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I. Introduction
For over a thousand years of Christian scholarship, Christianity has been described as the child of Judaism. However, in recent days it has become popular to speak not of ‘Judaism,’ but of ‘Judaisms,’ in recognition of the deep sectarian divides between groups of Jews. Each organized group, or sect, of Jews had distinct beliefs about the Jewish scripture, the temple, and the law. Each sect believed that only its members properly understood what God wanted from them, and that only they had God’s full approval. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls—which contain the only extant non-Christian sectarian corpus from the first century—catalyzed scholars’ understanding of the sectarian divides in the Jewish community. While attempting to shed light on Jewish discourse during the first century, many scholars have compared the texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, seeking evidence of both common ground and critical differences.

In this paper, I explore Jewish first-century sectarian dialogue via case studies on two discourse features: the metaphor of light and darkness, and ‘sons of’ expressions for spiritual membership. After a brief discussion of the sectarian verbal warfare of first century Judaism (Section I), and the location of the Qumran and New Testament writers within that discourse, I demonstrate that the New Testament writers both used and

Many thanks to Jason Mokhtarian, N. J. Medill, Layli Carsey, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments.

2 Cohen, From the Maccabees, 125. Cohen describes a sect as ‘a small, organized group that separates itself from a larger religious body and asserts that it alone embodies the ideals of the larger group because it alone understands God’s will.’ This definition accurately describes the Jewish sects of the first century: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and, despite some debate, the early Christians.
subverted stylistic features and pet phrases of the Qumran community in order to mark their own sectarian boundaries (Section II). In Section III, I examine the metaphor of light and darkness, and ‘sons of’ membership labels. I show that, while the Qumran and Early Christian communities’ use of these discourse features was innovative in some ways, the writers of both communities drew heavily on these features’ use in the Hebrew Bible; the use of these discourse features in other Ancient Near Eastern rhetorical traditions had no discernible impact on the rhetoric of the Qumran and New Testament communities. Next, I investigate both communities’ use of the metaphor of light and darkness and ‘sons of’ membership labels through texts from both corpora (Section IV). I highlight the differences in the New Testament writers’ use of these discourse features (particularly the metaphor of light and darkness), and use these differences to suggest that both discourse features were present in the larger Jewish sectarian discourse of the first century A.D. In conclusion, I state that both the Qumran writers and Christian writers used these two discourse features in their struggle to legitimize their own sects and undermine the claims of others (Section V).

First-century Judaism was heterogeneous in nature. Its religious elites formed disparate sects bound together only by varying measures of respect for written and oral Jewish traditions, and by their self-identification as Jews. Thus, sectarian agendas are present in early Jewish texts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament, both because the religious elite was more likely to be functionally literate (and therefore able
to produce texts), and because sectarian groups often wrote in order to maintain or explain their boundaries.\textsuperscript{4}

The ‘Judaisms’ of the first century comprised four major sects—the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Christians—and several marginal ones, each of which spent considerable time and energy defining its boundaries.\textsuperscript{5} The Pharisees, a politically active and popular group which embraced the Jewish oral tradition in addition to the Hebrew Bible, polemicized against the Sadducees for their lack of belief in the resurrection and in the intervention of spirits. The Pharisees also acted against the Christians, because of the Christians’ disregard for the oral tradition and because of Jesus’ supposedly blasphemous claim to be the Son of God.\textsuperscript{6} The Sadducees, who were a small, aristocratic group highly placed in the temple cult, believed that God and his heavenly subordinates did not interfere in the lives or choices of humanity. Therefore, the Sadducees sneered at the Pharisees’ seemingly unnecessary oral fence around the Torah, and disdained both the Christians and the Pharisees for their beliefs about the resurrection.\textsuperscript{7} The Essenes, a communistic group which included both ascetics and prophets, marked their external and internal boundaries with extensive ritualistic purity


\textsuperscript{5} An effort which was all the more necessary, from a sectarian standpoint, because of how few ideas were actually unique to a particular sect. It was the combination of ideas, not the ideas themselves, that made the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes distinct from each other.

\textsuperscript{6} Cohen, \textit{From the Maccabees}, 144-150.

\textsuperscript{7} Cohen, \textit{From the Maccabees}, 144-148. In Matthew 22, when the Sadducees create a legal problem for Jesus to solve which requires him to decide which of her husbands a woman will be wife to in the resurrection, they are not merely trying to stump Jesus, but to make the entire concept of resurrection ridiculous (Matt 22:15-22 NASB).
laws, treating non-Essenes and lower-level Essenes as unclean.\(^8\) The Essenes disliked the (Sadduceic) leaders of the temple cult, who they believed had made the temple impure; they also called the Pharisees ‘Speakers of Smooth Things,’ either because of the Pharisees’ ability to appeal to the populace, or because of some Pharisees’ willingness to negotiate with the Gentile authorities.\(^9\) The Christians objected to the Pharisees because of their oral tradition, to the Sadducees because of their lack of belief in the resurrection—and, far more importantly, to other Jews in general because they did not accept Jesus as their Savior-King.

While the Jews’ position as a dispreferred religious minority under Roman rule might have been expected to inspire Jewish solidarity, sectarian strife was the norm in the Judaism of the first century A.D. Sectarian writers did not write about outgroup Jews any more favorably than they wrote about Gentiles. Christians, for example, sorrowfully believed that all non-Christians, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, were doomed to


The Essenes had an extreme distaste for the swearing of gratuitous oaths (in common with the early Christians; see Matt 5:33-37), and refused to take an oath of loyalty to the government. Herod exempted both the Essenes and the Pharisees from the required oath, because Pollox the Pharisee had supported Herod’s authority when he first arrived and Manahem the Essene had made a favorable prophecy about him (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 15.10).

\(^9\) Cohen, *From the Maccabees*, 152-154; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18.1; *Wars*, 2.8.2-7. Josephus gives us the most detailed external view of the Essenes, having been in intense contact with that sect for some time during the late first century. It is important to remember, however, that the sectarian documents found at Qumran predate Josephus significantly, and not all of the beliefs cited by Josephus may have been fully developed or even present in the earlier communities.
spend eternity in the same lake of fire; while the leaders of the Essene sect regarded all non-Essenes as equally impure. Yet in conflicts over particular topics, two sects might be willing to make a temporary alliance against a third. For instance, both the Pharisees and the Sadducees tried to discredit Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 22, when they saw that he was becoming popular with the Jewish people; but when Jesus’ follower Paul was put on trial before the Jewish council in Acts 23 a few years later, he appealed to the Pharisees as his comrades and they defended him against the Sadducees. The Pharisees, allied with the Sadducees on one issue, later allied with the Christians on another issue. Sectarian alliances were fleeting—but sectarian warfare never ceased.

II. Sectarian Rhetoric: Shared Discourse and Verbal Strife

The best sources for turn-of-the-millennium Jewish religious rhetoric are the sectarian Qumran documents and the New Testament.¹⁰ The sectarian Qumran documents form only a part of the much larger collection found in the Judean desert (the Dead Sea Scrolls). The sectarian documents are usually said to have been produced in Palestine by the Essenes for the use of an Essene community at Khirbet Qumran, between the years of 150 BC and 68 AD.¹¹ These documents laid out how the community was to be

¹⁰ The works of Josephus and of the tannaim are also useful, although both corpora present problems. Josephus, who describes the major Jewish sects of the late first century, did not have an interior view of the sects which he describes, and also, in his desire to interpret Judaism for a Greek audience, sometimes explained Jewish beliefs using Greek terms which were anachronistic in the Jewish context (Gregory Doudna, ‘The Sect of the Qumran Texts and its Leading Role in the Temple in Jerusalem During Much of the First Century BCE: Toward a New Framework for Understanding,’ in Qumran Revisited: a Reassessment of the Site and its Texts (ed. D. Stacey and G. Doudna; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013), 122). The tannaitic works, written by the early rabbis, postdate the first century; see note 33.

¹¹ Others works in the DSS corpus include hymns, sections from biblical books, and pieces of the so-called intertestamental works.

Scholars have problematized both the attribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Essenes and the identification of the Khirbet Qumran site as an Essene community. David Stacey, who believes that no Essenes ever lived at Qumran, has argued that Khirbet Qumran began existence as a work site for seasonal
organized. These works—written by multiple, usually anonymous, authors—were internally focused; they had little to say about events taking place in the world outside of the Qumran community. They were not proselytizing documents, but were intended for the use of those who were already part of the group. The writers believed that the Qumran sect, with its rebuke of the ‘defiled’ temple and of worldly ways, had a better grasp of the truth than did any other Jewish sect.

The New Testament texts, like the Qumran documents, were written by many different authors over a number of decades, beginning around the year 50 A.D. and ending some time after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D. The New Testament includes historical documents about the life of Jesus and the early church, as well as theological and personal letters. Some of these works, like the letters of Paul, were primarily meant to strengthen and correct the beliefs of those who were already members of the Christian community; but others, like the Gospels, were written with a wider audience in mind. Unlike the Qumran documents, which were written by a community living in Palestine, the New Testament texts were written from and to a variety of communities around the Roman world. The New Testament authors had a

12 The wide geographic dispersal of Christian communities was one of the major diversifying forces of early Christianity. Since churches had to wait for handwritten copies of each text to circulate to their

workers attached to the Hasmonean estate in Jericho. Not until the Herodian period was KQ renovated for year-round occupation (David Stacey, ‘A Reassessment of the Stratigraphy of Qumran,’ in *Qumran Revisited* [ed. D. Stacey and G. Doudna; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2013], 3-5, 61, 66, 73). Gregory Doudna contests that the Qumran documents were penned by a group led by Hyrcanus II, a deposed high priest from the Jerusalem temple. This group, which labelled themselves as the ‘sons of Zadok,’ was made up of Sadducees. They may have eventually become Josephus’ Essenes, but they were originally part of the Sadduceic party (Doudna, ‘Qumran Sect,’ 75, 77, 82-84, 86, 107 and 118). If Doudna is correct about the origin of the Essenes, they may not have existed separately from the Sadducees during the early part of the NT period. If the Essenes and the Sadducees were not understood as separate during this time, this would account for the nonappearance of the Essenes in the New Testament.

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strong sectarian agenda, fearing that non-Christians, whether Jew or Gentile, could not be in right relationship with God unless they accepted Jesus’ truth.

Both the Qumran and New Testament writers were Jewish religious minorities. Neither group had enough political, economic, or social power to make adherence to the groups’ beliefs worthwhile for non-religious reasons. Thus, these groups depended on the persuasiveness of their rhetoric and the strength of their religious claims to gain and keep members.\(^\text{13}\)

Like competing political and religious groups throughout history, the Jewish sects participated in a shared discourse. As Craig Evans remarks, ‘we… find a shared worldview, which includes a set of assumptions, a common sacred tradition, and overlapping hopes and goals.’\(^\text{14}\) More than that, the Jewish sects exchanged ideas with one another, co-opting effective arguments from one enemy sect to use against another, subverting other sects’ rhetoric in order to discredit their opponents and increase their own authority. They cast doubt on each other’s exegeses, stole catchy phrases, and parodied each other with creative insults. Lacking the ability or desire to turn religious debate into physical warfare, the Jewish sects used words as their weapons.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^\text{15}\) For the most part, the Jews considered words to be powerful enough weapons in their own right. Both curses and blessings were expected to have real effects on the material and spiritual world (Alexander, ‘Insider/Outsider Labelling,’ 86).
The weaponization of words is not a phenomenon unique to the antique Jews. Throughout history, every organized group with an agenda has tried to further that agenda through the use of rhetoric. Rhetoric, in the broad sense, is language chosen and manipulated with a particular purpose in mind. Rhetoricians seek to convert their audiences to their agendas either by persuading said audience of the superiority of their own views, or by convincing the audience of the inferiority of others’ views. Rhetoricians seek common ground with their audiences, and persuade them that said wordsmiths have the authority to define or redefine the boundaries of the group.

Successful rhetoricians choose their language with care, using the style and dialect appropriate for their audiences, and organizing their ideas around set phrases, which help the audience both to comprehend and to remember the rhetorician’s ideas. These set phrases, which take the form of labels or slogans, have a meaning that transcends the words of which they are constructed. Labels not only indicate a certain person or group, but help to construct the identity of person using the label, by indicating whether the labeled person or group is ‘the same’ as or ‘different’ from the label user. Slogans, on the other hand, are sometimes non-compositional phrases which express the policy of a group, rather than delineating its identity. For example, the slogan ‘walk softly and carry a big stick’ immediately brings Teddy Roosevelt’s foreign policy to mind, even though the slogan contains no overt mentions of foreign nations, the military,

or U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. Less generic labels or slogans are more linguistically powerful in the war of words.¹⁹

Any slogan or label, once created, can be subverted by other groups in order to weaken the group which originated it.²⁰ A label can be subverted in one of three ways: first, it can be claimed verbatim by a different group than the group which originated it, and reanalyzed in order to exclude the former group (*appropriation subversion*); second, it can be altered to reflect the ideology of the new group (*transformation subversion*); or third, it can be altered or reanalyzed by the new group in order to reflect a supposedly more accurate picture of the old group (*parody*). All of these strategies strengthen the group that subverts, while usually weakening the group whose label or slogan is subverted. For example, in his 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama appropriated the slogan ‘Yes We Can’ as an attempt to gain support from Hispanic voters. This slogan had previously been used by Latino groups in its Spanish form, ‘*sí se puede,*’ as they bound themselves together to work toward social change. Unfortunately, Obama’s subversion strategy backfired when the slogan’s original users rejected his attempt at appropriation: most Hispanic voters felt that Obama trying to manipulate them by using their slogan.²¹ Or, to return to the earlier example, consider this diplomatic reworking of Roosevelt’s slogan: ‘walk softly and offer a carrot’ (*transformation*). The ideology of the slogan has been reversed, its rhetorical power co-opted by an opposing party. Finally,

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¹⁹ Alexander, ‘Insider/Outsider Labelling,’ 84. For instance, instead of simply calling members of a group ‘bad,’ one could call them ‘sons of wickedness.’
read the following criticism of military policy from a hypothetical political cartoon: ‘America’s military walks loudly and carries a big stick (of dynamite)’ (parody). The slogan has been altered to be used against the party by which it was created. The Christian authors often made use of appropriation and transformation subversions in their ongoing struggle for legitimacy as a new religious group.

While the early Christians and the Qumran sect were both part of the Jewish sectarian discourse, their exact relationship to each other is not easy to parse. Neither sect’s literature makes overt mention of the other. (Of course, any such mention would be improbable in the Qumran literature, since the Qumran sect wrote and operated mostly before the birth of Christianity.) Both sects had access to the same biblical texts, participated in the same general sectarian discourse, and existed in the same temporospatial frame—thus the two sects had many commonalities which cannot be ascribed to a genetic relationship between the two, giving rise to the following questions: Do any parts of Christian rhetoric owe their existence to Qumran alone? If they do, how did the Christians adopt or subvert the Qumran rhetoric? Or do commonalities such as both communities’ use of the metaphor of light and darkness indicate only that this metaphor was current in the discourse common to all Jewish sects?

Scholars have noticed that the Christian corpus includes many rhetorical innovations which are found in the Qumran texts but not yet developed in the Hebrew Bible. The Qumran works and the New Testament share traditions, genres, phrases, and titles which were either absent from or less developed in the ancient corpus. For instance, both the Qumran copy of Job and the New Testament allow the title ‘Lord’ to

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Probably the most important rhetorical commonality between the two groups is their understanding of the title ‘Messiah.’\footnote{The Qumran writers and the early Christian writers were both preoccupied with messianic thought, as the expectation of a messiah (or messiahs) was an important part of the Jewish apocalyptic tradition, to which they both belonged (James VanderKam, \textit{The Dead Sea Scrolls Today} [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010], 215).} In the Hebrew Bible, in every case where ‘messiah’ is used except for Daniel 9:25, the title is applied to a living historical figure. In Daniel 9:25, as well as in the Qumran documents and the New Testament, ‘Messiah’ is a title for a person or persons who are expected to come in the future, possibly in connection with the Day of Judgment.\footnote{Fitzmyer, \textit{DSS and Christian Origins}, 33; John J. Collins, ‘A Messiah Before Jesus?’ Pages 15-35 in \textit{Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls} (ed. J. Collins and C. Evans; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 28-29.} Furthermore, in the Qumran ‘Deeds of God’s Messiah,’ the Messiah’s coming is associated with resurrection of the dead, healing of the sick, feeding of the hungry, and political exaltation of the godly (although whether these miraculous reversals are caused by the Messiah or by a separate figure who arrives at the
same time is not clear). This kind of messianic expectation is paralleled in the New Testament, where Jesus, answering John the Baptist’s question about whether Jesus is the expected Messiah, replies, ‘Go and report to John the things which you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’\(^{30}\) The words used here in both the ‘Deeds’ and the book of Matthew are clearly drawing on Isaiah 35, a prophetic passage which, in the original, is not explicitly referring to a messiah’s activities; yet plainly both the Qumran sect and Jesus refer to a tradition which connects Isaiah 35 to an expected messiah.\(^{31}\)

There are many examples of Christian subversion of Qumran rhetoric. In Matthew 5:43, Jesus says, ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies.’ For hundreds of years, New Testament critics believed that Jesus was misquoting Leviticus 19:18 here (‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD’).\(^{32}\) However, in the Qumran Manual of Discipline, readers are told to ‘love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’ in a sectarian expansion on the Leviticus passage. This is significant not only because Jesus was familiar with the Qumran expansion of this verse, but because of his reaction to it—he denies their expansion (‘hate your enemy’), and says that the true expansion is the exact opposite (‘love your enemy’). Jesus not only gives his own view but questions the Qumran community’s sectarian claim to superiority.

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\(^{30}\) Matt 11:4-5.


\(^{32}\) Underline mine.
Paul also subverts Qumran rhetoric. In Romans 3:28, Paul remarks that ‘a man is justified by faith [in Jesus] apart from the works of the law.’ Even apart from its theological significance, this is a loaded statement. The Qumran writers also believed that ‘wicked humanity’ needed to be ‘justified’ by God’s grace.\(^{33}\) However, they stated that the ‘deeds of righteousness’ or ‘deeds of the law,’ namely, the proper performance of Torah, came from God; performance of these would be ‘reckoned to [them] as righteousness.’\(^{34}\) Paul turns the Qumran claim on its head. In his view, men are justified ‘apart from,’ not by, the ‘works/deeds of the law;’ it is faith, not law-keeping, that is ‘reckoned… as righteousness.’\(^{35}\) Like Jesus, Paul subverts Qumran rhetoric in a way which increases his own authority and decreases theirs.

This consideration of Christian use and subversion of Qumran rhetoric leads to a further question. Since Christianity and the Qumran sect had so much language in common, does this mean that the Christian writers were drawing directly on the writings or oral traditions of Qumran? This assumption, if made uncritically, would be dangerous. Lacking a representative sectarian corpus written in the ‘intertestamental period,’ or corpora from the Sadducees and Pharisees,\(^{36}\) scholars have little basis for claiming that


\(^{35}\) No equivalent to the phrase ‘works/deeds of the law’ is found either in the Tanak or in the rabbinic literature. For Paul on ‘faith reckoned as righteousness,’ see Rom 4:3,5,9.

\(^{36}\) Scholars like Jacob Neusner have attempted to reconstruct first-century Pharisaical beliefs based on rabbinic Judaism, its ideological heir. Unfortunately, as the Mishnah and the Tosefta, the earliest important works of rabbinic Judaism, were not completed until about 150 years after the birth of Christianity, retrojecting their ideas and phrases onto Pharisaism is a speculative exercise (Fitzmyer, *DSS and Christian Origins*, 9). While it would be reasonable to assume that there is significant continuity between the beliefs and rhetoric of the Pharisees and the beliefs and rhetoric of the rabbis, we have no way of knowing which ideas and phrases were continuous and which discontinuous.
specific ideas or phrases in the Qumran documents originated with the Qumran sect.\textsuperscript{37} These ideas and phrases may have originated with another sect; or, even if they did originate in Qumran, they may have become part of the general discourse, such that any of the first-century sects could have appropriated them. Thus, the early Christians could have been borrowing these ideas and phrases from the general discourse, or directly from any of the other sects of the day. Probably the strongest claim that scholars can make is that the slogans used by both groups existed in general Jewish sectarian discourse and were co-opted by the various groups as part of the ongoing debate.

\textbf{III. Discourse Features}

\textbf{A. Light and Dark in Ancient Near Eastern Context}

One of the most famous of the Qumran documents, the \textit{War Scroll}, describes an eschatological war between the ‘Sons of Light’ (the good army of God) and the ‘Sons of Darkness’ (the evil army of Beliai\textsuperscript{38}). While many ancient literatures, including the Hebrew Bible, use light and darkness as metaphors, the Qumran corpus shows several innovations in their use. First, as compared to the non-Semitic literatures which use these metaphors, the Qumran writers make the contrast specifically Semitic by using the characteristic construction ‘sons of’ for members of groups. Second, as compared to the Hebrew Bible, the writers consistently divide ‘all humanity into two distinct groups,’\textsuperscript{39} Because these expressions are never found verbatim in the Hebrew Bible, the labels ‘sons

\textsuperscript{37} Fitzmyer, \textit{DSS and Christian Origins}, 8.

\textsuperscript{38} In Old Testament biblical texts\textit{ beliya’al} was a noun used in descriptions of displaced or disenfranchised people like the early adherents of David; it is usually translated ‘wickedness’ or ‘worthlessness’ (as in 1 Samuel 25:17). Over time, it became the personal name of the chief of the wicked angels. The word\textit{ satan}, which is used to refer to the same individual, had a similar semantic journey from being a general-use noun meaning ‘prosecutor’ or ‘adversary,’ to being a personal name.

\textsuperscript{39} Fitzmyer, \textit{DSS and Christian Origins}, 35-36. Fitzmyer further states that this ‘division is never found in the Old Testament or in later rabbinic literature’ (36). For an argument against such an extreme version of this claim, see the section entitled ‘Sons and Seed,’ below.
of light’ and ‘sons of darkness’ were coined in the intertestamental period—possibly, although by no means certainly, by the Qumran sect themselves. These labels were picked up verbatim by the New Testament writers, and used frequently for sectarian purposes, especially in the works of John and Paul. Curiously, as I noted above, these terms (‘sons of light/dark’) do not appear in later rabbinic works, suggesting that either they were unpopular with the Pharisees during the first-century, or that the rabbis ceased to use them for some reason.

The Qumran sect’s use of the metaphors of light and darkness did not exist in a vacuum; their labels would have been interpretable to the members of any of the neighboring cultures. However, although no ancient Near Eastern or Mediterranean culture was completely bereft of light/dark metaphors, no other cultures used them as frequently, or in the same way. For instance, neither the Sumerians nor the Egyptians used this metaphor as way of defining men’s spiritual allegiances. While both cultures stated that light emanated from their chief gods, neither culture extended or elaborated the metaphor much; they associated light/darkness far more closely with life/death than with good/evil. The Assyrians and Babylonians also tended to use light to symbolize

\[\text{40} \text{ Using the Rabbinic Traditions web site, which has many texts from the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem Talmud, and Babylonian Talmud, I searched for ‘sons of light’ and ‘sons of darkness’ with no results. Also without result were my searches for ‘sons of deceit/lies,’ ‘sons of truth,’ and ‘angel of light.’ In a search of the Mishnah only via the Rabbinic Traditions web site, I found few examples of any light/dark metaphoric imagery. The only metaphoric use of ‘light’ or ‘darkness’ which I found was in Sanhedrin 10.3, where the authors speak about the fortunes of Israel in terms of light and darkness. ‘Sons of [spiritual group]’ tokens were also absent. Admittedly, the Rabbinic Traditions site (http://instonebrewer.com/RabbinicTraditions/) has mostly legal texts, which, while they are concerned with defining the ingroup, often do not define the outgroup explicitly.}
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\[\text{41} \text{ See Section V (Discussion and Conclusions) for some possible motivations for rabbinic non-use of these discourse features.}
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\[\text{42} \text{ The Sumerians did not construe light/darkness as spiritual states. Darkness was closely tied to death and the netherworld (‘Sisig… will provide light for him in the netherworld, the place of darkness…}
\]
qualities other than goodness, such as glory or prosperity.\textsuperscript{43} I found only one token in Pritchard’s *Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ANET)* in which a Babylonian writer used light as an extended metaphor; in this case, the writer used ‘light’ to mean accurate instruction from a deity (one of the most common uses of the ‘light’ metaphor in the Hebrew Bible): ‘O Shamash, all the world longs for your light. By the cup of the diviner, by the bundle of cedar-wood, you instruct the oracle priest and the interpreter of dreams.’\textsuperscript{44} The Egyptians, Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians did not often use the metaphors of light/darkness.

The three ancient cultures which were most interested in metaphors of light and darkness were the Greeks, the Persians, and the Israelites themselves. To the Greeks—with whom the Israelites were in close contact after Alexander the Great conquered the Near East—light was truth (and only secondarily goodness), emanating from the eternal sun, which was the visible symbol of the invisible Divine. In Plato’s *Republic*, written around 380 B.C., light/truth gives mental illumination, allowing the enlightened to better perceive the Ideal present in the spiritual world, rather than the derivative Forms present in the material world. Plato conceives of light and darkness as the endpoints of a

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{43} ‘Enuma Elish’ Tablet 6 (*ANET*, 69); ‘Code of Hammurabi’ (*ANET*, 178). They used darkness to describe death and the underworld, as did their Sumerian predecessors (‘Epic of Gilgamesh’ Tablet 7 [*ANET*, 87]).
\end{footnote}

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{44} Hymn to the Sun God (Shamash)’ (*ANET*, 388). This was the only such reference which I was able to find.
\end{footnote}
continuum, along which those seeking knowledge of metaphysics and philosophy are bound to travel. Like the other Greeks, who did not believe that the Divine was interested in their enlightenment, Plato saw light/truth as something that men had to seek out for themselves.\textsuperscript{45} Thus, the Greeks used light as a metaphor for something that they had to find for themselves, while the Israelites used light as a metaphor for something which could only come from God.

The Zoroastrians of Persia, proponents of a religion founded before the arrival of Alexander, saw light and darkness as symbolizing the good and evil forces which were at war in the universe.\textsuperscript{46} Light and darkness had been created by different beings, the light, along with all other good things, by a good deity (Ahura Mazda) and the darkness, along with all other bad things, by a bad deity (Angra Mainyu). The good deity was described as having a nature of light; while the bad being had a dark nature, that is to say, a nature which was completely lacking in any good qualities.\textsuperscript{47} The world itself is made up of


Many scholars have theorized that Zoroastrianism had a decisive influence on Judaism. In 1985, James Barr felt able to say that ‘It is customary to connect certain phenomena of the later Old Testament [by which he means the book of Daniel and some sections of other post-exilic books] and post-biblical Judaism with Iranian influence. The development within Jewish religion of such matters as angels, dualism, eschatology, and the resurrection of the body is commonly attributed to the impact of Iranian religion’ (James Barr, ‘The Question of Religious Influence: The Case of Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity,’ \textit{Journal of the American Academy of Religion} 53, no. 2 (1985): 201). The discussion of three of the four features of Judaism cited above is outside the scope of this paper. However, the present author is not at all convinced that Zoroastrian thought had any significant influence on the Jewish conception of the world as dualistic. While Zoroastrianism and post-exilic Judaism both divide the world into light and dark, their understandings of what this means, how this came to be, and how this division will ultimately play out, are quite dissimilar. See main body of the paper, below.


both light and darkness, which exist exclusively of one another even as they are tangled up in hearts of living beings; while humanity, which originally was “light-natured,” has become darkened by inviting evil into their hearts.\(^{48}\) Humans are only able to recognize good/light through the mediation of “the good spirits of light.”\(^{49}\) Unlike the Qumran sect and the New Testament Christians, the Zoroastrians believed that their good being was not able to conquer the evil being. Instead, they believed that all humans would eventually recognize the destructive power of evil and refuse to act wrongly anymore, a choice which would essentially starve the evil into dormancy.\(^{50}\)

We see that the Zoroastrian conception and use of the light/dark metaphor was similar to that of the Israelites in its description of their present reality; however their understanding of the origins and ultimate end of the light/dark rivalry was quite different. The Zoroastrians believed that every jot and tittle of spiritual light and darkness came from two rival divine beings, whose conflict could only be resolved by the choices of human beings, who would all ultimately choose light over darkness. The Israelites, however, believed that while all spiritual light came from God, the evil one was not correspondingly powerful, and was able to act only on God’s temporary sufferance. According to the Israelites, the conflict between light and darkness would be ended by God’s agency; some humans follow Him, but others would ultimately refuse to do so.

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\(^{48}\) In some versions, Light was the Primal Cause of the universe. The good deity lived in the light which he had created, while the bad deity lived in darkness (A. V. Williams Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, [New York: AMC Press, 1965]: 32, 40, 111).

\(^{49}\) Like the Qumran writers, the Zoroastrians regarded lying as the worst of sins (Jackson, *Zoroastrian Studies*, 135).

\(^{50}\) Kronen and Menssen, ‘The Defensibility of Zoroastrian Dualism,’ 186-191; Sanjana, Denkard Book 3, 147-148; Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, 219.
The Hebrew Bible, the most influential rhetorical source for both the Qumran sect and the early Christians, had been concerned with light and darkness since God first divided them from one another in Genesis 1:4: ‘And God saw that the light (‘or) was good; and God separated the light (‘or) from the darkness (khoshekh).’ While ‘or and khoshekh remain the most common words for physical light and darkness, they are also metaphorically extended. Later in the Bible, metaphorical light (‘or), meaning goodness, is said to be one of God’s character qualities. By a further extension, ‘or is the good instruction or wisdom that can only come from God, while khoshekh is ignorance or willful disobedience of God’s law.51 Third, ‘or becomes a quality of godly men, who ‘reflect’ the light of God’s instruction, while khoshekh is a quality of ungodly men.52 Fourth, ‘or is used for happiness, life, and blessing; while khoshekh characterizes misfortune and death.53

The Hebrew Bible’s use of the metaphor of light and darkness is not unique, at least in the sense that it is not incomparable. However, the Hebrew writers used this metaphor far more frequently than most of their neighbors; unlike other Ancient Near Eastern cultures, they tied light/dark most strongly to good/evil (see above). Then, in contrast to the Greeks, the Israelites saw spiritual light and darkness as a binary opposition, not as ends of a continuum; and while both Jews and Greeks connected light

51 ‘Come let us go up to the mountain of the LORD… that He may teach us concerning His ways… let us walk in the light of the LORD’ (Isa 2:3, 5). ‘There were those who dwelt in the darkness [khoshekh] and the shadow of death… because they had rebelled against the words of God’ (Ps 107:10-1).
52 ‘He who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God, is as the light (‘or) of morning when the sun rises’ (2 Sam 23:3-4). ‘Those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who delight in doing evil…’ (Prov 2:13).
53 In the book of Esther, after the Jews are rescued from Haman’s machinations, ‘for the Jews there was light (‘arah) and gladness and joy and honor.’ ‘May that day perish… may that day be darkness, let not God above care for it’ (Job 3:4-6). ‘[When I die] I go to the land of darkness and deep shadow…’ (Job 10:21-22).
with knowledge, the Jews saw this knowledge as an active gift of God, while the Greeks saw it as something men had to gain for themselves. The Greeks tied light/darkness primarily to the pair knowledge/ignorance, and only secondarily to good/evil, while the ancient Jews had the opposite order of emphases. In contrast to the Zoroastrians, who, while they believed in a light/dark dichotomy among their gods, believed that all humanity would eventually choose light, the ancient Jews believed that their only God was good, while the angels and humans fell on different sides of the light/dark dichotomy. Thus, the Qumran and New Testament writers, who also connect light/dark most strongly to good/evil, and believe that humanity will still be divided on the Last Day, are following in their Jewish ancestors’ footsteps, rather than borrowing their uses of this metaphor from other cultures.

B. Sons and Seeds: Metaphors of Group Membership
Although the exact packaging of these metaphors of light and darkness might seem trivial, the Qumran writers’ choice to use the ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ construction is more complex than it seems. Like the metaphors of light and darkness, these constructions are uncommon in other Ancient Near Eastern cultures. The ‘sons of’ construction is firmly rooted in the Hebrew biblical tradition, yet the Qumran use of it is innovative.

While many other ancient cultures use ‘sons of’ constructions, these cultures tend to use such constructions in order to indicate membership in physical groups. The Sumerian and Hittite cultures both used ‘sons of’ in this way (‘sons of his city,’ ‘sons of
the Hurri country’). A rare example of a metaphoric ‘sons of’ construction appears in Plato, where the great philosopher refers to ‘the poets, who are the sons of the gods.’ Only one text in ANET, in Sumerian, actually contains a ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ metaphor: ‘sons of the righteous, the noble.’

The Hebrew writers were more likely than the writers of other ancient cultures to use the ‘sons of’ construction metaphorically. The writers formed ‘sons of’ constructions with bene, ‘sons of,’ or occasionally with yeled, ‘children of.’ In addition to the straightforward use of ‘son’ as ‘descendant,’ the Hebrew Bible used ben to refer to a member of a larger physical group (‘sons of the prophets,’ 2 Kings 2:7); and, more importantly for this discussion, to a member of a spiritual group (‘sons of iniquity,’ Hosea 10:9). Even in the Hebrew Bible, these expressions were somewhat rare, with only five tokens in toto. The ‘sons’ of these spiritual groups are ‘sons’ because of their spiritual genealogies, not because of their physical genealogies. Thus, ‘sons of iniquity’ are those who behave iniquitously, or whose allegiance is to wrong rather than right; not those who were born out of wedlock, for instance (born via iniquity). The Hebrew writers of this time did not use ‘sons of’ expressions to divide the world’s entire population into two spiritual groups, however, as the Qumran writers did in later times.

In the Hebrew Bible, ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ designations usually refer to small groups

56 ‘Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur,’ [ANET, 613]. The ANET texts in Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Egyptian do not contain any of these constructions; nor does Plato’s Republic.
57 In addition to the Hosea 10:9 example cited in the main text, we find ‘sons (bene) of the sorceress’ (Isa 57:3); ‘sons (bene) of Belial’ (Judg 19:22); ‘sons (bene) of rebellion’ (Isa 30:1); and ‘sons (yelede) of transgression’ (Isa 57:4).
within Israel. For instance, the ‘sons of iniquity’ in Judges are a group of perverse Benjamites who lived in Gibeon, not all of the wicked people of the world.

In addition to the ‘sons of (group)’ construction, the Biblical Hebrew writers also used another phrase which was semantically similar—‘seed of’ constructions using zera’. This less common phrase is used metaphorically in a much higher proportion of its appearances than the ‘sons of’ constructions. Like ‘sons of,’ ‘seed of’ may be used to refer to descendants or heirs (‘seed of Aaron,’ Leviticus 21:21; ‘seed of the Jews,’ Esther 6:13; ‘seed of David,’ 1 Kings 11:39). Since it is a singular form, it can also refer to a singular heir, as in Genesis 4:25, ‘God gave me another seed.’ However, it is the rich tradition of ‘seed of (spiritual group)’ which concerns us now. The Hebrew writers frequently used zera’ to describe the members of a positive spiritual group (‘the seed of [God’s] servants,’ Psalm 69:36). They also used it to show membership in negative groups (‘seed of evildoers,’ Isaiah 1:4, 14:20). They even extended it beyond the semantics of the ‘sons of’ constructions to explicitly contrast the righteous and the wicked. This use may have been the spark behind the Qumran writers’ dualistic division of the human and divine. One of the earliest uses of zera,’ in Genesis 3:15, sets up an everlasting hostility between the seed of the devil and the seed of God’s covenant people: ‘And the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you

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58 Notice that zera’, unlike bene and yeled, can be used of nonhumans. Genesis 1:11, for instance, refers to the seed/descendants of plants, while Jeremiah 31:27 mentions the ‘seed of beasts.’ The seed sown in various agricultural passages is also zera’.

59 Also, ‘the seed of the blessed of YHWH,’ Isaiah 65:23; ‘the seed of God,’ Malachi 2:15.

60 Here the phrase refers to Israelites who have turned from God. Notice also the negative seed statements in Isaiah 57:3 and 57:4, where the phrase appears in parallel with negative ‘sons of’ constructions (57:3: ‘You sons of a sorceress, you seed of the adulterer and the whore;’ 57:4: ‘You are the sons of iniquity, the seed of deceit.’)
more than all beasts… I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.” Later, Ezra 9:2 contrasts the Israelite ‘seed of holiness’ with the Gentile ‘peoples of the lands.’ Psalm 37:28 compares God’s loyal ones (khasidav) with the ‘seed of the wicked.’ ‘A wicked one’ is in danger from God in Proverbs 11:21, but ‘the seed of the righteous will be safe.’ Here, the Hebrew writers divide the world’s population into two spiritual groups, with the positive group being congruent with the group of all faithful Jews.

The Qumran writers made several innovations in their repackaging of HB rhetoric, which the New Testament writers then used and innovated upon in their turn. First, the Qumran writers innovated when they turned HB imagery of light and darkness into ‘sons of’ labels. Second, they collapsed the semantic domains of the HB ‘sons of’ and ‘seed of’ expressions together into their own ‘sons of’ expressions. While they choose to use the ‘sons of’ form, they make use of the broader metaphorical territory which belonged to the biblical ‘seed of’ expressions. As a corollary of that second point, the Qumran writers innovated when they consistently used these ‘sons of’ expressions to divide the world’s entire population into two spiritual groups, where the positive spiritual group was congruent with their own particular sect.

IV. Feature Use Contrasted
A. Two Spirits: Rhetoric of Light and Darkness in the Qumran Documents
The writers of the Qumran documents combined the imagery of light/dark and ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ expressions from the Hebrew Bible to create their own powerful
sloganized ideas. In the War Scroll (1QM) and similar fragments, the ‘sons of light’ (bene ‘or) and the ‘sons of darkness’ (bene khoshekh) are opposing eschatological armies, led by a ‘prince of light’ (sar me’or) of uncertain identity and ‘Belial… a hostile angel’ (beli’al… mal’akkh mistamah). The sons of light, together with the angels/spirits of light, have been assembled by God ‘for the vengeance of his wrath on all the Sons of Darkness,’ in order that all the ‘army of Belial’ may be killed and the ‘sons of truth’ (bene ‘emet) may be safe and pure forever. According to the Qumran writers, every living man must be a soldier in one army or in the other; all of humanity is divided into two parts, two spirits, two loyalties. Those within the sect may be certain of their places in the victorious army, while those outside, even other Jews, may well be destined for destruction.

In the Rule of the Community (1QS), the Qumran writers show how the sectarian division between ‘sons of light’ and ‘sons of darkness’ was maintained in their own day. Rather than referring to an eschatological future like the War Scroll, the writers of the Rule are concerned with the present integrity of their sectarian community. Each individual member has a role to play in maintaining their boundaries: members of the community are to ‘seek God with all the heart and soul… to love all the Sons of Light (bene ‘or) each according to his lot in the counsel of God, and to hate all the Sons of

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61 While they also use light and darkness in the same ways as the Hebrew Bible did, in order to describe the character of God, the blessing of instruction, or the curse of ignorance and blindness, their innovation is more important to the current discussion.


Darkness (bene khoshekh) each according to his guilt in the vengeance of God.64 Those in authority over the community are to ‘receive all’ the sons of light while keeping out all the sons of darkness.

The Rule of the Community contains a fascinating account of the division of humanity.

[God] created man to rule the world, and He made for him two spirits (rukhot) to walk in until the time of His visitation; these are the spirits of truth (emet) and deceit (‘ol). In a spring of light (ma’on ‘or) truth is born, and from a well of darkness (mamqor khoshekh) deceit is born. In the hand of the Prince of Lights (sar ‘orim) is the governance of all the sons of righteousness (bene tsedeq); they are walking in the ways of light. In the hand of the Angel of Darkness (mal’akh khoshekh) is all the governance of the sons of deceit; they are walking in the ways of darkness. Through the Angel of Darkness comes the corruption of all the sons of righteousness.65

For God has separated them until the End, and put everlasting enmity between the groups. The actions of deceit are an abomination to truth, and the actions of truth are an abomination to deceit. [There is] a fierce struggle about every one of their judgments, for they do not walk together. But God… has set an end for deceit. At the time of visitation he will destroy it forever.66

In these selections the Qumran writers show that God created both sides (light and dark), knowing that they would always be in conflict until the Day of Judgment. The two sides are ‘abominations’ to each other; they can never be reconciled, nor is reconciliation even desirable. In the sectarian context, the Qumran writers use this text to draw boundaries between the ‘sons of light,’ a group including themselves, and the ‘sons of

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65 Qimron and Charlesworth, 1QS 3:17-22. Translation slightly adapted from Qimron and Charlesworth’s own.
66 Qimron and Charlesworth, 1QS 4:16-19.
darkness,’ their enemies, a group which includes some of their fellow Jews (notably the Pharisees and the supporters of the current high priest). Drawing the boundary in such a clear-cut way is advantageous for the Qumran sect because it helps them to maintain their separation from those with whom they disagree. It also motivates those within the sect to stay within the sect, knowing that leaving may put them outside the community of God, in danger of being ‘destroy[ed] forever.’

The Qumran writers did not limit themselves to the metaphor of dark and light in order to describe the division of the human race; they use a high density of ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ expressions which is unparalleled in ancient Near Eastern texts outside of the Christian corpus. Table 1 lists many of their favorite metaphors for the good and evil classes. They describe themselves, the good angels, and God with rhetoric of truth, righteousness, purity, and covenant; while Belial, the fallen angels, and their mortal enemies are connected with deceit and impurity. The Qumran writers’ practical commitment to truth and purity are evident in texts like the Rule of the Community, which lists heavy penalties for different kinds of lies and untruths, and outlines an intricate complex of purity laws.

**Table 1: Qumran Metaphors of Spiritual Membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Evil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons of light (<em>bene ’or</em>, 1QM 1:1)</td>
<td>Sons of darkness (<em>bene khoshekh</em>, 4QM 6:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of truth (<em>bene ’emet</em>, 4QM 1:15)</td>
<td>Sons/men of deceit (<em>bene/anshe ‘ol</em>, 1QS 3.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of righteousness (<em>bene tsedeq</em>, 1QM 1:8)</td>
<td>Sons of the pit (<em>bene ha-shakhat</em>, CD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the covenant (<em>bene berit</em>, 1QM 17.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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67 Many of these themes are attested in the rich metaphoric corpus of the Hebrew Bible. Citations and discussion of them are omitted due to space restrictions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sons of the dawn (bene ha-shakhar, CD)</th>
<th>Prince of Lights (sar ‘orim, 1QS 3.20)</th>
<th>Angel of Darkness (mal’akh khoshekh, 1QS 3.21)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angel of Truth (mal’akh ‘emet)</td>
<td>Belial (1QM 13:10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirits of light (rukhot ‘or, 1QS 3.25)</td>
<td>spirits of darkness (rukhot khoshekh, 1QS 3.25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spirit of truth (rukh ‘emet, 1QS 3.19)</td>
<td>spirit of deceit (rukh ‘olah, 4QS MSC 2.1.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spirit of impurity (rukh nadah, 1QS 4.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Qumran documents draw on older Jewish imagery of light and dark (as well as other metaphors) to divide men and divine figures into two groups on the basis of their loyalty or disloyalty toward God. They use a characteristically Hebrew construction, ‘sons of,’ to denote membership in a spiritual group. This innovative, sectarian use of language to separate themselves (and any other servants of God) from their religious adversaries (the army of Belial) had no precedent in earlier Jewish literature and has no parallel in later rabbinic literature.

**B. Some Light Remarks on New Testament Rhetoric**

This division of humanity into two parts, and the use of these Qumranic labels, has parallels in the New Testament. Various New Testament authors cast the struggle between Christ’s followers and His enemies in terms of metaphorical light (phōs) and darkness (skótos, skotía). In Luke 16:8, Jesus explains that ‘the sons of this epoch are more shrewd in relation to their own kind (genean) than are the sons of light (tous ὑιίους tou photos).’ Here, humanity is again divided into two groups or kinds. Like the

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68 New Testament authors also use light and dark imagery in all the ways that the Hebrew Bible did. Light was characteristic of God (Jas 1:17); wisdom from God (Matt 6:22-23, Luke 2:32); ignorance of God’s ways left men blind, in darkness (Luke 1:78-79).

69 The word for kind (geneēs) refers to innate quality. It applies to different kinds of animals or trees, and (here) different kinds of people.
Qumran sect, who received instruction from their leaders before they could become part of the community, Christians must accept Jesus’ instruction in order to gain membership in his family: ‘While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.’

Once a man has become a Christian, he will experience the animosity of the ‘sons of darkness.’ The apostle John describes the hostility between the two groups in terms reminiscent of the *Rule of the Community*:

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their actions were evil (*ponēra*)—for everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, because they fear their deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth (*alētheian*) comes to the light.

Like the Qumran writers, John references truth as one of the important correlates of light and goodness; he describes those who walk in light and those who walk in darkness as pursuing mutually exclusive paths. John also explains the light/dark division in terms of people’s actions, not only their spiritual beliefs.

The division between those who follow Christ and those who do not is at the heart of the New Testament’s message. No one who refuses to follow Jesus is a part of God’s family. Not for nothing does Jesus say, ‘He who is not with us is against us.’ In the

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70 John 12:36. Also, Eph 5:8: ‘for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light,’ and 1 Thess 5:5.
73 c.f. Qimron and Charlesworth, 1 QS 4:17-18: ‘The actions of deceit are an abomination to truth, and the actions of truth are an abomination to deceit.’
74 Luke 11:23. In Luke 9:50 He also says, ‘He who is not against us is for us,’ demonstrating the complexity of sectarian boundary-marking (Luke 9:50). I would note that in an environment of polarized sectarian strife, both statements accurately describe the same reality.
following parable, which is unique to Matthew, we find a strong statement of this division.

The kingdom of heaven (ἐ̂ basileia tōn ouranōv) may be compared to a man who sowed good seed (kalon sperma) in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares (zizania) also among the wheat (sitos), and went away. ... And the slaves said to [the owner], ‘Do you want us to go and root them [the tares] up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest ... you may root up the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say... gather the tares; and bind them into bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.’ ... And [Jesus’] disciples came to Him, saying, ‘Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.’ And He answered... ‘The field is the world; and the good seed are the sons of the kingdom (οἱ huioi tēs basileias); and the tares are the sons of the evil one (οἱ huioi tou ponērou)... therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the End of the age.

Humanity is divided into the sons of the ‘kingdom’ (Matthew’s usual euphemism for God) and the sons of the evil one. This division exists because of the actions of the devil (he ‘sowed’ evil men into the world) and continues because the evil men cannot currently be removed without negatively impacting God’s children. However, like the writer of the War Scroll, Matthew knows that the rivalry of good and evil will not last forever. On the Last Day, both the good and the evil will be removed from their present place, but the good will be taken under God’s roof, while the evil will be burned up.

The Qumran writer of the War Scroll and the New Testament authors had somewhat different perspectives on the events of the Last Day. The War Scroll writer graphically described the soldiers of good and evil; while each side is led by a

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75 An especially serious problem, as tares (bearded darnell) look almost exactly like wheat, especially before they are ripe; tares are at best inedible and at worst mildly poisonous.
76 Matt 13: 24-25, 28-30, 36-38, 40. Translation adapted from NASB.
supernatural figure and includes the spirits/angels of each type, the focus is on the armies themselves. On the other hand, while the New Testament authors (Paul in particular) described every Christian’s existence as a constant battle against the ‘forces of darkness,’ they put the focus of the Last Day on God’s victory. 

While the devil and his angels might gather together to fight back, God would not need to gather anyone to assist Him.

As is evident from the above parable of the wheat and the tares, Christian writers were not limited to light and darkness as metaphors for spiritual division. Like the Qumran writers, they used many other ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ constructions. Many of their additional metaphors are similar, but not identical to, those used in the Qumran documents; where Qumran writers reference ‘sons of the pit,’ New Testament writers use ‘sons of’

Table 2: Some New Testament Metaphors of Spiritual Allegiance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Evil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons/children of light (ὑιοὶ/τέκνα φῶτος, 1 Thess 5:5)</td>
<td>Sons of darkness (ὑιοὶ σκότους, 1 Thess 5:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of day (ὑιοὶ ἡμέρας, 1 Thess 5:6)</td>
<td>Sons of night (ὑιοὶ νύκτος, 1 Thess 5:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the kingdom (οἱ ὑιοὶ τῆς βασίλειας, Matt 13:38)</td>
<td>Sons of this epoch (οἱ ὑιοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος toutou, Luke 20:34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons/children of God (ὑιοὶ/τέκνα θεοῦ, Rom 8:14)</td>
<td>Sons of the evil one (οἱ ὑιοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of promise (τέκνα επαγγελίας, Gal 4:28)</td>
<td>Son of Gehinnom (ὑιός γεινήν, Matt 23:15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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77 2 Tim 2:3-4, Eph 6:10-16. 
78 See Table 2, below. 
79 The NT writers made limited use of the ‘seed’ metaphor. Generally in their use, sperma ‘seed’ referred either to actual seeds that might be planted in the ground (Matt 13), or to physical descendants (Matt 22:24, Luke 1:55, John 7:42). Paul uses sperma as a title for Christ in his commentary on Genesis 3:15, stating that Jesus is the Seed of Eve crushes the head of the serpent (the devil) (Gal 3:16). John discusses the apocalyptic fallout of Genesis 3:15, identifying the ‘seed’ of the original passage as representing all Christians, who are in danger from the dragon (the devil) until God vanquishes him on the Last Day (Rev 12:17). Peter uses sperma as part of a larger agricultural metaphor for death and resurrection (1 Pet 1:23).
The chosen (ὁ εἰληκτὸς, 1 Pet 2:9)  | Son of perdition (ὁ ζυὸς τῆς ἀπόλειας, 2 Thess 2:3)  
Father of Lights (ὁ πατήρ τοῦ φῶτον, Jas 1:17)  | Prince of the power of the air (ὁ αρχῶν τῆς εξουσίας τοῦ άείου, Eph 2:2)  
Prince of Life (ἀρχῆγον τῆς ζώης, Acts 3:15)  | Prince of this world (ὁ αρχῶν τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, John 12:31)  
Angel of Light (ἀγγέλος φῶτος, 2 Col 11:14)  |  

Table 3: Comparing Qumran and New Testament ‘Sons of’ Expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qumran Sect</th>
<th>New Testament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sons of light</td>
<td>Sons/children of light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the dawn</td>
<td>Sons of day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the covenant</td>
<td>Children of promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of darkness</td>
<td>Sons of darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of the pit</td>
<td>Sons of Gehinnom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of truth</td>
<td>Sons/children of the kingdom/God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons of righteousness</td>
<td>The chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sons/men of deceit</td>
<td>Sons of night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons of this epoch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons of the evil one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sons of perdition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children of (the nature of) wrath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince of Lights</td>
<td>Father of Lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel of Truth</td>
<td>Prince of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel of Darkness</td>
<td>Angel of Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belial</td>
<td>Prince of the power of the air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prince of this world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gehinnom'; 80 where Qumran writers use ‘sons of dawn,’ NT authors reference ‘sons of day,’ and both define their enemies by their negative character traits. 81 However, there

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80 Matt 23:15.
81 Qumran ‘sons of deceit;’ NT ‘children of disobedience’ (Eph 2:2, Eph 5:6, Col 3:6). See Table 3, below.
are also marked differences between the two lists. New Testament authors draw rhetorical battle lines even more sharply than did the Qumran writers, explicitly identifying one side as the ‘sons of God,’ and the other as ‘sons of the evil one.’\textsuperscript{82} New Testament writers also describe the groups according to their expected ends: their enemies are ‘son[s] of perdition’ and ‘children of wrath,’ while they themselves are ‘children of the resurrection.’\textsuperscript{83} The evil ‘children of this world’ are having their best times now, in the few short millennia before the Judgment, but the ‘children of the kingdom’ will only be coming into their own on the Last Day.\textsuperscript{84} The New Testament writers adopt the division of humanity proclaimed by the Qumran sect, but push the rhetoric even further, highlighting the binary nature of the choice as well as its eternal consequences.

\textbf{C. Allusion, Appropriation, Subversion: The Struggle for Sectarian Superiority}

Although the sectarian Qumran documents were written in Hebrew, while the New Testament was written in Greek, the vocabulary chosen by the authors of each are comparable. The Qumran writers drew on the vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible, while the NT writers drew on the vocabulary of the Septuagint (LXX), a Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible. While both Qumran and Christian writers had a well-developed theology of the apocalypse, Christianity appears to have had a more explicit set of beliefs about the afterlife.

\textsuperscript{82} ‘Sons of God’: John 1:12, Rom 8, Rom 9:8. ‘Sons of the evil one’: Matt 13:40.

\textsuperscript{83} ‘Son of perdition’: 2 Thess 2:3, John 17:12. ‘Children of wrath’: Eph 2:3. ‘Children of resurrection’: Luke 20:36. Notice also the Christian preoccupation with the rhetoric of life and death. While both Qumran and Christian writers had a well-developed theology of the apocalypse, Christianity appears to have had a more explicit set of beliefs about the afterlife.

\textsuperscript{84} ‘Children of this world’: Luke 20:34, Luke 16:8; ‘Children of the kingdom’: Matt 13:38, Matt 8:12. See also Matt 25:31ff. ‘But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ … Then He will say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’’ (Matt 25: 31-34, 41).
Hebrew Bible into Greek. The writers of both traditions knew their bibles well; they chose their rhetoric intentionally, aware of the resonances that this would create with the biblical text. Because both traditions were ultimately drawing on the Hebrew Bible, it is possible to compare their vocabularies through the mediation of the LXX.

Table 4 presents the relevant correspondences between the words for ‘light,’ ‘darkness,’ and ‘sons’ from the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament, as well as the sectarian Qumran documents and the New Testament. The most common word for each concept is listed first. Notice that the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament have similar lexical diversity (number of words for each concept), with the majority of words from each group deriving from one or two roots.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Bible</th>
<th>Qumran (Hebrew)</th>
<th>LXX / New Testament (Greek)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘or ‘orah nehir yafa’</td>
<td>light ‘brightness, shining</td>
<td>‘or light phōs phōtismós phōteinós epiphainō lychnos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khoshekh makhshakh khashakhah ‘ofel ma’afal ma’afelah ‘eypah</td>
<td>darkness, obscurity ‘obscured, darkness ‘</td>
<td>khoshekh darkness skōtos skoteinós skotía zóphos skoteō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banim yeledim</td>
<td>sons (male) children</td>
<td>banim sons ὑιοὶ teknoi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Qumran writers, drawing on the Hebrew Bible, did not make use of the full range of the HB’s lexical diversity. For ‘light,’ the Qumran writers always used ‘or; for ‘darkness,’ khoshekh; for ‘sons,’ banim. This kind of lexical rigidity increased the
strength of their rhetoric, with the specific words becoming tied to their metaphorical meanings. ‘Sons of light’ and ‘sons of darkness’ had become set phrases, labels, invariable. The Qumran writers’ other group descriptions (‘sons of truth,’ ‘sons of righteousness,’ and so on) are similarly rigid, sloganized.

The New Testament writers, on the other hand, used much more lexical variety for each concept, as we see in Table 4. Thus, while the NT authors were familiar with the metaphor of ‘group membership in spiritual light or darkness,’ this metaphor was not tied to single words for the entire NT community, as it was in Qumran. Instead, each NT author chose (or did not choose) to make light and darkness into slogans in his individual works.

The choices which each NT author made with respect to light/darkness were driven by their specific agendas. Not all of the New Testament authors were as familiar with ‘Qumran’ sectarian rhetoric, or as interested in responding to it, as others. For instance, Mark, the relatively uneducated Gentile who wrote the first-ever gospel, made no use of the metaphors of light and dark, or of the peculiarly Hebrew ‘sons of’ membership constructions. As a Gentile, he is unlikely to have been familiar with or invested in the specifics of Jewish sectarian debate. When sorting through his source material, Mark either missed the sectarian significance of Jesus’ light/dark statements, and thus failed to include them; or recognized their sectarian importance, but did not consider them necessary for the contemporary edification of the Christian church.

Table 5: Sectarian Light/Dark and ‘Sons of’ Rhetoric Use By Five NT Authors

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Matthew, a former tax collector who seems to direct his gospel toward a primarily Jewish audience, and Luke, the Gentile researcher, both use a moderate amount of light/dark rhetoric, often in parallel passages. However, despite the fact that neither seems particularly interested in light/dark as a metaphor for division, both are preoccupied with the dualistic division of humanity in general. Matthew records a conflict between the ‘children of the kingdom (=God)’ and the ‘children of wickedness,’ focusing on the character qualities of the divided people; while Luke allows the ‘the children of peace/the resurrection’ to battle it out with the ‘children of this world,’ directing his reader to contemplate the eternal destinies of each group. Both Luke and Matthew strongly believe in the dichotomy between those who believe in Jesus and those who do not, but neither is invested in using the explicitly sectarian metaphors of light and darkness to convey this dichotomy.

John, however—who makes an almost exclusive use of light and darkness as his metaphors for spiritual division—seems to be not only aware of this rhetoric’s sectarian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Matthew</th>
<th>Luke86</th>
<th>John87</th>
<th>Paul88</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Light</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>phōs (3)</td>
<td>phōteinos (1)</td>
<td>phōs (14+)</td>
<td>phōs (9+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lychnos (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>epiphaino (1)</td>
<td>phōtismos (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spiritual Darkness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>skotos (2)</td>
<td>skoteinos (1)</td>
<td>skotia (5)</td>
<td>skotos (9+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sons of [Spiritual Grp]</strong></td>
<td>huios (1)</td>
<td>teknos (3)</td>
<td>tekno (4)</td>
<td>tekno (2)</td>
<td>tekno (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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87 John, letters of John, Revelation.
88 Letters of Paul including Pastoral Letters.
provenance, but intent on subverting it to serve Christianity. He is most interested in the metaphor of light, which he always sloganizes as \( \text{phōs} \); he even uses the verbatim label ‘children of light,’’ the only gospel writer to do so.\(^89\)

John’s most innovative (and subversive) use of light/dark rhetoric was his identification of Jesus Christ as light personified. John gives this identification most clearly when he records Jesus’ statement that ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’\(^90\) John built on the Hebrew Bible’s use of light as both a quality of God’s character and the quality of his instruction, showing that Jesus was the manifestation of both. As the following verses show, without Jesus, no man can be spiritually enlightened. Thus, everyone who does not follow Jesus—both Jews and Gentiles—is excluded from membership in the family of light.

In [Jesus] was life, and the life was the light (\( \text{phōs} \)) of men. And the light shines in the darkness (\( \text{skotia} \)), but the darkness did not understand it. There came a man… whose name was John… that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He [John] was not the light… There was the true light (\( \text{to phōs to alēthinon} \)) which by coming into the world enlightens (\( \text{phōtizētai} \)) every man. … He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.\(^91\)

Why was John so much more involved in subverting the rhetoric of light and darkness than were his fellow gospel writers? As a Jew himself, he was more intimately

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\(^{89}\) John 12:36.

\(^{90}\) John 8: 12. John is also the gospel writer who most clearly established that Jesus was the Son of God. Notice the parallel to John 8:12 in 1 John 1:5-7: ‘And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light… the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.’ Jesus is light; God is light; Jesus is God.

\(^{91}\) John 1:4-7, 9, 11-12. See also Revelation 22:5.
connected with Jewish sectarian debate than either Mark or Luke. Yet the interior witness of the book of John states that John the disciple was a fisherman from a family of fishermen, more likely to be familiar with the popular religion of the ‘am ha-‘aret (common people) than with the ins and outs of any Jewish sect. What then is the explanation for John’s preoccupation with this particular sectarian metaphor? One possible explanation is that John, who almost certainly wrote his gospel after the destruction of Jerusalem, saw that the light/dark metaphors still resonated with the early rabbis, or (more likely) with the Jews who had scattered throughout Asia Minor; therefore, he found it worthwhile to use and subvert the rhetoric of light. A second explanation is suggested in John’s unexpected connection to the high priestly party in Jerusalem. In John 17, after Jesus was arrested, John, who ‘was known to the high priest… entered with Jesus into the court/house (aulēn) of the high priest.’ The high priest knew John well enough to allow him into his house—quite an honor for a lowly fisherman! Nor was the high priest detaining John there as Jesus’ accomplice; John was free to go out and let Peter into the yard.  

John is travelling more freely in the elite temple circle than one would expect given his occupation; it is possible that he also had more religious education and a deeper involvement in sectarian debate than most fishermen. But what sectarian camp would John have been introduced to in this circle? Elsewhere in the gospels, the New Testament writers repeatedly mention the fact that the high priest and his cohorts were Sadducees. John, who was known to the high priest, might have been more conversant with Sadduceic rhetoric than his occupation as a

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92 John 18:15-16. John is also the only gospel writer to name the servant of the high priest whom Peter wounded in John 18:10. The name of the slave is an unimportant detail; it is difficult to imagine why John would include it if the man were not personally known to him.
fisherman would suggest; if the Sadducees used the rhetoric of light and darkness, he might then have thought it worthwhile to use and subvert it.\textsuperscript{93} Whichever explanation is correct, John’s use of light as a slogan suggests that this rhetoric had passed into the wider Jewish discourse.

Paul, who was a Pharisee and well aware of Jewish sectarian conflict,\textsuperscript{94} was aware of the old Qumran light/dark labels. When dealing with the conflict between light and dark, he uses \textit{phōs} and \textit{skotos} exclusively, an arbitrarily rigid (sloganized) use of terms which echoes Qumran usage; he also uses the label ‘children of light’ verbatim, the only NT writer to do so other than John.\textsuperscript{95} Yet Paul is not simply annexing the Qumran rhetoric; instead, he subverts it. For instance, in Romans 2, his use is deeply ironic. Here Paul addresses the religious Jew, who is ‘confident that [he himself] is a guide to the blind… a light to those who are in darkness,’ and rebukes him: ‘You who boast in the law, through your breaking the law, do you dishonor God? For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ just as it is written.’\textsuperscript{96} The Jews who believe that they are light (\textit{phōs}) to those in darkness (\textit{skotos}) are hypocrites, dishonoring the God they claim to obey. In fact, these Jews are not Jews at all; ‘for he is not a Jew who is one outwardly… but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.’\textsuperscript{97} Here, Paul is claiming the

\textsuperscript{93} The fact that John wrote his gospel after the demise of the Sadduceeic party is evidence against this explanation.

\textsuperscript{94} As evidenced by his defense before the Sanhedrin in the book of Acts, when he saved himself by setting the Pharisees and Sadducees against each other (Acts 23).

\textsuperscript{95} 1 Thess 5:5, Eph 5:8. He also uses the label ‘Angel of Light’ in 2 Col 11:14, which is very similar to the Qumran ‘Angel of Truth’ and ‘Prince of Light.’

\textsuperscript{96} Rom 2: 19, 23-24. This is a combination of parody and appropriation subversion.

\textsuperscript{97} Rom 2:28-29.
legitimacy of his own sect and denying the legitimacy of Jewish groups which characteristically define themselves using light/dark rhetoric.

Like John, Paul subverts the Qumran rhetoric by including allegiance to Jesus as part of the definition of being a ‘son of light.’ In Romans 13, he states, ‘The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Let us therefore throw aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. … Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no allowance for the desires of the flesh.’ Putting on Jesus is part and parcel with putting on the armor of light. This use of light/dark rhetoric obviously excludes any Jews who did not follow Jesus, an outgroup which includes those who originated this rhetoric.

Paul also made subversive use of other ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ expressions. For instance, where the Qumran writers spoke of ‘sons of the covenant,’ Paul called on ‘children of promise.’ Both the Qumran sect and the early Christians recognized themselves as belonging to a spiritual heritage marked out by a special relationship with God. On the one hand, the Qumran writers trace their ancestry to Abraham, with whom God covenanted, and to whom God promised land, descendants, and blessings on Abraham’s children and on all the nations. On the other hand, with the metaphor ‘sons of promise’ Paul is tracing Christian ancestry back to Isaac, who was born as the fruit of God’s promises to Abraham. According to Paul, the Christians are the fulfillment of God’s promise to the Jews—an exceedingly subversive claim. Furthermore, like Isaac’s ill-begotten older brother Ishmael, Paul’s Jewish contemporaries ‘will not be heirs’ with

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98 Rom 9: 12, 14. This is primarily a transformation subversion.
99 Other examples of Paul’s subversive introduction of Jesus into light/dark rhetoric occur in 2 Cor 4:6, 1 Thess 5:2-10, Eph 5:1-14, and Col 1:13-14.
100 Gal 4:28, Rom 9:8.
101 Gen 15, 17.
the Christians; they will have no part in eternal joy, although they may seem to be more powerful in the present world.\textsuperscript{102}

Because Paul, the renegade Pharisee, was so fond of light/dark and ‘sons of’ rhetoric, it is tempting to speculate that these labels were popular with the Pharisees of his day as well as with the Qumran sect. While it is possible that Paul, long embedded in sectarian dialogue, was aware enough of specifically Qumranic rhetoric to subvert it, it is unlikely that he would have felt threatened enough by the Qumran sect to have spent so much energy using and subverting it. If, however, these labels were popular with the Pharisees as well, it would make perfect sense for Paul to annex them to himself, reinterpreting them to his former brethren’s disadvantage.

\textit{V. Discussion and Conclusions}

Qumran and New Testament writers’ use of the rhetoric of light and darkness to divide humanity into two groups—one of which was identified as the family of God and goodness; and the other of which was identified as the army of the devil, destined for destruction—was unusual in the ancient world. Both sets of writers draw on the Hebrew Bible’s use of ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ expressions, as well as the HB’s definition of light/dark as referring primarily to good/evil. However, the frequency with which they use both light/dark and ‘sons of’ expressions is unprecedented, showing that significant development had taken place in this rhetoric by the time it was taken up (or originated)

\textsuperscript{102} Those ‘born according to the flesh’ will persecute those ‘born according to the Spirit.’ Gal 4:22-31, Rom 9:8. Compare with Boyarin’s discussion of later Jews and Christians who used the metaphor of Jacob and Esau, each assigning Jacob to themselves and Esau to the other (Daniel Boyarin, \textit{Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism} [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999], 125-126).
by the Qumran writers. Their use of this rhetoric to divide all of humanity into two groups is also interesting, especially as such a division is not found in later rabbinic texts.

The New Testament writers seem to have received the light/dark and ‘sons of’ rhetorical traditions from multiple sources. There is no mention of the Qumran sect in the New Testament, and therefore no evidence of direct rhetorical contact between the groups. However, Paul and John’s extensive use and subversion of this rhetoric suggests that these labels may have been current in the Pharisaic and Sadduceic parties. If these traditions were common in more than one sect, then it is plain that this rhetoric had become part of the shared discourse of the Jews.

Both the Qumran sect and the early Christians used the rhetoric of light and darkness and ‘sons of (spiritual group)’ expressions to mark their sects’ boundaries. The New Testament writers intentionally subvert the earlier usage of this rhetoric by other sects, asserting their superior claim to the truth, due to their knowledge of Jesus, who is the Light. In the process of subverting the earlier rhetoric, New Testament writers re-assigned the labels to themselves (appropriation), altered them to reflect their own ideology (transformation), and even used them ironically to the detriment of previous users (parody).

Both the Qumran sect and the early Christians used light/dark division rhetoric, showing that this rhetoric had passed into shared Jewish discourse. Why, then, does it not appear in the later rabbinic writings? One possibility is that the rhetoric simply went out of fashion in the Jewish community in Palestine following the destruction of

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103 The fact that the Qumran sect is never mentioned by name also suggests that, if such rhetorical contact occurred, the New Testament writers did not find it worthwhile to address the Qumran community specifically.
Jerusalem. There are fads in language as in all things, and in times of upheaval these fads come in and out of fashion very rapidly. Another, more intriguing possibility is that the rabbis decided to stop using this rhetoric after it became pervasive in Christianity. Many early Christian writers, both proto-orthodox and heretic, used the rhetoric of light and darkness to describe their group’s boundaries, founding their rhetoric on sectarian claim that Jesus is the Light.\(^\text{104}\) Augustine, Eusebius, and Origen—among others—all made use of this rhetoric.\(^\text{105}\) Perhaps the rabbis, not desiring to encourage the minim (Jewish

\(^{104}\) For instance, the Coptic Manichaeans of the fourth century A.D. believed that both light and darkness were ‘trapped in mixture’ in every soul. However, only the Elect (the Manichaeans) were able to act according to the will of the Mind of Light, or to free ‘particles’ of light from their earthly mixture with darkness in order to allow them to return to the ‘land of light,’ whence they might assist in the destruction of ‘the enemy’ (Jason D. BeDuhn, ‘Manichaean Ritual,’ in Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice [ed. R. Valantasis; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000], 319-321).

\(^{105}\) To take one example, Eusebius describes Jesus in the following manner: “Supreme and pre-eminent Ruler of the universe, he shares the glory of his Father's kingdom: for he is that Light, which, transcendent above the universe, encircles the Father's Person, interposing and dividing between the eternal and uncreated Essence and all derived existence: that Light which, streaming from on high, proceeds from that Deity who knows not origin or end, and illumines the super-celestial regions” [Eusebius Pamphilius, ‘Oration in Praise of Constantine’ (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series 1; ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace; trans. E.C. Richardson; Buffalo, N.Y.: Christian Literature Publishing, 1890. Rev. ed. New Advent Online, 2009; ed. K. Knight. Cited September 2014. Online: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2504.htm): Ch 1].

Origen makes use of similar language. “Let no one wonder if we have understood Jesus to be announced in the Gospel under a plurality of names of good things. … One good thing is life; but Jesus is the life. Another good thing is the light of the world, when it is true light, and the light of men; and all these things the Son of God is said to be” [Origen, Commentary on the Gospel of John (Anti-Nicene Fathers 9; ed. A. Menzies; trans. A. Menzies; Buffalo, N.Y.: Christian Literature Publishing, 1896. Rev. ed. New Advent Online, 2009, ed K. Knight. Cited September 2014. Online: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/101501.htm); Book 1 Ch 11].

Augustine applies the metaphor of light to Jesus and to those who follow Him. In the following passage, Augustine explains that the angels were created as part of God’s “Let there be light.” “For when God said, Let there be light, and there was light, if we are justified in understanding in this light the creation of the angels, then certainly they were created partakers of the eternal light which is the unchangeable Wisdom of God, by which all things were made, and whom we call the only-begotten Son of God; so that they, being illumined by the Light that created them, might themselves become light and be called Day, in participation of that unchangeable Light and Day which is the Word of God, by whom both themselves and all else were made. The true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world—this Light lights also every pure angel, that he may be light not in himself, but in God; from whom if an angel turn away, he becomes impure, as are all those who are called unclean spirits, and are no longer light in the
Christians and other dissenters), decided not to use this rhetoric any more. A third possibility, which is even more probable, is that, while the metaphorical use of light and darkness was well-understood by all the Jewish sects of the first century, this metaphor’s productivity was tied to Jewish apocalyptic thinking. The ability to divide humanity into God-fearing and God-hating groups is most important in the context of eschatological judgment; thus, this division is more interesting to apocalyptic groups than to non-apocalyptic groups. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the evidence for the existence of Jewish apocalyptic groups disappears. The Jewish religious elites who rebooted Judaism did so on a strictly non-apocalyptic basis. Only the Christians retained their apocalypticism—and thus, perhaps, they retained their interest in these apocalyptic discourse features.

Studying the use of the rhetoric of light and darkness in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament provides a window into first-century Jewish sectarian debate. Jewish rhetoric from one sect can pass quickly into the general discourse and become current with all sects, ready to be subverted and used as a weapon against each sect’s religious rivals.


VanderKam, Dead Sea Scrolls Today, 222.
**Bibliography**


