

Torah in Early Jewish Imaginations

Edited by

Ariel Feldman and Timothy J. Sandoval

Mohr Siebeck

Ariel Feldman is Rosalyn and Manny Rosenthal Professor of Jewish Studies at the Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University.

Timothy J. Sandoval is Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University.
orcid.org/0000-0002-3675-2461

ISBN 978-3-16-162664-7 / eISBN 978-3-16-162665-4
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-162665-4

ISSN 0940-4155 / eISSN 2568-8359 (Forschungen zum Alten Testament)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <https://dnb.de>.

© 2023 Mohr Siebeck Tübingen, Germany. www.mohrsiebeck.com

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that permitted by copyright law) without the publisher's written permission. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations and storage and processing in electronic systems.

The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen using Minion typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Table of Contents

Preface	V
Abbreviations Including Frequently Cited Sources	IX
 <i>Ariel Feldman and Timothy J. Sandoval</i>	
Introduction	1
 <i>Richard J. Bautch</i>	
The Pentateuchal Redaction: An Exercise in Scribal Imagination	9
 <i>Steven D. Fraade</i>	
“Bringing the Messiah(s) through Law”: Reflections from the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Some Successors	25
 <i>Carol A. Newsom</i>	
Access to Knowledge and Resistance to Genesis 2–3 in Mid-Second Temple Texts	39
 <i>Daniel A. Machiela</i>	
An Ancestral Pattern for Diaspora Life in the Aramaic Literature from Qumran	57
 <i>Ariel Feldman</i>	
The Song of the Sea in the Writings of Early Judaism	67
 <i>Joseph McDonald</i>	
Exodus as Chosen Trauma, Exodus as Chosen Glory: Group Identity Formation among Ancient Israelites, Jews of the Hellenistic Diaspora, and Modern Ethiopian Jews	91
 <i>Jonathan Kaplan</i>	
Leviticus and the Rewriting of the Torah in 1QWords of Moses (1Q22)	111
 <i>Jeremy L. Williams</i>	
The Rhetorical Use of Blasphemy for Criminalization from Leviticus 24:10–23 to Acts 6:8–7:60	125

Timothy J. Sandoval

Satirical Elements in Tobit? Tobit's Torah Ethics in GII versus GI 147

Judith H. Newman

Trickery as Virtue? Reworking the Torah's Trickster in the Book of Judith 171

Kelley Coblenz Bautch

The Law and the Prophet: Reading 1 Maccabees in the Days of John
Hyrcanus 183

List of Contributors 205

Index of Ancient Sources 207

Index of Modern Authors 216

Index of Subjects 219

“Bringing the Messiah(s) Through Law”

Reflections from the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Some Successors

Steven D. Fraade

What is generally referred to today as the Damascus Document has a long history, during which it was called by different names, since like virtually all manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, it bears no original over-arching title for its text, titles having been bestowed upon it by its modern scholars. Those names mainly derive either from the favored Zadokite branch of the Aaronite priestly dynasty, Zadok having been the High Priest in Solomon’s temple, with the community understanding itself or its leaders as incorporating or having descending from that High Priesthood; or from the prominence of “Damascus” or the “land of Damascus” in the scroll, that is, from internal markers in the absence of an external title page.¹ Scholars have divided over whether Damascus refers literally to the Syrian city by that name, or by extension to Babylonia, or figuratively to the Qumran community or its place of sojourn.² The community would appear to experience itself as privileged by virtue of its deep connections to both markers, in a sense, priestly (Zadok) and prophetic (Damascus).

However, both of these terms/characterizations appear in the Admonition, but never in the Laws, which are now (since the publication of the 4QD fragments) seen as constituting the core and possibly the majority of the Damascus Document. In fact, two major translations of and commentaries to the Damascus

¹ For the basis of the Zadokite designation (e. g., Solomon Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries: Volume 1: Fragments of a Zadokite Work* [Cambridge: The University Press, 1910]; Chaim Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954]); see CD 3:21b–4:1; 4:3–4; 5:5; 4Q266 (4QD^a) 5 i 16. For the recurring importance of Damascus, see CD 6:5, 19; 7:15, 19; 8:21; 19:34; 20:12; 4Q266 (4QD^b) 3 iii 20; where it appears to be a place of exilic dwelling and covenant entry or renewal.

² See Murphy-O’Connor (with reference to his earlier publications) for the more literal understanding and Knibb, for the more figurative and prophetic understanding, based on Amos 5:27: יהוה אמר יהוה: “therefore I will take you into exile beyond Damascus says the Lord,” (NRSV), with the latter understanding now being dominant. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Damascus,” in *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and James C. VanderKam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1:65–66; Michael A. Knibb, “Exile in the Damascus Document,” *JSTO* 25 (1983): 99–117.

Document omit entirely the core section of the Laws from consideration.³ For this reason, some have favored for titles either “The Exact Nature of the Laws” (פרוש המשפטים) or “The Final Interpretation (or Instruction) of the Torah” (מדרש התורה האחרון), both of which appear in the final lines of the Damascus Document according to the 4QD *legal* fragments.⁴ It might be noted that in Israeli scholarship, the Damascus Document is most commonly referred to as the “book/scroll of the Damascus Covenant” (מגילת ברית דמשק) highlighting a twofold theme that runs throughout the document, that of a divinely renewed covenant with an exiled righteous remnant who “enter” it in “the land of Damascus.”⁵ All of these terms have messianically infused resonances.

As already suggested, none of these common designations gives adequate attention to the legal core of the Damascus Document, or to the extent to which the enveloping Admonitions are interwoven with sectarian law and legal understanding. In fact, the Damascus Document, as I have argued previously, is unusual (but not unique; viz. 4QMMT) for its combining and intersecting of legal and narrative (the latter including historical and eschatological) modes of discourse, much after the pattern of the biblical book of Deuteronomy, with its substantial legal core and encompassing didactic narrations of sacred history, eschatological expectations, and moral/ritual admonitions. This hybrid character becomes a hallmark of early rabbinic literature, with its deep and dynamic intersecting of law and narrative, or *hālākā* and *’aggādā*.⁶

Ancient Jewish law (and Jewish law overall) can no longer be viewed as representing a branch of Judaism distinct from its spirituality and eschatology, but rather their generative complement. It was once thought, especially by supersessionist Protestant theologians and biblical critics, that a split occurred early

³ Michael A. Knibb, *The Qumran Community*, Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World, 200 BC to AD 200 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the “Damascus Document,”* JSOTSup 25 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).

⁴ For the former, see CD 14:18b; 4Q266 (4QD^a) 1 a–b 1 (restored); 4Q266 (4Q^a) 11 18; 4Q269 (4QD^d) 16 16–17; 4Q270 (4QD^e) 7 ii 12. For the latter, see 4Q266 (4QD^a) 11 20–21; 4Q269 (4QD^d) 16 19; 4Q270 (4QD^e) 7 ii 15; 4Q266 (4QD^a) 5 i 16–17. See Steven D. Fraade, “Ancient Jewish Law and Narrative in Comparative Perspective: The Damascus Document and the Mishnah,” *Diné Israel: Studies in Halakhah and Jewish Law* 24 (2007): 65–99 (68–69); idem, “Law, History, and Narrative in the Damascus Document,” *Meghillot* 5–6 (2007): *35–*55 (36–37; Hebrew).

⁵ See CD 6:19; 8:21; 19:34.

⁶ On “nomos and narrative” in biblical and early rabbinic legal discourse, see the seminal article by Robert Cover, “Nomos and Narrative: Forward to the Supreme Court 1982 Term,” *Harvard Law Review* 97 (1983): 4–68; and Steven D. Fraade, “Nomos and Narrative Before Nomos and Narrative,” *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 17 (2005): 81–96; idem, “The Vital Intersection of Halakha and Aggada,” in *The Literature of the Rabbis*, ed. Christine Hayes, CRINT (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 463–71. On the Damascus Document (and the Mishnah) more specifically, see idem, “Ancient Jewish Law and Narrative”; idem, “Law, History, and Narrative.” For their rhetorical interpenetration in 4QMMT, see idem, “Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Miqṣat Ma’ase Ha-Torah (4QMMT): The Case of the Blessings and Curses,” *DSD* 10 (2003): 150–61.

in the evolutionary history of Israelite religion and early Judaism so that nomistic pietism and eschatological spiritualism (e.g., the showdown “Amos versus Amaziah” of Amos 7:7–17) represented sharply divergent and *incompatible* paths, later (retrojectively) assigned to Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism on the one hand and early Christianity on the other, respectively. This has had similarly insidious effects as in Matthew Arnold’s binary bifurcation of “Hellenism and Hebraism,”⁷ as has the dichotomy between the Old Testament God of wrath and punishment versus the New Testament God of love and forgiveness. Thus, the *old* (inferior) nomism is teleologically superseded by the *new* (superior) messianism and its spiritualism.

With the discovery and publication of the Damascus Document, and now more abundantly with that of the 4QD fragments (as with other legal texts such as the Temple Scroll and 4QMMT), we now see the full scale and scope of its laws, which go hand in hand with its narrative and eschatological framework and rhetoric. In short, the stereotypical legal/spiritual (nomistic/messianic) bifurcation finds no place at Qumran, and especially not in the Damascus Document, unless scholars have interpolated it therein. That is, there is nothing incompatible about them, even as they are dialectically charged, from their very beginnings, to their continually intertwined histories, to the present, and therefrom to their very ends. Stated differently, if *nomos* and narrative (including history and messianism in the latter) are deeply intertwined, from covenantal beginning to eschatological consummation, it would be understandable to assume that the proper practice and study of the laws might interdependently advance, whether incrementally or suddenly, sacred history toward its expected messianic fulfillment.

To borrow an expression, from Robert Cover, coined for an entirely different Jewish millenarian context (1538 Safed), the purpose of the Damascus Document, both practically and didactically, might be thought of as “Bringing the Messiah Through Law.”⁸ The Qumran sectarians, it might be imagined, could hasten the “end of days”⁹ through their cleaving to (and study of) the divinely appointed path of “true” law and spirit, on the inner plane of history, while they awaited (and perhaps nudged along) the necessary redemptive transformations on the outer plane.

⁷ See Olender for the dark nineteenth century history; as well as, most recently, Kaye and Klawans for its lasting and perverting legacy. Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Alexander Kaye, *The Invention of Jewish Theocracy: The Struggle for Legal Authority in Modern Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 55–56; Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁸ Robert Cover, “Bringing the Messiah Through Law: A Case Study,” in *Religion, Morality, and the Law*, ed. J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapman, *Nomos* 30 (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 201–17.

⁹ For the expression, see CD 3:4; 4:4; 6:11; Annette Steudel, “אחרית הימים in the Texts from Qumran,” *RevQ* 16 (1993): 225–46.

While many of the laws of the Damascus Document are intended to apply, ideally at least, to Israel as a whole (e.g., Sabbath laws), others are specific to the internal organization of the community (e.g., its self-governance), the latter of which it shares broadly with the Community Rule. These rules, of both types, were not just recited or studied, but, in the main where possible, practiced in the structuring of the community and the behavior of its members (e.g., the rules and practices of intra-communal reproofs, for which we have documentary evidence in 4Q477). A central figure in ensuring that the community practiced what it preached was the Overseer, who, I have argued, might have been a Levite.¹⁰ Herein we see the tension (evidenced in all monarchic and theocratic polities) between heredity (or royalty) and expertise.¹¹ Similarly, the community as a whole might be the covenantal tool of God's redemptive plan for all of Israel, even as specific roles are assigned to officers whose authority derives from their inherited, priestly or Levitical, pedigrees, which in turn may be compromised if they lack the necessary aptitude or expertise. As Strugnell characterized this tension relatively early in scrolls scholarship, "Theologically the order may have been a priesthood of *all* believers, but the texts clearly show that in ritual and purity the legitimate priesthood had prerogatives" (emphasis added).¹² Yet those prerogatives were not without conditions, as we can see from the section "Disqualification of Priests."¹³ Nevertheless, the dialectical tension between an egalitarian ethos and an aristocracy of knowledge runs throughout.

Significantly, the Damascus Document, in the 4QD fragments thought to provide its epilogue, is unique among the scrolls in suggesting that one of the main performative contexts in which it would have been recited and studied is the communal gathering during the festival of the "third month," that is, Shavu'ot.¹⁴ This allows us to imagine how it would have rhetorically resonated at an annual event of covenant renewal, that involved the blessing (confirmation and advancement) and cursing (demotion and expulsion) of its members, and the

¹⁰ See, in particular, CD 9:2–8a; CD 9:16b–10:3; 4Q266 (4QD^a) 7 i 2–5; all with notes, commentary, and suggestions for further reading in Steven D. Fraade, *Damascus Document*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); as well as idem, "Shifting from Priestly to Non-Priestly Legal Authority: A Comparison of the Damascus Document and the Midrash Sifra," *DSD* 6 (1999): 109–25.

¹¹ See more broadly, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Mutatio morum: The Idea of a Cultural Revolution," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. Thomas Habinek and Alessandro Schiesaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3–22, who terms the onset of this tension a "cultural revolution" with respect to the Roman imperial context more broadly.

¹² John Strugnell, "Flavius Josephus and the Essenes: Antiquities XVIII.18–22," *JBL* 77 (1958): 106–15 (111).

¹³ 4Q266 (4QD^a) 5 ii 1–16 (// 4Q267 [4QD^b] 5 iii 1–8; 4Q273 [4QD^h] 2 1–2; 4 i 5–11); see Fraade, *Damascus Document*, 135–37.

¹⁴ 4Q266 (4QD^a) 11 16–17, and parallels.

initiation of new recruits. This is as much of a historical (and social) datum as the purported “dating” of the movement’s origins in the opening lines of CD.¹⁵

No less interesting or important than locating the Damascus Document in time is the question of its own temporal perspective.¹⁶ The community appears to view itself as living in an extended temporal present, a “time-between,” that has its beginnings in the Urzeit of the “first ones”¹⁷ and its consummation in the imminent Endzeit of the “end of days,” a partial foretaste of which could already be experienced in the life of the community in exile while awaiting their imminent return. The “first ones” could be the biblical patriarchs who are, as it were, the covenantal “founders” (after whom came the “joiners” of the subsequent and present communities). Alternatively, the “first ones” in some contexts could be understood to be the founders of the community itself, including the inspired Teacher of Righteousness, who is claimed to have been a revealer of laws, both “first” and “last,” to the community.¹⁸ Perhaps a rhetorical conflation of the two (that is, biblical and sectarian “first ones”) is the result of such ambiguity. In that “time-between” of communal formation, maintenance, and vindication, utmost importance was given to the reciting, studying, and performing the cumulative laws that had accrued through revelatory teaching and study within the community alone within Israel, staying the course, as it were, until the eschaton, and the advent of an eschatological “one who will teach righteousness in the end of days” (CD 6:11): יורה צדק באחרית הימים.

Let us look at a few brief but important passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls, beginning with CD 12:22–13:2, from the section of Laws, which demonstrate the central place of law in the “time-between”:

וזה סרך מושב	12:22
המת[נ]ת המתהלכים באלה בקץ הרשעה עד עמוד משוח אהרן	23
וישראל עד עשרה אנשים למועט לאלפים ומיאיות וחמשים	13:1
ועשרות	2

- 12:22 <vacat> And this is the rule for the meeting of
 23 the camps: Whoever walks according to these (rules) during the period of wickedness until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron
 13:1 and Israel (forming groups) of at least ten men, by thousands, hundreds, fifties,
 2 and tens.

The members of the community are divided into (wilderness) “camps” of different numerations, with the smallest being no less than ten, as if for holy war.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Fraade, *Damascus Document*, 9–11 (“Rhetorical/Ritual Enactment”).

¹⁶ See Steven D. Fraade, “History (?) In the Damascus Document,” *DSD* 25 (2018): 412–28.

¹⁷ See, for example, CD 1:4 (with note in Fraade, *Damascus Document*, 30), 16; 3:10; 4:8–9; 6:2; 8:17; 20:8–9, 31.

¹⁸ For first and last laws, see CD 4:6–12; 20:6–10, 30–33; IQS 9:10b–11. On the Teacher of Righteousness more broadly, see Fraade, *Damascus Document*, 29–33.

¹⁹ See Exod 18:25; Deut 1:15. For the community constituting multiple (decentralized) camps,

In the present (“the period of wickedness”)²⁰ communal life is characterized by the conducting themselves (מתהלכים) according to the laws herein specified.²¹ That present extends right up to the “coming of the Messiah(s) of Aaron and Israel.” The new age will begin immediately upon the conclusion of the old.²² It is unclear whether the messianic formulation here denotes a single Messiah (anointed leader), who has authority over both the priests (Aaron) and non-priests (Israel), or two individual Messiahs, priestly and Davidic in both respective ancestries and functions, their governance being a diarchy rather than a monarchy.²³ In any case, the “time-between” of communal life in exile, whether divinely (via human agents) or self-imposed, is lived in legal pietism, a sort of holding pattern suspended, as it were, between the dual shadows of covenantal origins and messianic redemption, and between two righteous teachers, one past and one future. For a similar connection between law and eschatology in the Damascus Document, note 4Q266 (D^a) 10 i 11–12 (= CD 14:18–19, with the same ambiguity regarding one or two Messiahs):

זה פרוש 11
[המשפטים אשר יש]פטו במ עם עד עמוד משיח אהרון וישראל 12

11 And this is the exact nature of

12 [the laws by which they shall be ju]dged until the rise of the Messiah(s) of Aaron and Israel.

Once again legal practice and study are what define, for the sectarians, their anticipatory preparations, if not impetus, for the arrival of the Messiah(s) and his (their) redemptive promise.

Next, I wish to consider more closely and problematize the title of this essay, “Bringing the Messiah(s) Through Law,” borrowed from the title of an un-

see CD 12:19; 13:20; 14:3; John J. Collins, *Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

²⁰ For which see CD 4:9, 10; 6:10, 14; 14:18–19; 15:7, 10.

²¹ Compare the similar usage in CD 2:15–16; 12:21, 22; 14:1; my note to the first in Fraade, *Damascus Document*, 37–38.

²² Compare Sifre Deuteronomy 343 (ed. Finkelstein, 397.6–16), commenting on Gen 25:26, where the succession of the birth of Jacob immediately follows that of Isaac with hardly any time or distance between them. Here is the midrashic comment: “The Holy One, blessed be he, said to them, ‘No nation or language will enter between (them and) you.’” That is, the fall of Rome (the descendants of Esau) will be immediately followed by the messianic ascendance of Jacob (= Israel). For more on the generally discounted rabbinic apocalypticism, see Anthony J. Saldarini, “Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature,” *CBQ* 39 (1975): 348–58; idem, “Apocalypses and ‘Apocalyptic’ in Rabbinic Literature and Mysticism,” *Semeia* 14 (1979): 187–205; idem, “The Uses of Apocalyptic in the Mishna and Tosepta,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 396–409.

²³ For which see David M. Goodblatt, *The Monarchic Principle: Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity*, TSAJ 38 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1994). Compare in this regard CD 14:19; 19:10–11; 20:1; 4Q266 (4QD^a) 10 i 12; and IQS 9:11 for the plural “Messiahs”: עד בוא נביא ומשיחי אהרון וישראל (“until there come a prophet and the anointed ones of Aaron and Israel”).

finished, posthumously published article by Cover 1988, introduced above.²⁴ Can the close, interdependent link between Jewish law and Jewish (even universal) history lead some to presume that the legal piety of the righteous can facilitate or even hasten (that is, “bring”) the arrival of the Messiah(s)? Conversely, does the unlawfulness of the pre-messianic wicked age delay his/their coming? This question has a long history itself, down to modern-day Israeli politics,²⁵ but how far *back* does it extend? In brief, how interdependent are nomism and messianism? In both cases (lawful and unlawful), my tentative answer would have to be: it is not as clear as we might think. For the sectarianism of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the “age of wickedness” is divinely pre-determined, like historical epochs in apocalyptic literature more generally (e.g. Daniel 7), and its *exact* time of arrival is inscrutable to most, if not all, humans, which did not stop them from trying to fill in its descriptive and prescriptive blanks.

For the most part, the revealed messianic truths of the Damascus Document (as of other sectarian scrolls) are to inform its readers/auditors of the divine retribution that will be suffered by the unrighteous, whether Jewish or not, and the divine favors that will be meted out to the righteous of the “new covenant” alone, each in accord with their (predetermined) behavior in the past and, more importantly, anticipatory “present,” that is, reward and punishment, or, in Deuteronomic terms, blessings and curses.²⁶ The timing and consequences of the “end of days” are divinely predetermined. While its time of arrival, if only in symbolic rather than calendrical terms, may be revealed to the righteous alone, it is not within their power to accelerate it, in effect, to “force the end,” but to keep knowledge of the nature of its onset a secret preserved among the righteous and

²⁴ Cover, “Bringing the Messiah Through Law.”

²⁵ E.g., in contemporary Israel, there are those for whom the Jewish (re)settlement of the “greater Land of Israel,” the restoration of prayer and even sacrificial worship on the Temple Mount in a rebuilt temple, and the institution of a judicial system that adjudicates according to “Torah law” serve to “hasten the end.” The same can be said for Chabad, which sees every-day pious acts as hastening the advent (or return) of the Messiah. Do such practices need to await the messianic kingdom in full, or can they (implicitly at least) initiate it in progressive stages? For these questions with regard to early twentieth-century Zionism, see the following sampling: Kaye, *The Invention of Jewish Theocracy*; Arie Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption: Messianism and the Resettlement of the Land of Israel*, trans. Joel A. Linsider (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); idem, *The Gaon of Vilna and His Messianic Vision*, trans. Naftali Greenwood (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2012); Julius Newman, *Semikhah (Ordination): A Study of Its Origin, History, and Function in Rabbinic Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1950); Tomer Persico, “The End Point of Zionism: Ethnocentrism and the Temple Mount,” *Israel Studies Review* 32 (2017): 104–23; Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, trans. Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chapman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Hayyim Rothman, *No Masters but God: Portraits of Anarcho-Judaism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021); Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). I greatly appreciate the assistance of Alexander Kaye and Eliyahu Stern with this note.

²⁶ For fuller discussion, see Fraade, “Rhetoric and Hermeneutics in Miqṣat Ma’āse Ha-Torah.”

learned few.²⁷ Let us see how this unfolds in the well-known, very first column of what is preserved in CD 1:8–18:

ויבינו בעונם וידעו כי	8
אנשים אשימים הם ויהיו כעורים וכימגששים דרך	9
שנים עשרים ויבן אל אל מעשיהם כי בלב שלם דרשוהו	10
ויקם להם מורה צדק להדריכם בדרך לבו <vacat> ויודע	11
לדורות אחרונים את אשר עשה בדור אחרון בעדת בוגדים	12
הם סרי דרך היא העת אשר היה כתוב עליה כפרה סורירה	13
כן סרר ישראל בעמוד איש הלצון אשר הטיף לישראל	14
מימי כזב ויתעם בתוהו לא דרך להשח גבהות עולם ולסור	15
מנתיבות צדק ולסיע גבול אשר גבלו ראשנים בנחלתם למען	16
הדבק בהם את אלות בריתו להסגירם לחרב נקמת נקם	17
ברית	18

- 8 And they discerned their iniquity and knew that
 9 they were guilty people, and like blind people and like those who grope for a way for
 10 twenty years. And God discerned their deeds, for with a full heart they sought him,
 11 and he raised for them a Teacher of Righteousness, to guide them in the way of his
 [= God's] heart. <vacat> And he [=God] made known
 12 to the last generations what he would do in the last generation to the congregation of
 traitors.
 13 They are the ones who turn from the way. This is the time about which it was written,
 "As a wayward cow,
 14 so did Israel stray" (Hos 4:16), when the Scoffer arose, who sprinkled upon Israel
 15 waters of falsehood, and led them astray in a wasteland without a way, bringing down
 the eternal heights and departing
 16 from the paths of righteousness and moving the border which the first ones established
 in their inheritance, so as
 17 to cause the curses of his covenant to cling to them, delivering them to the avenging
 sword of the vengeance
 18 of the covenant.

While much could be and has been commented on this passage (and its wider textual context), here I will only mention aspects relevant to our discussion. In lines 10–13 the Teacher of Righteousness reveals to the righteous (and presumably to them alone) what would be the final retribution against the “congregation of traitors,” who have “turned from the (sectarian) way” of true practice, as scripturally and prophetically foretold here in Hos 4:16. The precise time (“the last generation”), just as the nature of their punishment (“the curses of the covenant” and “the avenging sword of vengeance”), has been pre-set and we are told what to expect will happen to the followers of the Scoffer. The present is suspended between covenantal origins and covenantal retribution, but heavily leaning toward the latter. *When* exactly will it happen? It is enough to know that it has

²⁷ On secret societies and their mysteries in ancient Judaism and beyond, see now Michael E. Stone, *Secret Groups in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

already begun, or will do so momentarily. The true way and the false way are preparing, if not prepared, for their cosmic duel to the end. For the chosen few, there is no doubt as to who will be (if not already) justified: the followers of the Teacher of Righteousness and not those of the Scoffer. What is revealed here is *not when* but *how and why*.

Speaking of the Teacher of Righteousness, the following passage commenting on Hab 2:2 portrays him as interpreting the words of the prophet Habakkuk in divinely revealed eschatological terms:²⁸

1 וידבר אל אל חבקוק לכתוב את הבאות על
 2 הדור האחרון ואת גמר הקץ לוא הודעו
 3 ואשר אמר למען ירוץ הקורא בו
 4 פשרו על מורה הצדק אשר הודיעו אל את
 5 כול רזי דברי עבדיו הנבאים.

- 1 And God spoke to Habakkuk [telling him] to write down the things
- 2 that will come upon the last generation, but *how the period would end* (גמר חקק) *he did not make known to him* (emphasis added).
- 3 <vacat> And concerning what it says, “So that the one who reads it will run” (Hab 2:2b).
- 4 Its interpretation concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known
- 5 all of the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets.

The deeper meanings of Habakkuk’s prophesies were *not* revealed to the prophet himself. Their consummation was for a future time (the “last generation”), that being the time of the Teacher of Righteousness. To him the mysteries of the prophets were divinely revealed, and, presumably, contained in the Peshar Habakkuk, as in the other prophetic pesharim. This cross-cultured literary phenomenon has been referred to as “the ignorant messenger.”²⁹ However, there is a deep ambiguity in the expression גמר הקץ, translated here as “how the period [of wickedness] would end,” that is, the nature of the rewards and punishments to be received by the righteous and the wicked respectively in the final judgment. Vermes, however, translates it as, “when time [= the current period of wickedness] would come to an end,” that is, disclosing when the eschaton would arrive, thereby responding to the incessant question, “How much longer must we wait?”³⁰ Since knowledge of גמר הקץ, according to the peshar, was denied to Habakkuk, presumably it, with either possible meaning, was revealed to the Teacher of Righteousness. However, which was it, the nature of the end, or the timing of its arrival, or both? In any case, was the Teacher able to disclose it to his

²⁸ 1QpHab 7:1–5.

²⁹ See Steven D. Fraade, “4 Ezra and 2 Baruch with the (Dis-) Advantage of Rabbinic Hindsight,” in *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall*, ed. Matthias Henze and Gabrielle Bocaccini, JSJSup164 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 363–78 (374–76); as well as b. Menahot 29b, for R. Akiba knowing more than was disclosed to Moses in his day.

³⁰ Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 2004), 512.

followers before his death, or only posthumously?³¹ We shall turn in conclusion to the question of the community's temporal eschatological anticipation (and perhaps its attendant impatience), in light of repeated deferral of its fulfillment.

The Peshet Habakkuk commentary continues by emphasizing that the final period (קץ האחרון) will take longer than expected, *even as predicted by the prophets* (7:7–8: דברו הנביאים), since, ultimately, “the mysteries of God are awesome” (7:8: ביא רזי אל להפלה). This tension is most acutely expressed in Peshet Habakkuk's comment to Hab 2:3b:³²

9 אם יתמהמה חכה לו כיא בו יבוא ולוא
10 יאחר פשרו על אנשי האמת
11 עושי התורה אשר לוא ירפו ידיהם מעבודת
12 האמת בהמשך עליהם הקץ האחרון כי
13 כול קיצי אל יבואו לתכונם כאשר חקק
14 להם ברזי ערמתו

9 “Even if it tarries, wait for it still, for it will surely come, without
10 delay” (Hos 2:3b): Its interpretation concerns the *men of truth*,
11 *who perform the Torah (commands)*, whose hands do not grow slack in the service
12 of the truth, when the last period is prolonged for them, for
13 all of God's periods will come according to their fixed order, as he decreed
14 for them in the mysteries of his prudence.

The passage seems to be self-contradictory. For the pious who are steadfastly awaiting and preparing for the eschatological end of days, its delay might be frustrating and challenging to faith. The pesherist responds that the seeming delay is itself part of the inscrutable divine plan, according to which it will surely come as if on time, therefore, “without delay.” In other words, it will come on time, but not as humanly expected or calculated. It will come in “its own (= God's) sweet time.” Its coming remains a certainty according to a divine plan, even as it may (seem to) take longer than hoped/expected to arrive. In the time-between, the “men of truth” (אנשי האמת) and the “doers of the Torah (laws)” (עושי התורה) must stay the course of legal pietism, for their reward is imminent, albeit delayed.³³ No matter what their virtuous acts, they cannot advance the arrival of the Messiah(s) through their human deeds. At most, they can ensure

³¹ Timothy H. Lim, *The Earliest Commentary on the Prophecy of Habakkuk*, The Oxford Commentary on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 94, translates, “but the period to come He did not make known to him,” retaining the ambiguity of the Hebrew and thereby avoiding my question. He does not comment on this wording. Nor does Horgan, who translates, “but the fulfillment of the period he did not make known to him.” Maurya P. Horgan, “Habakkuk Peshet (1QpHab),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations: Vol 6B: Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents*, ed. James H. Charlesworth et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 157–85 (173).

³² 1QpHab 7:9–14.

³³ For other occurrences of these terms, see trans. Horgan, “Habakkuk Peshet (1QpHab),” 173 n 68, 69.

their portion of the eschatological rewards, while anticipating the punishment of the rival scoffers. Even the Teacher of Righteousness, it would appear, with all his divinely bestowed prophetic insights, does not know when the awaited end will begin (if it has not already). For the century or two that the Qumran community was in existence, the "end" was permanently imminent yet repeatedly deferred, with these texts, with their emphasis on an inscrutable divine plan, serving as performative coping mechanisms. Presumably there were allied or rival groups for whom the anticipation and deferral was even longer.

Having concluded this brief tour of Dead Sea Scroll texts, it is clear that Cover's title, with which we began, cannot be mine or the Damascus Document's. Rather, with all due respect, I suggest a revised title: not "bringing," but "Preparing for the Messiah through Law," still emphasizing human (sectarian) agency in setting the messianic table, as it were, albeit of a different, interior, but no less activist, sort.

Later rabbinic texts adopt a similarly activist-quietist pose with regard to messianic expectations, perhaps against the backdrop of the tremendous losses of three failed rebellions against oppressive Roman rule, which were at least partly spurred by imminent messianic hopes.³⁴ Here's a single sample with a three-fold rabbinic interpretation from the Babylonian Talmud (b. Ketubot 111a), the context being various views of whether Jews should seek to live in the Land of Israel, where piety can be better observed, or remain in Babylonia until God, as it were, gives the messianic signal to return:³⁵

שלא יגלו את הקץ, ושלא ירחקו³⁶ את הקץ, ושלא יגלו הסוד³⁷ לנכרים

that they (= the prophets) not reveal the end, that they not defer the end, and that they not reveal the secret to gentiles.

The "end" here refers to the pre-ordained end of history as we know it and the advent of the messianic "world to come." To not "reveal" it is not to uncover signs or predictions of its arrival, through scriptural interpretation, and thereby to heighten hopeful expectations. To not "defer" it, on the other hand, is to not discourage hope in its eventual arrival. The prescribed way is somewhere in the middle, the "golden mean," as it were, of messianically deferred expectation. In any case, knowledge of the end, however much constrained, is not to be shared with non-Jews, possibly referring to Christians of one variety or another, who

³⁴ However, the similarity with the quietist message of 1QpHab 7:9–14, treated above, should give pause to too strong of a determinist historiography.

³⁵ A previous set of three adjurations are more explicitly political (and anti-Roman): that Israel not return en masse to the Land of Israel, that Israel not rebel against the nations (who rule over them, i. e., Rome), and that the idolaters not oppress Israel too much.

³⁶ Some manuscripts have ירחקו, which is a scribal variant that does not affect the meaning.

³⁷ Some manuscripts have סוד העיבור, "the secret of the intercalation."

also anticipate the advent (or second advent) of the end of historical time and circumstances. The key to a better understanding of this saying is in its evoking of three scriptural “admonitions” or “oaths” from the Song of Songs that more or less say the same thing and therefore must constitute three *separate* signifiers and signifieds, lest Scripture be thought to speak in redundancies. As stated by Song 2:7 (and echoed by Song 3:5 and 8:4):³⁸

השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלם
 בצבאות או באילות השדה
 אם־תעירו ואם־תעוררו את־האהבה עד שתחפץ

I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem,
 By gazelles or by hinds of the field:
 Do not wake or rouse
 Love until it please! (NJPS)

Clearly, the rabbinic interpretations take the Song of Songs as an allegorical love song between God and Israel (as have Christians between God or Jesus and the Church). Both emotionally and theologically, premature love is not the love worth waiting for. It, like redemptive history, will arrive when it (or God) is ready. Until such time, it is better not to get prematurely aroused (metaphorically speaking, of course) in messianic love. Better to ride the covenantal law to its deferred messianic fulfillment than to expect that end to supersede the law, deeply intertwined as they are as paired nomism and messianism.

I will consummate my own comments with a quote from Walter Benjamin, one of the great but tragic historians and prophets of the past century, writing on the “concept of history” and Jewish messianism in particular. It is remarkably resonant with the ancient texts of both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Babylonian Talmud that we have encountered:³⁹

He [the historian] grasps the constellation into which his own era has entered, along with a very specific earlier one. Thus, he establishes a conception of the present as “now-time” shot through with messianic time. We know that the Jews were prohibited from inquiring into the future: the Torah and the prayers instructed them in remembrance. This disenchanting the future, which holds sway over all those who turn to soothsayers for enlightenment. This does not imply, however, that for the Jews the future became homogeneous, empty time. For every second was the small gateway in time through which the messiah might enter.

Benjamin expresses a disenchantment with the future in favor of the small messianic gateways in (present-day) time that have persisted for over two millennia. Contrary to the mystical activists of 1538 Safed, our ancient texts have no

³⁸ See also Song 5:8 and Jer 27:21–22.

³⁹ Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings: Volume 4: 1938–1940*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 389–400 (397; written February–May 1940).

expectations or illusions of “bringing the Messiah(s) through law,” but, more modestly (by comparison) of *preparing* (and repairing) themselves and their world for the fully un-discoverable appointed time of still hoped-for redemption.