

THE DAVAR BIBLE SCHOOL

# Bible

**CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**

LESSON 8

## **An Open Letter from the Dean**

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- James Trimm

**Davar Bible School**  
Beit Netzarim Yeshiva  
P.O. Box 471  
Hurst, TX 76053  
U.S.A.  
jstrimm@yahoo.com

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## LESSON 8

Historically the Tanak (The so-called “Old Testament”) (including the Apocrypha) ends with the reign of John Hyrcanus (1Macc. 16:23-24).

John Hyrcanus was succeeded as High Priest and King by his son Alexander Jannaeus (103-76). Once, while he was officiating as High Priest at Sukkot, the Pharisees pelted him with their citrons. Jannaeus responded by slaughtering Pharisees by the thousands (Josephus; Ant. 13:13:5). Pharisees joined with Jannaeus’ foreign enemies, but when he overtook them, he had the conspirators crucified. (Josephus; Ant. 13:14).

It seems that at this point in time a radical group split off from the Pharisees. This group became known as the Essenes. This group was led by a figure known to us only as the “Teacher of Righteousness”. The Teacher of Righteousness was at odds with a figure referred to simply as the “Wicked Priest” whom most scholars identify with Alexander Jannaeus.

At the same time the Essenes were at odds with the group from which they had split off from, which they refer to with several euphemisms, most notably the “wall builders” (clearly the Pharisees).

The Essenes describe their origin this way:

...we separated from the majority of the people  
and from all their uncleanness and from being party  
to or going along with them in these matters.  
(4QMMT C:7-9)

At the time the “majority” were the Pharisees, as Josephus writes:

...the Sadducees are able to persuade none but  
the rich, and have not the populace obsequious  
to them, but the Pharisees have the majority on  
their side...  
(Ant. 13:10:6)

The Essenes separated from the Pharisees because they felt that the Pharisaic halacha was not strict enough, and that as a result the Temple was being defiled:

They [the wall-builders] also defile the sanctuary,  
for they do not separate clean from unclean according to  
the Law.  
(Dam. Doc. 5, 6-7)

...we separated from the majority of the people  
and from all their uncleanness and from being party  
to or going along with them in these matters.  
(4QMMT C:7-9)

The Essenes found the Pharisaic “wall” of restrictions to be too lax:

The Wall-Builders who went after “Precept”—Precept  
is a Raver of whom it says, “they shall surely rave” (Mic. 2:6)...  
(Dam. Doc. 4, 19)

But against his enemies, the Wall-Builders,  
his anger burns.  
(Dam. Doc. 8, 18)

Speaking of the Wall-Builders the Damascus Document states they fall into “three traps  
of Belial (4, 14-16) These three traps are given as “fornication... wealth... defiling the  
sanctuary.” (4, 17-18).

The first of these is that of “taking two wives in their lifetimes” (Dam. Doc. 4, 20-21) that  
is in allowing for divorce. This is similar to the position of the Pharisaic House of  
Shammai which allowed for divorce only in case of unchastity (m.Gittin 9:10). However  
the prevailing Halachah among the Pharisees was expressed by the House of Hillel  
Pharisees which said a man could divorce a woman “even if she spoiled his dish” (ibid).

The trap of “wealth” would seem to be more of an attack on the Sadducees, who tended  
to be wealthy, rather than the Pharisees, who represented the majority of the population.  
This trap may refer to the relationship by which Pharisees intimidated the wealthy  
Sadducees into implementing Pharisaic Halacha.

The Essenes believed that the Pharisees were defiling the sanctuary with their lax  
halacha. In the document known as MMT (Miqsat Ma’ase HaTorah) “Some of the Works  
of the Torah” the Essenes lay out twenty-four points of halacha related to purity about  
which they disagreed with the majority (the Pharisees), and because of which they  
believed the Pharisees were defiling the Temple. Many of the twenty-four points made in  
MMT are exact counterpoints of Pharisaic halacha given later in the Mishna.

The Essenes also held a stricter halacha than the Pharisees on the observance of the  
Sabbath. As Josephus writes:

...they are stricter than any other of the Jews  
in resting from their labors on the seventh day...  
(Wars 2:8:9)

Finally the Essenes held a stricter halacha on oaths than the Pharisees. The Pharisees had

a complex wall established around the commandments concerning oaths. These are laid out in the Mishna. However the Essene wall was even stricter, allowing for no oaths at all. As Josephus writes:

...whatsoever they say also is firmer than an oath; but swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury for they say that he who cannot be believed without [swearing by] God is already condemned.

(Wars 2:8:6)

And as we read in the Damascus Document:

A man must not swear either by Aleph and Lamedh (Elohim) or by Aleph and Daleth (Adonai)...

(Dam. Doc. 15:1)

The Essenes began when its first adherents became followers of an individual known simply as the Teacher of Righteousness. They followed him to Damascus where they all entered into a covenant together which they believed was the New Covenant. This New Covenant was centered around purity:

For when Israel abandoned Him by being faithless, He turned away from them and from His sanctuary and gave them up to the sword. But when He called to mind the covenant He made with their forefathers, He left a remnant for Israel... They considered their iniquity and knew they were guilty men... He raised up for them the Teacher of Righteousness to guide them in the way of his heart...

(Dam. Doc. A 1, 1-11)

...the captives of Israel... went out of the land of Judah and dwelt in the land of Damascus...

(Dam. Doc. 6, 5)

...They [who have entered the covenant] must distinguish between defiled and pure, teaching the difference between holy and profane. They must keep the Sabbath day according to specification, and the holy days and the fast day according to the commandments of the members of the new covenant in the land of Damascus..."

(Dam. Doc. 6, 17-19)

They saw their salvation as coming from their faith in this Teacher of Righteousness:

As for the righteous man, by faith to him one may find life." (Hab. 2:4b) This refers to all

those who obey the Law among the Jews whom God will rescue from among those doomed to judgment, because of their suffering and their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness.

(Hab. Com. 7, 17 - 8, 3)

They also saw their justification as coming from these New Covenant purity regulations which they came to refer to as the "Works of the Law"

These are some of our pronouncements concerning the Law of God. Specifically, some pronouncements concerning the Works of the Law that we have determined [are beneficial] and all of them concern defiling mixtures and purity....

A lengthy list of pronouncements is then given. Then the document concludes:

Now we have written to you some of the Works of the Law, those which we determined would be beneficial for you and your people,... And it will be reckoned to you as righteousness...

(4QMMT)

Thus the Qumran Community taught that they were all partakers in a New Covenant established by their Teacher of Righteousness, which offered them justification through their faith in him and his teachings, specifically purity regulations which were known as "Works of the Law". In other words their idea of the "New Covenant" was based on these "Works of the Law".

#### Yochanan and the Essenes

A careful reading of the Gospels will show that John the Baptist had his own "disciples" (Jn. 1:35) who continued on as such, apart from the Yeshua movement even after John and Yeshua had died (Acts 19:1-3). The flavor of John chapter one also indicates that John did not live alone in the wilderness, but lived with a community of followers near Bethabara (Jn. 1:28) a town just eight miles from Qumran.

Now one of the most important similarities between John the Baptist and his disciples, and the Qumran community is quite obviously that of geography. As mentioned, John and his disciples resided "in the wilderness" near a town just eight miles from Qumran. In fact the caves in which the scrolls were found are just five miles from the location along the Jordan at which John was baptizing. Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament use the phrase "in the wilderness" (drawn from Is. 40:3) almost as a proper noun, to describe this area. One NT passage in particular seemed a mystery until the discovery of the Scrolls. Luke 1:80 states:

...the child [John the Baptist] grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

What would a child be doing "in the wilderness?" Could John have been raised at the Qumran community? An apocryphal tradition once circulated in the Church of the East may offer some insight. The Protevangelion of James, once read in some eastern churches, records a tradition that at the time of the slaughter of the innocents,

Elizabeth took her son and went up unto the mountains, and looked around for a place to hide him; and there was no secret place to be found. Then she groaned within herself, and said, O mountain of YHWH, receive the mother with the child.

For Elizabeth could not climb up. And instantly the mountain was divided and received them. And there appeared to them an angel (or messenger) of YHWH, to preserve them."  
(Protevangelion 16:3-8)

Could this tradition be preserving an ancient tradition that John and his mother were taken in through an opening in the mountains (a cave) and a "messenger of YHWH" at Qumran took them in. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that Hugh Schonfield has shown that there are a number of parallelisms between DuTillet Hebrew Matthew and the Protevangelion, "which cannot be accidental." . Moreover Josephus tells us that the Essenes commonly raised other peoples children (Josephus; Wars 2:8:3). Thus it would seem that John the Baptist was raised up in the Qumran community.

As a Levite, and descendant of Zadock, John would have held a prominent place in the Qumran community, which favored the priesthood heirs. However, John's normal life at Qumran was interrupted when "the word of Eloah came to Yochanan... in the wilderness" (Lk. 3:2). In a rigid community where everyone had a rank and no one spoke out of turn, John's message may not have been welcome. This would explain why John and his disciples relocated near nearby Bethabara.

Both Matthew and Mark tell us that John ate locusts (Mt. 3:4; Mk. 1:6). Now The Dead Sea Scrolls tell us that the Qumran community also made locusts as part of their diet. In fact, the Dead Sea Scrolls even tell us how they were to be cooked (Dam. Doc. xii, 11-15).

Both the Qumran community, and John quoted Is. 40:3 as being a prophecy foretelling of their work (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn 1:23; Dam. Doc. viii, 12-14; ix, 20). This verse appears in most New Testaments as:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
"Prepare the way of YHWH;

make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim."

As a result of their use of this verse, both John and the Qumran community referred to themselves as being "in the wilderness" and both the Qumran community and the early believers in Yeshua called their movement "the way". (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn 1:23; Dam. Doc. viii, 12-14; ix, 20).

Another strong parallel between John and the Qumran community is that of the importance given to the practice of water immersion/baptism (Heb: T'vilah). The Torah requires "washing" for "uncleanness" (Lev. 16-18) and "uncleanness" can result from sin (Lev. 18:1ff for example.) King David spoke of this practice in the Psalms (Ps. 51:2, 7). In the Qumran community this practice was given great importance (Man. Disc. 3, 4f; v, 13; Dam. Doc. 10, 10-13) and it was certainly regarded as of high priority to John (Mt. 3:6, 11; Mk. 1:4-5; Lk. 3:2-3, 7; Acts 19:3-4). Both believed that water baptism was only symbolic of a greater cleansing of wickedness performed by the Ruach HaKodesh (Man. Disc. 4, 12-13).

One final similarity between John and the Qumran community was that both stressed that the day of fiery judgment was eminently approaching. Now having discussed the similarities between John the Baptist and the Qumran community, let us note the differences. Essenes always wore white (Josephus; Wars 2:8:3) yet John wore camel's hair (Mt. 3:4). Secondly, the Qumran community only ate food provided by their community yet John foraged for himself (Mt. 3:4). Finally and most importantly the Qumran community was not even a little bit evangelical. The Manual of Discipline specifically commands its adherents to "bear unremitting hatred towards all men of ill repute... to leave it to them to pursue wealth and mercenary gain... truckling to a depot." (Man. Disc. ix 21-26). But John called these men of ill repute to "Repent, for the Kingdom of Elohim is offered." (Mt. 3:2). This new teaching must have been the "word of Eloah" which John "received in the wilderness" (Lk. 3:2) since it is later echoed by Yeshua (Mt. 4:17) and Yeshua's disciples (Mt. 10:7).

Yeshua came to be immersed by John in the wilderness at about the age of 30 and was proclaimed by John to be the "lamb" of Isaiah 53:7 (Jn. 1:29). Certain of John's students then became students of Yeshua (Jn. 1:35-51). Yeshua then began to proclaim, as John had proclaimed: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is offered." (Mt. 3:17). Later He sent his twelve students out with the same proclamation (Mt. 10).

Despite the fact that Yeshua's teachings largely agreed with that of the Pharisaic School of Hillel, there were occasions where Yeshua's teachings agreed with the School of Shammai against the School of Hillel. An important example of this is the issue of divorce where Yeshua agreed with Shammai against Hillel (Mt. 5:31-32 & m.Gittin 9:10). There were also occasions when Yeshua's teachings agreed with that of the Essenes against that of the Pharisees. One example is on the issue of oaths (compare Mt. 5:33-37 & Damascus Document- Geniza A; Col. 15; Lines 1-3).

While Yocahan was essentially an Essene, Yeshua did not appear to live the Essene

lifestyle, as we read in Mt. 11:18-19:

Yochanan came neither eating nor drinking...

The Son of man came eating and drinking...

Nonetheless there are many important similarities between the teachings of Yeshua and those of the Essenes/Qumran community. Yeshua went out into the wilderness to be tempted (Mt. 4:1f). Yeshua's twelve talmidim (students) remind us of the council of twelve at Qumran (Manual of Discipline 1QS 8:1). Yeshua's twelve talmidim seemed to be headed by three (Kefa (Peter), James (Ya'akov) and Yochanan (John) and the twelve laymen of Qumran were headed by three priests (1QS 8:1).

In Matthew 10:9-11 Yeshua instructs his Talmidim as follows:

Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor lesser coin in your belts.

Pack not for the journey, either two coats, or sandals,  
or a staff, for the laborer is worthy of his food.

And into whatever city or town you will enter, enquire who in it is honorable, and there abide until you go out from there. - Some light on this text may be acquired by examining a statement by Josephus concerning the first century Essene sect of Judaism:

...and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go into such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel into remote parts, though still they take their weapons with them, for fear of thieves. Accordingly there is, in every city where they live, one appointed particularly to take care of strangers, and provide garments and other necessaries for them.

(Josephus; Wars 2:8:4)

Yeshua's talmidim had for the most part, come from an Essene background. It would appear that they were therefore able to travel within Essene circles from town to town without having to carry additional supplies.

Also note that Yeshua and his Talmidim traveled armed (Lk. 22:38) Were Yeshua and his Talmidim circulating to some extent within the Essene community network?

Also in Luke 22:24 (see also 9:46):

And there was also strife among them  
about who among them was greatest -

What? What kind of prideful, arrogant, self-righteous men had Yeshua chosen as his twelve emissaries? Are they really bickering over which of them is better than the other? The Dead Sea Scrolls offer some insight on what otherwise looks like a childish squabble

that should be totally uncharacteristic of the kind of men Yeshua would have chosen as his twelve talmidim and emissaries (see comments to Mt. 10:2). In the Manual of Discipline we read:

This is the rule for the session of the general membership, each man being in his proper place. The priest shall sit in the first row, the elders in the second, the rest of the people, each in his proper place.... So that each man may state his opinion to the society of the Yahad. None should interrupt the words of his comrade, speaking before his brother finishes what he has to say. Neither should anyone speak before another of higher rank.  
(Manual of Discipline 1QS 6, 8-11)

The Essenes of Qumran were informed of their rank once a year at an annual review as we read elsewhere in the same document:

They shall do as follows annually,...  
the priests shall pass in review first,  
ranked according to their spiritual excellence,  
one after another.  
Then the Levites shall follow, and third all the people by rank,  
one after another, in their thousands and hundreds  
and fifties and tens.  
Thus shall each Israelite know his proper  
standing in the Yahad of God...  
(Manual of Discipline 1QS 2, 19-22)

And regarding the Great Messianic Banquet (see comments to Mt. 26:17-30):

The procedure for the [mee]ting of the men of reputation [when they are called] to the banquet held by the society of the Yahad, when [God] has fa[th]ered (?) the Messiah (or, when the Messiah has been revealed) among them: [the Priest,] as head of the entire congregation of Israel, shall enter first, trailed by all [his] brot[h]ers, the Sons of] Aaron, those priests [appointed] to the banquet of the men of reputation. They are to sit be[fore him] by rank. Then the [Mess]iah of Israel may en[ter], and the heads of the th[ousands of Israel] are to sit before him by rank. ... all the heads of the congregation's cl[ans], together with [their] wis[e and knowledgeable men]. Shall sit before them by rank.

[When] they gather [at the] communal [tab]le,  
[having set out bread and w]ine so the communal table

is set [for eating] and [the] wine (poured) for drinking, none [may r]each for the first portion of the bread or [the wine] before the Priest. For [he] shall [bl]ess the first portion of the bread and the wine, [reac]hing for the bread first. Afterw[ard] the Messiah of Israel [shall re]ach for the bread. [Finally,] ea[ch] member of the whole congregation of the Yahad [shall give a bl]essing, [in descending order of] rank.

This procedure shall govern every me[al], provided at least ten me[n are ga]thered together.

(1Qsa 2, 11-22)

Since Passover is the spiritual new year for Israel, it stands to reason that this annual review coincided with Passover. Yeshua's talmidim are sitting down for the Passover Sader, for the acting out of the Messianic Banquet (see comments to Mt. 26:17-30). To their minds they may have even been having the actual Messianic Feast (in light of the comments at Mt. 10:1 & 10:9-11) Yeshua's talmidim, being mostly of Essene background (see comments to Jn. 1:28-51) and sitting down for the Sader were anticipating that Yeshua would be assigning them each a rank so that they would each "know their proper standing". This was not out of arrogance but out of humility. They did not want to be speaking presumptuously ahead of their rank. The statements involved in this dispute were likely not arrogant presumptuous claims of "I am greater [in rank] than you" but rather "\_\_\_\_\_ is surely greater [in rank] than I".

In Matthew 21:23-27 The Pharisees challenge Yeshua as to where his s'mikhah, or authority comes from. Yeshua responds by asking them about where Yochanan's authority came from. Yeshua was not evading their question. Yeshua was raising this point because Yeshua's earthly authority (s'mikhah) came from Yochanan (Jn. 1:6-8, 15, 26-27, 29-37) and Yochanan's authority was from an Essenes rather than a Pharisaic source (see comments to Mt. 3:1). Thus Yeshua's s'mikhah traced back through Yochanan to the Essene line of s'mikhah. Yeshua was putting the Pharisees in the position of either acknowledging Essene Halachic authority or declaring it to be false. It would appear that the Pharisees were hesitant to question the s'mikhah of a sect that was known for being even stricter on observance than they were.

Many of Yeshua's halachic teachings parallel those of the Qumran community. Yeshua opposed the taking of oaths (Mt. 5:34) as did the Essenes (Josephus; Wars 2:8:6; Manual of Discipline 1QS 15:1-3). Yeshua's use of Gen. 1:27 to prove his halachic position on divorce is paralleled in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

...they are caught in two traps: fornication, by taking two wives in their lifetimes although the principle of creation is: "male and female He created them."...they are caught in two traps:

(Dam. Doc. Col. 4 line 20 through Col. 5 line 1)

Yeshua's halachah on the issue of "CORBAN" (an offering) being used as an excuse to violate Torah in Matthew 15:1-8 parallels a similar ruling at Qumran (Damascus Document 16:13).

Matthew records a very interesting event involving Yeshua and the Temple Tax:

...they that received tribute came to Kefa (Peter) , and said,  
Does not your master pay tribute? He said, Yes.  
And when he came into the house Yeshua prevented him, saying,  
what do you think, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth  
take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers? Kefa (Peter) said to him, of  
strangers. Yeshua said to him, Then the children are free. Notwithstanding, lest we  
should offend them, go you to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first  
comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, you shall find a piece of money: that  
take, and give to them for me and you.  
(Mt. 17:24-27)

Here Kefa indicates the Yeshua pays the Temple tax, but Yeshua indicates that neither himself, nor Kefa nor apparently any of his followers owe the Temple tax. Yeshua does not seem to argue that he does not owe such a tax because he is the Messiah, for he extends the same privilege to Kefa and apparently all of his followers. Is Yeshua teaching against Torah? The answer is no. The Torah does command that a Temple tax must be paid by every male 20 and older (Ex. 30:11-16) but is ambiguous as to how often it must be paid. The Pharisaic Halachah (and apparently the Sadducean Halachah) had the tax being paid annually during the month of Adar (m.Shek. 1:1, 3) However the Qumran community had a different Halachah. They taught:

...concerning the Ransom: the money of the valuation which a man gives as ransom for his life shall be half a shekel in accordance with the shekel of the sanctuary. He shall give it only once in his life.  
(4Q159 Frag 1; Col. 2; lines 6-7)

Now if Yeshua held to this Essene Halachah then He would not believe that he or his followers owed the tax, if they had already paid it at least once in their lifetime. This would explain why Kefa said that Yeshua pays the tax, while Yeshua claims that he and his followers don't owe the tax.

Like the Qumran community Yeshua speaks allegorically of "Living Water" coming from a well. . In John chapter four "living water" is symbolically drawn from Jacob's well, and brings salvation and eternal life. In the Manual of Discipline "living water" is

the teachings of the community and is symbolically drawn from the well of Num. 21:18 which is identified by the Scroll to be symbolic of the Law. Thus we may conclude that in Jn. 4 Yeshua draws upon a Midrash (allegorical interpretation) which existed in his time (Jn. 4:10 & Dam. Doc. VI, 4-5; VII, 9-VIII, 21).

Yeshua's use of the Passover Seder as a sort of Messianic banquet certainly reminds us of the Messianic banquet of the Qumran Essenes (Josephus; Wars 2:8:5; Manual of Discipline 6:3-6 & 1QS Sa. 2, 17-20). The Qumran material even reads "the Messiah of Israel shall reach for the bread" (1QSa. 2:20-21) a phrase which certainly reminds us of the "Last Supper" account of the New Testament. There were however some very important points with which Yeshua greatly disagreed with the Essenes. The Essenes held the strictest rules of resting on the Sabbath than any of the Jews (Josephus; Wars 2:8:9) The Qumran community, with its stricter Halacha likely did not permit healing on the Shabbat at all. They did not allow carrying medicine on the Shabbat nor did they allow using a tool to save a life on the Shabbat (Dam. Document col. 10; lines 14-18). Now Y'shua's Halacha on the issue seems to have been less strict. There is conflict between Yeshua and Qumran on the plucking and rubbing of wheat in Mt. 12:1=Lk. 6:1=Mk. 2:23. The activity described is clearly permitted by the Torah in general, though not necessarily on the Shabbat (Duet. 23:26 (23:25 in non-Jewish editions)). This was forbidden by Qumran halacha which stated:

"A man may not go about in the field to do his desired activity on the Sabbath... A man may not eat anything on the Sabbath except food already prepared."  
(Dam. Doc. Col. 10; lines 20-22).

Also Yeshua's teaching that it is permitted to rescue an animal from a pit. (Mt. 12:11 and Lk. 14:3-6) is in direct conflict with Qumran Halacha.(Dam. Doc. col. 10; lines 14-18).

Yeshua's followers had much in common with the Essenes. Both were called "The Way" (Acts 9:2 & 1QS 9,18) and "B'nai Or" (Sons of Light) (Lk. 16:8; Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; 1Thes. 5:5; Man. Of Disc. 1,9; 2, 24; 1QM). Like the Essenes they shared all things in common (Acts 2:44-45; Josephus; Ant. 18:1:5; Wars 2:8:3) and lying about such assets was regarded as a great sin (Acts 5:1-10). Although further study is needed, there may be some good connections between the Qumran hierarchy and that of the Nazarenes. Both groups seemed to have made some use of the Book of Enoch (1Enoch 1:9 is quoted in Jude 1:14-15; seven fragmentary copies of Enoch were found at Qumran). Like the Qumran community, the Nazarenes also seem to have used Hebrew manuscripts of Tanak books which agreed in places with the text behind the Septuagint. The Nazarene belief in two comings of the Messiah is similar to the Qumran belief in two Messiahs. The Qumran community believed in a priestly Messiah who was a Melchizadek figure whom they termed EL, ELOHIM and YHWH (11Q13), a figure they believed was prophesied of in such passages as Dan. 9:24-27; Is. 52 (and presumably 53) and Is. 61:1. In like manner the Nazarenes saw their Messiah Yeshua as a Melchizadek figure (Hebrews 7) who fulfilled the very same prophecies.

In Acts we read about Paul just before he became a believer in Messiah:

Now Shaul was yet full of the threat and anger of murder against the talmidim of our Adon. And he asked for letters from the Chief Cohen to give to Darm'suk (Damascus) to the synagogues, that if he should find any who follow in this way, men or women, he might bind and bring them to Yerushalayim.  
(Acts 9:1-2)

Now why would Shaul want to go to Damascus to pursue the followers of Yeshua? As we learned in chapter one, the first followers of Yeshua were from the Essenes. We also learned that Essene Judaism was born in Damascus and that its followers, like the Nazarenes, called their movement "the Way".

Now while on his way to Damascus Paul encounters the resurrected Yeshua and himself becomes a believer in Yeshua as the Messiah (Acts 9:3-7). As instructed by Yeshua, Paul enters Damascus and makes contact with the followers of Yeshua there (Acts 9:8-19). In his letter to the Galatians Paul describes these events as follows:

And I did not go to Yerushaliyim to the emissaries who were before me, but I went to Arabia and again returned to Darm'suk (Damascus), and after three years, I went to Yerushalayim to seek Kefa and remained with him fifteen days.  
(Gal. 1:17-18)

Why did Paul remain for three years in Damascus? Because it took three years to be fully admitted into the Essene community. As Josephus writes:

But now *if any one has a mind to come over to their sect*, he is not immediately admitted, but he is prescribed the same method of living which they *use for a year*, while he continues excluded'; and they give him also a small hatchet, and the fore-mentioned girdle, and the white garment. And when he has given evidence, during that time, that he can observe their continence, he approaches nearer to their way of living, and is made a partaker of the waters of purification; yet is he not even now admitted to live with them; for after this demonstration of his fortitude, his temper is tried *two more years*; and if he appear to be worthy, they then admit him into their society.  
(Wars 2:8:7)

Paul went through the entire process of learning the ins and outs of Essene Judaism. These studies also shaped Paul's thinking. There are several Parallels between Paul's teachings and the Essene teachings at Qumran.:

| Paul   | Qumran   |
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| <p><b>The Mystery:</b><br/>that by <i>revelation the mystery was made known</i> to me, even as I have written to you in few words, so that you may be able, while you are reading, to understand my knowledge which is in the <i>mystery</i> of the Messiah,<br/>(Eph. 3:3-4)</p>  | <p><b>The Mystery:</b><br/>...this refers to the Teacher of Righteousness to whom God <i>made known all the revelations of mystery</i> of his servants the prophets.<br/>(Hab. Commentary 1QpHab 7, 4-5)<br/>From his righteous fount comes my justification, the light of my heart from his wondrous <i>mysteries</i>.<br/>(Man. Of Disc. 11, 5)</p>  |
| <p><b>Sons of Light/Darkness:</b><br/>For you were previously in darkness, but now are light in our Adon. Therefore so walk as <i>Sons of Light</i>,<br/>(Eph. 5:8)<br/>For you are all <i>Sons of Light</i> and sons of the day. And you are not sons of the night or <i>Sons of Darkness</i>.<br/>(1Thes. 5:5)</p>   | <p><b>Sons of Light/Darkness:</b><br/>He is to teach them both to love all the <i>Sons of Light</i>—each commensurate with his rightful place in the council of God—and to hate all the <i>Sons of Darkness</i>, each commensurate with his guilt and the vengeance due him from God.<br/>(Man. Disc. 1,9)<br/>He shall be cut off from all the <i>Sons of Light</i> because of his apostasy from God, brought about by un-repentance and the stumbling block of sin.<br/>(Man. Of Disc. 2, 16)<br/>The first attack of the Sons of Light shall be undertaken against the forces of the Sons of Darkness, the army of Belial... supporting them are those who violate the covenant.<br/>(1QM 1, 1-2)</p> |
| <p><b>Light and Darkness:</b><br/>Henceforth, the night is passed and the day is near. Thus, let us lay aside from us the <i>works of darkness</i> and let us put on the armour of <i>light</i>.<br/>(Rom. 13:12)<br/>for you were previously <i>darkness</i>, but now you are <i>light</i> in our Adon. Therefore so walk as sons of <i>light</i>, for the fruit of the <i>light</i> is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. And determine what is pleasing before our Adon. And do not fellowship with the <i>works of darkness</i>, in which there is no fruit, but reprove them.</p> | <p><b>Light and Darkness:</b><br/>Upright character and fate originate from the habitation of <i>light</i>; perverse, with the fountain of <i>darkness</i>. The authority of the Prince of <i>Light</i> extends to the governance of all righteous people; therefore, they walk in the paths of light. Correspondingly, the authority of the Angel of <i>Darkness</i> embraces the governance of all wicked people, so they walk in the paths of <i>darkness</i>.<br/>(Damascus Document 3, 19-21).</p>  |

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| <p>for that which they do in secret is abominable even to speak.<br/>For everything is exposed and revealed by the <b>light</b>, and everything that reveals is <b>light</b>.<br/>(Eph. 5:8-13)<br/>What communion has <b>light</b> with <b>darkness</b>?<br/>(2Cor. 6:14)</p> |  |
| <p><b>Men as Vessels of Clay:</b><br/>But we have this treasure in <b>a vessel of clay</b>, that the greatness of the power might be from Eloah and not from us.<br/>(2Cor. 4:7)</p>   | <p><b>Men as Vessels of Clay:</b><br/>But I, <b>a vessel of clay</b>, what am I?<br/>Kneaded with water, for whom am I to be reckoned, and what is my strength?<br/>(Hodayot 11, 23).</p>  |
| <p><b>Portion of the Inheritance:</b><br/>You should give thanks to Eloah the Father, <b>who has made us worthy for the portion of the inheritance of the set-apart-ones</b> by light,<br/>(Col. 1:12)</p>   | <p><b>Portion of the Inheritance:</b><br/>To them He has chosen all these has he given—an eternal possession. <b>He has made them heirs in the legacy of the set-apart ones...</b><br/>(1Qs 11:7-8)</p>  |
| <p><b>Belial:</b><br/>What accord has Messiah with <b>Belial</b>?...<br/>(2Cor. 6:14)</p>  | <p><b>Belial:</b><br/>The true meaning of this verse concerns the three traps of <b>Belial</b> about which Levi son of Jacob said that <b>Belial</b> would catch Israel in,...<br/>(Dam. Doc. 4, 14-16)</p>  |
| <p><b>Angel of Satan:</b><br/>...a thorn was given me in the flesh, an <b>angel of Satan</b>, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated.<br/>(2Cor. 12:7)</p>   | <p><b>Angel of Satan:</b><br/>On the day a man promises to return to the Torah of Moses the <b>angel of Satan</b> will leave him, if he keeps his words.<br/>(Dam. Doc. 16, 4)</p>   |
| <p><b>Eternal Life for Truth Seekers:</b><br/>To <b>those who in the patience of good works seek glory and honor</b> and immortality, he gives to them <b>eternal life</b>.<br/>(Rom. 2:7)</p>   | <p><b>Eternal Life for Truth Seekers:</b><br/>To these ends is the earthly counsel of the spirit to <b>those whose nature yearns for truth</b>. Through a gracious visitation all who walk in this spirit will know healing, bountiful peace, long life, many children, followed by eternal blessings and perpetual joy through <b>life everlasting</b>.<br/>(Man. Disc. 4, 6-7)</p> |
| <p><b>Melchizadek</b><br/>[the priest after the order of Melchizadek]<br/>(Hebrews 7)</p>  | <p><b>Melchizadek</b><br/>...the Day of Atonement... when he [Melchizadek] shall atone for all the Sons of Light... (11Q13 2, 8)</p>   |

However Paul also contrasts Qumran theology. His commentary on Hab. 2:4 (in Gal. 3:11, Rom. 1:17 & Heb. 10:37-38 see my Hebrews Commentary on this passage) seems to be a rebuttal to that of the Qumran community (1QpHab 8, 1-3).

(End Lesson Eight)