

Dead Sea Scrolls and First-Century Judaism

Origins of Christianity * Lesson 3

Outline

1. Pharisees and Sadducees
2. The Qumran Scrolls
3. The Essenes

Terms

Messianism
Sadducees
Elijah

Pharisees
En Gedi
Habbakuk peshar

Essenes
eschatology

2 Samuel, 8:15-7

So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and equity to all his people... and Zadok the son of Ahi'tub and Ahim'elech the son of Abi'athar were priests.

Philippians, 3:4-6

If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless.

Mark 2:16

And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Matthew 23:27

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

Luke 13:31

At that very hour some Pharisees came, and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."

John 13:47-50

So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council, and said, "What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on thus, every one will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."

Was Qumran an Essene Site?

YES

Location of 900 scrolls, with a strong sectarian influence (e.g. renegade calendar) which are spread throughout 11 caves

The chronology of the site (140 BC-70 AD) would fit the origins and end of the Essenes

Scrolls tell story of separation from 'Wicked Priest' and life in a separatist community

Pliny locates Essenes on western shore of Dead Sea near En Geddi

Presence of 'ritual baths' point to concern with purity

NO

Located along strategic ridge in area fortified as defensive front by the Hasmoneans

Hasmoneans would not permit hostile religious sect to build a fortified settlement 25 mi. from Jerusalem

Clay and pottery remains indicate extensive industrial the operations on the site

Baths not necessarily 'kosher' and can be explained by architectural necessity