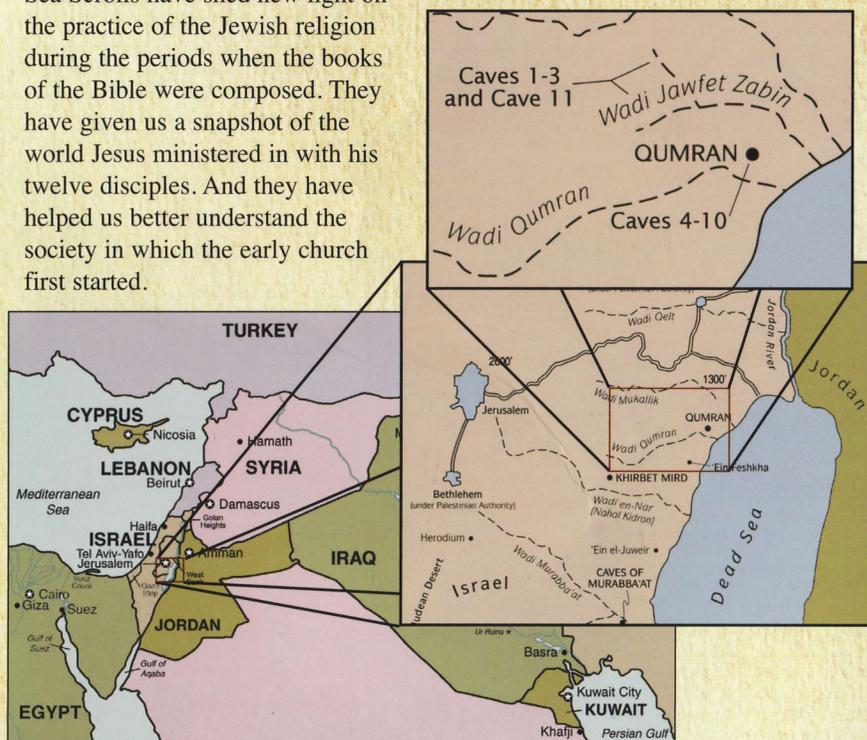


# WHAT ARE THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 931 documents discovered over a half century ago in a region of the Judean desert in what is today called the West Bank. The scrolls date from different periods—as early as 300 BC to AD 40—and were hidden in caves along the edge of the Dead Sea. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the greatest literary and archaeological discovery of our time. The scrolls are not the original documents that make up the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), but they are the oldest copies of those documents that we have today. The Dead Sea Scrolls have shed new light on the practice of the Jewish religion during the periods when the books of the Bible were composed. They have given us a snapshot of the world Jesus ministered in with his twelve disciples. And they have helped us better understand the society in which the early church first started.



Location of Dead Sea Scrolls Discoveries

# WHAT ARE THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS?

The scrolls are believed to be from the “library” of a group of first-century Jews who separated themselves from the rest of society by living out in the desert at a site known as Qumran. The scrolls contain a variety of writings: portions of every book of the Old Testament except the Book of Esther, commentaries on the books of the Bible, rules for religious rituals and community life, texts designed to prepare the Qumran sect for a war at the End of Time, marriage contracts, deeds of sale, calendars, horoscopes, and writings that claimed to foretell the future.

Canonical Division (According to the Hebrew Bible)	Old Testament Book	Number of Qumran and other Manuscripts (?-possible fragment)
<b>Pentateuch (Torah)</b>	Genesis	24
	Exodus	18
	Leviticus	18
	Numbers	11
	Deuteronomy	33
<b>Prophets (Nevi'im)</b>	Joshua	2
	Judges	3
	<b>Former Prophets</b>	
	1-2 Samuel	4
	1-2 Kings	3
<b>Latter Prophets</b>	Isaiah	22
	Jeremiah	6
	Ezekiel	6
	Twelve (Minor) Prophets	10
<b>Writings (Ketubim)</b>	Psalms	39
	Proverbs	2
	Job	6
<b>The Five Scrolls</b>	Song of Songs	4
	Ruth	4
	Lamentation	4
	Ecclesiastes	3
	Esther	0*
	Daniel	8
	Ezra-Nehemiah	1
	1-2 Chronicles	1
	Total	231
	Adjusted	223*

\*The total has been adjusted to read 8 less, since 6 scrolls from Qumran contain portions of two books (counted 2X), and 1 scroll from Wadi Murabba'at contains portions of 3 books (counted 3X).

*Qumran Manuscripts, which are copies of Books of the Old Testament*

The texts are composed in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. They are written on leather parchment (made from goat or sheep skins) and papyrus (a form of early paper). One scroll is inscribed on pure copper and is known as the Copper Scroll. It appears to be a treasure map, detailing directions to 66 places throughout the Judean desert where immense amounts of gold, silver, and other precious items were hidden. Due to the secretive and mysterious way the texts were written and the loss of identifying physical features in the region today, all attempts to locate the treasure have thus far proven unsuccessful.

## People and Events in Israel

25 years between lines

- Beginning of return of exiles to Jerusalem
- Esther becomes queen
- Simon II anoints
- Second Temple is built and dedicated
- Nehemiah completes walls of Jerusalem
- Alexander the Great conquers Israel
- Joshua serves as Zadokite high priest (Haggai 1:1)
- Ptolemy IV attempts to enter temple

700 BC

600 BC

500 BC

400 BC

300 BC

200 BC

## Events at Qumran

● Qumran

# HOW WERE THE SCROLLS DISCOVERED?

In 1946, shepherds of the Ta'amireh Bedouin tribe settled in a desert area between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, where they tended their flocks and herds. According to local hearsay, a teenager by the name of Muhammed edh-Dhib ("Muhammed the Wolf") went in search of a stray goat. Believing it to have wandered into one of the caves that honeycombed the limestone cliffs, he threw a rock into the cave to scare it out. Instead of hearing the bleat of a goat, he heard the sound of breaking pottery.



Inside Cave 1

He climbed up into what is today called Cave 1 and found ancient clay storage jars filled with seven scrolls. Four of these scrolls were sold in Bethlehem to an antiquities dealer known as Kando. He in turn sold them for \$97.20 to the archbishop of the Monastery of St. Mark's in Jerusalem, the Metropolitan (a high office in the priesthood of the Syrian Orthodox Church) Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel. The other three were sold to Feidi Salahi, another antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, who in turn sold them to Hebrew University Professor Eleazar Sukenik in Jerusalem.



# HOW WERE THE SCROLLS DISCOVERED?

The Bedouin shepherds searched more caves, bringing most of their finds to Kando. Meanwhile, the Metropolitan permitted John Trever of the American Schools of Oriental Research to publish news and photographs of the find to the world in April 1948. Soon after, British archaeologists conducted a careful survey of the region and discovered several other caves with scrolls, including those along a terrace at Qumran. Of these, Cave 4 yielded approximately 15,000 fragments representing some 600 manuscripts. These were not found in storage jars but beneath the cave floor, indicating a rapid burial because of impending danger—perhaps the Roman invasion of Jewish territory in AD 68 that led two years later to the complete destruction of Jerusalem. Cave 7 was also unique in that it contained the fragments of 19 texts in Greek—the same language used to write the New Testament.



Cave 4

When the Arab-Israeli war broke out in 1948, the Metropolitan took his four scrolls to the United States and offered them for sale in an ad in the *Wall Street Journal*. Yigael Yadin, an archaeologist and the son of Professor Sukenik, anonymously purchased the scrolls for the State of Israel for \$250,000. Later these four scrolls and three others were put on public display at the Shrine of the Book, a museum built in Jerusalem especially for scrolls. The State of Israel also houses other of the scrolls in a climate-controlled basement of the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. Some scrolls are located in other countries, such as the Copper Scroll in the Citadel Museum in Amman, Jordan.



Shrine of the Book

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Antiochus IV desecrates the temple; the Maccabean Revolt begins</li> <li>Death of Judas Maccabeus (leader of the revolt)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simon anointed high priest. Jews rule themselves for 79 years</li> <li>Jerusalem besieged by Antiochus VII Sidetes of Syria</li> <li>John Hyrcanus destroys Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim; forces the Judaization of Idumea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alexander Jannaeus in civil war with Pharisees, who are aided by Demetrius III Eucraerus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forces of Aristobulus II besieged by the Roman general Pompey on Temple Mount. Jewish rule falls to Rome on Yom Kippur.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>King Herod, aided by Roman general Sosius, takes Jerusalem from Antigonus</li> </ul>	
150 BC	125 BC	100 BC	75 BC	50 BC	25 BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Founding of Qumran Settlement near the Dead Sea (early date)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Period Ia founding of settlement; time of John Hyrcanus (?) (late date)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Period Ib begins, marked by building at time of Alexander Jannaeus, leader of Judea</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Period Ib ends either with Parthian invasion (40 BC) or earthquake (31 BC)</li> </ul>	

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE SITE OF THE SCROLLS?

Many of the scrolls were found in Caves 4-10 along the terrace known as Qumran, where archaeologists were quick to notice ancient ruins of buildings. Because the caves would have only been accessible via the Qumran plateau, archaeologists began to investigate a connection between the scrolls and the site. Archaeologist Roland de Vaux supported the connection with his discovery of pottery kilns that were used to fire the scroll jars and with his excavation of a two-story building that contained the remains of writing benches and ink wells. Roland de Vaux (in the 1950s), Yitzhak Magen (in the 1990s), and Randall Price (as recently as 2005) have uncovered deposits of animal bones overlaid with sherds (broken pottery). The Dead Sea Scrolls speak of ritual meals, and several scholars contend that the animal bone deposits that were found buried in a ritual manner are the remains of these ritual meals.

Some scholars believe that the site of Qumran may have been originally the biblical "City of Salt" mentioned in a list of cities in this region in Joshua 15:61-62. Scholars have suggested the following time line for the historical development of the Qumran site. There appears to have been two main phases, one beginning in the time of the Jewish king Alexander Jannaeus (134-104 BC) and continuing until a destruction of buildings in the settlement in 31 BC, and a final phase in the late Second Temple period (4-1 BC) until the destruction of the site in AD 68 by the Roman army's response to the First Jewish Revolt of AD 66-73. Thereafter for a short time the site was turned into a Roman garrison.



Site of Qumran

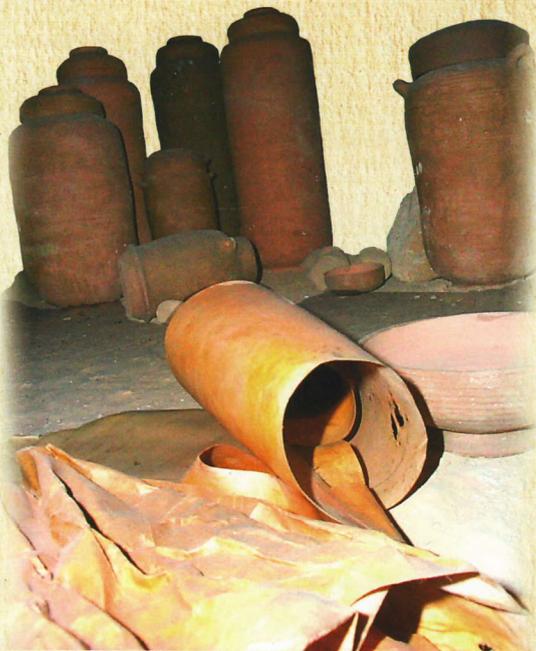
# THE HISTORY OF QUMRAN

Period	Date	Main Development of Building Projects
Israelite Period	7th-8th centuries BC	Enclosure wall, round cistern
Period Ia	c. 134-104 BC	Two rectangular cisterns, inlet channel
Period Ib	c. 103-31 BC	Tower, more cisterns, western block, use of south plateau
<b>Interruption in Occupation (31-4 BC)</b> Buildings destroyed by fire, allegedly as the result of an earthquake (reported to have occurred in 31 BC by Joseph Flavius, <i>War</i> 1:270-72; <i>Antiquities</i> 15:121-22).		
Period II	c. 4 BC-AD 68	Repairs to Ib structures, two reservoirs, use of south plateau
<b>Destruction of Jewish Settlement (AD 68 by Roman Army)</b>		
Period III	after AD 68	Use of part of main block, southeast cistern, water-channel

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Birth of Jesus of Nazareth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ministry of John the Baptist</li> <li>● Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth</li> <li>● Conversion of Paul</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jewish historian Josephus in Galilee</li> <li>● Civil war in Jerusalem, leading to destruction of site of Qumran</li> </ul>
AD 1	AD 50	AD 100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Period II begins, at the time of Herod the Great's death</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Period II ends, destruction at hands of Roman forces during First Jewish Revolt</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Period III, Roman military occupation of Qumran</li> </ul>

# WHAT DO THE SCROLLS TELL US ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The ancient keepers of the scrolls purposely hid their treasures, trusting that the God of whom they spoke in those documents would guard those documents until the proper time. That time, it turns out, would be our time, some 2,000 years later. Perhaps the most significant single contribution of the scrolls has been their witness to the earliest known text of the Hebrew Bible. Before the discovery of the scrolls, the oldest known complete Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament was a Masoretic text (made by Jewish scribes called Masoretes), which is known as the Ben Asher Codex located today in the Public Library of Leningrad, Russia. It dates to about AD 1008. Although this Masoretic version of the Bible is ancient, it was still penned 1,000 years after the last book of the Old Testament was written (around 325 BC). But because it was the oldest existing Hebrew manuscript, the Ben Asher Codex served as basis for the scholarly standard edition of the Hebrew Bible, Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, as well as Christian translations of the Old Testament such as the King James Version.



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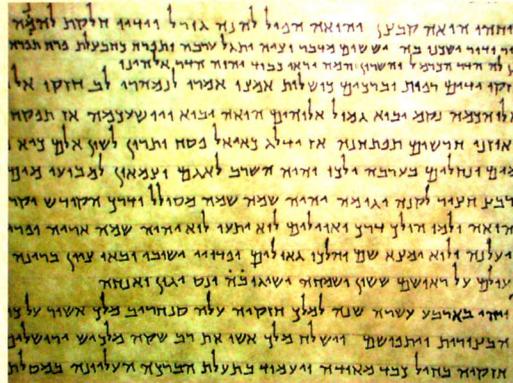
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## WHAT DO THE SCROLLS TELL US ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT?

The Dead Sea Scrolls confirm the accuracy of Bible translation over the years, despite skeptics' accusations that these translations were flawed. As copies of copies of copies of the Old Testament books were made over the centuries, many scholars concluded that mistakes may have been introduced into the Masoretic texts. Comparisons with other ancient versions of the Old Testament, such as the Greek Septuagint, Latin Vulgate, and Samaritan Pentateuch, seemed to confirm this "transmission" problem and called into question the integrity and reliability of the traditional Hebrew text.

These doubts were settled with the discovery in Cave 1 of a copy of the entire Book of Isaiah dated to 125 bc. This is 1,000 years earlier than the Masoretic Ben Asher Codex. When compared to the Ben Asher Codex, this scroll proved to be identical to the later version of Isaiah in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent variation consisted



Portion of a Scroll

primarily of obvious slips of the pen and spelling alterations, many of which are no more significant than the difference in meaning between the word "over" being used in place of the word "above."

This accuracy also proved to be the case for all the other biblical scrolls among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although interesting differences and additions do appear and are of great value in understanding the history of the transmission of the biblical text, on the whole the witness of the scrolls is to the exceptional preservation of the biblical text through the centuries.

### Abbreviations For the Dead Sea Scrolls

Example: 4Q521 2:6

- 4 = number of the cave in which the document was found
- Q = Qumran
- 521 = designated number for the scroll
- 2 = column number (abbreviated Col.)
- 6 = line numbers

This scroll is a reference to Text 521, from Cave 4 at Qumran, column 2, line 6

## WHAT DO THE SCROLLS REVEAL ABOUT JEWISH HISTORY?

One thing the scrolls demonstrate is that a number of Jewish groups who separated themselves from society by living in "separatist" communities flourished during what is called the Second Temple Period. The Second Temple Period is the period from 520 BC to AD 70. It is called the "Second Temple" because in 520 BC, the Jews were allowed to rebuild Solomon's temple, which had been destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar. This second temple stood until it was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. The separatist Jewish groups included the Pharisees, Sadducees, the Zealots—all of whom we read about in the Gospel stories—as well as the Essenes, and the Sicari. So far as we know, none of these groups left behind documents concerning their sects. The exception would be the authors and collectors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some believe the Essenes produced and collected the scrolls. Whether or not scrolls belonged to the Essenes, the texts provide historians with original writings on the beliefs and practices of other sects of this period with which the Qumran Jews interacted.



The discovery of the scrolls shows us that Second Temple Judaism, although similar to the older biblical Judaism we read about in the Old Testament, was not identical to it. Neither was Second Temple Judaism identical to what is called Rabbinic Judaism, which began to emerge after the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70. As a result, the scrolls give us a snapshot of a moment of great disagreement and change in the Jewish practices and beliefs of the day. For example, in many of the writings, the Qumran Jews condemn what they viewed as the ritual abuses of the priests of the day who ran the temple (the same group of Pharisees that Jesus often criticized). Below is a portion of the War Rule. The War Rule is a scroll that contains a prophecy that God would soon destroy these corrupt Temple Jews, as well as a prophecy about the defeat of the Gentile powers oppressing Israel in an end-of-time battle.

### The War Rule (Scroll abbreviation: 1QM 1:5-8)

*Col. 1<sup>s</sup>[Then the]re\* shall be a time of salvation for the People of God, and a time of dominion for all men of His forces, and the eternal annihilation for all the forces of Belial. There shall be g[reat] panic [among] the sons of Japheth, Assyria shall fall with no one to come to his aid, and the supremacy of the Kittim shall cease, that wickedness be overcome without a remnant. There shall be no survivors of [all the Sons of] Darkness.*

*<sup>8</sup>Then [the Sons of Rig]hteousness shall shine to all ends of the world, continuing to shine forth until [the] end of the appointed seasons of darkness.*

\* [ ] brackets indicate proposed translation or difficult or missing letters or words.

## WHAT DO THE SCROLLS REVEAL ABOUT EARLY CHRISTIANITY?

The scrolls opened a window into the time surrounding the climactic events leading up to the birth of the early church, a period that witnessed the development of an end-times movement in Judaism, the birth and ministry of Jesus, the destruction of Jewish independence, the rise of Christianity, and the formation of Rabbinic Judaism.

More particularly, the messianic emphasis (that the long-awaited Messiah of Israel would soon come with power) and prophetic orientation found in many of the scrolls provide insight into the religious viewpoint expressed in the New Testament and early Christianity. When considering the history and religious controversy depicted in the scrolls, it reaffirms the Jewishness of Jesus, the Gospels, and Christianity. In addition the scrolls help us better understand the Apostle Paul's vocabulary and his discussion of customs.

The scrolls also provide help in resolving questions related to Christian interpretation of the Old Testament. For example, Christian tradition has accepted the reading of the Greek Septuagint version of Psalm 22:16, which reads: "They have pierced my hands and feet." This reading appeared to justify a messianic interpretation, where this statement was a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion. At odds with this reading was the Hebrew-language Masoretic Text, which reads "like a lion are my hands and my feet." Because of this it was thought those who made the Septuagint translation (followed here by the New Testament) had mistakenly read the Hebrew word as a verb (= "pierced") rather than a noun (= "lion"). However, the Greek Septuagint, and Christian copyists, were proven to be correct when the Psalms Scroll clearly indicated a verb instead of a noun and reads "they pierced" rather than "like a lion."

Temple Scroll

## WHAT DO THE SCROLLS REVEAL ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Since the scrolls generally come to us from a time before the formation of Christianity, they offer a context for understanding the expected nature and role of the Messiah in Judaism. Many of the scrolls from Cave 4 demonstrate a high view of the coming Messiah as being a divine agent with supernatural qualities and powers. These words from a Cave 4 scroll illustrate this understanding:

### The Messianic Apocalypse (Scroll abbreviation: 4Q521 2:6-13)

*Col. 2<sup>o</sup>His spirit will hover over the humble, and He renews the faithful in His strength. 7For He will glorify the pious with the th[ro]ne of His eternal kingdom, 8free the captives, open the eyes of the blind, raise up those op[ressed]. 9And for[ev]er I shall hold fast [to] the [ho]peful and pious [...] 10[...] holy [Messiah] will be delayed [...] 11and the Lord shall do glorious things which have not been done, just as He said. Lord.*

*12For He shall heal the critically wounded, He shall resurrect the dead, He shall proclaim good news to the poor, 13He shall [...], He shall lead the [ho]ly ones, and the hungry He shall enrich...*

The scrolls also explained the sense of prophetic purpose of the Qumran sect in the Judean desert in terms of Isaiah's statement, "A voice is crying, Prepare a way for the Lord in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3), the same expression of purpose given by John the Baptist in the Gospels. The scrolls also contain "beatitudes" (4Q525) similar to those of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12) and on the Plain (Luke 6:20-23), use vocabulary unique to the New Testament ("sons of light," "works of righteousness," "Belial"), and have similar political and social views on such subjects as predestination, the Temple, divorce, and prophetic events climaxing in a messianic age. With respect to motive for the Sanhedrin's condemnation of Jesus and approval for the Roman punishment of crucifixion, the Temple Scroll shows that the condemnation was based on an interpretation of Deuteronomy 21:22-23 in which the punishment of hanging a man on a tree is mentioned. The Temple Scroll states that this was the prescribed punishment for sedition (betraying the Jewish nation), and this agrees with the statement of the high priest Caiaphas in John 11:49 that Jesus was guilty of this crime.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was heard around the world, because the scrolls prove the accuracy of the Bible we have today, shed light on the culture in which Jesus lived, and provide fresh and new insight into the context of early Christianity.

