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SACRED TIMES: THE BOOK OF JUBILEES AT QUMRAN

by J. Amanda McGuire

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that the Qumran community had an interest in matters pertaining to the calendar, and the proper times to observe feasts.¹ Amongst the thousands of manuscripts found in the Qumran caves, there are nineteen texts that are strictly calendrical in nature, as well as one sundial.² However, several other DSS texts indicate an interest in, or even a preoccupation with the calendar. One such example is the book of Jubilees.

Jubilees holds a very distinct place in the Qumran library. It is not regarded as a sectarian document, however it is one of the most attested books in the entire Qumran corpus.³ At least fifteen, possibly sixteen, manuscripts of Jubilees were found at Qumran.⁴ It is not, however, simply the number of manuscripts that indicates Jubilees

¹ For example, see James C. Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, ed. George J. Brooke, *The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1998).; Sacha Stern, "Qumran Calendars: Theory and Practice," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim (London: T&T Clark, 2000).

² Vanderkam, 74-90, 110. For a nice image of the sundial, see James C. Vanderkam, "Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 63, no. 3 (2000): 166.

³ Charlotte Hempel, "The Place of the *Book of Jubilees* at Qumran and Beyond," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim (London: T&T Clark, 2000), 195-196.; James C. Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 40. Only Psalms, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, and Genesis equal or exceed Jubilees.

importance, but also the reliance of the sectarian writers on the book itself. For example, the book is mentioned by name in CD 16:2-4: “But the specification of the times during which all Israel is blind to all these rules is laid out in detail in the ‘Book of Time Divisions by Jubilees and Weeks.’”⁵ Another connection to Qumran was identified by Gershon Brin, who points out that there is a unique linguistic connection between 11Q19 51:6-7 and 4Q216 1:12-13.⁶

Given the evidence that Jubilees was so influential at Qumran, this paper seeks to answer the following questions: How did the book of Jubilees understand sacred times in general and the Sabbath in particular? How did its sacred time theology affect the theology of the Qumran community?

This paper will not contribute any novel or unique ideas regarding either Jubilees or the Qumran community, as such. It will, however, endeavor to bring the various facets of scholarship on the subjects together, making the relationship between the two more concrete.

Background to the Book of Jubilees

The only complete version of Jubilees is written in Classical Ethiopic, however fragments of the book also exist in Latin (approximately one-third of the book) and Greek (quotations only).⁷ Before the discovery of Qumran, it was hypothesized that Jubilees

⁴ 1Q17, 1Q18, 2Q19, 2Q20, 3Q5, 4Q176a, 4Q176b, 4Q216, 4Q217?, 4Q218, 4Q219, 4Q220, 4Q221, 4Q222, 4Q223-224, 11Q12 An Index of Qumran Manuscripts, Ver. 4.2 (OakTree Software).

⁵ Translation from Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts (QUMENG), Ver. 1.9 (OakTree Software).

⁶ Gershon Brin, "Regarding the Connection between the *Temple Scroll* and the Book of *Jubilees*," *JBL* 112, no. 1 (1993).

was originally composed in Hebrew, and the finds were able to prove it.⁸ The earliest manuscript (4Q216) comes from c. 125-100 B.C.E., and thus was copied not long after the time that the book was originally written.⁹

Current scholarship now dates the composition of Jubilees to c. 170-150 B.C.E. It was written in Hebrew, and then subsequently translated into Greek, and possibly Syriac. It is from the Greek that the Latin and Ethiopic were translated¹⁰ and preserved by Christians.

Jubilees was written during a fascinating time in Judaism's history. The Second Temple Period saw many different expressions and interpretations of Judaism. Despite the apparently united front, Judaism, like any family, had internal strife.¹¹ Diaspora Jews, often endeavored to make their beliefs more palatable to their Gentile neighbors.¹² Palestinian Judaism was divided into various sects and groups following one teacher or another. It was the Maccabean Rebellion (c. 167-164 B.C.E.), however, that set in motion a chain of events that led to the further splintering of Judaism. In the aftermath of the rebellion, the Maccabees made themselves a dynasty of kings and priests, but their

⁷ James C. Vanderkam, *The Book of Jubilees*, 2 vols., Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 510-511, Scriptorum Aethiopicum 87-88 (Lovanii: E. Peeters, 1989), Vol. 1 p. IX, Vol 2. p. XI-XIV.; O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 41-42.

⁸ Wintermute, 43.

⁹ James C. Vanderkam, Emanuel Tov, J.T. Milik, et. al., *Qumran Cave 4: Parabiblical Texts Part 1*, ed. Emanuel Tov, Discoveries in the Judean Desert Vol. 13, vol. 8 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁰ Vanderkam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Vol. 2 p. V-VI.

¹¹ Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, Second ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 12-14.

¹² John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, Second ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2000), 14-16.

authority was not universally acknowledged.¹³ Josephus relates that by the time of Jonathan the High Priest, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes were in existence.¹⁴

Given this setting, Jubilees was most likely written by a Palestinian Jew of priestly background and Hasidic or Essene persuasion. His knowledge not only of Canaanite geography as well as an intense interest in festivals and law gives witness to this.¹⁵ Though the book is well attested at Qumran,¹⁶ it is generally thought to predate the site, as the Damascus Document refers to it as an authority.¹⁷

The book itself is a retelling of the events of Gen 1 to Exo 16. It begins with the Lord calling Moses to the top of Mt. Sinai to receive a revelation:

“And Moses was on the Mount forty days and forty nights, and God taught him the earlier and the later history of the division of all the days of the law and of the testimony. And He said: ... ‘And do thou write down for thyself all these words which I declare unto thee on this mountain, the first and the last, which shall come to pass in all the divisions of the days in the law and in the testimony and in the weeks and the jubilees unto eternity, until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity.’ ... And the angel of the presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years – from the time of the creation– of the law and of the testimony of the weeks of the jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the jubilees [according, to the individual years], from the day of the [new] creation when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the

¹³ Cohen, 5, 22-23. The Essene sect is thought to have been loyal to another priestly family, the Zadokites, thus alienating them from the Temple cult. See E. P. Sanders, "The Dead Sea Sect and Other Jews: Commonalities, Overlaps, and Differences," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim (London: T & T Clark, 2000), 16-17.

¹⁴ Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. William Whiston, New Updated ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1987), Antiq. 13.5.9.

¹⁵ Wintermute, 45.

¹⁶ For the purposes of this paper, I am assuming that the Qumran community was Essene, as has been generally assumed, and recently defended in Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 71-97.

¹⁷ Wintermute, 43-44.

Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth.”¹⁸

The first chapter of the book clearly outlines the basic tenants of the author’s theology, and eschatology. The world and its events are running on a very strict calendar that was preordained and engraved on tablets in heaven.¹⁹ God has scheduled the time from creation to the renewal of creation, and it is important for the children of Israel not only be aware of it, but also to follow it.

This is not the only tenant the book sets out to prove. Jubilees is also intensely interested in proving that the narrative accounts of Gen 1-Exo 16 establish the Mosaic law, even before it is given on Sinai. The author reinterprets the events of Genesis, adding and subtracting material, expanding some stories, shortening others.²⁰

Calendars

Jubilees has a very specific calendar. According to *Jub.* 6:32, the Israelites are only to recognize a 364-day (solar) year. Other texts throughout the book reflect this view, especially in the creation account. The author says, “And God appointed the sun to be a great sign on the earth for days and for sabbaths and for months and for feasts and for years and for sabbaths of years and for jubilees and for all seasons of the years.”²¹

¹⁸ *Jub.* 1:4, 26, 29. Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. R. H. Charles, OakTree Software Ver. 1.8 ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913). This translation is primarily based on the Ethiopic text.

¹⁹ An interesting summary of the predestination passages of Jubilees can be found in Florentino García Martínez, "The Heavenly Tablets in the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, Armin Lange (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 247-250.

²⁰ For a summary of this trend, see below.

²¹ *Jub.* 2:9 Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

This differs from Genesis 1:14, which indicates that both the sun and the moon (and possibly the stars) were to “be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years...”²²

The origins of the 364-day calendar have been much debated in the scholarly literature. The most important contributor is Annie Jaubert. Her work with the time scheme in Jubilees led her to apply its’ calendrical system to the entire Hebrew Bible, and even to the New Testament. All of this was apparently with the end of figuring out what day of the week the Last Supper took place.²³ In essence her theory is this: a 364-day calendar meant that every date of the year would always occur on the same day of the week. Since the sun was created on Wednesday, then the first day of the year started on a Wednesday.²⁴ She goes on to argue that this calendar is in fact very ancient, and it assumed throughout much of the Old Testament, though it was eventually supplanted by the luni-solar calendar in the Second Temple Period.²⁵ While Jaubert’s theory is accepted or disputed to varying degrees, the chief argument against it is that the theory can not be proved with any degree of certainty.²⁶

Enoch, the mysterious figure from Gen 5:21-24, is mentioned in *Jub.* 4:17-25 as the first man who understood the heavenly calendrical system and wrote it down. This

²² Quoted from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

²³ Her scholarly work on the subject culminates in her book: Annie Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, trans. Isaac Rafferty (Staten Island: Alba House, 1965).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-52.

²⁶ See for example James C. Vanderkam, "The Origin, Character, and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar: A Reassessment of Jaubert's Hypotheses " *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1979).; Ben Zion Wacholder, Sholom Wacholder, "Patterns of Biblical Dates and Qumran's Calendar: The Fallacy of Jaubert's Hypothesis," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 66 (1995).

passage seems to presuppose the Astronomical Book of 1 Enoch (ch. 72-82).²⁷ Though it appears that Jubilees depends on 1 Enoch in some places, it certainly differs from 1 Enoch on the specifics of the calendar. The Astronomical Book indeed mentions the 364-day solar year in chapter 72, but also makes use of the moon and intercalation of sorts in chapters 73-74.²⁸ Thus, though Jubilees appears to have great respect for the Astronomical Book, Jubilees does not agree with its use of the moon in addition to the sun.

We find a similar situation when we look at the corpus of calendrical texts at Qumran. Though the community seems to have been preoccupied with the notion of getting the calendar right, their library was full of documents that contradicted each other. On the one hand, Jubilees mandates a strict 364-day solar year, while 1 Enoch, 4Q317, and 4Q318 use a luni-solar model.²⁹ This has led Stern to conclude that the calendars were “purely theoretical models.”³⁰

Though the sect’s documents do not entirely agree on the details, there are a few notable trends about the Qumran calendar. Firstly, the liturgical year of the Temple Scroll included all the Biblical festivals, plus the addition of three more festivals: Wine, Oil, and Wood.³¹ Secondly, no Qumran text makes mention of Purim (instituted in

²⁷ J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 11.; Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 28-29.

²⁸ Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 20-26.

²⁹ Milik, 68.; Matthias Albani, "Der 364-Tage-Kalender in der gegenwärtigen Forschung," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, Armin Lange, *Texte und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 93.; Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 76, 88; For other texts and which camp they fall into see 110-112.

³⁰ Stern, 181-182.

Esther) or Hanukkah (1 Maccabees).³² Thirdly, the Qumran sect seems to have designated the weeks of the year according to the priestly rotations in the temple. There were 24 names mentioned in 1 Chr 24:7-18, and it has been speculated that the Qumran sect added two more names so that there would be 26 priestly watches, which would each fall twice a year.³³ With this understanding, the strictly calendrical texts are somewhat easier to understand.³⁴

It is unclear precisely what event led to such disunity over the calendar, but Vanderkam says:

“There is good reason for believing that a calendrical dispute was one factor that led the Qumran community to separate itself physically from the rest of Jewish society. For them, the calendar was not simply a convenient tool; rather, the correct reckoning of time was divinely revealed, and conducting one’s life according to it had been mandated by God himself in prediluvian times.”³⁵

In fact, there is very little information about the calendrical system of the Second Temple Period.³⁶ The Elephantine Papyri (c. 5th century B.C.E.) combine Egyptian and Babylonian month names, but the Samaria Papyri (c. 375-335 B.C.E.) uses only the Babylonian month names. The Babylonian calendar was a lunar one, and the Egyptian was solar.³⁷ In Sirach 43:6-7 (written c. 175 B.C.E.), the moon governs the seasons,

³¹ 11QT 19:11-25:1; Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 66-69.

³² Ibid., 71-72.

³³ Ibid., 72-74; also 48-50. 1Q2:2 is the basis for the assumption that the Qumran list had 26 names rather than 24, however, the War Scroll possibly hints at this idea as well.

³⁴ See Vanderkam’s “Calendrical documents that incorporate the priestly courses” in Ibid., 77-85.

³⁵ Ibid., viii.

³⁶ While not denying the reality of calendrical concern at Qumran, Stern says of the limited evidence within wider Judaism: “...besides the Boethusians of the Mishnah and the book of *Jubilees*, there is nothing to suggest calendar sectarianism among the Jews of the Hasmonean or of the early Roman periods.” Stern, 185.

months, and festivals.³⁸ The books of 1 and 2 Maccabees use the Greek month names, and Josephus uses Jewish, Macedonian, and Roman month names.³⁹

It is unclear to what extent these (and potentially other) calendars differed, but if they did differ substantially, it is easy to understand how Jews could become anxious about observing the festivals at the right time. Perhaps this confusion is what led the author of Jubilees to write:

“And command thou the children of Israel that they observe the years according to this reckoning— three hundred and sixty-four days, and (these) will constitute a complete year, and they will not disturb its time from its days and from its feasts; for everything will fall out in them according to their testimony, and they will not leave out any day nor disturb any feasts. But if they do neglect and do not observe them according to His commandment, then they will disturb all their seasons and the years will be dislodged from this (order), [and they will disturb the seasons and the years will be dislodged] and they will neglect their ordinances. And all the children of Israel will forget and will not find the path of the years, and will forget the new moons, and seasons, and sabbaths and they will go wrong as to all the order of the years. For I know and from henceforth will I declare it unto thee, and it is not of my own devising; for the book (lies) written before me, and on the heavenly tablets the division of days is ordained, lest they forget the feasts of the covenant and walk according to the feasts of the Gentiles after their error and after their ignorance.”⁴⁰

Verses 36-38 go on to say that a lunar calendar mixes up the times and causes the people to profane holy days and perform holy rites on profane days. Not all time is created equal, and the Israelites must be very careful not to mix the days up.

The Habakkuk Peshar indicates that the Teacher of Righteousness (likely the founder of the Qumran community) and the Wicked Priest (possibly the reigning high priest) used different calendars.⁴¹ In *The Rule of the Community*, it reads:

³⁷ Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 15-16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁰ *Jub.* 6:32-35 Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

“They are not to deviate in the smallest detail from any of God’s words as these apply to their own time. They are neither to advance their holy times nor to postpone any of their prescribed festivals. They shall turn aside from His unerring laws neither to the right nor the left.”⁴²

Vanderkam asserts that this is evidence of a difference in calendrical calculation, because it would be unusual for Jews in the Second Temple Period to observe the festivals on completely different days than those mandated in the Torah.⁴³

The Damascus Document, which is of much interest to Jubilees scholars because of its reference to the book in CD 16:12-14, is also of interest because the book warns that the children of Israel would go astray in regard to the Sabbaths and festivals.⁴⁴ This shows a similarity in thought and concern between the two works, and perhaps even dependence of CD on Jubilees.

Though the calendar of the book of Jubilees was not embraced whole-heartedly at Qumran, the ideology behind Jubilees’ calendar was accepted. Jubilees drove home the concept that using the right calendar was imperative to the people of God. The Qumran community carried on this tradition, seeking to perfect their own calendar. For, “It was incumbent on the members of the Qumran covenant to observe sacred festivals at revealed times. To do otherwise entailed violating the harmony of the universe and mixing the sacred with the profane.”⁴⁵

Jubilees presupposes a deterministic theology. The events of the world are inscribed on the tablets in heaven, and everything happens according to its time. This is

⁴¹ Shemaryahu Talmon, "Yom Hakkippurim in the Habakkuk Scroll," *Biblica* 32, no. 4 (1951). See 1QpHab 11:4-8.

⁴² 1QS 1:13-15, Quoted from Qumran Sectarian Manuscripts (QUMENG).

⁴³ Vanderkam, *Calendars in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Measuring Time*, 45-46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 47-48. See CD 3:14-15, 6:18-19, 12:3-6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-111.

another point in which the Qumran community agrees with Jubilees. Throughout their documents, the sect shows itself to be deterministic, even to the point of using astrology!⁴⁶

We have seen how crucial it is to the writer of Jubilees that everything happens in its proper time, and that the festivals were observed using the 364-day calendar. We now turn to its theology of the weekly Sabbath.

The Sabbath

It has been pointed out that the book of Jubilees essentially begins and ends with the Sabbath.⁴⁷ Chapter 2 of the book discusses the creation in great detail, including the Sabbath, and chapter 50 ends with the command to keep the Sabbath, and prescriptions on how to do so. Doering notes that Jubilees follows account of Gen 1-Exod 16, and models its overall structure on these portions of the Torah. So though the Sabbath is not mentioned in the middle of the book, this is explained on the basis of its absence in the Biblical text.⁴⁸

Jubilees' treatment of the Sabbath is far more extensive than the corresponding Biblical text. We begin by looking at Jubilees 2, which builds its theology of the Sabbath on creation.⁴⁹ Fortunately, chapter 2 of the book also occurs in the Qumran library, in

⁴⁶ 4Q318, 4Q186, 4Q561; See Ibid., 88-89.

⁴⁷ Lutz Doering, "The Concept of the Sabbath in the Book of Jubilees," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, Armin Lange, Texte und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 179. For the end of the book see Vanderkam, *The Book of Jubilees*, Vol. 2 p. 327.

⁴⁸ Doering, 180.

⁴⁹ And it has been said that the author builds his creation account based on his concern for the Sabbath. See George J. Brooke, "Exegetical Strategies in Jubilees 1-2: New Light from 4QJubilees^a," in *Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, ed. Matthias Albani, Jörg Frey, Armin Lange, Texte und Studien Zum Antiken Judentum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 47.

fragments 4Q216 and 218. Vanderkam and Milik have concluded that these fragments resemble the Ethiopic versions more closely than that of the available Greek or Syriac fragments.⁵⁰ For this study, we will be looking primarily at the Ethiopic text (translated into English, as I do not read Ethiopic), and comparing it with the fragments of the surviving texts at Qumran.

The Sabbath is called “a sign for all His works,”⁵¹ at the beginning of the chapter. It is mentioned again shortly afterward in 2:9, in connection with the sun, which was to be a “great sign”⁵² for days, Sabbaths, months, years, feasts, and jubilees. As we have already seen, the solar calendar is vital to the book’s time system, and so it is no surprise that the moon is neglected in this passage. It is however, interesting that days and Sabbaths are mentioned in connection with the sun.

We know from the Biblical text that the day and the Sabbath were generally calculated from sunset to sunset, and almost exclusively so during this time period.⁵³ It is appropriate for the sun to be the sign that governs the days and the Sabbath, as the moon has nothing whatsoever to do with the dark-light cycle of the passing days.⁵⁴ Perhaps it is

⁵⁰ Vanderkam, *Qumran Cave 4: Parabiblical Texts Part 1*, 4.

⁵¹ *Jub. 2:1*; Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 4Q216 5:1-3 Clearly shows the words הַבְּרִיָּה...אִישְׁבֶּת בַּיּוֹם...לְעֵשׂוֹ. On the basis of Vanderkam and Milik’s reconstruction, the Qumran text matches the Ethiopic closely. See Vanderkam, *Qumran Cave 4: Parabiblical Texts Part 1*, 13-14.

⁵² The use of the word “sign” alludes to Exodus 31:13, 17. Doering, 181.; For further allusions to Exodus 31 in Jubilees 2 see Odil Hannes Steck, "Die Aufnahme Von Genesis 1 in Jubiläen 2 und 4.Esra 6," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 8, no. 2 (1997): 160.

⁵³ See J. Amanda McGuire, "Evening or Morning: When Does the Biblical Day Begin?," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 46, no. 2 (2008).

⁵⁴ *Jub. 2:10* says that the sun “divideth the light from the darkness [and] for prosperity, that all things may prosper which shoot and grow on the earth.” *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

because of Jubilees' interest in the Sabbath that the sun, not the moon, is the heavenly body that governs time.

The Sabbath is next mentioned in connection with the completion of creation (*Jub.* 2:17-33). The reader is informed that some of the heavenly creatures, the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification, are commanded to keep the Sabbath with God. Just as a certain group of angels are elected to keep the Sabbath, so a certain class of humans will also keep the Sabbath.⁵⁵ This institution at the beginning of creation presupposes the coming of the children of Israel whom the Lord will set apart from among the peoples of the earth to keep the Sabbath (*Jub.* 2:17-21). The reason given that Israel is chosen is:

“There (were) two and twenty heads of mankind from Adam to Jacob, and two and twenty kinds of work were made until the seventh day; this is blessed and holy; and the former also is blessed and holy; and this one serves with that one for sanctification and blessing. And to this (Jacob and his seed) it was granted that they should always be the blessed and holy ones of the first testimony and law, even as He had sanctified and blessed the Sabbath day on the seventh day.”⁵⁶

Thus we see that, though the Sabbath is created at the beginning of the world, it is not a universal commandment. In fact, the book prohibits Gentiles to keep the Sabbath (*Jub.* 2:31)!⁵⁷

This view is quite different from other authors of the Second Temple Period. Hellenistic Jews, who were necessarily more apologetic in nature,⁵⁸ may have had a

⁵⁵ Interestingly, Jubilees also states that these two classes of angels are circumcised by nature, thus further legitimizing their election, and the institution of circumcision. *Jub.* 15:27.

⁵⁶ *Jub.* 2:23-24. Quoted from *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.

⁵⁷ This verse is not attested at Qumran. This exclusive application of the Sabbath commandment is later echoed in Rabbinic writings, which taught that the Sabbath was for Israel alone, and Gentiles were forbidden to keep it on pain of death. See Doering, 190.

tendency to see the Sabbath as a universal idea.⁵⁹ For example, Philo says: “For that day is the festival, not of one city or one country, but of all the earth; a day which alone it is right to call the day of festival for all people, and the birthday of the world.”⁶⁰ Indeed, in *Mos. II*, Philo advocates the laws of Moses for all people, using the Sabbath as an example. He says of all classes of people, animals and even plants: “Everything is at liberty and in safety on that day and enjoys...perfect freedom...in obedience to a universal proclamation.”⁶¹ And before Philo, Aristobulus also saw the Sabbath as universally applicable based on the sevenfold-order of the cosmos.⁶²

Jubilees’ theology of the Sabbath was not unacceptable to the Qumran community, as it was to others. The sect saw themselves as a “remnant” community,⁶³ and exclusivity was built into their worldview. Membership in the community required, among other things, strict observance of the Sabbath (CD 6:18; 10:14-11:18). Though no mention is made of Gentiles keeping the Sabbath, it is interesting to note that no one of the community could observe the Sabbath in a location near to Gentiles (CD 11:15). Ultimately, the Qumran community seemed more interested in separating themselves from other Jews than worrying about Gentile morality.

⁵⁸ Collins, 14-16.

⁵⁹ Doering, 190.

⁶⁰ Philo Judeaus, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. C. D. Young (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993). *Opif.* 89

⁶¹ *Ibid. Mos II:19-22*

⁶² Fragment 5. See A. Yarbro Collins, "Aristobulus: A New Translation and Introduction," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 834.

⁶³ Sanders, 16-17.; See also Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised ed. (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 68-69. He cites CD 5:2, 4Q266 f5i, f11, 4Q270 f7ii, 1QS 8:14-16, and 4Q265 f7ii as examples.

Jubilees 2:25-33 enumerates how to keep the Sabbath. Though much of this portion is not attested at Qumran, several parts of the Ethiopic text agree with the stipulations found in the Damascus Document. For example, on the Sabbath one may not prepare food or drink, carry things in or out of the house, or draw water (*Jub.* 2:29-30; CD 10:22-11:1, 7-8).

Jubilees' most fascinating statement concerning the Sabbath regards its holiness, however. In 2:30, 32 the book declares that the Sabbath is the most blessed of all days, surpassing even the jubilee days. Doering says "The sabbath *obtains a significance that can hardly be increased; it is the most important time order of Israel, which is to be most scrupulously observed.*"⁶⁴ In essence, the Sabbath's supreme holiness is a result of its heavenly origins (*Jub.* 2:30-31). Again, though these verses are not attested at Qumran, similar sentiments can be found in the Qumran documents. On the Sabbath, only the daily and Sabbath sacrifices could be offered (CD 11:17-18), even if it coincided with a feast day.⁶⁵ Angelic participation in the Sabbath is also a major feature of the Qumran community, as is seen in the Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice.⁶⁶

Jubilees 50:6-13, the end of the book, revisits the Sabbath. It gives more stipulations for how to keep the Sabbath properly. The list is longer than the list of chapter 2. The same prohibitions are enumerated, and others are added such as the prohibition against sex, war, killing an animal, lighting a fire, riding an animal, or traveling by boat. This portion of the book is not attested at Qumran, but it bears an even stronger similarity to the Damascus Document than chapter 2 does. There are

⁶⁴ Doering, 194. Italics his.

⁶⁵ Sanders, 18-19. He points out that the community's calendar was set up to avoid such an occurrence, but this is not presupposed in CD.

⁶⁶ Vermes, 329-330. For further references on this point see Doering, 188.

prohibitions against discussing business, working the field, making journeys, preparing food and drink, drawing water, and carrying things in and out of the house (10:18-11:1, 7-8), all of which are present in Jubilees 50.⁶⁷

The Sabbath's mention at the end of the book fulfills the institution of the Sabbath in chapter 2. Jubilees 2 connects the Sabbath to creation, chapter 50 connects it to the Exodus.⁶⁸ Chapter 2 gives it to the elect angels, predicting that the children of Israel are destined to keep it; Chapter 50 institutes the Sabbath for the Israelites. It is almost as if the entire book has been leading up to Israel receiving the Sabbath.

Between chapters 2 and 50 the Sabbath is still present. Though the Sabbath was mandated for Israel alone, Jubilees has the patriarchs apparently keeping the Sabbath, and the author was careful to avoid mentioning travel on the Sabbath.⁶⁹ This is consistent with the book's method of grounding the Torah within the Patriarch narratives. Other examples can be found with the laws of childbirth (*Jub.* 3:8-14), covering one's nakedness (3:26-31), murder (4:1-6), retaliation (4:31-32), the Feast of Weeks (6:17-31), first fruits (7:34-39), circumcision (15:23-34), tithe (15:25-27, 32:1-15), the Levitical priesthood (30:18-20), and incest (33:10-20; 41:23-26).

Jubilees constantly warns against forgetting the Sabbath, along with the feasts, months, and the commandments.⁷⁰ Clearly, the author is concerned about the laws that govern sacred time and the effects it has on Israel's covenant relationship with God.

Jubilees 1 and 23 connect Israel's breach of the covenant, especially neglecting sacred

⁶⁷ Another sectarian document, 1QM 2:8, mentions that war is prohibited during Sabbath-years.

⁶⁸ See the comments in Doering, 183.

⁶⁹ Annie Jaubert, "Le Calendrier des Jubilés Et De La Secte De Qumrân: Ses Origines Bibliques," *Vetus testamentum* 3, no. 3 (1953): 252-254.; Doering, 183.

⁷⁰ *Jub.* 1:10, 14; 6:34-38; 23:19 See Doering, 183-184.

time and committing idolatry, to the exile. Chapter 6 ascribes Israel's evil deeds to failing to follow the solar calendar. By doing so, the profane and the holy are "mixed up"⁷¹ and the sacred times are not observed properly. The result is that Israel becomes like the Gentiles in their feasts, and they violate the law by eating blood.

Conclusion

Though Jubilees was not written at Qumran, nor written for the sect specifically, the book was integral to the community. In fact, it has been suggested that the text be reclassified as a Dead Sea text, rather than a work of the Pseudepigrapha.⁷² Though the Qumran sect did not accept the book's teachings unequivocally, it laid the groundwork for the community's theology of the Sabbath and the calendar.

The book of Jubilees sees time as fixed, ordained by God, and of cosmic significance. To alter the yearly calendar is to go against the order of heaven. If Israel does not follow the correct calendar, then they will be led astray, like the Gentiles. The Sabbath is the supreme expression of Sacred Time. Created at the beginning of the world, observed both in heaven and on earth, it is the most holy of the holy days.

The Qumran sect, too, wrestled with the concept of the divine order of time. In their minds, it seems, God's commandments were very clear and specific. In their attempt to follow the Law to the letter, they found themselves in opposition to the larger Jewish community on the issues of the temple, the priesthood, and even the calendar. Their retreat from society enabled them to follow the Law, and observe the Sacred Times as they saw fit.

⁷¹ See the translation of verse 37 in Wintermute, 68.

⁷² Hempel, 195-196.

There is a lesson that Adventists can learn from the disputes of the Second Temple Period. Though we believe that we have a special message about Sacred Time (the Sabbath), we are not to follow in the steps of the Qumran community and withdraw from society in order to protect it. Instead, we are to share it, until such a time as Jesus sees fit to return to Earth. Then we too may keep the Sabbath with God and His angels in heaven, just as Jubilees predicted.

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