Is the Plan of Salvation Attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls?

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The original working title of this paper was “The Qumran Community: Where Did It Come From? Why Was It There? and Where Was It Going?” This proved not only to be somewhat cumbersome, but also misleading. Some readers would have thought that the paper focused on the origins of the Qumran community, and would have expected a discussion of theories on how these people had gathered from Jerusalem and other Judean locales, and why they had chosen a rather desolate spot on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea to live. The question Where was it going? could be answered easily: nowhere. Those at Qumran who did not escape the Roman army as it made its way along the western shore of the Dead Sea about AD 68 were captured or killed. However, that is not the focus here. Those three questions were intended to communicate that the intent of this paper is to consider evidence of the plan of salvation in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

For Latter-day Saints, the plan of salvation consists of all the principles, powers, and ordinances necessary for the children of God to return to his presence and enjoy eternal life. It is our belief that “all human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. . . . In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life.”¹ This, of course, is all made possible by the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the first begotten of God in premortality and the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh.²

Having so stated, and at the risk of eliminating all the suspense, let me now answer the question posed in the title of this paper: “Is the Plan of Salvation Attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls?” From a Latter-day Saint perspective, the answer is a definite no. However, if we ask, “Are there any concepts attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls that are similar to any of the components of the plan of salvation?,” then the answer is a qualified yes. To understand the reason for qualifying the answer to this second question is to understand the relationship between Latter-day Saint doctrine and practice and anything contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Qumran community, generally accepted as being most closely related to a group known as the Essenes, were part of the larger group of Israelites, or Jews as we often call them, living in Judea at the turn of the era. From a Latter-day Saint perspective, the Jews as a people, including those Jews living at Qumran, were living in at least a partial state of apostasy during the last few centuries BC and into the new Christian era (AD).³ Therefore, on the one hand, we should not expect to find pure forms of theological concepts or practices attested in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other documents of this time period. However, we should not be surprised, on the other hand, to find what I refer to as “corrupted echoes” of true doctrines and practices preserved in these documents, since these people were heirs to the prophetic legacy that is partially preserved in the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament). Although the Qumran community had separated themselves from what they considered to be corrupt Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and were anticipating and preparing themselves for the coming of a messiah or messiahs,⁴ it is clear that they were not a divinely legitimized community of saints with a complete or accurate understanding of who the true Messiah was and what conditions would prevail at his first coming.⁵

Having provided this orientation, it is of interest to note that some of these people’s ideas relating to the plan of salvation have a certain ring to them that Latter-day Saints can perhaps appreciate more than Jews or traditional Christians today. My paper contains examples of such ideas that relate to the three major phases of our existence:
premortal life, mortality, and the afterlife. I have chosen a few representative examples of echoes of the plan of salvation that I think will be of interest.

Two points need to be made, however, before proceeding. First, it must be understood that the contents of the scrolls, as is the case with much of our own scriptural records, do not contain a developed, systematic discussion of their authors' views on any subjects. Our understanding of the Qumran community's views is based on mining nuggets of information from all of the appropriate documents. Since our understanding is dependent on what material has been preserved and discovered, it may not be completely accurate. Second, it must not be assumed that every text discovered at Qumran imparts a clear picture of what this particular community believed. Hundreds of scrolls were brought to Qumran, but only those that are thought to have been composed by members of this community are of value for this study. Therefore, I have only employed so-called sectarian texts, those documents indigenous to the Qumran community, as sources of information. Most of the passages included in this presentation are derived from the most significant sectarian scrolls from Qumran: the Rule of the Community (1QS), the Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH) and the War Scroll (1QM). I will now review passages relating to pre-mortal life, the purpose of mortality, and resurrection and afterlife.

**Premortal Life and Predestination**

Because these documents developed out of the biblical tradition, many passages in the sectarian documents indicate that God is the great creator who knows all things and has power over all things. Consider these three examples:

1. "before your [God's] might, nothing is strong, and nothing is [comparable] to your glory, and to your wisdom there is no measure, and your faithfulness has no end"
   
   (1QH XVII [9] 16–7)

2. "Who (is) like you, God of Israel, in the heavens or on the earth, to do great deeds like your deeds, marvels like your feats?"

   (1QM X 8)

3. "From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be. (1QS III 15)"

Thus, the God of Israel is over all and nothing can compare with his matchless power and knowledge.

Josephus, the first century AD Jewish historian, indicated that the Essenes believed in the premortal existence of souls, or spirits. He records that:

1. "their doctrine is this, that bodies are corruptible . . . but that the souls are immortal and continue for ever: and that they came out of the most subtle air, and are united to their bodies as to prisons . . . but that when they are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward. And this is like the opinion of the Greeks." 

While the record of Josephus cannot be used without some critical evaluation (for example, it is not clear to what extent this passage is tinged with the influence of Greek ideas), it is clear from various other sources that at least
some Jews and Christians living at the turn of the era believed in the existence of spirits before these spirits entered their mortal bodies. Two passages from the *Thanksgiving Hymns* strongly suggest this same idea:

> These are those you founded before the centuries, to judge through them all your works before creating them, together with the host of your spirits and the assembly of [the gods,] with the holy vault and all its hosts, with the earth and all its produce.

(1QH V [13] 13–5)

> you [God] are prince of gods and king of the glorious ones, lord of every spirit, owner of every creature

(1QH XVIII [10] 8)

While the inhabitants of Qumran apparently believed in the premortal existence of spirits, there is nothing in the Dead Sea Scrolls that indicates the nature or characteristics of these spirits. They are never described as the “children” of God.

The Old Testament contains various passages that are understood by Latter-day Saints to indicate that the Lord knows “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10), and that the house of Israel (Isaiah 49:1–3) and the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5), for example, were called, or foreordained, from the womb or even earlier to do God’s will. There are several passages in the sectarian scrolls, however, that clearly indicate that the Qumran community went beyond such conceptions of foreordination to believing in predestination—that everything in life happened according to God’s will and plan. Consider the following two representative passages from the scrolls:

> In your wisdom you established eternal [...]; before creating them you know all their deeds for ever and ever. [...] [Without you] nothing is done, and nothing is known without your will. You have fashioned every spirit and [...] and the judgment of all their deeds. Blank You have stretched out the heavens for your glory. Everything [which it contains you have established] according to your approval. [...] And in the wisdom of your knowledge you have determined their course before they came to exist. And with [your approval] everything happens, and without you nothing occurs.

(1QH IX [1] 7–10, 19–20)

> From the God of knowledge stems all there is and all there shall be. Before they existed he made all their plans and when they came into being they will execute all their works in compliance with his instructions, according to his glorious design without altering anything. (1QS III 15–16)

Based on these and similar passages, it is evident that the inhabitants of Qumran believed more strongly in the determining power of God’s foreknowledge than is evidenced in any other Jewish writings known to us from that time period. This view roughly correlates with the statement of Josephus that “the sect of the Essenes . . . declares that Fate is mistress of all things, and that nothing befalls men unless it be in accordance with her decree.”

The passage from the *Rule of the Community* continues:

> In his [God’s] hand are the laws of all things and he supports them in all their needs. He created man to rule the world and placed within him two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation: they are the spirits of truth and of deceit. In the hand of the Prince of Lights is dominion over all
the sons of justice; they walk in paths of light. And in the hand of the Angel of Darkness is total dominion over the sons of deceit; they walk on paths of darkness. Due to the Angel of Darkness all the sons of justice stray, and all their sins, their iniquities, their failings and their mutinous deeds are under his dominion in compliance with the mysteries of God, until his moment; and all their punishments and their periods of grief are caused by the dominion of his enmity; and all the spirits of their lot cause the sons of light to fall. However, the God of Israel and the angel of his truth assist all the sons of light. He created the spirits of light and of darkness and on them established all his deeds. (1QS III 16–25)\(^\text{12}\)

This passage indicates that God created two spirits, the Prince of Lights and the Angel of Darkness, who each have their “lot” or group of spirit followers that influence people with “truth” or “deceit.” Latter-day Saints may see in this the aftermath of the war in heaven. That may well be the origin of this concept at Qumran, but it must be pointed out that in the Qumran material there is no mention of such a war, nor of a loss of status for the Angel of Darkness.\(^\text{13}\) Note also that in the preceding passage the Angel of Darkness is described as being created evil by God. While it might be tempting to suggest that the Qumran community did not really believe in predestination, but in foreordination, thus allowing for an individual’s agency, similar to the Latter-day Saint conception, I do not see how the passages just cited can be understood to indicate anything other than predestination.

There is, however, another dimension to this picture. There are several passages, especially in the Thanksgiving Hymns, that seem to suggest that in the doctrines taught at Qumran there was a certain amount of free will or agency that people could exercise in order to merit God’s grace and forgiveness. For example:

Dread and dismay have gripped me… for I have remembered my faults… But when I remembered the strength of your hand and the abundance of your compassion I remained resolute and stood up… for you have supported me by your kindnesses and by you abundant compassion. Because you atone for sin and cle[anse man] of his fault through your justice.

\(\text{(1QH XII [4] 33–7)}\)

All the sons of your truth /you take/ to forgiveness in your presence, you purify them from their sins by the greatness of your goodness, and in your bountiful mercy.

\(\text{(1QH XV [7] 30)}\)

In his compassion he draws me near, and in his mercy he brings my judgment. In the righteousness of his truth he judges me. In his great goodness he atones for all my iniquities. In his righteousness he cleanses me.

\(\text{(1QS XI 13–4)}\)\(^\text{14}\)

Space does not allow a full exploration of how these concepts—predestination, agency, and forgiveness—could comfortably coexist in the thought of the Qumran community. E. H. Merrill has observed, “the very fact that a man joined the Community proved that he was one of the predestined. He did not do so to become one of the Elect; he did so because he was one of the Elect. Predestination did not contradict free will; it provided the rationale as to why men chose ‘freely’ as they did.”\(^\text{15}\) From the perspective of the inhabitants of Qumran, those who entered the covenant of the community and remained faithful in that covenant as true Israel had been predestined to be the
 elect of God. Yes, they would sin and need to be forgiven, but this like everything else, happened because God had willed it long ago.

In summary, the Qumran sectarian scrolls indicate that God created all things, including good and evil spirits, as well as the spirits or souls of people before they existed in the flesh, and that God determined which people would be saved and which people would be destroyed. These passages suggest to me corrupted echoes of the war in heaven and of God’s foreordination of his spirit children, concepts that Latter-day Saints believe were known and understood in previous gospel dispensations. However, by the time of the Qumran community it appears that their understanding was well off the track of true doctrine.

The Purpose of Mortality

Latter-day Saints understand that mortality is a significant stage in our eternal progression. When asked about the purpose of mortality, a Latter-day Saint will often respond with a statement similar to this one:

There came a time [in our premortal existence] when . . . we were taught that we would come down here for two purposes: first, to gain bodies, mortal bodies, which would be given us again in immortality, in a resurrected state, as a consequence of an infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice which would be made; and secondly, that we would come here to be examined and tried and tested, to see if we would believe the truth, accept the truth, live the truth, walk in conformity to the mind and will of the Lord, as that was revealed to us by his prophets.

The classic scriptural statement on the purpose of mortality is in the book of Abraham:

And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. (Abraham 3:24–6)

These and other passages emphasize that there is a divine purpose to our mortal existence and that the acquisition of a physical body is essential to our progress. However, this idea of mortality as a second stage of development, which follows the opportunity we had for progression in our premortal existence, appears to be totally absent from the Dead Sea Scrolls. While members of the Qumran community seem to have believed in the existence of spirits before mortality, I am not aware of any passage in the scrolls that indicates the community’s view of why spirits come to earth. Furthermore, there are no passages that indicate that receiving a physical, mortal body is a positive step. Again, it could be argued that our information is incomplete, but if the statement by Josephus that the Essenes viewed mortal bodies as “prisons” from which spirits are glad to be released at death is accurate, then it is not surprising that passages contradicting that view are not attested in the scrolls.

Similarly, there is no specific indication in the Dead Sea Scrolls of the idea that mortality is a training and testing period. However, as we might expect to find in the records of a community grounded on a particular interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, there is ample evidence that faithfulness to God’s will was extremely important. Consider the
In order to seek God with [all the heart and soul] doing what is good and right before him, as he commanded Moses and through all his servants the prophets, and in order to love all that he has chosen, and to hate all that he has rejected, keeping away from all evil and adhering to all good works, and in order to perform truth and righteousness and justice upon the earth; to walk no longer with the stubbornness of a guilty heart, and (no longer with) lustful eyes doing all evil; in order to receive all those who devote themselves to do the statutes of God into the covenant of mercy, to be joined to the Council of God, to walk perfectly before him (according to) all revealed (laws) at their appointed times, and in order to love all the Sons of Light each according to his lot in the Council of God, and to hate all the Sons of Darkness each according to his guilt at the vengeance of God; all those devoting themselves to his truth bringing all their knowledge, and their strength, and their property into the Community of God in order to strengthen their knowledge by the truth of God's statues, and discipline their strength according to the perfection of his ways, and all their property according to his righteous counsel, and in order not to deviate from any single one of all the commands of God in their times, . . . thus all those who are entering shall cross over into the covenant before God by the Rule of the Community, in order to act according to everything which he has commanded. They must not turn back from following after him because of any terror, dread, affliction, or agony during the reign of Belial.19

Similar thoughts, less extensively developed, are also attested in other sectarian scrolls, such as these in the Thanksgiving Hymns:

[I will] look for the spirit [. . .] to be strengthened by the spirit of holiness, to adhere to the truth of your covenant, to serve you in truth, with a perfect heart, to love your [will.]

(1QH VIII [16] 14–5)

with an oath I have enjoined my soul not to sin against you and not to do anything which is evil in your eyes.

(1QH VI [14] 17–8)

Thus, those who entered into this covenant group at Qumran were expected both to know and do God's will as it was understood by the community. Sentiments such as “not to sin against you and not to do anything which is evil in your eyes” are attested elsewhere in the Dead Sea Scrolls, suggesting the strict nature of obedience expected in this covenant group.

Several passages, especially in the Thanksgiving Hymns, indicate that these people felt the need for divine assistance as they tried to strictly observe their covenant obligations. Consider these representative statements:

I give thanks, Lord, because you have sustained me with your strength, you have spread your holy spirit over me so that I will not stumble, and you have fortified me against the wars of wickedness.

(1QH XV [7] 6–7)
What will I say if you do not open my mouth? How can I understand if you do not teach me? What can I purpose if you do not open my heart? How will I walk on the right path if you do not steady [my feet?] How will my step stay secure [if you do not] strengthen [me] with strength?

(1QH XX [12] 33–5)

Both the need for obedience to God’s will and the importance of God’s strength to assist one in being faithful to him finds rich expression in the Hebrew Bible and in these and other passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

We must again note, however, that several passages from the scrolls cited above indicate that these people believed that God had predestined certain people to be faithful and thus to be saved. According to this view, those who were obedient to God’s will had already been designated by God to be so. This perspective alone distances the Latter-day Saint view of the nature and purpose of mortality from what is attested at Qumran.

Given the silence in the scrolls concerning the relationship between premortal spirits and God, no indication of a positive attitude about gaining a mortal body, and the concept that obedience is a consequence of predestination and not an indication of faithfully exercised agency, it seems clear that the purpose and significance of mortality as understood by Latter-day Saints is nowhere to be found in the documents from Qumran.

Resurrection and Afterlife

There are several statements relating to salvation in the sectarian documents, especially in the Thanksgiving Hymns. However, most of these passages are vague at best concerning what the inhabitants of Qumran really understood about the afterlife. Even though some Jews at the turn of the era, especially the Pharisees, believed in the physical resurrection of the body, there is no unambiguous statement of the doctrine of resurrection in Qumran texts that are clearly sectarian. The following passage may be understood to suggest a belief in resurrection:

For your glory, you have purified man from sin, so that he can make himself holy for you . . . and [be] in the lot of your holy ones, to raise the worms of the dead from the dust, to an [everlasting] community and from a depraved spirit, to your knowledge so that he can take his place in your presence with the perpetual host and the [everlasting] spirits, to renew him with everything that will exist.


If the inhabitants of Qumran believed in a literal resurrection I would expect a more specific statement than the passage just cited. Perhaps the statement from Josephus quoted earlier is accurate: “when they [people’s spirits or souls] are set free from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward.” However, in contrast to this, we have a statement from Hippolytus, a leader in the Christian church at Rome about AD 200, who stated that “the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has also derived support among [the Essenes], for they acknowledge both that the flesh will rise again, and that it will be immortal, in the same manner that the soul is already imperishable.” We cannot yet confidently determine which one of these descriptions is correct.

A text discovered in Cave 4 of Qumran, designated 4Q521, strongly suggests a belief in resurrection:
The Lord will perform marvelous acts such as have not existed, just as he said, for he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the meek, give lavishly to the needy, lead the exiled and enrich the hungry. (4Q521 2, ii, 11–3)

A second reference to resurrection may be seen on another fragment of this same text (5, ii, 6–7): "[...] like these, the accursed. And they shall be for death, [when he makes] the dead of his people rise." It is not clear, however, that this text is indigenous to the Qumran group, so it is difficult to know to what extent it represents the thought of the community.

Many writings that contain references to the condition of the righteous in the afterlife focus on praising God for his goodness and power. Consider these two passages from the Hymns:

The corrupt spirit you have purifed from the great sin so that he can take his place with the host of the holy ones, and can enter in communion with the congregation of the sons of heaven. You cast eternal destiny for man with the spirits of knowledge, so that he praises your name together in celebration, and tells of your wonders before all your works.

(1QH XI [3] 21–3)

All the sons of your truth /you take/ to forgiveness in your presence, you purify them from their sins by the greatness of your goodness, and in your bountiful mercy, to make them stand in your presence, for ever and ever.

(1QH XV [7] 30–1)

Perhaps the most interesting passage relating to the afterlife is found in the Rule of the Community:

These are the counsels of the spirit for the sons of truth in the world. And the visitation of those who walk in it will be for healing, plentiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessings, eternal enjoyment with endless life, and a crown of glory with majestic raiment in eternal light. (1QS IV 6–8)

While these passages provide a general but glowing picture of a future existence for those predestined to enjoy such, there is no specific mention of the opportunities inherent in a Latter-day Saint understanding of exaltation.

The wicked, of course, could not expect to enjoy such pleasing conditions. Several passages in the sectarian scrolls speak of the destruction of the wicked at the end of the world (see, for example, 1QH XIV [6] 29–32 and 1QpHab XIII 2–4), although these contribute little to our attempt to understand their view of the afterlife. There is one passage in the Rule of the Community, however, that vividly describes the fate of the wicked in the world to come:

The visitation of all those who walk in it [the Spirit of Deceit] (will be) many afflictions by all the angels of punishment, eternal perdition by the fury of God's vengeful wrath, everlasting terror and endless shame, together with disgrace of annihilation in the fire of the dark region. And all their times for their generations (will be expended) in dreadful suffering and bitter misery in dark abysses until they are destroyed. (There will be) no remnant nor rescue for them. (1QS IV 11–4)
While it is not clear to me how “eternal perdition” and “annihilation” can coexist, it is possible that the torment suffered by the wicked in the “dark region” mentioned in this passage is a corrupted echo of the Latter-day Saint concept of outer darkness to which sons of perdition will be banished.

Taken together, these and other passages from the sectarian scrolls mentioning life after death do not provide us with much specific information other than the view that the righteous may be resurrected and will be happy praising God in glorious conditions and that the wicked will suffer endlessly or, perhaps, be annihilated.

Again, it is important for our purposes to understand that there is no mention in the sectarian scrolls of degrees of glory in the afterlife, nor of a personal Savior, nor a great redemptive sacrifice, or related concepts as taught in Isaiah 53, in the New Testament, and in the Book of Mormon. Additionally, there is no mention that the concept of the messiah as taught at Qumran involves the Son of God in the sense that Latter-day Saints understand it.

Summary and Conclusion

I hope that this brief review of the Qumran community’s concepts of premortal, mortal, and postearth life has illustrated some of the interesting content of the sectarian scrolls from Qumran and has illustrated some of the difficulties that exist in understanding the ideas contained in them. Our relative uncertainty of the details of many of their conceptions only complicates the difficulties of relating them to Latter-day Saint doctrine.

I feel strongly that Latter-day Saints can appreciate and understand the passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls that relate to the plan of salvation, but we must also appreciate that a clear or comprehensive understanding of this plan is not evidenced at Qumran. Though there are concepts that I have described as corrupted echoes of true doctrines, there are simply too many key points of the plan of salvation absent from the preserved texts. Doctrines such as the fall, the infinite atonement of the Savior, clear indications of a universal, physical resurrection, and eternal ordinances requiring the holy Melchizedek Priesthood are not attested. The Dead Sea Scrolls cannot teach Latter-day Saints anything about the plan of salvation that has not already been revealed by the Lord through his authorized servants. However, our study of the scrolls can help us to understand the beliefs of the Jewish inhabitants of Qumran and, because of the contrasts, such study can help us more fully appreciate the gospel truths restored in the latter days.

Notes

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2. See, for example, Romans 8:29; Hebrews 1:6; 2 Nephi 25:12; Moses 1:6.
3. Those Jews who accepted the declarations of Jesus represent a significant exception to this statement, of course. However, the statement is made as a general observation on the status of all Jews at the end of the old era and most Jews at the beginning of the new one, the time when the Qumran community was in existence.
4. See the discussion of the messianic concept at Qumran by Florentino García Martínez in this volume.
5. Reasons that the inhabitants of Qumran cannot be viewed as so-called primitive Christians anticipating the true Messiah include: they seem to have believed in multiple messianic figures with different functions, especially royal and priestly functions (i.e., from a Latter-day Saint perspective, they fragmented the various roles of the true Messiah among separate individuals); their messiahs were not imagined to be divine; their messiahs would come with power and bring a new order to the earth (not unlike what we expect Jesus to do at his second coming), but they would live the pure form of the law of Moses after the coming of their messiahs; these people made no claims to be prophets authorized to speak for the Lord; and there is no prophetic reference in the Scrolls to Jesus or John the Baptist, whose names had been prophesied long before this time according to Latter-day Saint belief, nor is there any mention of John the Baptist or any of the apostles who actually ministered the gospel during the last three decades of the community’s existence at Qumran.

6. All English renditions of passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls in this paper are quoted from Florentino García Martínez, trans., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated*, translated into English by Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), unless otherwise noted. Note also that the columns of the scroll containing the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QH) have been renumbered since they were originally published. García Martínez uses this more recent numeration. I have provided the older numeration in brackets for convenience in using other translations, such as the one by Vermes.


9. Interestingly, the title *Lord of Spirits* is used several times in the Jewish pseudepigraphic text *1 Enoch*, which dates from about the time of the Qumran community but was not composed by it. See *1 Enoch* II.37–71 in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. Charlesworth, 1:29–50.


2. Note the similar perception preserved in 1QM XIII 9–13: “You, [have created] us for you, eternal people, and you have made us fall into the lot of light in accordance with your truth. From of old you appointed the Prince of light to assist us, and in [. . .] and all the spirits of truth are under his dominion. You created Belial for the pit, angel of enmity; his [dom]ain is darkness, his counsel is for evil and wickedness. All the spirits of his lot angels of destruction walk in the laws of darkness; towards them goes his only desire. We, instead, in the lot of your truth, rejoice in your mighty hand, we exult in your salvation, we are happy with your aid and your peace. Who is like you in strength, God of Israel?” See also CD II 7–10.

3. Elsewhere in the scrolls and other Jewish literature of the period the chief wicked spirit is designated as Belial, a title for Satan that occurs once in the New Testament (2 Corinthians 2:16). Greek manuscripts of this verse actually read Beliar, a common variant of Belial in Rabbinic and pseudepigraphic documents.


6. Latter-day Saints may remember that a similar belief of predestination is evident in the account of the apostate Zoramites’ prayer (see Alma 31:17).

7. Another passage in 1QM X 11–5 indicates that as part of his plan, God not only decided the fate of individuals, but of nations: “[. . . You created] . . . the earth and the laws of its divisions in desert and steppe, of all its products . . . of beast and birds, of man’s image, of the generations of . . . , of the division
of tongues, of the separation of peoples, of the dwelling of the clans, of the legacy of nations. . . ." (compare Acts 17:26).


9. Rule of the Community (1QS) 1 1–18, in Qimron and Charlesworth, Rule of the Community, 7–9. Note the emphasis on loving the faithful "sons of light" and hating the "sons of darkness." Since such a concept is not found in the Hebrew Bible or rabbinic writings, it is often suggested that this teaching, found in several passages in the sectarian scrolls, may have served as the background for Jesus' statement that "ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:43–4).

0. See Acts 23:6–9.


3. This text is also known as QMessianic Apocalypse. It draws on Isaiah 61:1, a scripture that was quoted in reference to Jesus in Luke 4:18.

4. Some scholars have suggested that this passage does not really refer to the afterlife, but to the conditions of members of the community. See, for example, VanderKam, Dead Sea Scrolls Today, 80.

5. Interestingly, the expression "crown of glory" occurs in a similar context in 1 Peter 5:4 and D&C 104:7 (see also its occurrence in Isaiah 28:5; 62:3; and Proverbs 4:9; 16:31, and related expressions such as "crown of life" occur elsewhere in the New Testament and Doctrine and Covenants).