interpretation, "At the end of the forty years [from the time that the commentary was written,] they [the wicked] shall be blotted out and no [evil] man shall be found on the earth."[61] In a passage in the *Commentary on Habakkuk,* an interest in the last days can also be seen: "And God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end."[62]

The author(s) of the commentaries frequently likened the scriptural passage to themselves (i.e., the Qumran community of believers) by arguing that its fulfillment had reference either to themselves or to contemporary events. Such an approach of likening the scriptures to the present community of believers is an ancient practice, for it was

59. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon," 109.

60. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 152–53.

61. 4Q171 II, in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 510; final brackets in original.

62. 1QpHab VII, in Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 512.

also used by the prophet Nephi.[63] Similar commentaries find a place in the modern world, authored by church authorities or scholars.

Tefillin and Mezuzot. Other biblical texts, in the form of small parchments containing passages from Exodus and Deuteronomy, have been excavated at Qumran. The parchments were part of *tefillin* (called phylacteries in the New Testament; see Matthew 23:5) and *mezuzot* (small boxes fastened to the doorposts of some Jewish houses or structures). The texts are usually from Exodus 12:43–13:16 and Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9, 10:12–11:21. Twenty-one *tefillin* texts and eight *mezuzot* texts have been found in the Qumran excavations.[64]

Conclusion

We may conclude with the words of President Howard W. Hunter, who wrote with regard to the Bible, "No greater literary work was ever compiled."[65] And the biblical and parabiblical DSS provide us with a treasure trove of knowledge regarding what the Bible looked like during the century or two before the Christian era. The biblical scrolls are significant because they disclose the manner in which ancient scribes and copyists transmitted the Bible from generation to generation. These scrolls also provide us with confidence that our Old Testament has been preserved with a high degree of accuracy, notwithstanding the relatively small number of variant readings that exist between the Masoretic Text and the DSS Bible. The parabiblical scrolls are important because they open possibilities that the textual contents of our present Old Testament is incomplete, that perhaps in antiquity there were other scriptural books that had canonical status.

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63. See 1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 6:5; cf. 11:2, 8.

64. These texts are still in similar use today.

65. Clyde J. Williams, ed., *Teachings of Howard W. Hunter* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 58.