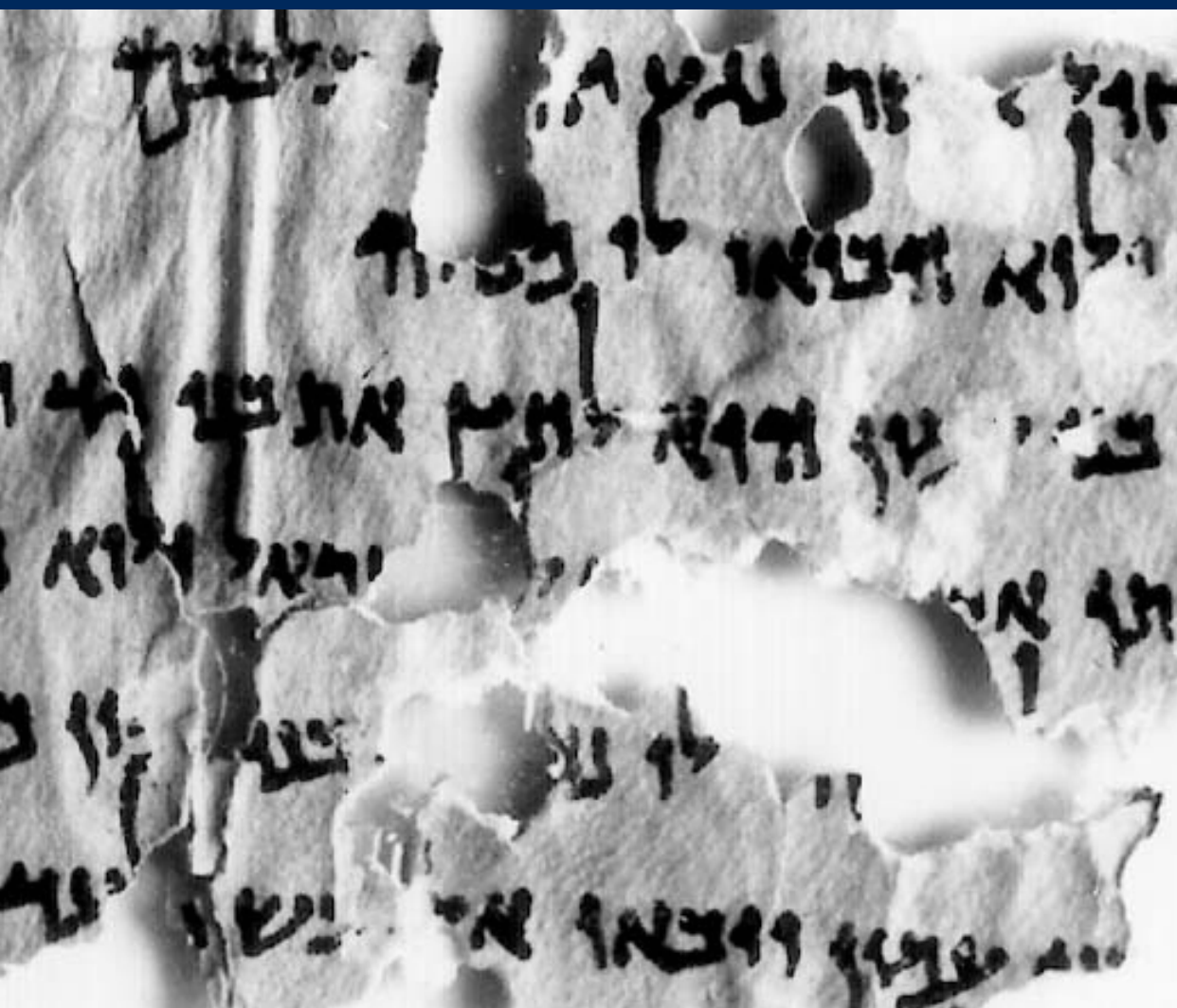


DEAD SEA SCROLLS



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The Origin of Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls

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For those accustomed to thinking in terms of New Testament theology, to speak of the origin of sin is to bring to mind immediately the story of Adam, Eve, and the serpent. The Genesis 3 account of “the Fall,” as the story has been labeled, traces a number of the world’s problems, the most notable of which is death, back to the first human couple’s fateful decision to disobey their Creator and to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is to this story that the apostle Paul refers on more than one occasion to explain the human predicament (e.g., 1 Cor 15:21–22). For Paul, that act of rebellion perpetrated by Adam in the garden was the source of both death and sin: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Rom 5:12).¹ Paul argued that the solution to this problem for both Jews and Greeks was the righteousness and life that came through Jesus Christ.

Given how central the Genesis 3 story is to Christian explanations of the human situation, it is somewhat surprising that the story of Adam and Eve was only one among several explanations of sin and evil that Jews ascribed to in the first couple of centuries BC. While some Jews traced the origin of human sin back to the garden of Eden, many others looked elsewhere for the root of the world’s problems and used scriptural passages other than Genesis 3 to explain how evil entered creation. After summarizing some of the explanations of sin that were available to Jews in the Second Temple period, this essay will consider explanations offered by two texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Finally, this essay will comment very briefly on Paul’s approach to the matter in the context of early Judaism.

Explanations of Sin in Early Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Genesis 3

Although other explanations of sin seem to have enjoyed a wider circulation in the first couple of centuries BC, one writing from this period

¹All quotations of the Old and New Testaments are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB). All quotations of the Apocrypha are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

hints at the impact of Adam and Eve's transgression on human morality. Writing early in the second century BC, the wisdom teacher Ben Sira states, "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die" (Ecclus 25:24).² This statement occurs in the midst of a series of sayings concerning the troubles that women can bring upon men. Ben Sira's comment attests to the belief that sin "had its beginning" in the Garden of Eden.

One should be aware, however, that this comment about Eve probably does not reflect any sort of systematic approach to the question of sin on the part of Ben Sira. Nor does it represent the totality of his thinking regarding the events that transpired in Eden.³ Ben Sira compiled an anthology of wisdom teachings, some of which are inconsistent with one another. Elsewhere, for example, Ben Sira attributes death not to Eve's disobedience but to God's plan for humanity from the beginning:

The Lord created human beings out of earth,
and makes them return to it again.
He gave them a fixed number of days,
but granted them authority over everything on the earth.
He endowed them with strength like his own,
and made them in his own image.
He put the fear of them in all living beings,
and gave them dominion over beasts and birds.
Discretion and tongue and eyes,
ears and a mind for thinking he gave them.
He filled them with knowledge and understanding,
and showed them good and evil (Ecclus 17:1–7).

According to this passage, which clearly alludes to Genesis 1–3, human mortality (as well as the knowledge of good and evil!) were allotted to humankind by God. They are not said to be the unfortunate result of Adam and Eve's disobedience but are described simply as God's design for humans. Ecclesiasticus 25:24, nevertheless, expresses the idea that the first humans, Eve in particular, are responsible for the existence of sin and death.⁴

²The book of *4 Ezra*, written near the end of the first century AD, also looks to Adam for an explanation of sin: "O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants" (7:118). See John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism from Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, 1988).

³John J. Collins suggests that Ben Sira's comment reflects his distrust of women more than it does an exegesis of Gen 1–2. John J. Collins, "Before the Fall: The Earliest Interpretations of Adam and Eve," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman and J.H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 298. Cf. Ben Sira's comment regarding women in Ecclesiasticus 42:14.

⁴On the guilt of Eve in introducing sin into creation, see also the somewhat later *Apoc. Mos.* 32:2.

Genesis 6

Other Jews found a more helpful account of how the world went awry later in Genesis in the enigmatic opening verses of chapter 6.

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. . . . The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown (Gen 6:1–2, 4).

Just who these “sons of God” are is a question to which several answers have been proposed in the history of this perplexing passage’s interpretation.⁵ For the authors of the *Book of Watchers* (1 En. 1–36), the sons of God in Genesis 6 were angelic beings called “watchers,” who rebelled against God by having sexual relations with human women.⁶ According to the *Book of Watchers*, these angels taught humans certain illicit arts, such as sorcery and divination. Also included among those things revealed to humans was how to manufacture jewelry, cosmetics, and weapons. With the knowledge of these crafts, humankind acquired the ability to commit acts of violence and sexual immorality on an unprecedented scale.

Unfortunately, the revelation of these forbidden crafts was only one part of the problem created by these rebellious angels. The watchers’ half angel/half human offspring turned out to be a race of giants whose insatiable appetites drove them to devour humans as food. Although the giants eventually destroyed one another in battle, they continue to pose a grave threat to humanity. Their fleshly, human components perished, but their spiritual, angelic components survived and continue to dwell on the earth as “evil spirits” (1 En. 15:8–16:1). Evil spirits, according to the *Book of Watchers*, were not created by God, but came into existence as the result of angelic rebellion. These evil spirits afflict humans with various manners of illness. Furthermore, the angel Uriel tells Enoch, these spirits “bring destruction on men and lead them astray to sacrifice to demons as to gods” (1 En. 19:1).⁷ In this

⁵For a discussion of the expression “sons of God” in this passage and in early Jewish literature, see Ryan E. Stokes, “Sons of God,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, ed. John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); John H. Walton, “Sons of God, Daughters of Man,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 793–98.

⁶The *Book of Watchers* is a composite document that appears to have arrived in its present form by the end of the third century BC. J.T. Milik dates two manuscripts of the work that were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls to the first half of the second century BC. One of these manuscripts (4QEn^a), according to Milik (141), was copied from a manuscript dating no later than the third century BC. J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 25, 140, 164.

⁷The identification of false gods as “demons” is based on the mention of שְׂרִיִּם in Deut

way, the idolatrous worship of the gentile nations is traced back to the “sons of God” of Genesis 6.

The book of *Jubilees*, written sometime in the mid or late second century BC, further develops the belief that malevolent spirits spawned by the “watchers” before the flood are responsible for the world’s evils.⁸ According to *Jubilees*, these spirits are under the command of the Prince of Mastema, *Jubilees*’ preferred name for Satan. The Prince of Mastema sends these spirits among the gentile nations to lead them into idolatry and into violent military aggression (*Jub.* 11:5). Israel, however, is God’s chosen people, and God offers them protection from the spirits of Mastema. As long as Israel lives in accordance with the laws that God revealed to them through Moses, claims *Jubilees*, they will enjoy protection from the deception and destruction that the malevolent spirits work among the rest of humankind.

It is important to observe that for both the *Book of Watchers* and for *Jubilees*, evil spirits are not blamed for all human sin. Rather, the evils for which these spirits are said to be responsible are those of idolatry and military aggression, those sins of which the nations, not Israel, are guilty.

Defenses of Human Free Will

With theologies that attributed human wickedness to superhuman influence gaining momentum, several Jewish thinkers formulated responses to these teachings, responses that defended the notion of human free will. For one example of such a counterargument, we return to Ecclesiasticus.

Do not say, “It was the Lord’s doing that I fell away;”
 for he does not do what he hates.
 Do not say, “It was he who led me astray;”
 for he has no need of the sinful.
 The Lord hates all abominations;
 such things are not loved by those who fear him.
 It was he who created humankind in the beginning
 and he left them in the power of their own free choice.
 If you choose, you can keep the commandments,
 and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.

32:17 and Ps 106:37. All quotations of *1 En.* in this essay are from George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: A New Translation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004).

⁸There is as of yet no consensus regarding the precise date of the composition of *Jub.* James C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 14 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977), 207–85, dates the book between 160 and 150 BC. Jonathan A. Goldstein, “The Date of the Book of Jubilees,” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 50 (1983): 63–86, dates it between 169 and 167. Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century B.C. Claims to the Holy Land*, *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum* 15 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Seibeck], 1987), 57–88, locates the books composition in the period of 130–09. Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 72–77, places it in the last third of the second century BC.

He has placed before you fire and water;
 stretch out your hand for whichever you choose.
 Before each person are life and death,
 and whichever one chooses will be given.
 For great is the wisdom of the Lord;
 he is mighty in power and sees everything;
 his eyes are on those who fear him,
 and he knows every human action.
 He has not commanded anyone to be wicked,
 and he has not given anyone permission to sin
 (Ecclus 15:11–20).

This passage defends God against any charge of complicity in immoral behavior, asserting that humans were created with “free choice.” The Hebrew word translated as “free choice” in Ecclesiasticus 15:14 is **יִצָר**, which is often translated as “inclination.” Later, the Mishnah will speak of two conflicting “inclinations” within a person’s heart, a good inclination (**טוֹב יִצָר**) and a bad inclination (**רַע יִצָר**).⁹ Humans must choose to follow the good and deny the bad. According to Ben Sira, each individual has only one **יִצָר**. It may be that “free will” is not an entirely satisfactory translation of **יִצָר** in this passage, but Ben Sira unambiguously places responsibility for choosing between sin and obedience on the individual. Whether this translation of **יִצָר** is appropriate or not, Ben Sira certainly advocates a doctrine of free will.

As one might expect, Ben Sira is not entirely consistent on this matter. In another passage, the sage seems to say that God creates persons as either righteous or wicked.

Good is the opposite of evil,
 and life the opposite of death;
 so the sinner is the opposite of the godly.
 Look at all the works of the Most High;
 they come in pairs, one the opposite of the other
 (Ecclus 33:14–15).

As with other complex matters, Ben Sira has preserved for us differing perspectives on the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom.

Another writing from the second century BC to weigh in on the free will side of this debate is the *Epistle of Enoch* (1 En. 92–105). Similar to Ecclesiasticus 15, the *Epistle of Enoch* asserts, “lawlessness was not sent upon the earth; but men created it by themselves, and those who do it will come to a great curse” (1 En. 98:4b). It is clear from Ben Sira and the *Epistle of Enoch* that not all Jews were comfortable with the teaching that God or other

⁹E.g., *M. Ber.* 9:5.

superhuman forces manipulated the wills of human beings, leading them to sin.¹⁰

Explanations of Sin in the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls are frequently hailed as the greatest archaeological discovery of the twentieth century. They are certainly the most significant discovery for biblical studies. The recovery of these ancient writings, which were deposited in eleven caves near Qumran nearly two millennia ago, has contributed enormously to discussions about the text of the Old Testament. It has vastly expanded our knowledge of the Jewish context of the New Testament. Scholars of rabbinic Judaism mine the scrolls as well for information pertaining to the origins of that form of Judaism.

A large number of the scrolls are copies of Old Testament books. Others are copies of previously known extracanonical Jewish works like the *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees*. These works were of interest to a large number of Jews, including those who placed the scrolls in the caves. Also found among the Dead Sea Scrolls were the writings of a particular Jewish group, most of which were previously unknown to scholars. Over 60 years since the scrolls' discovery, many questions about these documents remain unresolved. Who exactly were the Jews who composed, copied, and read them?¹¹ What is the relationship of the scrolls to the site of Qumran, very near which the scrolls were discovered?¹² These important questions notwithstanding, this much is clear: Many of the Dead Sea Scrolls were produced by a group of Jews who believed that they alone of Abraham's descendants had rightly interpreted their Scriptures and were appropriately in a covenant with God. Two of the works produced by this group are considered here. The first is the *Damascus Document*. The second is the *Rule of the Community*, specifically that section of the *Rule of the Community* known as the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*.

¹⁰The closest parallel to Ben Sira's statement on free will is found in the New Testament book of James: "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone" (Jas 1:13). Another affirmation of human moral responsibility appears in *Pss. Sol.* 9:4–5:

Our works (are) in the choosing and power of our souls,
to do right and wrong in the works of our hands,
and in your righteousness you oversee human beings.

The one who does what is right saves up life for himself with the Lord,
and the one who does what is wrong causes his own life to be destroyed;
for the Lord's righteous judgments are according to the individual and
the household.

R.B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. ed. James Charlesworth (Doubleday, 1985), 2:660.

¹¹On this question, see John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

¹²On this question, see the article by Steven Ortiz in this issue.

Damascus Document

Although the *Damascus Document* is correctly regarded as one of the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls, this work was actually known to scholars several decades before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the twentieth century. Solomon Schechter found two copies of this work in a genizah, a repository for damaged and otherwise discarded manuscripts, in a synagogue in Cairo. Schechter brought these two copies to Cambridge in 1896 and published them in 1910.¹³ When several copies of this work turned up among the Dead Sea Scrolls, it was obvious to scholars that the work came from the same stream of Judaism that produced many of the scrolls.

With regard to the origin of sin, the *Damascus Document* exhorts its readers “to walk perfectly in all [God’s] ways and not to stray in the thoughts of a guilty inclination (יִצְרַר אֲשַׁמְהָ) and licentious eyes” (CD 2:16).¹⁴ The *Damascus Document* proceeds to give a number of examples of individuals who strayed from God’s commandments because they succumbed to their guilty inclination. The first examples given, drawn from Genesis 6:1–4, are the watchers and their children (CD 2:18–19). The belief that a guilty inclination is the source of humanity’s wickedness is derived from Genesis 8:21, where God resolves after the flood never again to curse the ground because of humankind, “for the intent (יִצְרַר) of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” The *Damascus Document*’s notion of the guilty inclination is different from Ben Sira’s, which seems to be a more neutral concept. It also differs from the rabbinic teaching that humans have both a good and a bad inclination. For the *Damascus Document*, humans have only a guilty inclination, a proclivity for wickedness that must be resisted.¹⁵ Very few people, according to the *Damascus Document*, do resist it.

Though humankind’s guilty inclination might account sufficiently for the ubiquity of wickedness in the world, the *Damascus Document* takes things a step further and assigns God an active role in bringing about human sin. Regarding the sinful among Israel, the *Damascus Document* says,

For God did not choose them primordially; before they were established he knew their works. And he despised the generations

¹³Solomon Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries Edited from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Now in the Possession of the University Library, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910).

¹⁴Unless otherwise noted, quotations of CD in the essay are from Joseph M. Baumgarten and Daniel R. Schwartz, “Damascus Document,” in *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995). The abbreviation for the *Damascus Document* is CD, which stands for Cairo, where the work was discovered, and Damascus, a city of historical importance for the group whose origins the work recounts.

¹⁵Near the end of the first century AD, *4 Ezra* will speak similarly of an “evil heart” that humans must overcome if they are to be righteous (*4 Ezra* 3:20–26; 4:30; 7:92).

(in which) they [st]ood and hid his face from the land. . . . [T]hose whom he hated he caused to stray (CD 2:7–8, 13).

God chose certain members of Israel long ago, but other members he did not so chose. Those whom God hated, God caused to stray. This sort of predestinarian viewpoint is quite compatible with other sectarian writings of the Dead Sea Scrolls, most notably the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*, which will be considered below.

Other passages in the *Damascus Document* elaborate on the superhuman workings behind Israel's transgression. These passages claim that Israel is under the power of a deluding force.

[D]uring all those years, Belial will be sent amidst Israel, as God spoke through the hand of the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, saying, "Fear and a pit and a snare are upon you, O inhabitant(s) of the land." This refers to the three nets of Belial, of which Levi, the son of Jacob, said that he (Belial) entrapped Israel with them, making them seem as if they were three types of righteousness. The first is unchastity, the second arrogance, and the third defilement of the sanctuary. He who escapes from this is caught by that and he who is saved from that is caught by this (CD 4:12–19).¹⁶

According to this passage, which is an interpretation of Isaiah 24:17, Belial has been sent, presumably by God, amidst Israel. (Belial is the preferred name for the Satan figure in several of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹⁷) Belial has caught Israel in the "nets" of unchastity, arrogance, and defilement of the sanctuary. Those whom Belial has trapped in these nets are unaware that they have been duped. They do not think that they are behaving in an unchaste or arrogant manner and certainly do not intend to defile the sanctuary. While they suppose their conduct is righteous, the *Damascus Document* asserts that they are nonetheless sinning.

This text has much in common with *Jubilees*. Both the *Damascus Document* and *Jubilees* attribute the sins of those who do not keep the Torah to a superhuman deluding influence. *Jubilees*, however, speaks of only the gentile nations being led astray by the Prince of Mastema, not Israel. For the *Damascus Document*, on the other hand, all Israel, except for those within their sect, are under the power of Belial and unknowingly transgress God's commands.

¹⁶The translation above is based on that of Baumgarten and Schwartz, "Damascus Document." It deviates from Baumgarten and Schwartz's translation, however, in that it renders מְשׁוּלָה in 4:13 as "be sent" rather than "run unbridled." But understanding the word in the sense of "sending" is preferable based on the parallels in *Jub.* 11:5 and *1 En.* 98:4.

¹⁷The Greek form of Belial, "Beliar," appears once in the New Testament (2 Cor 6:15). It also occurs frequently in *T. 12 Par.*

Also similar to the teaching of *Jubilees* is the *Damascus Document's* prescription for protecting oneself from Belial's nefarious influence.

And on the day when a man takes upon himself (an oath) to return to the Torah of Moses, the Angel of Mastema shall turn aside from after him, if he fulfills his words (CD 16:1–5).

In this text, one encounters yet another appellative for the Satan figure, the Angel of Mastema.¹⁸ Just as *Jubilees* claims that by following the Torah one acquires protection from the forces of Mastema, so the *Damascus Document* teaches that by returning to the Torah, as interpreted by the *Damascus Document*, one is freed from the Angel of Mastema. The *Damascus Document* contains essentially the same understanding of sin as is found in *Jubilees*, except in the case of the *Damascus Document* this understanding has been adapted to suit a sectarian perspective.

One important thing to observe about the explanations of sin found in the *Book of Watchers*, *Jubilees*, and the *Damascus Document* is that these explanations are limited and exclusive. These teachings are limited in that they do not account for the existence of all sin, just for certain kinds of sin. And they are exclusive in that the infractions that they do explain are those that characterize only outsiders. The etiologies of the *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees* pertain, for instance, to the idolatrous practices of the gentiles. The *Damascus Document's* teaching deals with the sins of Jews outside of the sect, those who do not interpret the law according to sectarian standards. A more comprehensive and inclusive explanation of sin is found in the next document to be considered.

Treatise on the Two Spirits

The text from the Dead Sea Scrolls that has probably received more attention than any other is that section of the *Rule of the Community* known as the *Treatise on the Two Spirits*.¹⁹ The *Treatise* opens with a declaration of God's absolute sovereignty.

From the God of knowledge comes all that is occurring and shall occur. Before they came into being he established all their

¹⁸Baumgarten and Schwartz, *Damascus Document*, 23, translate מלאך המשתמה as "the angel Mastema."

¹⁹The *Treatise* appears in only two of the dozen or so copies of the *Rule of the Community* found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS and 4QS^c) and is probably an editorial addition to the work. Sarianna Metso, *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule*, Studies on the Text of the Desert of Judah 21 (New York: Brill, 1997), 145, says that it is likely that the two spirits passage existed independently of the *Rule of the Community* and was later made to address to the *maskil* in order to fit into its present context. Philip Alexander, "The Redaction-History of *Serekh ha-Yahad*: A Proposal," *Revue de Qumran* 17 (1996): 437–56, based on the paleographical dating of the various manuscripts of the *Rule of the Community*, regards 1QS and 4QS^c (which contain the two spirits treatise) as the earlier form of the document, which, he argues, later editions abbreviated.

designs; and when they come into existence in their fixed times they carry through their task according to his glorious design. Nothing can be changed (1QS 3:14–15).²⁰

For the author of this text, everything that exists does so by God’s design and behaves exactly as God dictates, including humankind, good, and evil.²¹ The *Treatise* continues,

[God] created (ברא) the human for the dominion of the world, designing for him two spirits in which to walk until the appointed time for his visitation, namely the spirits of truth and deceit. In a spring of light (אור) emanates the nature (תולדות) of truth and from a well of darkness (חושך) emerges the nature (תולדות) of deceit (1QS 3:17–19).

These lines, from which the *Treatise* gets its name, claim that God created two spirits for humans, one of truth and the other of deceit. This account of creation is based on Genesis 1:1–2:4a. Note the terminological connections with the Genesis text: “created” (ברא), “light” (אור), “darkness” (כשוח), and “*toledoth*” (תולדות). Even the concepts of “spirits” (רוחות) and of watery origins have parallels in Genesis 1:1, where the רוח אלהים is said to hover over the waters. This is not to say, of course, that the two spirits teaching was derived purely from an exegesis of Genesis 1:1–2:4a, but that this portion of Genesis is the text that the *Treatise* employs to express its understanding of humankind, good, and evil.²²

Scholars disagree over exactly what sorts of “spirits” the two spirits of the *Treatise* are supposed to be, whether they are supposed to be superhuman, personal beings or merely psychological dispositions within individual humans.²³ In favor of the superhuman interpretation is the fact that the *Treatise*

²⁰Quotations of the *Rule of the Community* in this essay are from Elisha Qimron and James H. Charlesworth, “Rule of the Community,” in *Rule of the Community and Related Documents*, vol. 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 1–51.

²¹Compare the similarly deterministic statements in 1QH^a 9:5–38; 18:1–12.

²²Scholars disagree over whether the two spirits teaching has been influenced by Persian Zoroastrianism or can be explained entirely as a development within Jewish tradition. The two spirits teaching certainly contains some striking parallels between the teaching of the Persian Gathas. For a somewhat dated but helpful discussion of these parallels, see Paul J. Kobelski, *Melchizedek and Melchireša*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 10 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1981), 84–98. Whatever the source of the Two Spirits teaching, one would expect a Jewish theologian to articulate this teaching with reference to the received texts of Judaism.

²³For a brief summary of the two major views, see John R. Levison, “The Two Spirits in Qumran Theology,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran Community*, vol. 2 of *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 169–85.

goes on to speak of the “Prince of Lights” and the “Angel of Darkness,” two superhuman figures who rule over humankind.

In the hand of the Prince of Lights (is) the dominion of all the Sons of Righteousness; in the ways of light they walk. But in the hand of the Angel of Darkness (is) the dominion of the Sons of Deceit; and in the ways of darkness they walk (1QS 3:20–21a).

Elsewhere, however, the *Treatise* speaks of the two spirits struggling within the heart of a person, imagery which lends itself to a psychological understanding of the spirits.

Until now the spirits of truth and deceit struggle in the heart of humans, and (so) they walk in wisdom or vileness. According to a man’s share in truth shall he be righteous and thus hate deceit, and according to his inheritance in the lot of deceit he shall be evil through it, and thus loathe truth (1QS 4:23–25).

Whatever the precise meaning of “spirits” in this text, the *Treatise* clearly teaches that there is a superhuman dimension to the conflict between good and evil and that this conflict is played out to some degree within the human heart. More importantly for the present discussion, the *Treatise* states unequivocally that God created the spirit of deceit. To the question of where evil came from, the *Treatise* answers simply, “God created it.”

Despite the *Treatise’s* claim that humankind is divided into two camps, the Sons of Righteousness and the Sons of Deceit, a more complex understanding of humanity emerges from this text. Although the Sons of Righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and the Sons of Deceit are ruled by the Angel of Darkness, the *Treatise* explains that even the Sons of Righteousness can on occasion be led into sin by the Angel of Darkness:

By the Angel of Darkness comes the aberration of all the Sons of Righteousness; and all their sins, their iniquities, their guilt, and their iniquitous works (are caused) by his dominion (1QS 3:21b–23).

Furthermore, 1QS 4:23–35, which was quoted above, describes individuals as possessing a share of both truth and deceit. The *Treatise* explains that how righteous or wicked a person is depends on how much truth and deceit this person has been apportioned.²⁴ The *Treatise* envisions a graded scale between

²⁴This anthropology has often been compared to that of 4Q186, “4QHoruscope,” where a person’s behavior is related to how many parts of that person are in the “House of Light” as opposed to in the “House of Darkness.” Cf., however, Mladen Popovic, *Reading the Human Body: Physiognomics and Astrology in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Hellenistic–Early Roman Period Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 172–208, who argues that the “light” and “darkness” language of 4Q186 does not pertain to makeup of a human being, but pertains to the quality of the

righteousness and wickedness along which humans fall. It is not quite as simple as being either good or evil. All humans are said to have some of both, though, to be sure, some individuals are more righteous than others.

Accordingly, the “deceit” that the *Treatise* has in mind is not merely the iniquity practiced by the outsiders, the Sons of Deceit. It also includes the sins of which even the insiders, the Sons of Righteousness, are at times guilty.

But concerning the Spirit of Deceit (these are the principles): greed and slackness in righteous activity, wickedness and falsehood, pride and haughtiness, atrocious disguise and falsehood, great hypocrisy, fury, great vileness, shameless zeal for abominable works in a spirit of fornication, filthy ways in unclean worship, a tongue of blasphemy, blindness of eyes and deafness of ear, stiffness of neck and hardness of heart, walking in all the crafty ways of darkness, and evil craftiness (1QS 4:9–11).

The *Treatise* also offers a complementary list of virtues.

[A] spirit of humility and patience, of great compassion and constant goodness, and of prudence, insight, and wonderful wisdom, which is firmly established in all the works of God, leaning on his great mercy; and a spirit of knowledge in all work upon which he is intent, zeal for righteous precepts, a holy intention with a steadfast purpose; and great affection towards all the Sons of Truth; and a glorious purity, loathing all unclean idols, and walking with reservation by discernment about everything, concealing the truth of the mysteries of knowledge. The (preceding) are the principles of the spirit for the Sons of Truth (in) the world (1QS 4:3–6).

Although this list of virtues includes some traditionally Jewish qualities, like “loathing all unclean idols,” most of the items listed are not the exclusive property of Judaism or of a particular Jewish sect. Nor are the vices, which include “pride and haughtiness,” necessarily the sins of gentiles or outsiders only. The *Treatise* offers not an explanation of some sins or of sins that only some people commit. The *Treatise* is concerned with all kinds of sin, including those of which all people are guilty to varying degrees. This explanation of sin is more comprehensive and inclusive than the explanations offered by the *Book of Watchers*, *Jubilees*, and the *Damascus Document*, which are intended to account merely for those sins committed by outsiders. For this explanation of sin, the *Treatise* looks not to the story of the sons of God in Genesis 6, but to the creation account in Genesis 1:1–2:4a.

superhuman spirits associated with that human. Whichever interpretation is correct, 4Q186 is certainly relevant to a discussion of the *Treatise*.

Conclusions

There is little evidence that the Genesis 3 story was widely held to recount the origin of sin among Jews of the first and second centuries BC. The one reference to the garden narrative as an explanation for sin in the literature from this period occurs in Ecclesiasticus 25:24. But it is difficult to know what to make of this verse that blames Eve for introducing sin and death into the world. This comment appears in the midst of a list of warnings about the problems that women can create for men, not within a discussion of the source of human sinfulness or of the meaning of Genesis 3. It also runs contrary to other statements made in Ecclesiasticus. The significance of the Genesis 6 story in literature from this period is much clearer. The *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees* blame the watchers for the existence of evil spirits. These evil spirits lead people to worship idols and (in *Jub.*) to shed human blood.

Several copies of the *Book of Watchers* and *Jubilees* were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. In those Dead Sea Scrolls that appear to be sectarian in origin, however, the Genesis 6 story does not appear prominently as an etiology for sin. The *Damascus Document*, although it refers to the watchers, cites them only as an example of sinners succumbing to their guilty inclination, not as the origin of sin. In other regards, nonetheless, the work follows *Jubilees*. The *Damascus Document* teaches that Belial is behind the failure of those outside of the sect to walk according to its sectarian interpretation of the Mosaic Torah. The *Treatise on the Two Spirits* is the only text considered in this paper that attempts to explain the origin of all sin. Drawing on Genesis 1:1–2:4a, the *Treatise* teaches that God created deceit.

This essay began by noting Paul's use of Genesis 3 to explain the origin of sin. While a full exegesis of Romans 5:12 lies beyond the scope of this essay, one tentative suggestion is in order. The suggestion is this: Paul's selection of the Genesis 3 story as his starting point for human sin, as opposed to other etiologies that were circulating during the time that he wrote, was not arbitrary. Although other Jews looked to Genesis 6 as the explanation of sin, the sons of God story served only to explain the sins of the idolatrous nations. The iniquity with which Paul was concerned in his letter to Rome, however, was more comprehensive (Rom 1:28–32). And it was not simply the idolatrous gentiles who were guilty of it, but Jews as well (Rom 2:9–11). In this regard, Paul's general understanding of what constituted sin and of who was guilty of it was similar to that of the *Treatise*. Accordingly, both Paul and the *Treatise* look to the opening chapters of Genesis, to a time well before the sons of God descended, to deal with the issue. Paul disagreed with the *Treatise*, however, when it came to assigning blame for introducing sin into the cosmos. The *Treatise*, referring to Genesis 1, teaches that God created deceit. Paul, citing Genesis 3, traces it to Adam. For Paul, God did not create sin, nor did the watchers breed it into the world. One human is to blame, and one human has provided the solution.