

## **4Q382, Elijah and the Dead Sea Scrolls by Christopher J. Patrick Davis (2002)**

4Qpapyrus paraphrase Kings (4Q382) is a highly fragmentary document that seems to have paraphrased specific Elijah narratives from 1 and 2 Kings, and synthesized them with prophetic and poetic elaborations. In his assessment of 4Q382, the official editor suggested that in all probability, the document was not a homogenous work. These findings have resulted in a moratorium on any further research of the text, and potentially robbed the scholarly community of what may be a valuable contribution to the discussion of Qumran eschatology and messianism. In 1996, Michael Wise postulated that perhaps—due to several interesting word occurrences and phrases—4Q382 might best be described as an “Apocryphon of Elijah”; a text that could be interpreted to refer to the return of the Prophet Elijah in the Last Days. If this is the case, 4Q382 would be of significant interest in two regards: First, it would be the only text from the Qumran community that identifies the Prophet Elijah by name in the context of the Last Days. Second, it would be the only example of a work from the Second Temple period that drew from the events of Elijah’s ministry to present him as an eschatological figure. Such an interpretation is dependent upon establishing the cohesion of the fragments of 4Q382, and presenting the document as a single work.

In the course of my investigation of 4Q382, I have sought to demonstrate the plausibility of such an interpretation. Due to several questionable reconstructions, and doubtful readings in the Critical Edition, it was first necessary to revise the publication of the text. Following an extensive study of all the published photographs and transcriptions, I have established a new text and a translation, and used these to investigate the possibility that Elijah had a place in Qumran eschatology. The occurrences of significant words in 4Q382 such as *הַמְתַּקֵּן*, “The Interpreter of the Law,” and *לְקֵץ* “The end”; in conjunction with sectarian terms like *wrCp*, “the interpretation of this,” all attest to the eschatological nature of this text. Through comparing the text of 4Q382 to the prophecies of Elijah’s return in Mal 3.22–23 and in Sir 48.1–11, and with allusions to Elijah’s return in the Gospel of Luke and other texts from the Qumran corpus (4QTest; 4Q252; 4Q521; 11QMelch), this discussion effectively illustrates the plausibility for understanding 4Q382 as a periphrastic pesher that developed the narrative accounts of Elijah in 1 Kings 18 and 2 Kings 2 into a portrait of his involvement as a Prophet in the Last Days.