

Qumran

7

Correcting decades of misdirection regarding the
dating and writing of the gospels

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Preface

'The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of the earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.'

Psalm 12:6-7

But from the beginning the preserved words of the Lord have been under attack by spiritual forces of evil working also through human beings.

Introduction

The apostle Paul gave this warning, that after he was gone to glory – *‘For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.’* Acts 20:29-30

So it should surprise no one that we now find ourselves, as the church, surrounded by the fruit of many decades of misdirection and *obfuscation. The extent and the sources of that misdirection and obfuscation are hereby revealed.

(* *obfuscate to make unclear and to bewilder*)

The purpose of the misdirection and obfuscation has been to reduce our reliance on the scriptures, to tell us they cannot be trusted, that they are inaccurate and contradictory. A starting point is to try to convince us that the gospels in particular, and much of the rest of the New Testament, was not written until sometime after 80AD through to various much later dates and not by the apostles.

That is why we need to consider Q, which stands for Qumran, and particularly 7, which refers to cave 7.

(To add to confusion many critics refer to Q as a source used for information by the gospel writers – this Q is in no way connected with the caves at Qumran but is mystical figure for whom there is no evidence other than people’s imagination.)

All references are from the New King James Bible

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Chapter 1

It is not possible!

In the very beginning the serpent challenges God's word. The Lord had told Adam and Eve that they would surely die if they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent tells Eve 'You will not surely die,' and 'you will be like God knowing good and evil.' The fall of man is history. It led to the need for the coming of Jesus in the flesh, to redeem mankind by paying the price - through His crucifixion. Perhaps then it is no surprise that confusion surrounds that event -

How has it come to this, that most of the scripture we use tells us Jesus was crucified on Friday and rose on Sunday, and we accept it. Jesus, Himself gave one sign, 'For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' Matthew 12:40. Jesus said it - It has to be so.

Accepting that Jesus was crucified on Friday, His body was put in the tomb, in the heart of the earth, that evening. So we count three days and three nights like this:

1st night Friday

1st day Saturday

2nd night Saturday

2nd day Sunday

3rd night Sunday

3rd day Monday – Jesus rises early on the 3rd day.

The scripture is seen to be correct – no confusion now. For many this comes as something new, so is there any way of gleaning more from the scripture to confirm? Yes, but due to a tragic mistranslation it is obscured. Matthew 28:1 Mark 16:2 Luke 24:1 and Acts 20:7 all have this mistranslation.

Our bibles have *'Now after the Sabbath as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.'* 'day' is usually in italics because it is not present in the Greek texts. 'Week' should be rendered 'weeks' plural to be accurate to the text. Both these statements are easily confirmed in a quality interlinear bible.

So we should render the two Mary's coming - *'After the Sabbath as the first of weeks began to dawn.'* Now we get a very different and accurate result.

This is the first day of the feast of weeks which indeed it was following Passover. It was also first fruits. So it is confirmed that Jesus rose on Monday early in the morning. (Scripture being doubly clear on the issue as Jesus fulfils the picture of both first fruits and the feast of weeks as indeed He had to do.)

As we shall see later, very early on the Roman church made a deliberate effort to move away from the Jewish roots of the church by fixing the resurrection to a Sunday as a matter of convenience. With the crucifixion being Friday (before the Sabbath,) and resurrection Sunday, Jesus sign of three days and three nights in the heart of the earth cannot be accommodated. In so doing the Roman church sowed this error which causes confusion and doubt on the veracity of the word of God.

The church has suffered misdirection and obfuscation ever since, now celebrating Jesus death neither on the day of crucifixion nor on the day of resurrection. Of course different churches have their own ways of treating the crucifixion and resurrection of our Saviour. So long as the focus is Him and what He achieved perhaps it doesn't matter too much – yet the best would surely be to be as close as we can to the reality we are celebrating.

The mistranslation in Acts hides a wonderful miracle illustrating the resurrection. Paul was preaching late into the night –

waiting for midnight when the assembled people would break bread to celebrate Jesus resurrection as it was the anniversary - the first of the feast of weeks. A young man, Eutychus, falls out of a high window and is taken up dead. Paul falls on him and embracing him his life returns – resurrection. (Acts 20 :7-12)

We have illustrated the point. Much of our modern church now celebrates – what is it? neither remembering Jesus death on Friday, nor celebrating His resurrection on Monday by seemingly doing both on Sunday? We deny the specific sign Jesus gave in order to hold to a faulty tradition, even though in doing so we uphold the impossible - that is crucifixion Friday and resurrection Sunday which cannot accommodate the three nights stated by Jesus. Thus we deny the God breathed scripture. Including the specific sign given by Jesus.

What folly!

Jesus birth is similarly obfuscated by being fixed to the 25th of December.

Confusion has been deliberately sown by that same serpent that beguiled Eve.

The same serpent who goes under the name of satan is still the author of confusion and obfuscation. He uses people as his agents in his work. He uses whatever he can, and particularly liberals and higher critics who want to be able to interpret things to suit themselves, and Greek scholars who hate the inspired word handed down for 2,000 years, and churches which put themselves above the word of God re-interpreting scripture to suit their own ideas.

The serpent wants to reduce and destroy our trust in God's word – just as he did with Eve with tragic consequences.

The serpent's purpose is to weaken and if possible to destroy our trust in the word God Himself states to be preserved for ever.

However we have been given the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth which He freely does and particularly as we seek Him for it. Why should we bother? Because *'all scripture is given by inspiration of God (God breathed) and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete (perfectly fitted), thoroughly equipped for every good work.'* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

As believers the more we have confidence in the word of God as recorded in our bibles, the more complete and thoroughly equipped we shall be. Hence the need for study and for questioning just like the Bereans of Acts 17:10-11. Time for some good news

Chapter 2

Qumran and the Old Testament

Around 1946-7 a young Bedouin was herding his animals (sheep and goats) when one wandered off. Following the wanderer he climbed up to a cave in which he found earthenware jars. Looking inside ancient scrolls were discovered.

The find came eventually to the knowledge of a Jewish scholar from the Hebrew University, then in the area controlled under the British mandate. The writing on the scrolls was identified as extremely old Hebrew.

The find was now seen as hugely significant and important – here were scrolls from the time of Judas Maccabee, from the time of Herod, from the time of Jesus.

The search for more scrolls was then on in earnest. One of the Qumran caves, number 4, itself yielded over 500 manuscripts and fragments thereof.

The caves were close to the ruin of an ancient settlement known as Qumran - inhabited by a Jewish sect known as the Essenes. Many of the scrolls and fragments were of Essene practices as well as scriptures.

Old Testament finds.

Among the scrolls were many parts of what we know as the Old Testament. Here we just stop a moment to realise that these scrolls and parts thereof being very, very old were much fragmented. Indeed the only almost complete scroll was that of Isaiah found in cave 1. This scroll was more than a thousand years older than the oldest one in existence in the 1900's.

The Isaiah scroll was poured over by scholars to determine how accurate the much younger scrolls we have are when compared to this very much older scroll. The result was very

occasional differences in spelling and wording - there was a huge amount of agreement and nothing detrimental to our understanding of biblical truth was found. The word was preserved.

The number of Old Testament finds:

A total of 201 scrolls and parts thereof were found covering more than 20 books of the Old Testament. As we have already noted the caves were all sealed up by AD 68. These scrolls and fragments thereof are from the time of Jesus and earlier.

Chapter 3

Qumran and the New Testament.

The Essenes were a Jewish sect so it is no surprise that there were so many Old Testament scrolls and fragments. But were there any finds of parts of the New Testament ? So called experts and higher critics say no but they are wrong

We turn to cave 7 where a number of fragments written in Greek, not Hebrew, were found. These fragments were very small, some just a few Greek letters, leading to the common description thereof as 'unidentified.' Here we find an example of misdirection because the fragments have indeed been identified. However it suited those who want to oppose the efficacy of scripture to ensure that their existence and content is obscured.

The common position has been and still is that the Gospels were written after 80 AD and some say many years later, as we said in the introduction. This is deliberate misdirection because it takes the Gospels out of what is known as the eyewitness period -AD 30 to 70. Therefore they say the gospels are unreliable and not eyewitness accounts' and not written by the Apostles whose name they bear. The critics are wrong (again!)

The identification of the fragments of cave 7.

A Spanish Jesuit, named Jose O'Callaghan* was able to identify nine fragments from cave 7 comprising parts of

Mark, 1 Timothy, James, Acts, Romans and 2 Peter.

Remembering that the caves were sealed off in AD 68 that puts all these books at least into the eyewitness period. The finding of these fragments does not suit higher critics and liberals so has been suppressed.

* O'Callaghan was a highly qualified papyrologist.

His identification (of Mark 6:52-3) was examined by a mathematician, Albert Dou, who has calculated the chance of the fragment not being of Mark 6:52-3 as being not less than 1 in 900,000,000,000. Hence the identification stands the highest test.

The identification of the fragments was hotly contested by leading liberals as it proved the error of two of their assertions – Namely:

1 that the gospels of the New Testament were not written in the eye witness period and therefore were not written by the apostles whose names we find in our bibles today – and therefore are not reliable. Critics wrong!

2 they assert that no New Testament was written on scrolls, only in codex format. (Scrolls are written on one side whilst Codexes on both sides.) The Q7 fragments are written on one side only – so scrolls, and these critics are wrong again! (The point being they try to show that the early codexes were the earliest writings again denying the early writing of the gospels.)

Paul's letters were written before his death in the 60's and were circulated to the churches. Every church would also want its own copies of the gospels which were going to later become the 'received text.' That the scriptures were in circulation very early on should not be a surprise.

Perhaps amusingly *7Q4 has been identified as belonging to 1 Timothy 4:1-3 the first two verse of which say, *'Now the Spirit expressly says that in the later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.'* Extremely appropriate for the higher critics and liberal theologians!

O'Callaghan – a Jesuit. Huge irony attaches to the fact that he was a Jesuit. The Jesuit's agenda throughout history has been

to keep biblical truth away from the people and to denigrate the gospels trying to show them as late and unreliable - thus trying to undermine the protestant bible. O'Callaghan was shunned by his fellow Jesuits after his identification of the fragments.

So Q7 and its fragments of the New Testament are of great importance to those who love and honour the scripture. Whilst many voices and pressures speak against the received text we have now evidence of its early writing including eyewitness accounts.

So with the New Testament clearly written early on, we might have hoped for the steady growth of sound doctrine amongst the early Christians. Sadly it was not to be, so we move along to see how a constant attack on the veracity of scripture, which continues in full flow today, came into the church.

*7Q4

7 refers to cave 7

Q refers to Qumran

4 refers to fragment number 4

Chapter 4

The early attacks on the scripture

The very early church came into a world dominated by the Romans and very full of pagan and idolatrous activity. On the good side the apostles were writing and ministering widely and the Spirit worked with them confirming the word with signs and wonders. The gospels and the letters, particularly of Paul, were written within a few years and widely circulated to the young churches.

On the adverse side the Jews persecuted the new believers who were following the way. We read the account of Saul, later Paul, as an example. Acts 9

The Romans too became hostile as they concluded Christianity was not a 'proper' religion, not having anything common to other (pagan) religions. No statues, no temples, no sacrifices, no order of priests (in the very early days this was so) and so on. There were many false accusations against Christians and strong persecution arose.

Quoting Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History,

'That a great number of persons of every class and rank, suffered death for the cause of Christ, during the first three or four centuries, no impartial person acquainted with those times can entertain a doubt.'

Rome changes the celebration of Easter for convenience and to move the church away from Passover and its association with the Jews.

Easter – history and confusion

In the first century AD the church was in its infancy. It was made up of a number of independent churches in various locations as evidenced by the letters of Paul. As the church established Bishops were appointed - over one church - no groups appeared until the second century.

Grouping of churches seems to have started in the second century and as time went on, with the church councils taking place, chief men became appointed over the church in different parts of the world to achieve some coherence. Out of this the Roman Pontiff later emerged.

By the middle of the second century difference of opinion between Rome and the churches of Asia Minor developed over the keeping of Easter. Rome had in effect moved the day of resurrection closer to the crucifixion, when they fixed Sunday as the resurrection as a matter of convenience. Asia Minor steadfastly resisted the change wanting to keep their understanding of Jesus in the tomb three days and three nights as handed down to them by St John. They kept the memorial on the 14th Nissan, which Rome considered inconvenient as it moved through the week year on year. By the end of the second century Victor, Bishop of Rome wanted to compel the churches of Asia Minor to follow the now established custom of Rome. This was refused by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon intervened in the increasingly bitter dispute and the outcome was that Rome and the churches of Asia Minor agreed to differ and kept their customs.

Hence confusion has arisen. Rome's actually impossible position has since been universally adopted.

If one follows the custom of Rome Jesus is crucified on Friday and rises on Sunday. This is counted as three days but cannot

by any means account for three days and three nights. The churches of Asia Minor wanted to retain their belief in the fulfilment of scripture by celebrating on the 14th Nisan. But as it is generally agreed that Jesus was crucified on the Friday being the day before the Sabbath that means He rose on Monday early in the morning and not Sunday.

Regarding rising on the third day - Jesus said destroy this temple and on the third day I will rise. Friday would be the destruction of His temple – then 1st day Saturday, 2nd day Sunday and rise on the third day Monday.

Thus both requirements of scripture are clearly fulfilled.

* Date of Easter was then fixed as the first Sunday after the first full moon following the northern spring equinox.

Into this crucible of a vibrant and growing church being attacked by Jew and gentiles alike, where churches were being established in a wide area, Paul's warning about savage wolves coming amongst the flock was also coming abundantly true. Men were moving away from the apostle's doctrine bringing their own ideas and some were trying to take control. This was already underway as reported in John's 3rd letter for example. (verse 9 and 10)

The extensive pagan religions of the time were full of 'hidden truths' and mysteries (gnosis) and many persons tried to mould the Christian doctrines into conformity with these concepts. The principle sects we know as 'Gnostics.' They claim the ability to restore to mankind the lost knowledge of the true and supreme god (Not our Lord.) The methods of paganism were being brought into the churches.

Paganism thrived on allegory and this falsity was spreading into the churches.

Allegory - that is the allocating to scripture of whatever private interpretation you want to, came into the doctrines of the church in the second century. It came under the description or

guise of 'philosophy.' It was promoted by Origen and others. Amongst those who want to be able to dictate truth rather than be subject to the scripture it was and is highly welcomed. It did immense harm to Christianity and continues to do so as many want their own interpretations of scripture regardless of 1 Peter 1:20 -

'and knowing this first, that no prophecy (that is the speaking out of the mind and will of God – i.e. all scripture) of scripture is of any private interpretation'

The result was numerous tribes of monks who added 'various foolish and useless rites suited only to nourish superstition, no small part of which we see religiously observed by many even to the present day.' (Quote from Mosheim)

Chapter 5

Deliberate denial of the received text

Into this developing church, which was moving further and further away from the scripture, then and over the centuries which follow on, came the need for liberals and doubters to create increasing uncertainty about the bible text. For the received text of the church, handed down over centuries denied much of what was now being introduced into the teachings of the church.

In the 1800's two respected Greek scholars joined forces to introduce a new 'standard' text based on more recent manuscript discoveries. Three older manuscripts of Egyptian origin had been discovered – Codexes Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. These were all of very dubious quality – leaving out large parts of what was included in the received text and containing errors and contradictions - they didn't even agree with each other. They are known as 'minority texts' because they disagree in so many ways with the received text and with many other witnesses. Sinaiticus was of such poor quality it is no surprise that it was discovered in the bin being used as fire lighters.

Before we go further we just need to understand who these two gentlemen were and something of their beliefs.

Bishop B F Westcott 1825 to 1901 is known to have been an active spiritualist.

Professor F J A Hort 1828 to 1892. At age 22 he announced that he was determined to overthrow that vile Textus Receptus (the traditionally received text,)

Both men were members of occult societies and both are reported to have been involved in such activities including speaking to the dead. It is immediately apparent that the work of these men is not the work of born again men who believe in

the one true God, but rather the work of those who seek to promote the other side.

Together they developed a revised Greek text preferring the very poor quality Egyptian manuscripts over the traditional Byzantine ones loved and trusted by the church for centuries.

This revised text was the basis for the English Revised Version of 1885 and for the Nestle/UBS text. In the years that have followed hundreds of 'new' translations have been forthcoming and in every case relying on the faulty text developed by these two. Only the King James version and the New King James version rely on the received text.

Whilst these two laid the foundation for the denial of the received text it has been further denied by one Kurt Aland, very highly regarded as one of the higher critics. Virtually a 'god' amongst them so no one dares to contradict him! He served as the co-editor of the Nestle/Aland Greek text since the 1940s. He denies the concept of the verbal inspiration of scripture by God. So he does not see scripture as inerrant or as God breathed. He tried to eliminate some books from the canon and to introduce other works not recognised by the church as inspired.

Their agenda has been to spread lies and criticisms of the received text creating uncertainty and weakness of faith.

A new belief has become embedded in Evangelicalism. The once held belief in the infallible inspiration of scripture has been replaced by a sort of Modernism.

Francis Shaeffer, a well known evangelical leader had this to say 'within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the bible so that the full authority of scripture is completely undercut.'

That, of course, was the objective of Westcott, Hort and Aland and many others. Deny the true scripture and cause confusion – faith will then diminish. The work of satan through men!

The most prominent example is the denial of Mark 16:9-20. Here is the passage which described Jesus resurrection and instructs the 'Great Commission,' which is accompanied by works of power. Our modern translations have this to say about the passage, 'The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20' NIV.

This statement is a complete lie for a number of reasons: The early manuscripts Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do not have this passage but Alexandrinus does. There are 18 unicals and 600 cursives which also do, as does early bible versions such as the Syriac version and Jerome's. There are references to the passage in the writings of the early Fathers.

The same is said about John 7:53 to 8:11 where Jesus teaches about grace that is coming instead of Law. Both passages pass the test of *septenary authenticity proving they are part of the God breathed scripture.

Stop and ask yourself just for a moment, why would anyone seek to undermine scripture and do so loudly and brazenly?

There are many more instances where the wonderful God breathed truth is removed or watered down. (20 instances of important exclusions are listed in 'Is the bible reliable – can we trust it.' There are hundreds more.)

Are we surprised? We shouldn't be when we know the beliefs of the men who have perpetrated the lies and deception that have gone before. The only surprising thing is how far the errors have gone and penetrated into today's bible versions and into evangelicalism – and that they have been accepted and preferred over the original received text.

When we remember that from the beginning the serpent set about confusing and misdirecting Eve we need to note that he is still using the same wiles today – and doing so very effectively!

* Septenary authenticity.

In the early 1900s Ivan Panin discovered that the scripture has multi-layered complex numerical patterns – way beyond the ability of a human author to create. The existence of these patterns authenticated Mark 16:9-20 for example.

Chapter 6

Deliberate denial of inspiration

If we deny that God has spoken and given us His word then we are free to believe what we want and to be swept along by whatever new doctrine or thinking comes along – there have been many.

The higher critics want to remove our trust in the Bible because that removes or reduces our witness in the world.

Having introduced uncertainty they can spread whatever ‘truth’ they want to - anything that denies our Lord and Saviour which is why the new translations leave out Jesus name and reference to His blood many times.

When we look at today’s churches do we see the preaching of Jesus sacrifice, the efficacy of His shed blood, and His glorious resurrection accompanied by works of power and signs? Or do we just see pomp and ceremony?

Why are so many dear Christian brothers and sisters just plain confused and unsure of the truth? Is it because we now have a myriad of voices and opinions? Is it because we have lost sight of the fact that the scripture is God breathed and as such cannot be in error or contradictory in its original manuscripts?

How is it that we have given place to inaccurate bible texts produced by known spiritualists and those who deny God’s inspiration of the scripture He has given us?

Back to the very beginning when the serpent spoke to Eve

– God had spoken very clearly – *‘You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.’* The word of God is questioned, Eve is challenged by the serpent, *‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree in the garden?’*

The reason given to Adam and Eve as to why they were not to eat of that tree was, if they did so they would surely die.

The serpent brings this challenge, *'You will not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil.'*

We see two levels of challenge:

1) Did God really say that and then -

2) God did not say that.

To which we can add the idea that God had an ulterior motive.

When we consider the work of the higher critics and all those who set themselves against the bible text passed down from the very beginning of the church we will find a striking similarity:

Much is said and claimed that God is not the author of the bible – that is the scripture is not God breathed. In my booklet, 'Is the bible reliable – can we trust it,' I set out some of the many proofs that it is beyond the capability of men to produce it.

These proofs cover the actual text which carries a watermark of authenticity; the mass of fulfilled prophecy; the remarkable numbers; the proven passage of time; and the way both archaeology and science are continually confirming more and more of the bible statements.

Because we have accepted countless lies about the bible and particularly those based on the received text, we have been 'conditioned' into thinking it is unreliable. We have lost sight of God's word:

'The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of the earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them O Lord - You shall preserve them from this generation forever.' ..and of His promise to preserve them forever.

Chapter 7

Where are we now

We find that the work of our enemy has been very effective, such that many Christian people have lost or reduced trust in the accuracy and power of the scripture for good in their lives. Amongst unbelievers their unbelief is strongly reinforced by the never ending stream of lies about the bible.

We find that many churches no longer expect to experience any sign of the power of God working in their meetings.

We find that whilst there are many new bibles being produced they are all based on the inferior minority texts which have been much mutilated.

Nevertheless the word of God is *'living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword.'* (Hebrews 4:12) and even in its damaged state is still able to change lives.

Martin Luther is an amazing example. Being a monk he was steeped in all the erroneous doctrines of the Catholic church. When he came across part of one verse in Jerome's poor Latin translation it not only changed Luther but it gave birth to the reformation. *'The just shall live by faith.'*

As the scripture has been extensively degenerated we find that the standards of public life have left any idea of righteousness far behind - even concepts which would previously have had no houseroom at all have and are becoming enshrined in law. Hope and expectation of good are greatly diminished.

However there are those who love the Lord with all their heart and love His word and are continually blessed. The Lord is ever ready to bless. There is growing expectation that the return of Jesus cannot be far away.

Amongst the increasing darkness there are bright spots where the Lord is truly worshipped – here His presence is found and felt.

Each one of us can individually become a ‘bright spot’ by increasing in love for the Lord and increasing in love for and understanding of His word. The Holy Spirit will bring this increase as we ask Him to do it in us.

Qumran cave 7 has proved that the gospels were written very early on, so we can dismiss all those who try to claim otherwise. The early date helps us to have confidence in what has been handed down.

When we see that for 2,000 years there has been, and is still continuing, onslaught against the received text, we can be certain that it is indeed the word of God, hated by those who oppose Him and those who do not want to be subject to the bible but want to be free to bring their own interpretations to make scripture more to their liking.

The Lord God has preserved His word in the received text written through the apostles and handed down through generations.

The Spirit and the bride say, come Lord Jesus.