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## Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters

Timothy H. Lim

Published in print: 1997 Published Online: October 2011  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/  
ISBN: 9780198262060 eISBN: 9780191682292 acprof:oso/9780198262060.001.0001  
Item type: book

What was the ancient exegetes' attitude to the biblical texts? Did they consider them 'sacred' in the sense that the words were the inviolable utterances of God? Alternatively, did they when necessary modify and adapt holy writ for their own purposes? This book examines the question of exegetical modifications from the post-Qumran perspective of textual pluriformity of literalism that runs through ancient exegeses and translations. The Qumran Commentators and Paul complemented their fulfilment-exegeses by paying close attention to the verbal formations of the biblical texts. The hermeneutical principles underlying their exegeses involved a multiplex of competing forces that at the same time sought to make scripture relevant while guarding it from changes. In so far as the label 'post-biblical exegesis' describes a clear separation between the written, authoritative texts and its interpretation, the distinction is overdrawn, for the ancients were not merely commentators, but also in some sense authors of the biblical texts.

## The Significance of Proverbs 1-9

Stuart Weeks

in Instruction and Imagery in Proverbs 1-9

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2007  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/  
ISBN: 9780199291540 eISBN: 9780191710537 acprof:oso/9780199291540.003.0007  
Item type: chapter

The date and origin of Proverbs 1-9 are difficult to pin down, but its influence can be identified clearly in some subsequent Jewish literature (most notably Ben Sira and certain texts from Qumran). The imagery of the work is never reproduced in full, but elements of it are developed on the basis of an understanding close to that presented in this study.

Proverbs 1-9 provides a link between these later texts and the other biblical wisdom texts; it also raises interesting questions about the way in which wisdom literature's focus upon the individual corresponds to the more corporate Deuteronomistic literature in the post-exilic period. Proverbs 1-9 is an instruction, but that is not the key factor for determining its nature and meaning.

## Temple as Cosmos or Temple in the Cosmos

Jonathan Klawans

in *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: January 2007  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195162639.003.0005  
ISBN: 9780195162639 eISBN: 9780199785254  
Item type: chapter

This chapter analyzes two distinct symbolic understandings of the Jerusalem temple and its rituals. It finds evidence for a belief in the temple as representing the cosmos in Josephus, Philo and rabbinic literature, and evidence for a belief that the earthly temple represents a heavenly sanctuary in the Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, and other rabbinic sources. It attempts to identify one or another of these two symbolic understandings as the precursor of the other are rejected.

## Sinful People, Impure Priests, and Inadequate Structures

Jonathan Klawans

in *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: January 2007  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195162639.003.0006  
ISBN: 9780195162639 eISBN: 9780199785254  
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines literature discovered at Qumran and related literature, including the Temple Scroll, with an eye toward describing more fully the anti-temple polemics articulated. It identifies sources making the following claims about the Jerusalem temple: that it is ritually defiled, morally defiled, ritually inadequate, and structurally insufficient. It also reconsiders the sources that ostensibly "spiritualize" the temple, arguing instead that these sources are rooted in beliefs concerning the temple's importance and efficacy. Sectarian Jews emulated the temple's rituals and priests in part because they looked forward to the temple being under their own control.

# The Purity of the Second Temple in Rabbinic Literature

Jonathan Klawans

in *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism*

Published in print: 2005 Published Online: January 2007  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/  
ISBN: 9780195162639 eISBN: 9780199785254 acprof:oso/9780195162639.003.0007  
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines an array of rabbinic sources concerning the temple, including Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud, drawing a number of contrasts with Qumran literature in particular. The Rabbis seem to agree with the sectarians that the temple was flawed, recalling instances of priestly greed, theft, and even murder. But the rabbis downplay the moral defilement of the temple and deny to the end that the temple was ritually defiled to any significant degree before its destruction by Romans in 70 CE. Unlike the sectarians, the rabbis took a stance toward the temple and its purity that was less idealistic, but more practical and permissive.

## Attitudes to Holy Scripture

Timothy H. Lim

in *Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters*

Published in print: 1997 Published Online: October 2011  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/  
ISBN: 9780198262060 eISBN: 9780191682292 acprof:oso/9780198262060.003.0011  
Item type: chapter

The writings that together make up 'holy scripture' are sacred not because they have been formalized and fixed in stone, but because in them it is thought that the divine will of God can be found. One of the deductions to be drawn from these exegetical adaptations is that ancient interpreters felt the need for changes, because the literal sense of the words does not correspond to what they wish to say. Now the pesherists and Paul do not have to construe the words in this manner. Within their writings are displayed exegetical techniques that range from the literalistic to the figurative and allegorical. Obscure though the choice of exegetical techniques is, the hermeneutical centre of their scriptural interpretations no doubt lies in the revelation of God. Significant, too, for Paul's hermeneutics is the centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

## “And Jacob Remained Alone”

Eliezer Diamond

in *Celibacy and Religious Traditions*

Published in print: 2007 Published Online: January 2008  
ISBN: 9780195306316 eISBN: 9780199867721  
Item type: chapter

Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195306316.003.0003

Judaism has been opposed to celibacy because marriage was a normal condition and a divine ordinance. The Jewish tradition provides evidence of exceptions to the rule against celibacy among marginal sects, such as the Therapeutides, Essences, and Qumran community. There were even exceptions made by Rabbinic Judaism associated with Torah study.

## Performative Reading and Text Interpretation at Qumran

Martin S. Jaffee

in *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE - 400 CE*

Published in print: 2001 Published Online: November 2003  
ISBN: 9780195140675 eISBN: 9780199834334  
Item type: chapter

Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/0195140672.003.0003

Explores the nature of oral-performative reading and text-interpretive tradition in the scribal community (Yakhad) associated with the Qumran ruins and the Dead Sea scrolls. The focus is upon the conceptions of the authority of written texts and their oral-performative transmission as embodied in the community's written representations of the study session of the community, its own practice of textual study preserved in the Damascus Covenant (CD), and the Community Rule (1QS). The chapter shows that despite a rich tradition of interpretive reading of scriptural works and others regarded as stemming from prophecy, the Qumran Yakhad had no sense of itself as bearing an ancient tradition, either oral or written.

## Solar and Lunar Calendars

Sacha Stern

in *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE to 10th Century CE*

Published in print: 2001 Published Online: November 2003  
ISBN: 9780198270348 eISBN: 9780191600753

Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/0198270348.003.0001

Item type: chapter

Ancient sources including the books of Enoch and Jubilees, Qumran and related literature, Philo, Josephus, Graeco-Roman, and early Christian sources, reveal that a variety of solar and lunar calendars were used by Jews in the second century b.c.—first century c.e. From the first century c.e., however, lunar calendars became the norm throughout the Jewish world. This stands in contrast with the development of non-Jewish calendars in the Roman Empire, and especially in the Roman Near East: after the arrival of the Romans, the lunar, Seleucid calendar was generally abandoned in favour of solar calendars modelled on the Julian. Thus the Jewish lunar calendar would appear to have become, in the context of the Roman Empire, a marker of Jewish identity and distinctiveness.

## The Messiah before Jesus

Israel Knohl

Published in print: 2000 Published Online: May 2012 Publisher: University of California Press  
DOI: 10.1525/california/9780520215924.001.0001  
ISBN: 9780520215924 eISBN: 9780520928749  
Item type: book

In a work that challenges notions that have dominated New Testament scholarship for more than a hundred years, this book gives startling evidence for a messianic precursor to Jesus who is described as the “Suffering Servant” in recently published fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The book clarifies many formerly incomprehensible aspects of Jesus' life and confirms the story in the New Testament about his messianic awareness. The book shows that, around the time of Jesus' birth, there came into being a conception of “catastrophic” messianism in which the suffering, humiliation, and death of the messiah were regarded as an integral part of the redemptive process. Scholars have long argued that Jesus could not have foreseen his suffering, death, and resurrection because the concept of a slain savior who rises from the dead was alien to the Judaism of his time. But, on the basis of hymns found at Qumran among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the book argues that, one generation before Jesus, a messianic leader arose in the Qumran sect who was regarded by his followers as ushering in an era of redemption and forgiveness. This messianic leader was killed by Roman soldiers in the course of a revolt that broke out in Jerusalem in 4 bce. The Romans forbade his body to be buried and after the third day his disciples believed that he was resurrected and rose to heaven. The book argues that this formed the basis for Jesus' messianic consciousness; it was because of this model that Jesus anticipated he would suffer, die, and be resurrected after three days.

