

Can you explain what the Teacher of Righteousness was (of the Essenes) and how that figure differs from Jesus Christ?

The Essenes were a Jewish sect which existed during the Second Temple period.

According to J. Murphy-O'Connor the Teacher of Righteousness was the dominant figure who was associated with the Essenes at Qumran.

Murphy-O'Connor wrote:

...[F]ifteen references [were] in the published Dead Sea Scrolls, however, [they] furnish only meager information about him. Some are so fragmentary as to yield only the name *môreh haššedeq* (1QpHab 1:13; 4QpPsb [= 4Q173] frag. 1, 4; frag. 2, 2)...Despite periodic efforts to argue that the allusion is to a function carried out by different individuals at various stages of the sect's history (Buchanan; Rabinowitz; Starcky), the consensus is that it is the title of a particular personage...

...His presence quickly provoked a split within the Essene movement. The reasons are complex and not entirely clear. One factor was probably his assumption of the eschatological (but not messianic) role of "the one who teaches righteousness" predicted in CD 6:10–11 (Davies 1983: 123–24); this is the simplest explanation of his title, Teacher of Righteousness...

Jonathan, the Wicked Priest, had first dismissed the Teacher as insignificant, but when it became known that he had acquired followers and moved to Qumran, he had to act against him because an eschatological movement was both a threat to his authority and a danger to the Jewish people at a critical moment in their history (1QpHab 9:9–10)...¹

Jesus was more than a teacher. He was and is the preeminent Son of God (Ps 2:7; He 1:5), the second person of the trinity (Mt 28:19).

¹ Murphy-O'Connor, J. (1992). Teacher of Righteousness. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 6, pp. 340–341). Doubleday.