

AN ESOTERIC RELATION
BETWEEN QUMRAN'S 'NEW COVENANT
IN THE LAND OF DAMASCUS'
AND THE NEW TESTAMENT'S
'CUP OF THE NEW COVENANT
IN (HIS) BLOOD'?

Sommaire

À première vue, il n'y a aucun rapport entre « la nouvelle alliance au pays de Damas » dans le *Document de Damas* et la « coupe » de la « nouvelle alliance dans (sa) sang » sauf la référence à la « nouvelle alliance ». Mais, une analyse plus poussée montre un possible rapport linguistique ou ésotérique (même s'il est très léger) : les mots hébreux pour « sang » (*dam*) et pour « coupe » (*chos*) forment les deux part du mot grecque « Damascus »

Summary

At first glance there is no relationship at all between "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" in the *Damascus Document* and Paul's and the Synoptic Gospels' "Cup" of the "New Covenant in (his) blood," except the reference to "the New Covenant." However, on further analysis, there is a linguistic or esoteric one — however tenuous. This will depend on letters that have a certain signification in the Hebrew language moving over into the Greek language to develop a slightly different signification. The article examines the possible connection of the Hebrew word for "blood" (*dam*) and for "cup" (*chos*) both of which form the two parts of the Greek word "Damascus."

IN a 1994 paper to the Society of Biblical Literature I pointed out that letters with unusual significance in Hebrew — for example, *B-L-*' (the root of "Belial," "Bela'," and "Balaam"), moved over into the Greek with entirely different signification as if the letters themselves (*balla'* in the Hebrew; *ballo* in the Greek) carried some special importance whatever their meaning. To illustrate this, I showed that the "swallowing" language, applied in Hebrew in the *Habakkuk Peshar* to the death of the Righteous Teacher, had a certain linguistic relationship

to the "casting out"/"casting down" language in New Testament, Josephus, and early Church accounts of the deaths of Stephen, Ananus, and James respectively. (1)

This "casting out" language was also to be found in "nets" and exorcism symbolism generally in the New Testament, not to mention the "expulsion" language Josephus applies in his description of "Essene" banishment practices. In addition, it was easy to see how "Belial" and his "nets" in the language of Qumran allusion moved into "Balaam," "Balak," their "nets," "Babylon," and "Beelzebub" in *Revelation* and the Gospels. As an aside to this, "Belial" itself, to say nothing of Paul's "Beliar" bowdlerization, connect in the Greek with *Diabolos* — in English, "the Devil" — as they do in the Arabic with "Iblis." (2)

When considering "Damascus" — as in "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" in the *Damascus Document*, so designated because of this allusion — the Hebrew for "blood" is *dam* and for "cup" *chos*, both forming two of the parts of the transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew word for "Damascus." Admittedly this particular homophone only works for the first syllable, if the Hebrew form of the usage *Damashkeh* is considered, though, as we shall see below, this is not entirely the case as the second part will ultimately also link up with the Hebrew phraseology "give to drink," a staple of almost all New Testament accounts of these trenchant allusions attributed to Jesus himself.

However this may be, these two denotations in Hebrew at the root of the Greek transliteration "Damascus" now become the essence of the New Testament theological formulation "the New Covenant" now not "in the Land of Damascus," but "in the cup of (his/Christ's) blood." Though in the Hebrew only the "blood" part of this formulation appears to work out (which itself would be sufficient), so obsessed are Chapters 8-13 of *Hebrews* — as we shall demonstrate below — with this aspect of "the New Covenant," what is the mathematical probability of such a surprising overlap being accidental? This is especially the case in the Greek where the transference is at first glance anyhow more precise — though as just remarked and as we shall see at the end of this article, the second part of the geographical designation comprising the Hebrew root Sh-K-H (in its fourth form verbal configuration *mashkeh*, meaning "to give to drink") works out as well.

Putting this in another way, is it logical to think that such a focus on "cup" and "blood," the homophonic equivalents in Hebrew of the

(1) Printed in R. Eisenman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians. Essays and Translations* (Element: Shaftesbury, Dorset, 1996) 332-351 with the title: "The Final Proof that James and the Righteous Teacher are the Same."

(2) See R. Eisenman, "The Historical Provenance of the 'Three Nets of Belial' Allusion in the Zadokite Document and 'Balla'/Bela' in the Temple Scroll," *Folia Orientalia* 25 (1987-88) 51-66, reprint in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, 208-217.

syllables *dam* and *chos* composing the Greek form of the transliteration "Damascus" is simply accidental? Even if it should be granted that New Testament writers like Paul, to say nothing of those producing the Gospels — at least the Synoptic Gospels, understood an esoteric or allegorical equivalence or secondary meaning of this kind, the question remains whether those responsible for the materials found at Qumran understand allusion to "Damascus" in this manner?

Many have searched for the connection between the language of "the New Covenant" found at Qumran and its use in the New Testament. If this equivalency holds, one may safely be said to be on the way towards delineating it. Let me say, I am no more sure of any of these equivalencies than perhaps any of those hearing this paper, nor do I know of any further arguments other than textual ones to back them up or dismiss them (though if we take the *mashkehl* 'giving to drink' equivalence noted above and further delineated at the end of this article, I am more convinced of even the linguistic equivalencies than when I started and take this argument as definitive). (3)

That is to say, I am at a loss what to make of such parallels or if in the end allowed, such equivalencies; but are we just to ignore them, pass over them, as if they did not exist, or treat them simply as accidental or fortuitous coincidence? Given the importance of the material under consideration, I think this would not be advisable. Recently I heard an investigator in the field of criminology insist that "coincidences" are rare. In my view, one could say the same thing about coincidences of this kind in the area of linguistic transfer.

Since in this paper I make no claims to being a philologist but rather someone who has always concentrated on the meaning of texts, the only way I can envision proceeding is to look at the texts themselves and see how the expression "the New Covenant" is being used in them. This is what I will do — look at the question primarily from a text critical perspective and not a philological one. Other persons more qualified in the latter can weigh in from the point of view of philology should they choose.

Allusion to "the New Covenant," as everyone knows, is found in the prophecies of *Jer* 31:31-34 which are, as it turns out (so important were they then evidently thought to be), quoted in full in the sections of *Hebr* 8:8-12 alluded to above which we shall delineate more fully below. These are followed up by "new heart and new spirit" imagery in *Ezek* 11:18 and 36:26, which Paul variously adopts to his own purposes in *2 Cor* 3:6, while conveniently discarding the phrase "keep My laws" associated with the phraseology across the board. It is then picked up

(3) For which I am indebted to a suggestion by Professor Moshe Bernstein here at the conference.

again significantly in "last supper" scenarios in the Synoptic Gospels (though not in *John*) and *1 Cor* 11:25. Thereafter it is fleshed out definitively in *Hebr* 8.13, 9.14-15, 10-20, and 12.24 (here not "new" but "fresh"), just remarked above, though in these last with an emphasis rather on the "blood" aspect of the locution not the "cup."

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is found almost exclusively in the *Damascus Document* and there almost never unaccompanied by the allusion "the Land of Damascus." In it the first allusion to "Damascus" occurs in recapitulation in Column 6 of the prior exegesis of *Ezek* 44:15's "Zadokite Covenant" in Column 4. In the latter, *waw*-constructs were inserted (seemingly deliberately) to break up the original apposition found in *Ezekiel* of "the Priests who are sons of Zadok Levites" to produce three separate categories, two of which are "the Priests" delineated as "the Penitents of Israel who went out from the Land of Judah and the *Nilvim* (seemingly in exposition of or esoterically equivalent to the term as found in *Ezekiel*, 'Levites') with them." The third of course are "the Sons of Zadok," who are defined more eschatologically.

Though the addition of "the Land of Damascus" does not actually occur at this point in *CD* 4, it is picked up in the second exposition of yet another biblical passage in *CD* 6, which now centers on *Num* 21:18 which contains a similar apposition, in this case, two similar categories, "the Princes" and "the Nobles of the People." It is here that the phrase "to dwell" or "live in the Land of Damascus" is added. Not insignificantly, this contains a direct parallel in *Acts* 9:23 which in detailing Paul's activities there actually speaks of "the Jews who dwelt in Damascus" and in *Acts* 26:20, which actually pictures Paul describing this, as referring to "Damascus first and Jerusalem and in all the region of Judaea and to the Gentiles." (4)

In two papers, one last month to the European Association of Biblical Studies and another a decade ago to the Society of Biblical Literature, (5) I called attention to the fact that a certain amount of the exposition in *CD* 4: 6-8, and 19-20 seems to be addressed to and signal a cadre of Gentiles associated with the Community (e. g., "those fearing God" or in "God-Fearer" status), particularly, as just remarked above, the manner in which *CD* 4:3 expounds the term "Levites" in terms of "*Nilvim*"/"Joiners," (6) and the way *CD* 6:7-8 applies the language of *Isa* 54:16 to its evocation of "the Staff" defined as "the Interpreter of the Torah." In fact, that *Isa* 54-56, from which this expression is taken, is

(4) The whole passage containing several inversions of known Qumran usage or ideology.

(5) Published in R. Eisenman, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, with the title: "'Joining/Joiners', 'Arizei-go'im', and the 'Simple of Ephraim' Relating to a Cadre of Gentile 'God-Fearers' at Qumran." 313-331.

(6) A typical expression in Hebrew documents for Gentiles attaching themselves to the *Torah*.

being directly applied to such "*Nilvim*," i. e., the foreigners who have "joined themselves to the Lord... keep My sabbaths... and hold fast to the Covenant," language permeating these last sections of *CD*, is made explicit in *Isa* 56:3-6.

To return to the second appositive cluster in *CD* 6:9, "the Nobles of the People" (subsequently defined as "those who came to dig the well with the staves," meaning the *hukkim* or "Laws" legislated by the *Mehokkek*/Midrash/Interpreter/Seeker), (7) are now combined with "the Princes" to develop a third overall category "the Diggers." This in turn produces the exposition, "the Diggers are the Penitents of Israel who went out from the Land of Judah to dwell in the Land of Damascus — the "Nobles of the People" (8) presumably being those already in the Land of Damascus who dug the well with "the Seeker" 's or "*Midrash*" 's "staves" (that is, "laws"). "The Diggers" here are self-evidently synonymous with "the Priests" in the first exposition in *CD* 4 of *Ezek* 44:15, "the Land of Damascus" now being added probably because of the coming evocation of "the New Covenant" which is going to be described as being erected there in connection with the "digging of the well."

Admittedly much of this is rather obscure or arcane — in fact about as arcane as Pauline/Hebrews exposition of "the New Covenant in the blood," albeit from a completely opposite perspective — but some sense can be made of it. "The Leaders of the People" (9) are now to be identified with "the *Nilvim*" of the earlier exegesis, "People"/"Peoples" being a typical Qumran/ *Damascus Document* allusion to "Gentiles." According to *Acts* 26:16ff., even Paul evokes similar usage when he speaks of "being taken out from among the People and the Peoples to whom I now send you."

In fact, throughout the rest of *CD* there are continual allusion to "fearing God's Name" and "God-Fearers" accompanied by pointed allusions to "strengthening," "being steadfast," and "holding fast to," meaning "to the Covenant" or "the Law."

This is typically put in *CD* 20:17-20 (Ms. B) as follows:

But the Penitents from sin in Jacob kept the Covenant of God. Then each man shall speak to his neighbor, each strengthening his brother, to support their step in the Way of God (10) ...and a Book of Remembrance was written out (11) before Him for God-Fearers and for those reckoning His Name until God shall reveal Salvation (*Yeshu'a*) and Justification to those fearing His name. (12)

(7) All these are plays.

(8) Note here the play on "Peoples"/"Gentiles" — "*Ethnon*" in Greek

(9) "Peoples" — carrying on the "Gentiles" theme

(10) This passage relates to one from *Jer* 31:34: "each one to teach his neighbor and each one to teach his brother" directly cited in *Hebrews* 8:11.

(11) Note here the "Book of Remembrance" linking up with allusions in both *1 Cor* 11:24-25 and "Last Supper" scenarios of the Synoptic Gospels, "do this in remembrance of me."

(12) It should also be noted, these are exactly the parameters of *Isa* 56:1, "Zedakah"

And again at the end (*CD* 20:21-34 of Ms. B):

For He does Mercy to (the thousands) of them that Love Him and... all those who hold fast to these statutes, coming and going in accordance with the *Torah* and... listening to the voice of the Righteousness Teacher (13)... Their hearts will be strengthened and they shall prevail against all the sons of the Earth, and God will make atonement for them, and they will see his Salvation (14) because they took refuge in His Holy Name.

The first allusion to "the New Covenant" associated with these promises comes in *CD* 6:14-7:6 amid allusion to "separating from the Sons of the Pit" and the Nazirite-rooted language of "keeping away from (*lehinnazer*) polluted evil Riches... and from the Riches of the Temple... and (from) robbing the Poor" (*CD* 6:14-16).

In the newer fragments of the *Damascus Document* from Cave 4, (15) this language is also found in the First Column preceding the beginning, as previously recorded in the Genizah copy, in the instructions "to the Sons of Light" "to keep way from the paths" (again "*lehinnazer*"), probably "of Evil" or "of Wicked pollution," "until the completion of the time of Visitation." It is for this reason that I refer to this language as "Nazirite" and this Community as a "consecrated" one or "a house of the *Torah*" dedicated to God, or to use more familiar language, "Nazirites"/ "Nazoraeans"/ "Nazrenes" as the case may be.

The actual reference to "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" comes in *CD* 6:16-21 where "the Staff"'s decrees — in which they are commanded to walk during all the era of Evil — are defined in terms of:

Separating between polluted and pure ("separation" here, a synonym for "*lehinnazer*" above)... Holy from Profane and to keep the Sabbath Day (16)... the Festivals and the Day of Fasting (*Yom Kippur*) according to the precise letter of the Commandment of those entering the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus.

This, of course, is the direct opposite of what Peter is presented as learning in *Acts* 10:15 and 10:28 version of what it considers ultimately to be "the New Covenant," that is, "not to make distinctions between holy and impure" and "to call no man profane"!

and "*Yeshu'ati*," introducing the material about "foreigners attaching themselves to the Lord to serve Him and to love His name and be His servants" — *Isa* 56:4-5; cf. too Paul in *Acts* 25:16 on being appointed "a servant" and 2 *Cor* 3:6 above on being "competent Servants of the New Covenant."

(13) Pauline-style Grace? Cf. *James* 2:5 on "The Kingdom He Promised to those that love Him" — one should also note that "loving God" is the second part of the all Righteousness Commandment.

(14) *Yeshu'a*, another variation of *Yeshu'a* — "Jesus"?

(15) 4Q266, Fragment 1, a-b.

(16) The language one actually finds in *Isaiah* 56:4 and 56:6 above regarding "*Nilvini*" or "Gentile" converts above.

In *CD*, on the other hand, this "Covenant" is then specifically defined as:

To set up the Holy Things according to their precise specifications, to love every man his brother, (17) to strengthen the hand of the Meek, the Poor (*Ebion*), and the *Ger* (18)... and not to uncover the nakedness of near kin (i. e., niece marriage and/or incest) but to keep away from fornication according to the Statute (19)... to bear no rancor...but to separate from all pollution according to their statutes. (20)

Now that we know the terms of "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus," the presentation turns Messianic and *CD* 7 proceeds to evoke another image, also common to James' speech in *Acts* 15 from *Amos* 9:11, "re-erecting the fallen tent of David," proceeding to combine it with another image too from *Amos*, "exiling the Tabernacle of your king and the bases of your statues from My Tent at Damascus" (*Amos* 5:26-27).

For its part, the speech accorded James in *Acts* 15 puts an esoteric spin on "re-erecting" this tent which to my mind compresses a good deal of what follows from in Columns 7-8 and 19-20 of the Qumran *Damascus Document*. In both the exposition is esoteric. In the latter "the Tabernacle of the King... which is fallen" is identified with "the Books of the Torah." "The King" (21) "is the Community and the bases of the statues are the Books of the Prophets whose words Israel despised." Curiously, in *Acts* 15:16-21 the esoteric exegesis of this passage from *Amos* would appear to have something to do with James' alleged support of the Pauline "Gentile Mission" or as it puts it, "all the Gentiles (*Ethne*) upon whom My Name has been called," which then triggers the various versions of James' directives to overseas communities from *Acts* 15:19-35.

That the whole complex as it is presented in the *Damascus Document* is to be taken in a "Messianic" way is clear from the evocation of "the Star Prophecy" from *Numbers* 24:17 which follows in *CD* 7:16-21. Bringing the whole series of usages full circle, as this prophecy is expounded, it is now connected with the "Diggers" materials (that is, "those who dug the well in the Land of Damascus") and "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" preceding it in Column 6. In turn,

(17) James 2:8's "Royal Law according to the Scripture."

(18) Here converts are distinctly referred to combined, not insignificantly, with the "steadfast"/"strengthening" imagery we have already noted above and so important to these considerations.

(19) Here *lehazzir*, again based on the same *N-Z-R* -Nazirite root, a variation of *lehinnazer* above, and the second category of James' directives to overseas communities in *Acts* 15:20, etc.

(20) Cf. James in *Acts* 15:20 above on "keeping away from the pollution of the idols" — here, of course the "separation" ideology again.

(21) As in Paul in *1 Cor* 12:27, etc.

both are connected to *Numbers* 21:18's "well"/ "exile," "the penitents who went out to the Land of Damascus" materials, and *Isaiah* 54-56's "Staff," described as "an instrument for His works." The link between these is, of course, "the *Midrash ha-Torah*" or "Seeker" (the "seeking" theme is fundamental here), that is, "the Interpreter of the Torah" who is both "the Staff who decrees the Laws" (22) who is identified in the latter exegesis as "the Star... who came to Damascus."

However tenuous, we are now in the realm of *Acts*' presentation of early Christian history on two counts: 1) in the matter of "the Interpreter of the Torah who came to Damascus" and 2) in the use of the *Amos* materials, particularly those relating to "re-erecting the fallen tent of David" forming the jumping-off point, as it were, to *Acts*' presentation of James' directives to overseas communities or those "*Nilvim*" joining themselves to the Community in its picture of the outcome of the so-called "Jerusalem Council."

This second, as we have just seen, is not only used in *Acts* to definitively present James as supporting the Pauline Gentile Mission — a presentation I dispute (23) — but to introduce the specific ban in these instructions ascribed to James on "blood." The two, to be sure, are incompatible and my reason for denying the historicity of this application of *Amos*' prophecy about "re-erecting the fallen tent of David" in the picture of James' discourse in *Acts* 15 to the Pauline Gentile Mission. Such a ban, which Paul feigns ignorance of in *1 Corinthians* — if taken seriously — precludes what Paul claims in *1 Cor* 11:24 he "received" directly "from the Lord." A claim of the latter kind, if entertained, can only mean via direct visionary experience, the kind of experience he also claims as both the basis of his "apostleship" — "not from men nor through man" — in *Gal* 1:1, but also of his view of the entire "Gentile Mission" in *Gal* 2:2.

As Paul now pictures Jesus describing this "New Covenant in the blood," possibly adding "the cup" from an esoteric understanding of "Damascus,"

This cup is the New Covenant in my blood... as often as you drink... this cup you drink the death of the Lord... whoever shall... drink the cup of the Lord unworthy shall be guilty of... the blood of the Lord.

A more esoteric or allegorical understanding of the "New Covenant" is hard to envision. In *Mat* 26:27-28 (24) this is:

Taking the cup... he gave it to them, saying, "This is my blood, that of the New Covenant which is poured out for the Many for remission of sins."

(22) *Hukkim*, a play as we have already seen on "the *Mehokkek*" as well as "His staves," which in this case carries the esoteric meaning of "His laws."

(23) He might support the mission, but not its "Pauline" parameters.

(24) *Mark* 14:23-24 is the same only omitting the "remission of sins" part.

Luke 22:20 follows Paul. It even includes the two references to "delivering up" in 21-22 of the kind included in *1 Cor 11:22*, adding only the variation on *Matthew* and *Mark*, "which is poured out for you."

According to *Acts*, as just remarked, James' evocation of "re-erecting the fallen tent of David" even includes an allusion to how God "visited the Gentiles to take out a people for His name." "Visitation" language of this kind permeates *CD*, beginning with the famous assertion in Column 1 — also preceded by two references to "delivering up" — that God "visited them and caused a root of planting to grow out of Aaron and Israel" (*CD 1:7*), to this very juncture of the document and the exegesis there of "the Star Prophecy."

In Ms. B, the "Star Prophecy" of *Num 24:17* is replaced by *Zechariah 13:7*, *Ezekiel 9:4*, and evocation of the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel (singular), but in both versions the "Visitation" usage is conserved. Even the word "First" as in "First Visitation" is included in both A and B versions of the text, e. g., "these escaped in the Era of the First Visitation," and the language of "Visitation" or "God visiting" is repeated three times.

In James' speech in *Acts*, (25) this becomes, how "God first visited the Gentiles," i. e., "Simeon has told you how God first visited the Gentiles to take out a people for his Name" [*Acts 15:14* (26)]. As in *CD 7:18*'s "the Prophets whose words Israel despised," "the words of the Prophets" are invoked as well (*Acts 15:15*) and, just as in *CD 7:16* above, *Amos 9:11-12* as already signaled is quoted, but with the addition of: "And I will build the ruins of it again and I will set it up."

It will be recalled that in *CD 6:8*, quoting *Isa 54:16*, "the *Mehokkek*" was defined as "the Interpreter of the Torah" and characterized as "an instrument for His works." Stitching the whole together, *CD 7:18-19* now defines "the Star"/"Stave"/"*Mehokkek*," as we saw, as "The Interpreter" or "Seeker after the Torah who came to Damascus." But in James' speech in *Acts 15:18*, not only is "the fallen tent of David" invoked its "ruins to be rebuilt," but this then becomes an explanation of why "the residue of men" or "the men who are left may seek out the Lord," "those who are left" or "the remnant" also being language familiar to these sections of the *Damascus Document*.

Once again, the "seeking" language is pivotal as it is for *CD 7:18-19*'s exposition of *Amos 5:26-27*, *9:11-12*, and *Num 24:17* in terms of the "the *Doresh*" or "Seeker after the Torah." It is also the explanation

(25) No explanation as to who this "James" was, the other James having already disappeared from the text, removed from the scene.

(26) Not only the "visitation" language but also the allusion to "for His Name" replacing more familiar allusions as "called by Name" in the Scrolls or "called by this Name" earlier in *Acts*.

earlier for why God called "the Diggers" of *Nim* 21:18, "the Penitents who went out from the Land of Judah to dwell in the Land of Damascus," "Princes — because they sought Him and their honor was questioned by no man" (*CD* 6:4-7).

At this point James is pictured in *Acts* 15:18 as adding, as if by way of explanation, "all his works are known to God from Eternity" (15:18). Here, of course, we have the "works" language of *Isaiah* 54:16 and *CD* 6:8 and "the Staff"/ "Seeker" being "an instrument for His works," not to mention the earlier material from *CD* 1:10: (27) "And God considered their works because they sought him with a whole heart" (here both the "seeking" and the "heart" allusions) or of "God visited their works" later in *CD* 5:17.

Even more germane, almost the exact words in *CD* 2:5-8, where "the Penitents from sin" among those "who enter the Covenant" (that is, "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus"), are described as being blessed, but:

Power, Might, and overwhelming wrath with sheets of Fire... upon the Turners-Aside from the Way and the Abominators of the Law... Before the world ever was, God chose them not and before they were established He knew their works.

Here *CD* 2:8 adds, as if for emphasis and as a *coup de grâce* of sorts: "and abominated their generations on account of blood."

Once again, one should compare this allusion to "God knowing their works" with James in *Acts* 15:18: "All his works are known to God from Eternity."

Directly, *Acts* has James proceed with his "rulings" or "judgements": "Therefore I judge those from the Peoples who turn to God," (28) a speech which then gives way to the overt use of the "Nazirite" language "abstain from"/ "keep away from," we have also signaled above and seen permeating these several columns of *CD*. This is particularly true where the two categories of "fornication" (*CD* 7:1) and "pollution of the idols" are concerned (7:3). *Acts* also has James add "carrion" and "blood" here, the last-mentioned being of the utmost importance, as already just noted above, for determining the outlook of the Jamesian "Jerusalem Community" on the Pauline / Synoptic portrayal of "Communion with the blood of Christ."

These well-known directives are then repeated in *Acts* 15:29 as: "Keep away (29) from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and

(27) Following on from how "God visited them and caused a root of Planting to grow."

(28) This same "turning"/ "returning," we have already noted above, familiar to Columns 6-8 and 19-20 of *CD* above.

(29) Clearly the equivalent in *Acts* to the *Damascus Document's* *lehinnazer*.

from carrion, and from fornication." The only change being the substitution of the more specific "things sacrificed to idols," crucial in a number of key contexts we shall just signal below, at this point in Acts for the more general "pollution of the idols" of in line 15:20 above.

This formulation is intrinsic to Paul's apparent discussion of these rulings in *1 Cor* 8-11 culminating in the proclamation in *1 Cor* 10:16 and 11:25 of what goes, as noted as well, by the name of "Holy Communion": "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood... drink it in remembrance of me."

The expression "things sacrificed to idols," as alluded to, is also fundamental to *4QMMT*, Pliny's correspondence with Trajan, Hippolytus' descriptions of the steadfastness and willingness to undergo martyrdom of those he calls "Zealot" or "Sicarii Essenes," and the *Pseudoclementine Homilies*. As well it forms a fundamental basis for Islamic dietary law in the Koran. The final formulation of the expression in *Acts* 21:25 more or less follows the second rendering in *Acts* 15:29. Of course, the *Damascus Document* parallels and Hebrew linguistic underpinnings of "remembrance of me" and "drink it"/ "giving to drink" we have already set forth above.

In *CD* as well, we have already observed the "keep away from" language (*lehazzir* and *lehinnazer*) specifically with regard to "fornication" (*CD* 7:1) and its parallel, "to separate from all pollutions" (in *CD* 7:3, which certainly would include "the pollution of the idols" as it is expressed here in *Acts* 15:20), but also where in the column preceding *CD* 1 from *4Q266*, "the Sons of Light" are instructed to "keep away from (*lehinnazer*) the ways," probably "of Evil" or "of Evil pollution," the last-mentioned being expressed in *CD* 6:15 as "polluted Evil Riches," a seeming attack on the Herodian Establishment.

Aside from the almost hysterical attack on "blood" just highlighted in *CD* 2:8 above, there are at least two other specific references to "blood" in *CD*, one immediately following upon the one in 2:8 and after explaining why Abraham.

Was made a Friend of God, (30) because he kept the Commandments of God and did not choose the will of his own spirit... But the sons of Jacob turned aside in them (31) and... walked in stubbornness of their heart..., complaining against the Commandments of God, (32) each man doing what was right in his own eyes. So they ate blood and their males were cut off in the wilderness. (*CD* 3:2-7) (33)

(30) Also of interest to *James* 2:23-24.

(31) Our "straying"/ "turning aside" allusions noted above.

(32) Which of course Paul does interminably.

(33) Paul also enjoys parodying this language of "cutting off" in the way he disparagingly alludes to circumcision in *Galatians* 5:12.

The second:

They also pollute the Temple, because they do not separate according to the *Torah*, but rather they lie with a woman during the blood of her period and each man takes (to wife) the daughter of his brother and the daughter of his sister.

A construct of the "fornication" and "pollution of the Temple" charges, the first and third of "the three nets of Belial," already alluded to in *CD* 4:16-18 above. (34) While not relating to the ingestion of food or drink per se (as *CD* 2:8 does above) and as a consequence "communion with the body and blood of Christ Jesus," this last passage nonetheless vividly illustrates the attitude of the authors towards contact with "blood" of any kind.

To sum up the approach of *CD*, we should look at its closing section containing its most vivid exhortative passages (Column 8 and Columns 19-20). Here, even backsliding "Penitents of Israel" are condemned, "because they turned back from the Way" (*CD* 8:16). (35) But "because God loved the First (or "Forefathers")... He loved those coming after them" (*CD* 8:17-18), a form of Pauline "Grace" should one choose to regard it but with specifically Qumranic overtones. Here too Elisha's rebuke of Gehazi his servant, a favorite Rabbinic allusion for rebuking Pauline-type teachers, (36) is invoked to emphasize God's:

Judgement on all those who reject the commandments of God and forsake them, turning away in stubbornness of their heart (*CD* 8:18-21).

In conjunction with this, "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" is for the second time directly invoked, this in order to condemn all those "who entered it" but "turned back and betrayed and turned aside from the Fountain of Living Waters" [Ms. A 8:21-22/Ms. B 19:33-34 (37)]. Similar expressions are reiterated in the third evocation of "the New Covenant" in *CD* 20:11-12, where it is also designated as "the Compact which they erected in the Land of Damascus" and equated with "the House of the Torah" (20:10-13).

Sentiments of this kind continue to be expressed in the surrounding materials having to do with the fate of all such "Traitors," "backsliders," and "Scoffers" from *CD* 8:21 of Manuscript A to *CD* 20:17 of Manuscript B. At this point, the text turns positive, returning to "the Penitents

(34) To say nothing of the two categories of James' directives to overseas communities, "fornication" and "pollution of the idols" above.

(35) Cf. James in *Acts* 15:18 above.

(36) See R. Eisenman, "Interpreting some Esoterism: The Kings of the Peoples, the Princes of Judah and Gehazi in the Damascus Document," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the First Christians*, 288-312.

(37) Here the most complete expression of the "turning aside"/"betraying" complex of language.

from sin in Jacob who kept the Covenant of God," the same "Penitents" we heard of in Column 2:5, (38) in particular "God-Fearers" and "those reckoning his Name" to whom "God shall reveal Salvation (*Yeshu'*) and Justification" (*Zedakah*) (*CD* 20:19-20) (39) and for whom "a book of Remembrance would be written out"!

To understand these passages one should again refer back to *Acts* 15:14-17 above and James' alleged connection of God "taking out of the Gentiles a People for His name" (15:14) with "re-erecting the fallen tent of David" and "setting it up" again, reiterating its applicability to "those left of men," designated as "seekers," and "all the Gentiles upon whom My name has been called" (15:16-17). This was particularly to include:

all those who hold fast to the Statutes, coming and going in accordance with the Torah...(who have) not lifted up their hand against the Holiness of His Laws and the Righteousness of His Ordinances (*CD* 20:27-31)

Once again, as in James' speech above, the word "First" appears ("the First Ordinances" or "Judgements" *CD* 20:32), but here rather relating to "the First" or "the Forefathers" of the First Covenant as earlier in *CD* 1.4's description of how God "remembered the Covenant of the First" or "the Forefathers" — the "First Covenant" and, therefore, "leaving a remnant" and "not delivering them up," but rather "visiting them and causing a (Messianic) root of planting to grow"!

Rather when they "listen to the voice of the Righteous Teacher" (40) they "hear:"

The Laws of Righteousness and do not desert them... their hearts will be strengthened and they shall prevail against all the sons of Earth. And God will make atonement for them and they will see His Salvation, (41) because they took refuge in His Holy Name (*CD* 20:33-34).

This Covenant of course is exactly the opposite of the Pauline one as it has come down to us.

How can two such chronologically almost contemporaneous versions of "the New Covenant" be so completely and diametrically opposed? It is almost as if one is framed in direct reference to or with direct knowledge of the other. A similar kind of diametrically opposed reversal can be seen, in the writer's view for instance, in the exposition of *Habakkuk* 2:4 in the Qumran *Habakkuk Peshar*, as everyone knows, a fundamental "building block" of Pauline theology. In *1QpHab* 7:17-8.3, the applicability of this key allusion from *Habakkuk* 2:4 is reserved to

(38) Before the fulsome condemnation of the "Turners-aside from the Way and the abominators of the Law" on account of their consumption "of blood."

(39) The exact terms of *Isaiah* 56:1, introducing its position on foreign "*Nilvim*" "Joiners" in 56:3-6.

(40) "Teacher" here repeated twice at this juncture in *CD* 20:28 and 20:32.

(41) Here, as in *Isa* 56:1, *yeshu'ato*.

“Doers of the *Torah* within the House of Judah” — in other words, however arcane, “Jewish *Torah* Doers.” It therefore follows that it does not apply to “Non-*Torah*-doing Gentiles” nor does it even apply to “Non-*Torah*-Doing Jews.”

It is the position of this paper, in which I have been trying to highlight these contrasts and reversals, that this kind of stark contrast where “the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus” is concerned, further highlights the Qumran perspective. In so far as the latter was addressed to Gentile converts, it was addressed to those keeping the whole of the Law, including the sabbath and the other observances like circumcision (another usage connected with Abraham in *CD* 16:5-6), (42) as per the parameters of *Isaiah* 54-56 and *CD* 6-7 above; as opposed to the more allegorized and spiritualized “New Covenant” being delineated at such length and with such self-evident rhetorical flourish by Paul who is finally (if carefully) emphasizing to his followers that it was not necessary to do so, *inter alia*, that is was unnecessary to circumcise themselves.

For these last, the rhetorical and polemical constructions of the last five chapters of *Hebrews* are fundamental: “If the First Covenant had not been found wanting, then there would be no need to seek for the Second” (*Heb* 8:7), quoting in its entirety the passage from *Jer* 31:33-34 on “making a New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah.” This last included the stress on “keeping the Covenant” so conspicuous in the conclusive exhortation in the Qumran *Damascus Document* above and the reference to “teaching each one his neighbor and each one his brother,” also found word-for-word in *CD* 20.17-18:

Then each man shall speak to his neigh[bor and each on]e his brother to support their steps in the Way of God.

At this point, *Hebrews* calls the First Covenant “Old,” again in stark contrast to that of “the New” as embodied in “New Covenant,” opining “that which decays and grows old is ready to disappear” (*Heb* 8:13).

Continuing this theme into Chapter 9 and evoking to “the veil” between the outer sanctum and the inner, the Holy of Holiest in 9:2-3, *Hebrews* now alludes to Christ “by his own blood” and, repeatedly reiterating the redemptive power of “blood,” “entered the Holy of Holiest once for all” (9:12). In total allegorical description, it now asserts “how much more the blood of Christ can purge,” “the dead works” of his hearer’s “consciences (43) to serve the Living God (*Hebr* 9:12-14). It is at

(42) Therefore too, Paul’s pregnant allusion to “those of the circumcision” in *Gal* 2:12.

(43) Typically Pauline allusion as encountered in *1 Cor* 8-11.

this point that it designates Christ (44) "the Mediator of the New Covenant" (9:15). Picking up the "Perfection of Holiness" language of *CD* Cols. 8, 19-20, it concludes in 10:14, "For by one offering, he has perfected forever those who are sanctified" or "made Holy."

Again, quoting *Jer* 31:33 on "putting My *Torah* in their midst and writing it on their hearts" (45) (but completely ignoring *Jeremiah's* further repeated and absolute insistence on "keeping the Covenant"), Hebrews now states:

This is the Covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord. Their sins and lawlessness will I remember no more. (46) (*Hebr* 10:16-17)

This is the Covenant Paul also develops in *2 Cor* 3:6 above, when he calls himself and his confreres, "Servants of the New Covenant" which he claims, using the language of *Jeremiah* augmented by that of *Ezekiel*, "to have written on the fleshy tablets of the heart." Once again, he ignores both the latter's insistence on "keeping the Laws" and "the Covenant."

Picking up the "moving through the second veil" allusion of Chapter 9 and, by implication the allusion to "the Mediator" there, the author of *Hebr* 10:19-20 now goes on finally and climactically to claim "to have the boldness to enter into the Holiest (that is, the Holy of Holiest)... by a new and living way." (47) The author means by this and defines this as, moving into almost total allegory, "by the blood of Jesus" which has been "consecrated through the veil."

Finally, in *Hebr* 12:23-24, alluding to the dual efficacy again of Jesus, its "Mediator" and "the New Covenant" and "the Perfect Holiness of the Righteous," (48) and in Chapter 13 evoking *4QMMT's* "camp" language, it is now stated that:

Just as the bodies of those animals, whose blood was brought into the Holy of Holiest as a sacrifice for sin, were burned outside the camp; so too Jesus suffered outside the camp so he might sanctify the people by his own blood (*Hebr* 13:10-12) ... It is this blood of the eternal Covenant of our Lord Jesus that will make you perfect in every good work (*Hebr* 13:20-21).

Not only is this almost mesmerizingly entrancing, the total Philonic allegorization implicit in it is hardly to be missed.

(44) Much as the "Instrument"/"Seeker"/"Stave"/and "Star" above.

(45) For *Hebr* 8:12 and 10:16: "I will put My Laws in their hearts and write them on their minds."

(46) Another possible variation on the "remembrance" language denoted above.

(47) Cf. *CD* 8 and 19 above on "the Fountain of living waters" directly descriptive of "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus."

(48) Literally "the spirits of the Righteous made perfect" — again, "Perfect Holiness" being a central doctrine of the *Damascus Document* as well as the *Community Rule*.

The only question remaining is the one we asked at the beginning of this discussion: did the sectaries at Qumran know the Pauline or New Testament position (if we can refer to it in such manner) on "the New Covenant," to which they were responding? Or was there some secret, hidden, or inner meaning imparted only to central members of the sect as is sometimes implied in the *Damascus Document* and elsewhere after, as *CD* 4.10-11 puts it:

And with the Completion of the Era of the number of these years, there will be no more joining to the House of Judah but rather each man will stand upon his own net. (49)

Or, as this is put earlier:

And he built for them a House of Faith in Israel, the likes of which has never stood from ancient times until now. And for them that hold fast to it, there will be Victorious Life and all the Glory of Adam will be theirs. (50) (*CD* 3:19-20).

It is possible, but I consider both options relatively doubtful.

The other possibility is, did someone like Paul (51) understand "the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus" in this manner? In asking this question, I leave aside the allusions to "the Cup of the Wrath of God" in *IQpHab* 11:15, but it would seem that Paul has some understanding of this variation of the usage as well when he states in *1 Cor* 11:26 (directly following his evocation of communion with the blood of Christ) "for as often as you drink this cup, you solemnly proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes," following this up in 11:29 with:

For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks Judgement to himself, not seeing through to the body of the Lord.

Allegorization such as this is, in fact, really quite expert.

My conclusion is: yes in some symbolic or allegorical manner, teachers like Paul and authors even of books such as *Acts*, (52) did see through to this esoteric understanding of "Damascus" and did reinterpret it in this utterly spiritualized and Hellenistic mystery-religion oriented manner. However I do not believe, given the intensity of the attachment

(49) Or "watchtower," probably a defective redaction of the expression also used in *IQpHab* 6:12 quoting *Habakkuk* 2:1.

(50) A variation probably of the Ebionite/Elchasaite "Primal Adam" ideology.

(51) A person whom I consider, because of the breadth of Qumran language infusing his letters, spent time in the Community before he was most likely ejected as per the parameters of *CD* 20 and *IQS* 7 and who, speaking both Hebrew and Greek as he undoubtedly must have done, understood at least to a certain extent the esoteric possibilities inherent in the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew geographical designation "Damashek" or "Damascus," in particular as these bore on the Hebrew terms for "cup" and "blood."

(52) Which in my view did know the *Damascus Document* and was diametrically opposed to much of what it was saying.

to the Law — avowed repeatedly in the *Damascus Document*, unless this is to be considered simple dissimulation — that the sectaries at Qumran entertained any such hidden sense of “the New Covenant in the Land of Damascus” though, given their several intemperate denunciations of contact with or consumption of “blood” of any kind, it may be that they knew the Pauline one.

Since the presentation of this paper, it has been pointed out to me that the esoteric meaning of the formulation “Damascus” that I have outlined above actually works in the Hebrew as well as the Greek not only in one but in both syllables of the expression. In fact, it works even better than the simple homophonic relationship of to the Hebrew for “cup” (*chos*) and “blood” (*dam*) in the Greek transliteration. This was pointed out to me, as noted above, by Professor Bernstein after I gave my paper at the conference, for which I am particularly indebted to him. The fact of this unexpected further verification of what was initially just a theory provides extremely convincing additional verification of its applicability.

In Hebrew the word for the Greek/English “Damascus,” as already noted, is *Damashek*, but the word for “give to drink” or “drink” is *mash-keh*, a fourth form verbal noun based on the Hebrew root *Sh-K-H* as already set forth above. Therefore the place name “Damascus” in Hebrew breaks down in putative esoteric or allegorical delineation to *Dam-Mash-keh*, “give blood to drink.” This, of course, is the kind of phraseology repeated evoked in the quotation of it attributed to Jesus, (53) whether in *1 Corinthians* or the Synoptic Gospels.

To condense the various readings one encounters in these. *1 Cor* 11:25: “... he took the cup saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.” In the Synoptic Gospels it is varied slightly into “This is the cup of the New Covenant in the my blood which is poured out for you” (54) (*Luke* 22:20), followed by “I will not drink of the fruit of the vine again until I drink it again in the Kingdom of God.” (55) If this were not sufficient, it is preceded in all versions by the commandment, “drink of it.”

The combination of the usage “drink” or “drinking” with “the cup of the New Covenant” and “my blood”/“blood of me” in one manner or another in all contexts is hardly to be gainsaid. The writer considers that contextual allusions such as these are too insistent and too comprehensive to be simply fortuitous or coincidental. They betake some more persistent esoteric or allegorical wordplay, some kind of amusingly clever

(53) Even in the face of the ban on the consumption of “blood” in the various formulations of James’ directives to overseas Communities again already delineated above.

(54) “for the Many” in *Matthew* 26:27/*Mark* 14:24.

(55) “drink” as if for emphasis repeated twice.

and/or aesthetically pleasing wordplay. What the allegorical sense or meaning might be underlying these formulations and whether those at Qumran might also have been aware of it, as already discussed, the writer is unable to determine in any definitive manner.

Nor is it possible to determine which came first, the version and sense of "the New Covenant" found in Pauline/Synoptic formulation and attributed to the "Jesus" they are presenting or that found in Qumran variation. The writer, as should be clear, suspects that the latter, the Law or *Torah*-oriented exposition of it one finds developed in the later columns of the *Damascus Document* from Qumran, is the original and the esoteric play and even quasi-derogatory parody or exposition of it one finds in both Paul and the Synoptic Gospels is neither meant positively nor innocently, but rather to invalidate or to undercut, transforming it into its exact or mirror opposite.

Robert EISENMAN