

The Dead Sea Scrolls:
Their Significance and
Importance for Biblical Studies

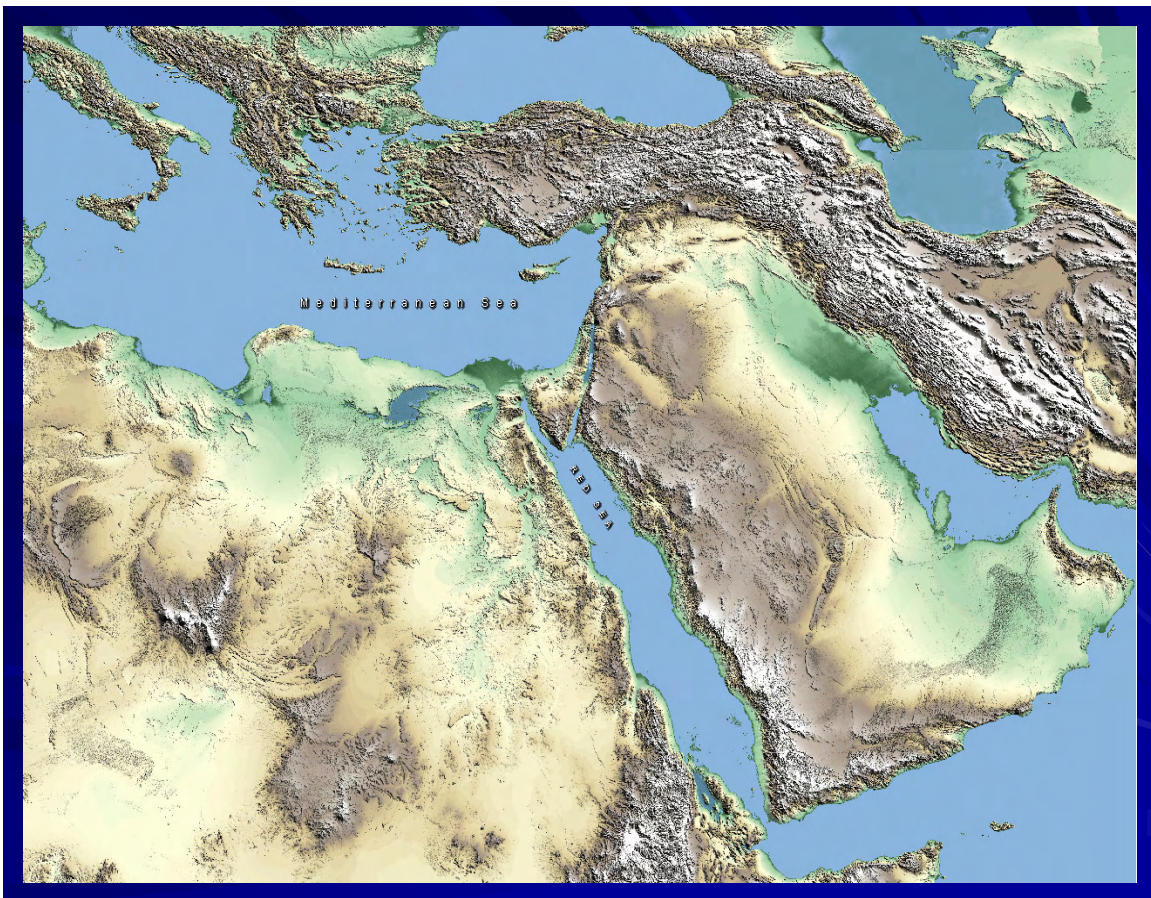
The History of the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls

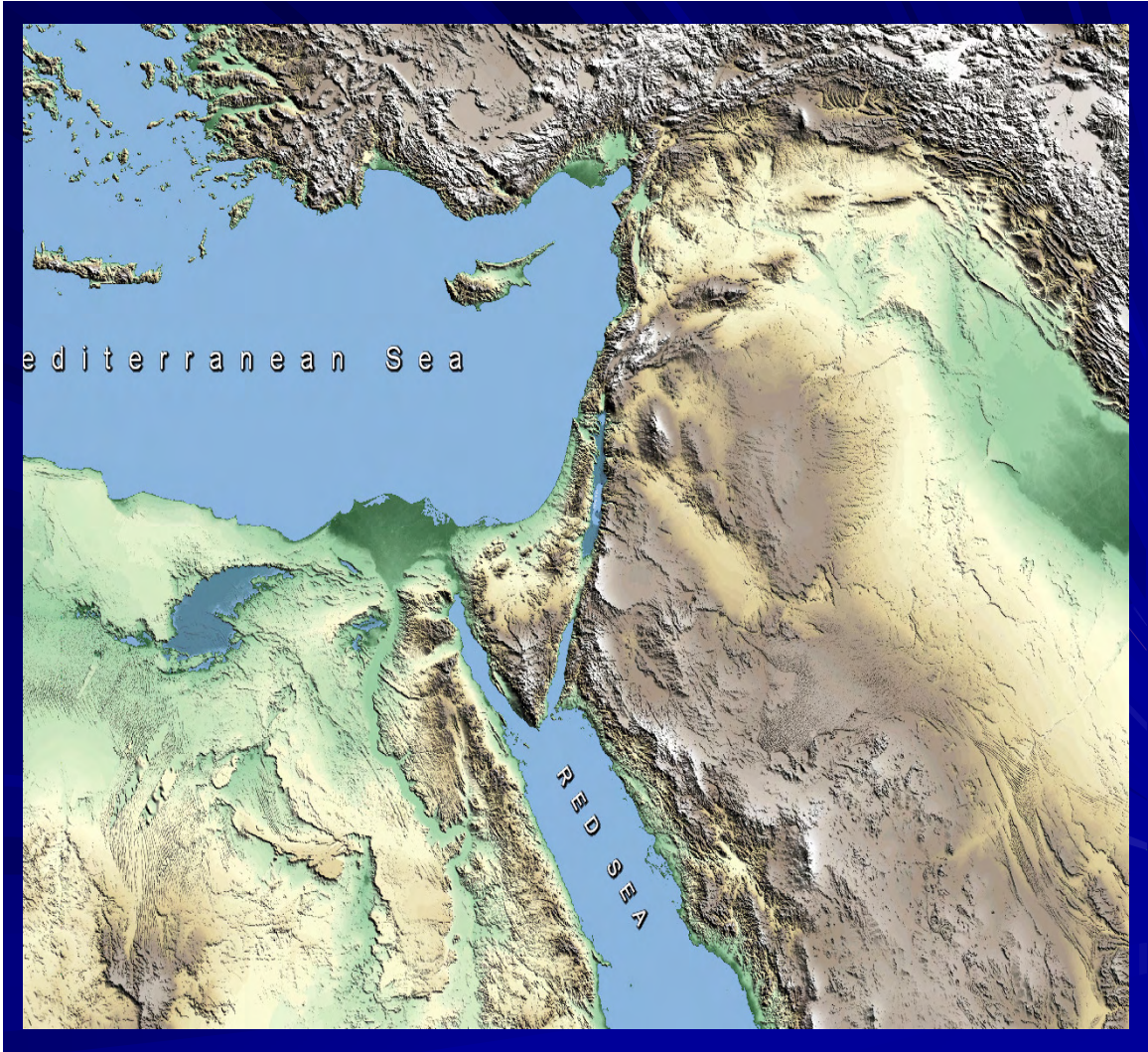
The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the spring of 1947 by a young Bedouin shepherd named Muhammad edh-Dhib, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in a very rugged, mountainous area in a cave (Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran In Perspective* [Cleveland: William Collins & World Publishing Co. Inc., 1978], 9). Since then, one of the most important archaeological finds ever made was announced to the world, which began an intense search for other scrolls, as well as an ongoing deciphering, analysis, and translation of the ones that were found. In all, eleven caves were discovered containing a treasure trove of manuscripts and fragments that are still being researched today. Over a nine year period (1947-1956), these eleven caves yielded twelve scrolls written on leather and one on copper, as well as thousands of fragments written on papyrus and leather. In all, almost “900 separate manuscripts were found in some twenty-five thousand pieces, with many no bigger than a postage stamp. A few scrolls are well preserved, such as the Great Isaiah Scroll . . . and the Great Psalms Scroll . . . however, most of the scrolls are very fragmentary” (Martin Abegg, Jr., Peter Flint, & Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999], xiv).

With regard to these texts found at Qumran, Geza Vermes describes how the Qumran scribes took great pains to carefully write and transcribe their work in a very delineated manner, and they would use a type of vegetable ink that was kept in ink wells. Thus, they were very precise in their writing and use of the materials available to them. The longer works were on scrolls on one side only and sewn together; papyrus documents were frequently used more than once; and shorter writings such as letters were typically written on small pieces of material, including wood and potsherds (Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, revised ed. [New York: Penguin Books, 2004], 15). In addition to these eleven caves discovered at Qumran, however, there have also been discoveries of manuscripts near the Dead Sea in other places, and some of the most significant were at “Wadi Murabb’ât (1951-52), Naḥal Ḥever (1951-52 and 1960-61), and Masada (1963-65)” (Abegg, Flint & Ulrich, xiv).

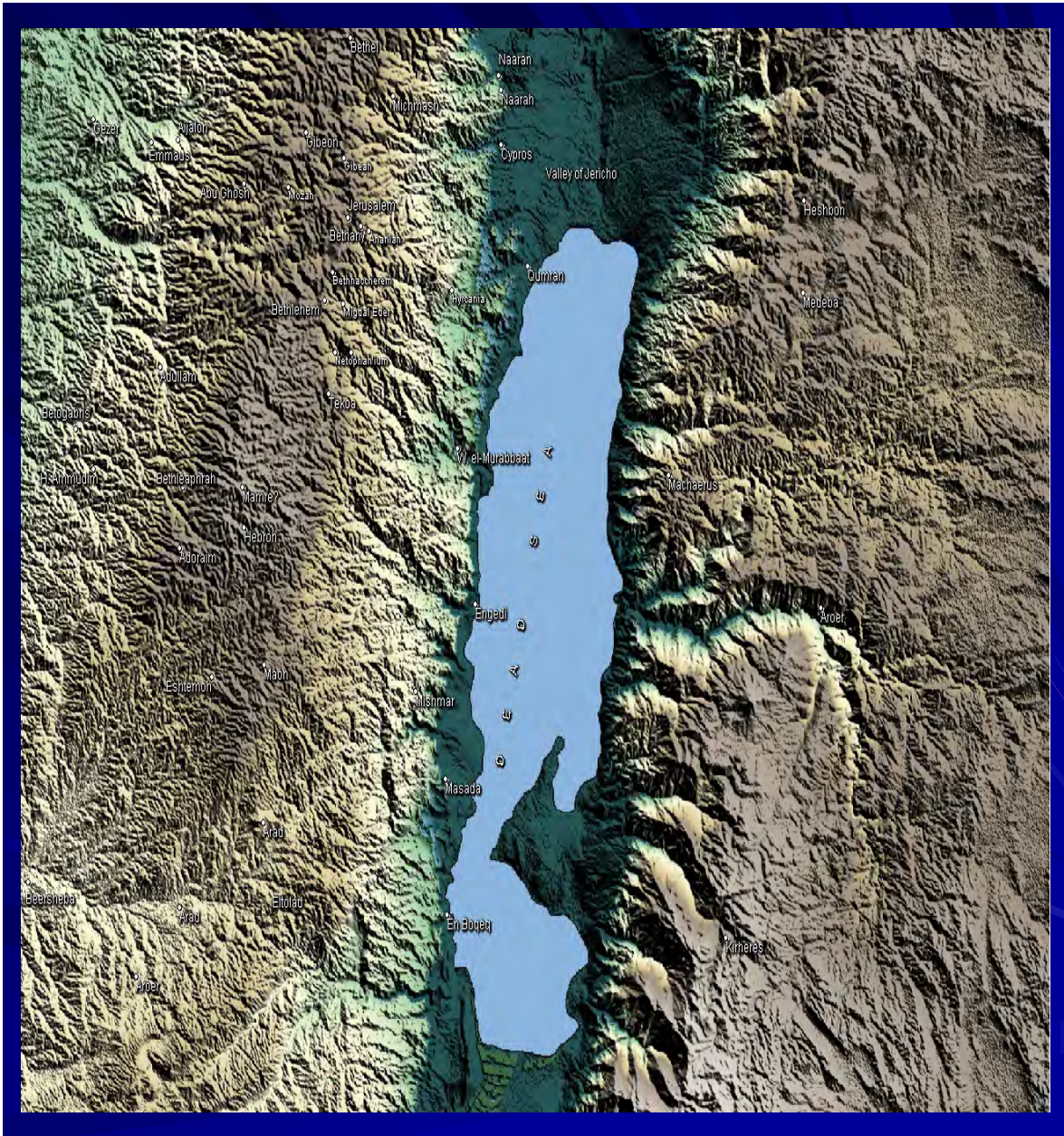
We will now take a look at just how the scrolls were discovered and eventually came to the forefront of biblical archaeology and scholarship, but

first we will get a view of the Dead Sea area where Qumran was located. The following pictures are overviews of the western side of the Mediterranean Sea: the first is that of Turkey, Greece, and Italy to the north, the whole of the Middle East to the east and south, and Israel and the Dead Sea almost in the direct center; the next three are close ups of Israel and the Dead Sea. These pictures will help you see just how geographically central Israel is to the world at large.









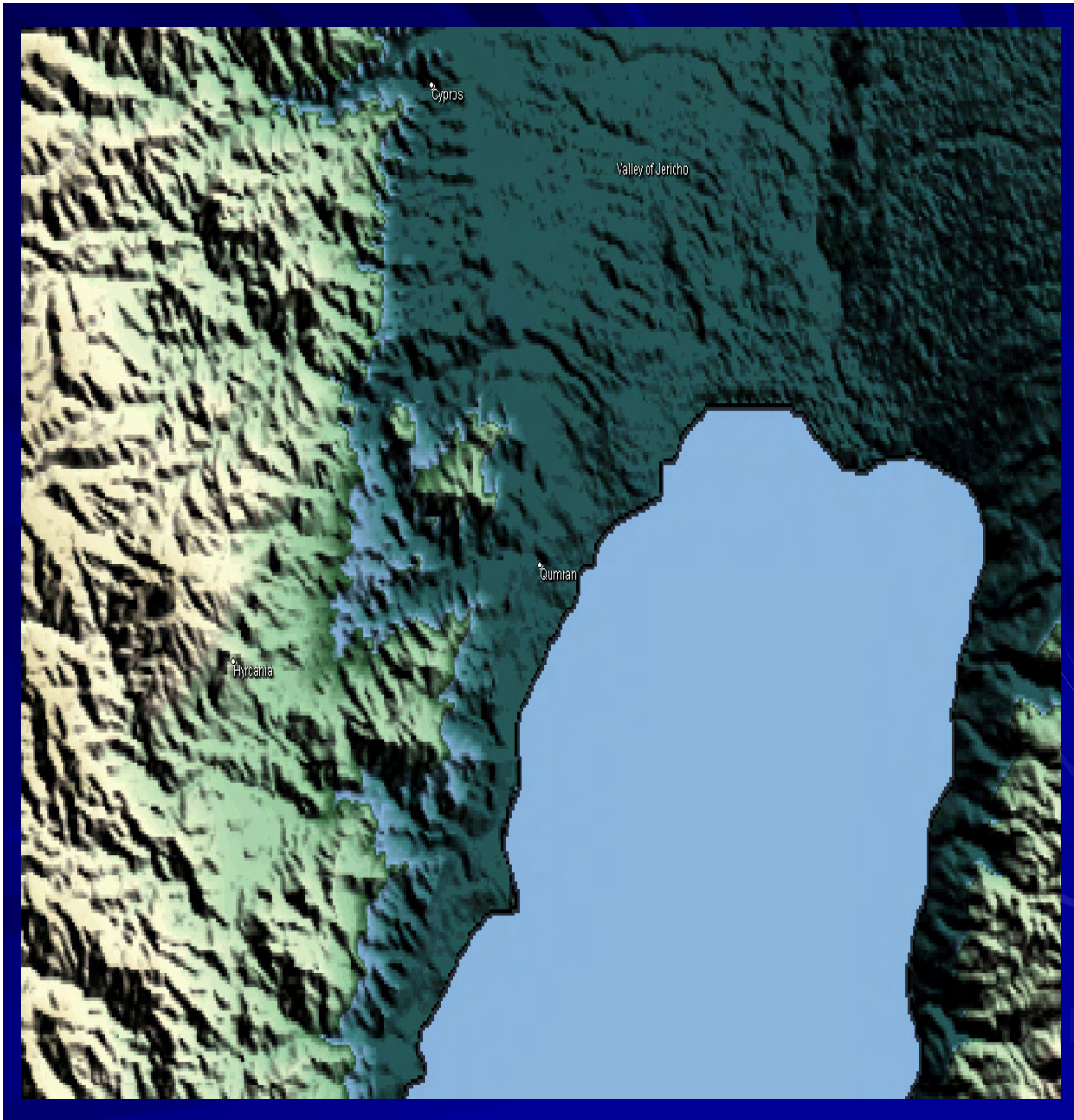
This following picture of the Dead Sea represents why it is called the Dead Sea, and that is the saline properties that permeate this body of water.

However, at this present time, the Dead Sea is in a gradual state of receding by about three feet per year due to the fact that the water from the Jordan River is being siphoned off for commercial and public use, and thus, these salt deposits are disappearing (Herschel Shanks, “The Dead Sea Scrolls – What They Really Say,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* v. 33, no. 3 [May/June 2007]: 8. Online: <http://deadseascrolls.bib-arch.org>).



This first of the next two pictures is a closer view of Qumran on the coast of the Dead Sea, and the next one actually shows a portion of Dead Sea

coast line with some vegetation in the foreground, and in the background are the limestone cliffs of the Dead Sea, which go directly down to the water's edge. This part of the Dead Sea coastline, which is in front of Qumran and juts out into the sea, can be seen in the previous overview (Ibid., 9).





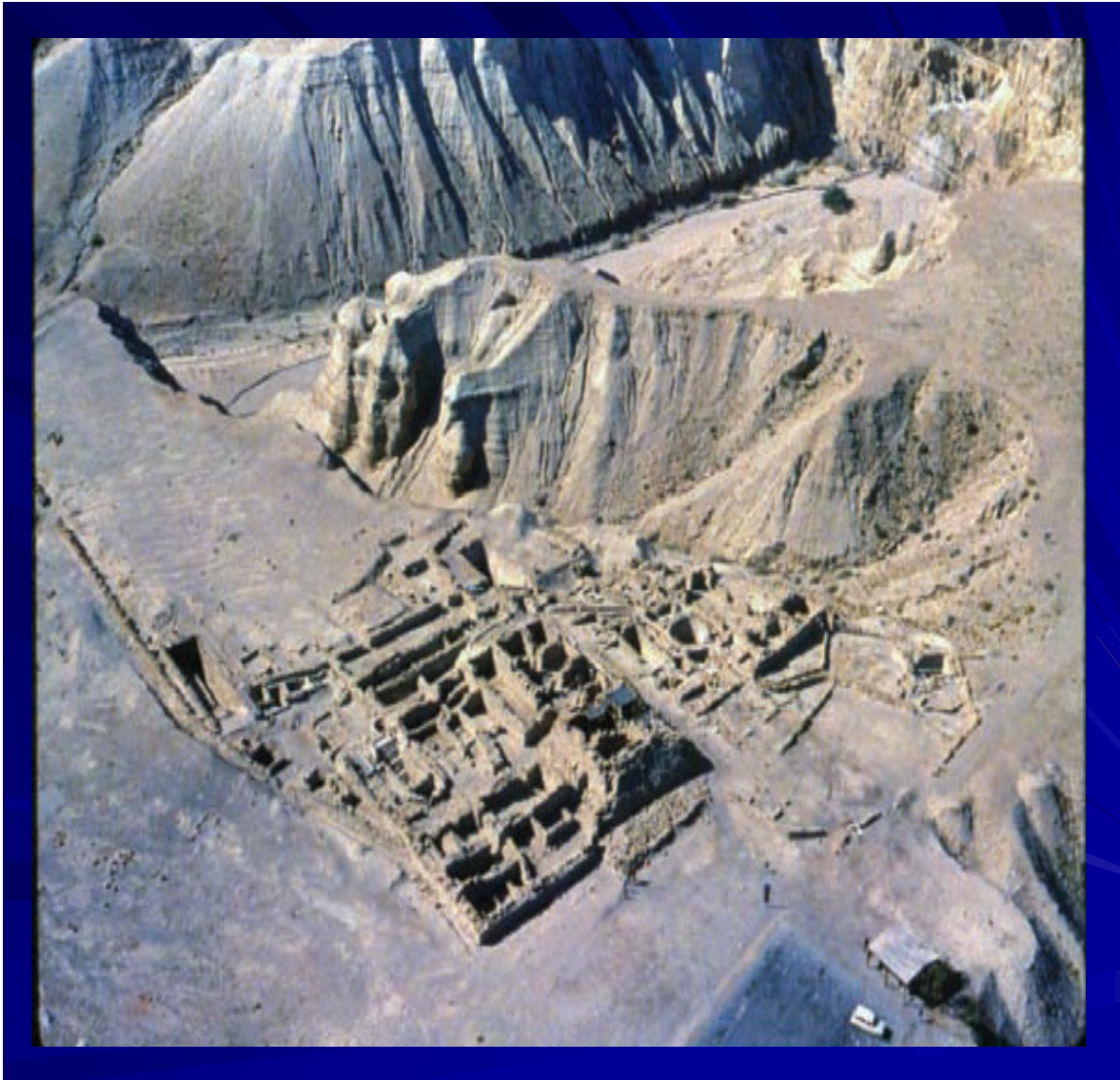
The following picture is that of the caves that punctuate these cliffs along the shore of the Dead Sea, and it was from one of the caves pictured here in

these sheer, limestone cliffs that the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls was found by the Bedouin shepherd, Muhammad edh-Dhib, in the spring of 1947 (Ibid.).



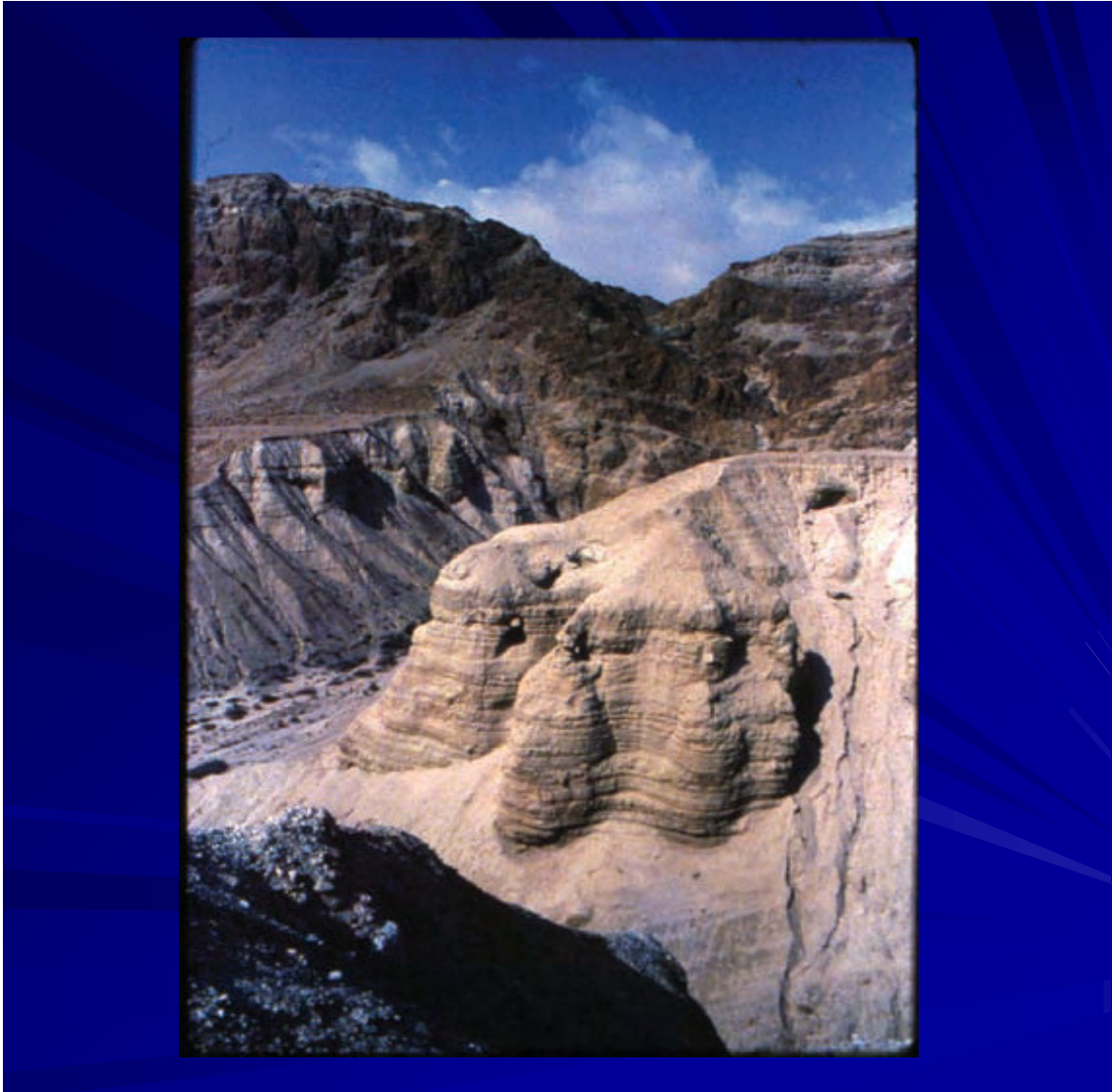
Between the coastal plain and the sheer, limestone cliffs punctuated with caves, lies a much softer rock, upon which Qumran was built. The

following is a picture of the Qumran ruins as they are today. What contributed to that softer condition of the rock is the fact that it is located in a wadi, or valley, through which the run off of winter rains comes down from the cliffs to the Dead Sea (Ibid., 13).



This next picture is a close-up of the rock formation just behind the present day ruins of Qumran, and as you can see, this formation of rocks juts

out in bulges, and in these bulging rock formations are man made caves that contained thousands of manuscript fragments (Ibid.).



The following is a picture of this same rock formation in the spring of the year, and Cave 4 is one of the holes at the top (Ibid., 13). This Cave

contained over 500 different scroll manuscripts, including fragment, 4Q246. This fragment contains phrases that are central to the New Testament presentation of Jesus: *Son of God*, *Most High* and *Son of the Most High*. We will examine this fragment in greater detail later, but suffice it to say that it represents the Jewish heritage out of which Christianity emerged, and its copy date is within 100 years of Jesus' birth (Robert Eisenman & Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* [New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1994], 68-71).



This is a picture of someone actually going down into Cave 4 through a hole at the top of the cave (Ibid., 13).



Here is a picture inside of Cave 4, and notice the holes in the walls at various heights (Ibid., 14).



As was mentioned earlier, there were over 500 manuscript fragments found in Cave 4, and there was no whole, undamaged scroll among them – everything was in fragments. I pointed out the holes in the walls to you, because it is thought that perhaps these were the fittings for storage shelves on which the scrolls were placed. If that is the case, the theory holds that at

some point the shelves began to break, perhaps due to earthquakes, or simply through decay over time. The result being that the scrolls fell to the ground where they were covered with rock debris and bat feces, and they were further damaged by various rodents chewing on them. Thus, by the 20th century, they were in fragments. The following picture is that of Cave 4 fragments, and you can see how these fragments

came to the researchers in small boxes of many fragments (Ibid.)



After the fragments were sorted out and cleaned up, they were placed under a protective glass and took on the appearance of a puzzle, with only 10 % of its necessary pieces at hand (Ibid.)



As was stated at the beginning of our presentation, in the spring of 1947, a young Bedouin shepherd named Muhammad edh-Dhib was looking for a lost sheep among some caves on the rugged northwest shore of the Dead Sea. The story goes that he threw a rock into a cave in hopes of scaring a sheep out if it if he was hiding there. However, what happened is that instead of hearing or seeing a sheep run out of the cave, he heard a cracking

sound of what seemed to him the sound of pottery being broken. Upon entering the cave, he found old pottery jars containing ancient scrolls. The following is a picture of edh-Dhib himself (on the right), along with another Bedouin, who together, “are said to have discovered the first seven intact scrolls from what has become known as Cave 1” (Ibid., 10).



There were a large number of leather fragments recovered from this first cave they discovered, representing well over fifty separate and specific topics and emphases, but the major items found in this first cave were: an incomplete Isaiah manuscript; a scroll of Hymns; the War Rule, which is a description of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness; the complete

Isaiah scroll; the Commentary of Habakkuk; the Community Rule; and the Genesis Apocryphon.

After the initial discovery, the scrolls eventually emerged in the hands of a Bethlehem antiquities dealer named Kando, who became the “middleman for the Bedouin” (Ibid.). Below is his picture.



On November 28, 1947, the day before the UN adopted the Partition Plan, whereby the Palestinian territory was divided into two sections, a Jewish state (55 % of the land) and an Arab state (45% of the land), Eleazer Lipa Sukenik, a professor of archaeology at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, went to Bethlehem to acquire three of the major scrolls found in

Cave 1, including the incomplete Isaiah scroll. The acquisition was completed on November 29, and upon his return to Jerusalem that very day, the streets were crowded with people singing and dancing over the fact that the UN had just voted by a 2/3 majority for a Jewish republic to be created for the first time in 2000 years! Professor Sukenik

was overwhelmed by what he saw and heard, and it was to him “almost messianic: to recover a 2,000-year-old scroll, from the time the Jews last had their own state, on the same day that a Jewish state was again being created was a moving spiritual experience for Sukenik” (Ibid., 11). Below is his picture.



The four other major scrolls of Cave 1, including the complete Isaiah Scroll, were acquired by the Metropolitan Samuel of the Syrian Christian Church in Jerusalem. He tried to sell them in Jerusalem, but nobody would buy them, so he came to the United States in hopes of finding a buyer. They were put on display in the Library of Congress, but still there were no

buyers, so he in turn put an add in *The Wall Street Journal* advertising the scrolls. The following are pictures of the Metropolitan, as well as the add he placed in *The Wall Street Journal*.



Professor Sukenik's son, archaeologist Yigael Yadin, was in the United States at the time, and he saw the ad in *The Wall Street Journal*. He tried to purchase them covertly for Israel because he was concerned that if the Metropolitan Samuel knew that he was attempting this on behalf of Israel, the Metropolitan would not sell them to him. Thus, Yadin employed some

covers and established a price of \$250,00 for four, intact Dead Sea Scrolls, which, once again, included the complete Isaiah Scroll. That is what might be called a 'steal' in both today's economy, as well as back then for such a priceless source of biblical and historical artifacts (Ibid., 12).

This is a picture of Yadin (bald) and another scholar attempting to separate pieces of the scrolls.



It is thought that the Metropolitan probably knew he was selling to Israel because he did not actually have title to these documents since Jordan, not Israel, had jurisdiction at the time over Qumran, and Jordan attempted to insist upon its title to the Scrolls. Israel, on the other hand, was not concerned with who had the bonafide title, but rather with acquiring the

documents, and that is what they did. Consequently, with the purchase of these four scrolls, Israel now had all seven of the major scrolls from Cave 1, and a special museum was built to house them called, the Shrine of the Book. The following is a picture of the Shrine.

The white dome represents the lid on the scroll jars, and the black slab and white dome represent the contrast between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness in the War Scroll (Ibid., 12).



The following picture is that of the complete Isaiah Scroll of Cave 1 that is now housed in the Shrine of the Book. It is opened to 40:3: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.’” This passage is quoted in all three synoptic Gospels, and it is John the Baptist heralding the coming of the

Messiah and calling on the people to “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight’” (Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-14)!



The Origin of the Qumran Community

In order to understand the beginnings of the Qumran Community, it is necessary to go back to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC, which in turn led to the Babylonian Captivity. When the Temple was destroyed in 587 by Nebuchadnezzar and the majority of its inhabitants were moved to Babylon (some fleeing to Egypt, taking Jeremiah, and some of the poorest remaining in Judea), Nebuchadnezzar also had some of the leading civil, military, and priestly leaders executed in Riblah (2 Kgs 25:18-21; Jer 52:24-27). Thus, without a Temple and active priesthood, how could the people carry on their worship, ministry, and service to the Lord? The answer, many believe, came with the establishment of the synagogue during this period of the Babylonian Captivity.

Ezekiel's ministry was one that took place entirely in Babylon (from 592 BC onward – Ezek 1:1-3), and we see some references to the Jewish elders and people in captivity coming and meeting with him in his home for instruction (Ezek 8:1; 14:1-5; 33:30-33), which could objectively be viewed as the incipient stage of the synagogue form of worship and teaching. The point being is that those who were truly believers in and followers of Yahweh would continue to worship and serve Him wherever they might be. And in fact, in two of the passages in Ezekiel that I just referred to (Ezek 14:1-5 & 33:30-33), we find Ezekiel rebuking the people and calling them back to a true and genuine commitment to the Lord that clearly involves a separation from self-destructive, worldly mindsets and actions, to an inward separation unto the Lord that would reflect in their lifestyles.

After the Persian conquest by Cyrus of Babylon in 539, the following year he issued the edict of restoration for the Jews to return to Palestine in order to rebuild the Temple. This of course would entail a reestablishment of an active and functioning priesthood, including the office of High Priest. There was great excitement, therefore, as the returning refugees began the rebuilding of the Temple. However, their enthusiasm was soon dampened by opposition from the current inhabitants of Israel, which included the Samaritans and others who had not been taken into exile, and who had deviated from the orthodox beliefs of the returning Jews. Their attempt to rebuild the Temple was shut down after the foundation was laid in 535, and it remained shut down until the second year of Darius I in 520 BC. Now once again, the Jews needed times and places where they could worship and

receive teaching during those 15 years, and the synagogue was the obvious place.

In 521, Darius I came to the throne of Persia, and at that same time in Judah, God raised up two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, and through these two men, God began to inspire the Jews once again to begin rebuilding the Temple:

When the prophets, Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them, then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them supporting them. (Ezra 5:1-2)

Thus, the rebuilding actually began in 519 BC, in Darius' second year of rule (Ez. 4:24). However, there was new opposition from a man named Tattenai, who was the provincial governor, and he sent a letter to Darius reporting about the Temple's rebuilding project as a result of the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah. Darius in turn issued a decree to find the edict of Cyrus concerning the rebuilding of the Temple, and it was found, and he in turn commanded that Tattenai help the Jews in every way to finish the rebuilding project as quickly as possible:

Then Tattenai, the governor of *the province* beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues carried out *the decree* with all diligence, just as King Darius had sent. 14 And the elders of the Jews were successful in building through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they finished building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15 And this temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar; it was the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. (Ezra 6:13-15)

Thus, the Temple was completed on approximately March 15, 515 BC. We will now skip from the completion of the Temple in 515 BC, to Ezra's trip to Jerusalem during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia (464-423 BC).

Ezra was of the priestly line, descended from Aaron:

This Ezra went up from Babylon, and he was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given; and the king granted him all he requested because the hand of the LORD his God *was* upon him. 7 And some of the sons of Israel and some of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the temple servants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. 8 And he came to Jerusalem in the

fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, because the good hand of his God *was* upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice *it*, and to teach *His* statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezra 7:6-10)

The actual time for the trip went from March 27 – July 24, 457. Artaxerxes sent a letter with Ezra with the following directions: anyone from Israel could return with Ezra; Ezra was given money to purchase whatever he needed in the way of sacrifices once he arrived; the servants of Yahweh were not to be taxed; and whoever did not follow the law of God and the law of the King would be subject to the severest punishment.

Once Ezra and his entourage arrived, everything was distributed in an orderly fashion for the purchase of the sacrifices, as well as whatever else might be needed for the use of the ministry in the Temple, and the edicts of the King were delivered:

The exiles who had come from the captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 lambs, 12 male goats for a sin offering, all as a burnt offering to the LORD. 36 Then they delivered the king's edicts to the king's satraps, and to the governors *in the provinces* beyond the River, and they supported the people and the house of God. (Ezra 8:35-36)

The actual date for the time of sacrifice appears to be July 28, 457. However, after all of this had taken place, Ezra was approached by the leaders of the people, and they told him some very disturbing things that had developed – mixed marriages with pagans was rampant, which in turn would result in a compromise of believing, following, and living for the Lord, bringing on the people's self-destruction for themselves, as well as for their progeny:

Now when these things had been completed, the princes approached me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, according to their abominations, *those* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 "For they have taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy race has intermingled with the peoples of the lands; indeed, the hands of the princes and the rulers have been foremost in this unfaithfulness." (Ezra 9:1-2)

This in turn brought on some intense reforms dictated by Ezra - the separation of the men from their foreign wives and their pagan influence, and their return in faithful obedience to Jehovah God. The date for this edict and its implementation appears to be December 11, 457 (Ezra 10:9). As you read this section in Ezra, you come away with a sense of the profound commitment Ezra had to the Lord and the Law given to Moses – his judgment and actions are very hard to see and understand in our culture today, but this is what he had the people to do in order to separate themselves unto the Lord in both their heart and actions.

The ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah overlapped. Ezra was in Judah from July 24, 457 BC until late 444 BC, less than one year after Nehemiah arrived from Artaxerxes' service in 445. Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem in 52 days, from July 18 – September 8, 444 BC. It was apparently after the wall was rebuilt that Nehemiah 8:1-3 occurred:

And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. 2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who *could* listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. (Nehemiah 8:1-3)

Right after this, we read: “Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, ‘This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.’ For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law” (Neh 8:9). According to 8:2, this address was “on the first day of the seventh month,” in the year 444, which would make that September 23, 444. Thus, approximately 15 days after the wall was completed, if these calculations are correct, Ezra read the entire “book of the law of Moses.”

Once again, if these dates and times are figured correctly, this is 15 years after Ezra had addressed the people concerning their mixed marriages, and now he gives his final address – reading the entire “book of the law of Moses.” The people repented and joined in a new covenant with the Lord:

Now the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God, their wives, their sons and their daughters, all those who had knowledge and understanding, 29 are

joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, which was given through Moses, God's servant, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of God our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes; 30 and that we will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons. 31 As for the peoples of the land who bring wares or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the sabbath or a holy day; and we will forego *the crops* the seventh year and the exaction of every debt. 32 We also placed ourselves under obligation to contribute yearly one third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: 33 for the showbread, for the continual grain offering, for the continual burnt offering, the sabbaths, the new moon, for the appointed times, for the holy things and for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. 34 Likewise we cast lots for the supply of wood *among* the priests, the Levites, and the people in order that they might bring it to the house of our God, according to our fathers' households, at fixed times annually, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God as it is written in the law; 35 and in order that they might bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of all the fruit of every tree to the house of the LORD annually, 36 and bring to the house of our God the first-born of our sons and of our cattle, and the first-born of our herds and our flocks as it is written in the law, for the priests who are ministering in the house of our God. 37 We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil to the priests at the chambers of the house of our God, and the tithe of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are they who receive the tithes in all the rural towns. 38 And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive tithes, and the Levites shall bring up the tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. 39 For the sons of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of the grain, the new wine and the oil, to the chambers; there are the utensils of the sanctuary, the priests who are ministering, the gatekeepers, and the singers. Thus we will not neglect the house of our God. (Neh 10:28-39)

Soon after this covenant was ratified with the people, Ezra apparently departs and returns to Susa, the Persian capitol, in late 444 BC. In 432 BC, Nehemiah returns to Susa for a period of time (Neh. 13:6), and while he is gone, the character of the people begins to slide as a result of spiritual and moral compromise: Eliashib, the high priest, had allowed Tobiah, the Ammonite, to have his own special room within the Temple compound; the people had not been bringing in their tithes, and thus, the Levites were not being recompensed for their service to the Lord, thereby forcing them to return to their own fields in order to support their families and leaving off their ministerial work; the people had returned to working on the Sabbath; and lastly, the people had once again returned to marrying pagans and

bringing in a godless and spiritually compromising influence into their culture. Nehemiah rebuked them for their compromising lifestyles, and he set about to restore them to the level of spiritual separation and inward holiness where he felt they should be in their relationship with Jehovah God (Neh 13:4-31).

With the Community at Qumran, we see some striking similarities between them and the Judeans of the mid 5th century. First of all, the Essenes are considered to be the inhabitants of Qumran from the mid 2nd century BC to 68 AD. Josephus makes an extensive reference to them as being one of three major sects of Judaism at the time of Christ:

For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first of whom are the Pharisees; of the second the Sadducees; and the third sect, who pretends to a severer discipline, and called Essenes. These last are Jews by birth, and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have. (*JW 2.8.2 # 119*)

There has been some debate over whether or not the Essenes were the actual inhabitants of Qumran, but the overwhelming and convincing evidence supports the view that they were.

Secondly, the Essenes lived a very strict, moral lifestyle, akin in some ways to that of the Judeans under Ezra and Nehemiah, but in some areas, even more strict. Again, Josephus points out some of their beliefs and practices:

These Essenes reject pleasures as an evil, but esteem continence, and the conquest over our passions, to be virtue. They neglect wedlock, but choose out other persons' children, while they are pliable, and fit for learning; and esteem them to be of their kindred, and form them according to their own manners. They do not absolutely deny the fitness of marriage, and the succession of mankind thereby continued; but they guard against the lascivious behavior of women, and are persuaded that none of them preserve their fidelity to one man. . . . They also avoid spitting the the midst of them, or on the right side. Moreover, they are stricter than any other of the Jews in resting from their labors on the seventh day; for they not only get their food ready the day before, that they may not be obliged to kindle a fire on that day, but they will not remove any vessel out of its place, nor go to stool thereon. (*JW 2.8.2 #120-121, 147*)

Thirdly, in Ezra and Nehemiah, we saw a deterioration of spiritual leadership in the Temple worship, and in particular with the High Priest, Eliashib (Neh 13:4-9, 28-29). This is the same type of thing that led to the Maccabean revolt and also constituted some of the reasons for the

establishment of Qumran. When Antiochus Epiphanes assumed the Seleucid throne in 175 BC (after Alexander the Great died on June 10, 323 BC, his kingdom was ultimately divided up between his generals – Antigonus I, Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy I, & Seleucus I – with Ptolemy and Seleucus being the most significant as far as their impact on western civilization and biblical history is concerned, Ptolemy receiving Egypt, and Seleucus claiming Syria), he initially kept Onias III (195-175), the current High Priest, in Jerusalem. But later, he removed him from the High Priesthood and appointed his brother, Jason, in his place because Jason paid Epiphanes more money for the position. Three years later, in 172, Epiphanes removed Jason and replaced him with Menelaus (172-162), of the priestly tribe of Bilga, whose brother, Simon, had been an opponent of Onias III. All of these actions were viewed by the Jews as completely out of line as far as their law was concerned – the unlawful removal of a sitting High Priest who was well and able to serve and replacing him with his brother; then, to remove the brother and replace him with someone from a priestly line other than the Zadokite line, who had no right to serve, was anathema in the eyes of the committed Jews (Urriel Rappaport, “Maccabean Revolt” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [New York: Doubleday, 1996]).

The second area that was of great concern to those Jews committed to Jewish law as the grid for their lives and culture was the increased Hellenization of their culture as a result of this unlawful investiture of spiritual authority by Antiochus Epiphanes, and that was especially true with both Jason and Menelaus:

But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, who was called the Illustrious, had taken possession of the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias ambitiously sought the high priesthood: 8 And went to the king, promising him three hundred and sixty talents of silver, and out of other revenues fourscore talents. 9 Besides this he promised also a hundred and fifty more, if he might have license to set him up a place for exercise, and a place for youth, and to entitle them, that were at Jerusalem, Antiochians. 10 Which when the king had granted, and he had gotten the rule into his hands, forthwith he began to bring over his countrymen to the fashion of the heathens. 11 And abolishing those things, which had been decreed of special favour by the kings in behalf of the Jews, by the means of John the father of that Eupolemus, who went ambassador to Rome to make amity and alliance, he disannulled the lawful ordinances of the citizens, and brought in fashions that were perverse. 12 For he had the boldness to set up, under the very castle, a place of exercise, and to put all the choicest youths in brothel houses. 13 Now this was not the beginning, but an increase, and progress of heathenish and foreign manners, through the

abominable and unheard of wickedness of Jason, that impious wretch and no priest. . . . Three years afterwards Jason sent Menelaus, brother of the aforesaid Simon, to carry money to the king, and to bring answers from him concerning certain necessary affairs. 13 Now this was not the beginning, but an increase, and progress of heathenish and foreign manners, through the abominable and unheard of wickedness of Jason, that impious wretch and no priest. . . . Three years afterwards Jason sent Menelaus, brother of the aforesaid Simon, to carry money to the king, and to bring answers from him concerning certain necessary affairs. 24 But he being recommended to the king, when he had magnified the appearance of his power, got the high priesthood for himself, by offering more than Jason by three hundred talents of silver. 25 So having received the king's mandate, he returned bringing nothing worthy of the high priesthood: but having the mind of a cruel tyrant, and the rage of a savage beast. (II Macc 4:7-13, 23-25)

Thus, both Nehemiah and the committed Jews of Jerusalem in the days just prior to the Maccabean revolt had problems with their Temple leadership, as well as with the purity and holiness of worship. However, it must be admitted, that the problems facing 2nd century BC Judea with regard to the role and function of the High Priest appear to be of a much greater magnitude than that facing the 5th century Judeans.

However, in 169, Jason, whom Menelaus had replaced, attempted to retake Jerusalem for himself, thinking that Antiochus had been killed in Egypt, and he shut up Menelaus in the citadel (II Macc 5:5). But Antiochus wasn't killed, and in December of 167, Antiochus Epiphanes took Jerusalem by force, and, with the help of Menelaus who was briefly reinstated as High Priest (II Macc 5:15), he made some drastic changes: the study and teaching of the Law was prohibited; Sabbath observance was stopped; circumcision was prohibited, and violation of this in particular was punishable by death; the daily sacrifice in the Temple was halted; and the altar in the Temple was violated (I Macc 1:43-67).

Soon after these changes were made, a man named Mattathias, of the Hasmonean, priestly family, rebelled against these changes and killed an apostate Jewish priest in Modin in 166, along with a Syrian military officer who had come to enforce Antiochus' changes in Jewish worship and sacrifice (I Macc 2:1-27). Thus, the Maccabean revolt began, and it reached an apex on December 25, 164, exactly three years to the day from the Temple's desecration by Antiochus when Judas Maccabees ("the hammer" as he was called, who was Mattathias' third son, and upon Mattathias' death bed, he declared Judas to be the new leader of the insurrection – I Macc 2:49-66) regained control of Jerusalem (except for the Akra, a fortress

within Jerusalem where the ‘Hellenizers’ were held up), cleansed the Temple, and restored Temple sacrifice according to Jewish Law. This in turn is the basis of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication, which is the celebration of this very event (I Macc 4:36-59).

Antiochus died shortly thereafter, but the fighting still continued with the Syrians under the leadership of Lysias, a military leader who was the guardian of Antiochus’ son, Antiochus V, who was 9 years old when his father died in 164. Lysias in turn reinstated the attack against Judah and Jerusalem, and he had victories over the forces of Judas. He ultimately forced Judas and his followers into the Temple, and it looked as if the tide was going to turn in favor of the Syrians. But at that moment, Lysias got word that another Syrian general was claiming guardianship over Antiochus V, and this forced Lysias to go back to Syria and quit the fight against Judas. However, before Lysias left, he was forced to come to an agreement with Judas in which he formally recognized the Temple as being under the control of the Jews, and thus, religious persecution stopped. Lysias also decided to get rid of Menelaus, the current High Priest, since he saw Menelaus as “the cause of the trouble,” and he in turn had him executed by throwing him into an ash heap in 162 (II Macc 13:4-8). However, the conflict with the Jewish ‘Hellenizers’ continued within Judah itself.

Soon after Menelaus’ execution, Demetrius I replaced Antiochus V as the new ruler of Syria in 162, and in 161, he appointed Alcimus as the High Priest who was of the line of Aaron (*Ant* 20.10.1 # 235). Judas, however, did not support this appointment, but a group of Jews known as the Hasideans did (the Hasideans are thought to be scribes who were supporters of Judas, but wanted an end to the fighting and conflict), and they thought they could negotiate with Alcimus, but through treachery, Alcimus had them murdered, thus, reinforcing Judas’ position as leader, as well as his unwillingness to compromise with what he saw as the ‘Hellenization’ of his homeland. Demetrius sent in forces to support Alcimus, but they were defeated on the 13th day of Adar, 161. Another force was sent by Demetrius under the leadership of Bacchides, the Syrian provincial governor of Judah, and at the battle of Elasa in 160, Judas was killed and his army dispersed. At this point, Jonathan, Judas’ brother, took over the leadership of the Maccabean forces (I Macc 9:28-30).

Jonathan was not only a good military leader, but he was also a wise politician, and under his military leadership and political sagacity, he ultimately became both High Priest and provincial governor in 152, overcoming both the military assaults by the Syrians, as well as the political influence of the ‘Hellenizers’. However, before that occurred, Alcimus died

in 159, and from that time until 152 when Jonathan became High Priest, there is not a recorded High Priest's name given (*Ant* 20.10.1 # 237). This has given rise to the suggestion that the "Teacher of Righteousness" was the de-facto High Priest because it is thought that the Day of Atonement required a High Priest to officiate all the proceedings for it to be sanctified and acceptable to the Lord. In 1QpHab 2:8, the "Teacher" is identified as "the Priest" (הַכֹּהֵן – *hakôhēn*), who some consider this to be a reference to him as a High Priest, in the same way that Eliashib was at times referred to as "the priest" and "High Priest" (Neh 13:4, 28). If indeed that is the case, and this man assumed the High Priesthood during that 7 year hiatus (159-152) as a recognized leader among the Jerusalem priesthood, then the committed Jews, such as the Essenes, would have had no qualms at all in recognizing his authority in the Temple, or in their Community. However, when Jonathan had himself installed as the High Priest in place of the "Teacher," then it is suggested that he became the "Wicked Priest." After Jonathan becomes the High Priest, the following events may have followed - Jonathan dismisses the "Teacher of Righteousness" as the rightful High Priest, and he, the "Teacher," and his followers then move to Qumran. Upon realizing the danger posed to his authority by such a group, Jonathan begins to oppose the "Teacher." This above scenario is thought by some to be restated in 1QpHab 9:9-12a:

9 Its interpretation concerns the [Wi]cked Priest, whom, for the wickedness against the Teacher of 10 Righteousness and the members of his council, God delivered into the hands of his enemies to disgrace him 11 with a punishment, to destroy him with bitterness of soul for having acted wickedly 12 against his elect. (1 QpHab 9:9-12a)

What is interesting is that Jonathan was ultimately killed through treachery, deceit, and betrayal in 142, and his younger brother, Simon, then assumed the position of High Priest.

With Simon, the Hasmonean dynasty reached a stage of independence for Judah, which they were striving for (I Macc 13:41-42). In addition, the 'Hellenistic' political faction was completely removed, but 'Hellenistic' cultural mores had seeped in and remained. For example, in 140, Simon was declared not simply to be the High Priest, but "their prince, and high priest forever" (I Macc 14:41). Thus, some have thought to place the title of "Wicked Priest" on Simon. In 135, Simon too died a violent death by assassination, along with two of his sons, as he was feasting and drinking, and many see this as a consequence of his embracing certain aspects of the 'Hellenistic' influence.

After Simon's death, John Hyrcanus, his third son, assumes the office of High Priest, which some believe had now become a hereditary post as a result of Jonathan being declared by the Jews "high priest forever." Hyrcanus ruled from 135 – 104, and under him, the first Hasmonean coinage is minted. One group has, "Johanan the high priest and council of the Jews," and another has "Johanan the high priest head of the council of the Jews" (Tessa Rajak, "Hasmonean Dynasty" *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*).

Aristobulus, Hyrcanus' oldest son, ruled for one year, 104-103, and assumed the office of High Priest, as well as the first Hasmonean to take on a crown as "king" (*Ant* 13.11.1). However, he was quite brutal, forcing the Ituraeans to be circumcised, and imprisoning and starving to death his mother and three of his brothers (*Ibid.*,1-3). However, he died a horrible death (*Ibid.*), and his younger brother, Alexander Jannaeus, became the leader.

Jannaeus ruled from 103 – 76 BC, and he set his mark in several ways: he was the first to actually "be made king" (*Ant* 13.12.1); he brutally crucified 800 Pharisees who had opposed him, and while they were dying, he slit the throats of their wives and children before their eyes; all the while he was watching this brutality, he was feasting with his concubines in view of all the city (*Ant* 13.14.2 # 380); he chose his wife, Salome Alexandra, to be his successor, versus his two sons, which is viewed as 'Hellenistic' in its application.

Salome Alexandra ruled from 76-67 BC, and at the end of her reign, her one son, Aristobulus II, rebelled against her by taking over 20 Judean cities under his rule. After her death in 67, her other son, John Hyrcanus II, the High Priest, entered into a civil war with his brother, and this in turn brought in Roman intervention by Pompey in 63 BC. Pompey's fight against Aristobulus was brief and included a three month siege of Jerusalem. He reinstated Hyrcanus as High Priest, made Judea a tribute state to Rome under the supervision of the Syrian governor, which in turn ended Judea's independence, and he took Aristobulus and his children with him to Rome.

The fourth and final similarity between the Ezra-Nehemiah revival and that of Qumran is an emphasis on repentance from the heart that leads to a changed lifestyle, and this revolved around a return to the Word of God and a hunger for its truth. With the beginning of the synagogue (from Greek word συναγωγή – *sunagōgē*, which means "assembly") during the Babylonian Captivity, the study of the Scripture began to be a major focus in Jewish life. Thus, this emphasis was continued with Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as with those in Qumran. Josephus makes this point in his writing about the Essenes: "They also take great pains in studying the writings of the

ancients, and choose out of them what is most for the advantage of their soul and body; and they inquire after such roots and medicinal stones as may cure their distempers” (*JW* 2.8.6 # 136). This hunger and desire for God’s truth in His Word stands in stark contrast to what was going on in Jerusalem with regard to the official Temple leadership, worship, and spirituality.

As we have looked at this brief overview of late Israelite and Inter-testamental history, I hope that further light has perhaps been shed on the motivating factors for the establishment of the Qumran Community. The rigidity and strictness that was in Qumran may now be better understood as a result of seeing what they considered to be the wholesale corruption of the Jewish Temple and the true worship of Yahweh. Consequently, as they were observing all of this going on that we have just gone over, all of their spiritual, ritual, and apocalyptic views were being reinforced continually by all that they were hearing and seeing. And what is interesting, is that we see this scenario repeated throughout the history of the Church – i.e., spiritual and ecclesiastical corruption, which in turn leads people to seek and hunger for the truth – and I believe this can be applied to Jesus’ parable about “old and new wineskins”:

And He was also telling them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. 37 "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. 38 "But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 "And no one, after drinking old *wine* wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good *enough*.'" (Luke 5:36-39)

The “old” is representative of the status quo, which from a spiritual perspective can represent being ‘religious’, versus “walking by the Spirit,” and simply being ‘religious’ will inevitably lead to spiritual, intellectual, and emotional stagnation. On the other side of the coin, however, in every revival I have ever read about, or been a part of, there are always extremes and imbalances that have to be worked out over time. But these extremes and imbalances are the birth pangs, if you will, of genuine, spiritual ‘life’ as it is being birthed in the hearts and minds of people, and so too was this true with the Qumran Community and the believers who were a part of that spiritual venture. Do those extremes and imbalances need to be addressed and corrected in Qumran, as well as in contemporary revivals? Yes, they do, but always remember that we are all in a state of growth and maturity, and

family, culture, and personal experience have a lot to do with what and how we believe.

The Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek *Texts of the DSS*

I. Who were the Essenes?

As has already been mentioned, there has been debate as to whether or not the Essenes were the actual inhabitants of Qumran, but the vast majority of evidence at this point supports the position that they were. And too, as we have already seen, there are three, ancient eyewitness testimonies: Philo (10 BC – 50 AD); Pliny the Elder (23 – 79 AD); Josephus (37 – 100 AD). It is thought, therefore, that the Essene beginnings go back to the Hasidic movement, which had its origin around the middle of the 2nd century BC when Mattathias began his revolt against the Syrian/Greek authorities who were ruling Palestine at that time, which events we have already covered. The following is an excerpt from I Macc 2:42-46, in which is described the Hasideans joining ranks with Mattathias to overthrow the Syrians/Greeks:

Then was assembled to them the congregation of the Assideans, the stoutest of Israel, every one that had a good will for the law. 43 And all they that fled from the evils, joined themselves to them, and were a support to them. 44 And they gathered an army, and slew the sinners in their wrath, and the wicked men in their indignation: and the rest fled to the nations for safety. 45 And Mathathias and his friends went round about, and they threw down the altars: 46 And they circumcised all the children whom they found in the confines of Israel that were uncircumcised: and they did valiantly. (I Macc. 2:42-46)

After the Syrians/Greeks were defeated, however, and the corruption that can come with power began to permeate the Jewish High Priesthood and their supporters, that is when it is believed by many that the sectarian (i.e., a separate, Jewish religious group) Essene history began as they opposed the Jerusalem leaders. They in turn chose their own leaders, including their central leader, the ‘Teacher of Righteousness’, who is referred to throughout the sectarian scrolls. Thus, Qumran, as well as other localities around Judah, became centers of their operation. According to Josephus, they even had a gate in Jerusalem named after them:

But if we go the other way westward, it began at the same place, and extended through a place called “Bethso,” to the gate of the Essenes; and after that it went southward, having its bending above the fountain Siloam, where it also bends again towards the east at Solomon’s pool, and reaches as far as a certain place which they called “Ophlas,” where it was joined to the eastern cloister of the temple. (*JW* 5.4.2 # 145)

We have also already briefly looked into the identity of the ‘Teacher of Righteousness’, but it is important to note some other qualities about this man. He was not the one who initially established the Community, however, it is quite likely he had interaction with the Essenes all during this turbulent time before he made his final exodus from Jerusalem to the Qumran Community. Secondly, he was not viewed as their Messiah, although he was looked upon as their major teaching authority, and we will see later some imbalanced perspectives they had toward him and his authority. However, he was a gifted and anointed teacher and interpreter of the prophets, and he was a deeply spiritual man who was keenly aware of his own sin and weaknesses. In fact, with reference to prophetic interpretation and the application of those insights, and especially so with Isaiah, we do not find in any other inter-testamental leader of his day the insight that he had until we come to John the Baptist. For example, we have the following quote from his commentary in the Hymns Scroll:

I know through the understanding that comes from Thee that righteousness is not in a hand of flesh, [that] man [is not master of] his way and that it is not in mortals to direct their step. I know that the inclination of every spirit [is in Thy hand]. (1QH 7:12-13)

Therefore, here we see a man who knew he was only a man, and this is reminiscent of Saul, who became Paul, and who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote: “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good *is* not” (Rom 7:18).

Thus, he was only a man, as the above quote demonstrates, and he was in no way the “divine Master” and “Savior-Messiah” that some have tried to portray him as being. He was a man whom God used with the Qumran sect, and he had a vision of what God was doing and was going to do. This was a vision that was permeating the hearts and minds of many in that day and time, as we see with John the Baptist, and those who had this vision realized that things could not remain as they were with regard to the spiritual condition of their culture.

II. What constitutes the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Dead Sea Scrolls are divided into two groups: biblical and non-biblical, or sectarian, including the Copper Scroll, which is in a category all its own. Some of all of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament are represented in at least fragmentary forms, except Esther and Nehemiah. There are also Aramaic and Greek translations of the Old Testament from the Targums and LXX respectively. In addition, there are also some works of the Apocrypha - Tobit, Ben Sira, & Baruch - as well as the Pseudepigrapha - I Enoch & the Book of Jubilees - (Abegg, Flynt, & Ulrich, xvi).

The non-biblical, or sectarian writings, include: a systematic set of rules for their “community,” as well as commentaries of various books of the Bible; poetry; Wisdom literature of various types; calendars; liturgies; and some astrological material. The “Copper Scroll” is unique because it is made of copper and gives a list of various, precious metal collections (Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 12).

As far as the dating of the scrolls, the consensus is that they were written or collected between ca. 200 BC to 68 AD, with a few of the texts actually dating back to the 3rd century BC. However, the major portion of the material is seen as having been written or compiled in the 1st century BC (Ibid., 14).

But one of the most important discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls with reference to dating was the Isaiah Scroll. Prior to its discovery at Qumran, the oldest Hebrew text of the entire book of Isaiah dated back to 895 AD. Thus, here was a witness to the book of Isaiah that was copied at least 1000 years earlier than the 9th century Isaiah scroll, and the Qumran scroll was practically word for word as the 895 AD text! What a testimony to the integrity and trustworthiness of the text and the scribes who copied it, let alone God’s superintending its transmission, as He, through His sovereign power, caused and preserved the text as He gave it to Isaiah.

III. The Sectarian Scrolls

A. The *Rule of the Community*

This book of regulation was found in 12 copies, which date from about 100 BC to the Herodian period, which is ca. 47 BC when Antipater, Herod the Great’s father, was given the administration of Judea by Julius Caesar. It is an almost intact ms, it was discovered in Cave 1, and it was one of the first scrolls published. The following is the general statement of the purpose of the Community taken from the actual scroll from Column 1, verses 1-15:

1 For [the Instructor ...] ... for his life, [book of the Ru]le of the Community: in order to seek 2 God with [all (one's) heart and] with a[ll (one's) soul;] in order to do what is good and just in his presence, as 3 he commanded by the hand of Moses and by the hand of all his servants the Prophets; in order to love everything 4 which he selects and to hate everything that he rejects; in order to keep oneself at a distance from all evil, 5 and to become attached to all good works; in order to do truth and justice and uprightness 6 on earth and not to walk anymore in the stubbornness of a guilty heart and of lecherous eyes 7 performing every evil; in order to welcome all those who freely volunteer to carry out God's decrees 8 into the covenant of kindness; in order to be united in the counsel of God and walk in perfection in his sight, complying with all 9 revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations; in order to love all the sons of light, each one 10 according to his lot in God's plan, and to detest all the sons of darkness, each one in accordance with his guilt 11 in God's vindication. All those who submit freely to his truth will convey all their knowledge, their energies 12 and their riches to the Community of God in order to refine their knowledge in the truth of God's decrees and marshal their energies 13 in accordance with his perfect paths and all their riches in accordance with his just counsel. They shall not stray from any one 14 of all God's orders concerning their appointed times; they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard 15 any one of their feasts. They shall not veer from his reliable precepts in order to go either to the right or to the left. (1QS 1:1-15)

Thus, you can easily see that they were quite serious with reference to their commitment and their lifestyle, and after having seen the lifestyle of Jerusalem, you can understand why.

B. *The Damascus Document*

This is the other major sectarian document, and it too provides rules for the lifestyle of the community. It also addressed those who were living outside the Community in other "camps" that they too might follow the overall principles and guidelines established by the Community as a whole. The following, therefore, are instructions for such people with reference to marriage and family:

of his brother and not to be unfaithful against his blood relation; to refrain from fornication 2 in accordance with the regulation; for each to reprove his brother in accordance with the precept, and not to bear resentment 3 from one day to the next; to keep apart from every uncleanness according to their regulations, without anyone defiling 4 his holy spirit, according to what God kept apart for them. For all those who walk 5 according to these matters in holy perfectness, in accordance with all his teachings, God's covenant is a guarantee for them 6 that they shall live a thousand

generations. Blank And if they reside in camps in accordance with the rule of the land, and take 7 women and beget children, they shall walk in accordance with the law Blank and according to the regulation 8 of the teachings, according to the rule of the law, as he said: Num 30:17 « Between a man and his wife, and between a father 9 and his son ». But (for) all those who despise: when God visits the earth in order to empty over them the punishment of the wicked, 10 when there comes the word which is written in the words of Isaiah, son of Amoz, the prophet, 11 who said: Isa 7:17 « There shall come upon you, upon your people and upon your father's house, days such as 12 have «not» come since the day Ephraim departed from Judah ». When the two houses of Israel separated, 13 Ephraim detached itself from Judah, and all the renegades were delivered up to the sword; but those who remained steadfast 14 escaped to the land of the north. (4Q266 3 iii)

The actual scroll on exhibit from the *Damascus Document* is a portion that deals with an arranged marriage and the responsibilities of the Father of the bride and groom. Leviticus 25:14, Deuteronomy 27:18, and 22:10 are quoted as the foundation for conduct in an arranged marriage:

1 [...] with money [...] ... [...] 2 [... he did not ha]ve enough to re[pay him] and the [Jubilee] year approaches [...] 3 [...] and God will forgive [him all] his sins. Blank Not ... [...] 4 [...] as one, for it is an abomination. Blank And what he said: *Lev 25:14* « Whether [you make a sale] 5 [to your fellow, or purchase from the hand of] your fellow, none of you is to harm his fellow ». Blank And this is the exact interpre[tation ...] 6 [...] in everything that he knows that has been found ... [...] ... 7 [...] and he knows that he is committing fraud towards him, whether concerning man or animals. And if 8 [a man gives his daughter to some-one] else, he should recount all her blemishes to him, lest he bring upon him the judgment 9 [of the curse which he sai]d: (regarding) *Deut 27:18* « whoever leads a blind man astray from the path ». And also he should not give her to anyone who is not fit for her, because 10 [that is « two kinds ». ... an o]x and an ass,*Deut 22:10* and woollen and linen clothing together. Blank No-one should bring 11 [a woman ... the ho]lly [...], who has experience in doing the act, who has either done 12 [the act in] her father's [house,] or as a widow who slept (with someone) after she was widowed. And every 13 [woman who has had] a bad [reput]ation during her maidenhood in her father's house, no-one should take her, unless 14 [on inspection by] trustworthy and knowledgeable [women], selected by the command of the Inspector who is over 15 [the Many; then] he may take her and if he takes her, he should proceed in accordance with the regulati[on. And he should not] announce about [her]. (4Q271, Frag. 3, Col. 1)

C. The *Book of War*

The *Book of War* comprises ten fragments, which are considered to be the final part of the *War Scroll*. Both of these pieces of writing are dealing with the final battle of the ages in which the forces of the ‘Sons of Light’, after a forty year battle and aided and empowered by almighty God, defeat the forces of the ‘Sons of Darkness’, who are referred to as the Kittim:

In the Commentaries on Habakkuk and Nahum, the Kittim are represented as instruments appointed by God to punish the ungodly priests of Jerusalem. The War Rule, however, testifies to a changed attitude towards them on the part of the sect by making the Kittim appear as the chief allies of Satan and the final foe to be subjugated by the hosts of the sons of Light. The Rule of War (4Q285), although very fragmentary, appears to point in the same direction (Vermes, Geza: *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Revised and extended 4th ed. [Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 56).

Most often in the scrolls, the ‘Kittim’ are associated with the Romans. However, in 1QM1:1-7, we see the “Kittim of Assyria” as being part of the alliance of the “Sons of Darkness” against the “Sons of Light.” In the Hebrew Old Testament, we find in Isaiah 23:1 where the form כִּיִּיִם (*kittîm*) is used for the Mediterranean country of Cyprus. However, predominantly throughout the scrolls, reference to the ‘Kittim’ is clearly seen to be referring to the Romans, but elsewhere in the 2nd century, we see the word ‘Kittim’ being used to refer to those peoples who were exerting military dominance and power (e.g., I Macc. 5:8, the ‘Kittim’ are the Greeks). But here in the *Book of War*, the ‘Kittim’ are definitely looked on in a very negative light as being synonymous with the ‘Sons of Darkness’.

One other interesting thing to note about this word is that it appears to have its derivation from, or at least some relationship to the Hebrew verb כָּתַם (*kātam*), which means “to stain or defile.” Thus, could this use of ‘Kittim’ be referring to ‘the stained/defiled ones’, which would also have included those Jews who “violated the covenant” and aligned themselves with the ‘Sons of darkness’ (1QM 1:1-7).

The two *Book of War* fragments open for exhibition are 11Q14 and 4Q491. 11Q14 is a blessing by the high priest over the ‘Sons of Light’ before their final battle with the ‘Kittim’, who are representative of the ‘Sons of Darkness’, and in addition, we have a similar blessing that corresponds to this blessing in Numbers 6:24-25. The following is the blessing from 11Q14 frag. 1, col. 2:

May God Most High bless you, may he show you his face, and may he open for you his good treasure which is in the heavens, to cause to fall down on your earth showers of blessing, dew and rain, early and late rains in their season, and to give you fruit, the harvests of wheat, of wine and of oil in plenty. And for you the land will yield delicious fruits (García Martínez, Florentino ; Tigchelaar, Eibert J. C.: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Translations)*. [Leiden; New York : Brill, 1997-1998], Frag. 1, col. 2:7-10).

The following is the blessing in Numbers 6:24-25:

“The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you.”

The following is a quote from 4Q491 that describes the battle against the ‘Kittim’:

against the Kittim [...] the infantrymen will set [their hand to cast down the badly wounded of the Kittim ...] the fight against the Kittim [...] ... [...] the badly wounded of the crucible to fall according to [the mysteries of] God, and the priests shall blow the trumpets of recall ... [...] the fight against the Kittim. At the first line [...] The priest «designated» for battle shall approach and position himself [in] front [of the row ...] and will strengthen their hands with his marvellous feats. He will start speaking and say: [...] vengeance, to devour among gods and men, for not [...] /flesh, except dust. But now [...] and will {burn} /consume/ as far as Sheol. And the foundation of wickedness[...] (García Martínez, Florentino ; Tigchelaar, Eibert J. C.: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Translations)*. [Leiden; New York : Brill, 1997-1998], 4Q491, frag. 10. col.2:8-17).

D. *Songs of the Sage*

This text tells how God will protect His people from demonic activity through worship and praise:

[...] their [do]minions ... and all [...] on the earth and in all the spirits of its dominion continuously. In their eras may the seas bless him, and may all their living things declare [...] beauty, may all of them exult before the God of Justice in jubilation of salvation. For there is no destroyer in their regions, and evil spirits do not walk in them. For the glory of the God of knowledge shines out through his words, and none of the sons of wickedness is able to resist (García Martínez, Florentino ; Tigchelaar, Eibert J. C.: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition (Translations)*. [Leiden; New York : Brill, 1997-1998], 4Q511, frag. 1:1-8).

E. *Papyrus Bar Kokhba 44*

This text was discovered in 1961 at the ‘Cave of the Letters’ in Nahal Hever. It is a lease agreement that dates to ca. 134 AD. The Qumran site had been destroyed by the Romans, and this agreement contains information about land formerly owned by Simon Bar Kokhba, who is called the “Prince of Israel,” which is a reference to him as being the leader of the rebellion against Rome. In this business transaction, one of the principals mentioned on the fourth line at the bottom of the text is “Alma, son of Judah.” Many Mormons have been elated over this discovery, believing that it confirms the validity of the Book of Mormon and the supposed revelation of Joseph Smith. However, what must be remembered is that Judah was a very common name for Jews at that time, as well as before and after then. Secondly, Alma is not an uncommon name either, anymore than various surnames and first names have interesting combinations. Thus, this does not confirm the validity and authenticity of Joseph Smith’s supposed revelation.

F. *Messianic Apocalypse*

This is a remarkable text in that it affirms what Jesus said about Himself to John’s disciples in Matthew 11:2-5:

Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent *word* by his disciples, 3 and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 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.

In the *Messianic Apocalypse*, 4Q521, we read the following:

[the hea]vens and the earth will listen to His Messiah, and none therein will stray from the commandments of the holy ones. Seekers of the Lord, strengthen yourselves in His service! All you hopeful in (your) heart, will you not find the Lord in this? For the Lord will consider the pious (hasidim) and call the righteous by name. Over the poor His spirit will hover and will renew the faithful with His power. And He will glorify the pious on the throne of the eternal Kingdom, He who liberates the captives, restores sight to the blind, straightens the b[ent] (Ps. 146:7–8). And f[or] ever I will clea[ve to the h]opeful and in His mercy ... And the fr[uit ...] will not be delayed for anyone and the Lord will accomplish glorious things which have never been as [He ...] For He will heal the wounded, and revive the dead and bring good news to the poor (Isa. 61:1) (Vermes, Geza: *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Revised and extended 4th ed. [Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 412-413).

The paleographic date for this text is about the beginning of the 1st century BC – i.e., around 100 – 75 BC. Thus, we have a ‘messianic vision’ that is essentially identical to that which Jesus said about Himself in quoting Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners.” This is incredibly significant in that we see approximately 100 years before the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, a perspective on the coming Messiah that was exactly what He both came to do and did!

G. Enoch 4Q202 – I Enoch 6:1-5; 7:1-8:2

According to the information given by the NHM, that portion of Enoch on exhibit has to do with the “Watchers” (i.e., the rebellious and fallen angels) who see the daughters of men and want them for their wives:

[al]l the [d]ays [of their life ...] It happened that wh[en in those days the sons of men increased,] pretty and [attractive daughters were born to them. The Watchers, sons of the sky, saw them and lusted for them] and sa[id to each other: « Let’s go and choose out women from among the daughters of men and sire for ourselves] [sons ». However, Shemihazah, who was their chief, said to them: « I am afraid you do not want to carry out] [this deed and I alone will be guilty of a great sin ». They replied] and [all] said [to him:] « Let us [all] take an oath [and all swear under oath to each other not to go back on] th[is cou]nse[un]til we have performed [this deed » Those [and their chiefs all took for themselves] women, choosing from al[l they chose,] and they began [to penetrate them and be defiled by them and teach them sor]cery, incanta[tions and the cutting of roots] [and to explain herbs. They became pregnant by them and gave birth to giants, some three] [thousand cubits tall, who were born upon the earth in keeping with their in]fancy [and grew at the rate of their growth and] consumed [the labour of all the sons of men, without the men being able to sup]ply [them. The giants] [plotted to kill the men and to consume them and they began to sin and to ... against all] [the birds and animals of the earth and the re]ptiles [which move upon the earth and in the sea] [and in the skies and the fish of the sea /and for some to consume the flesh of the others and] drink [the] blood. [Then the earth denounced the wicked for all] that/ had been done on it. ‘Asa’e[l] ta[ug]ht [men to] manufacture swords of iron and breast-[plates o]f copp[er and showed] them what is [dug up and how] /they could work [the] go[ld to fashion it/ rea]dy; /and as for/ silver, /to fashion it/ for bracelets [and other jewellery for women.] [To the women he showed] about antimony and eye-shadow [and all the precious stones] [and about dyes ...]

This is the account from which many in the early church deduced that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4 are referring to fallen angels who came, copulated with human women, and through that union was in turn born the “Nephilim,” who were a race of giants. How and why would the early churchmen believe such an account? One reason is because we find in Jude 14-15 a portion of scripture taken from Enoch 1:9. The passage from Jude reads as follows:

And about these also Enoch, *in the seventh generation* from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 1:14-15)

The actual passage from Enoch 1:9 reads as follows:

Behold he will arrive with ten million of the holy ones in order to execute judgment upon all. He will destroy the wicked ones and censure all flesh on account of everything that they have done, that which the sinners and the wicked ones committed against him. (James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983], 13-14).

The Book of Enoch found in the Dead Sea Scrolls is written in Aramaic, and the above passage I just quoted from Enoch 1:9 is taken from the Ethiopic version of Enoch. The DSS portion of Enoch 1:9 is found in *4Q204*, and it reads as follows:

when he comes with the myri]ads of [his] holy ones [to carry out the sentence against everyone; and he will destroy all the wicked] [and he will accuse all fl]esh for [all their wicked] deed[s which they have committed by word and by deed] [and for all their] arrogant and wicked [words which wicked sinners have directed against him. (4Q204)

The main difference we find with the Aramaic portion of the DSS, versus the Greek and Ethiopic translations is the word translated “myriads” in the Aramaic. The word in Aramaic is רבואת (*ribbô’ôṭ*), and it means a very large amount and is often translated simply as “myriad,” or “ten thousand.” However, in the Ethiopic version, the text has *te’lft*, which indicates “ten thousand times a thousand,” or “ten million.” The word in the Greek in Jude 14 is μυριάσιν (*muriasin*), and in the NAS it is translated as “many thousands”; in the NKJ it is translated as “ten thousands”; and in the NIV it

is translated as “thousands upon thousands.” The Syriac Peshitta simply transliterates the Greek μυριάσις (*muriasin*) and reads ܡܘܪܝܐܝܘܬܝܢ (*muria*), which in turn in the English translations of the Syriac reads “myriads.”

Thus, what we have is a portion of divine truth contained in Enoch, which was in turn placed into the divinely inspired New Testament Canon (i.e., Jude 14-15), but the book of Enoch on the whole was rejected by the Church as not being a divinely inspired writing. That brings us back to the account of the “Watchers” (i.e., the fallen and rebellious angels) who copulate with human women and produce a race of giants. Is this indeed what the passage in Genesis 6:1-4 is saying, or is it saying something else?

The passage in Genesis 6:1-4 reads as follows:

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

One very interesting to notice is that according to the biblical record, the Nephilim were not the progeny of the union between the “sons of God” and the “daughters of men,” but rather they were already here on the earth before that union ever took place. The Bible simply says they “*were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.” In addition, where we read in the Book of Enoch that the progeny of the “Watchers” and the “daughters of men were “three thousand cubits tall” (in the Ethiopic translation, it says three hundred), I think we can safely say this is mythical legend, not truth. A cubit is between 17 – 21 inches long. Let’s use 20 inches for simplicity, and when that is multiplied 3000 times, we have creatures who were ca. 5000 feet tall. That is equal to 16 ½ football fields in height! When we look at 300 cubits, we come up with a creature of 500 feet in height, or just over 1 ½ football fields in height! The latter is a bit more reasonable, but even here I believe one must say that this is mythical legend. This, I believe, is one of the reasons that Augustine in the early fifth century repudiated the view that the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1-4 were fallen angels. My own personal view is that in this passage, this term is referring to the godly line of Seth, who, over time, compromised their faith and commitment to the Lord and were “unequally yoked” with unbelieving wives who were of the line of

Cain in much the same way the Jews were after their return from the Babylonian Captivity in the fifth century BC. At that time, both Ezra and Nehemiah had to call the people back to God in repentance and brokenness in order that the purity of their faith and commitment to the Lord would be preserved, versus being destroyed through their compromising union with unbelievers.

Therefore, in my opinion, the focus in Genesis 6:1-4 should be on Genesis 6:5, which for me gives the true and biblical cause for the flood, and it is the very same problem we face today: “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” The word for “intent” in the Hebrew is יָצַר (*yēṣer*), and it means “a form or frame” of something. Thus, as one would first set the ‘forms’, or outline, of an intended, concrete patio before ever pouring the concrete, in order that the liquid concrete would fit and harden into the desired shape of the proposed patio, so too the “intents” or “forms” of our thoughts are the outlines of our thoughts before they ever become cognizant to us. Thus, “evil” is at the inception of the very “frames” and “outlines” of our thoughts before we ever think them, and that being the case, we are, at the very core of our being, basically evil, not good, and that evil had its inception in the fall of man in Genesis 3:1-7. This, in my opinion, should be the focus, not the myth of fallen angels (“whose sexual organs were like those of horses” 4Q206) copulating with human women and producing a race of evil giants! We are all perpetrators, not victims, and once we see and realize that truth, then we will experience real and genuine freedom in Christ.

IV. The Biblical Scrolls

We are now going to look at those scrolls that have to do primarily with the Bible, either in commentaries about the Scripture, or the Scripture itself.

A. The Isaiah Scroll

The antiquity of the Masoretic Text was confirmed by the Isaiah scrolls of Cave 1, both the partial manuscript, as well as the full scroll. And one of the most important areas of identity is in Isaiah 53:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our

sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded^b for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid^c on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison^d and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (1QIsa^a col xliv)

When you read this, you will immediately notice that it is in essence the same as your English versions, and that is because it is the same as your English versions! What a glorious truth and demonstration of God's power, even in the midst of our incredible human frailty, weaknesses, and flaws, that He would maintain the integrity of His Word, even in the harshest of circumstances, including 'bat poop'!

B. Habakkuk Commentary

One of the most important passages in the Old Testament that is used in the New Testament with regard to our relationship with God through Jesus is found in Habakkuk 2:1-4 in the Hebrew MT:

I WILL stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved. 2 Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe *it* on tablets, That the one who reads it may run. 3 "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. 4 "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.” In the Commentary on Habakkuk from Qumran on this passage, we read the following:

Hab 2:4 See, it is conceited and does not give way 15 [his soul within him.] Blank Its interpretation: they will double upon them 16 [... and] find [no] mercy at being judged. [...] 17 [... Hab 2:4b But the righteous man will live because of their loyalty to him.]

However, in the LXX, which was the official version of the early church, as well of the Apostles, we read the following:

I will stand upon my watch, and mount upon the rock, and watch to see what he will say by me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd. 2 And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and *that* plainly on a tablet, that he that reads it may run. 3 For the vision *is* yet for a time, and it shall shoot forth at the end, and not in vain: though he should tarry, wait for him; for he will surely come, and will not tarry. 4 If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith.

The significance of this cannot be overstated – i.e., the “his faith” in the MT is understood by the LXX translators to be referring to the Lord, not the man! Thus, this is a theme that runs through Paul’s teaching as can be seen in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” Paul, therefore, understood “faith” itself to be God’s gift to man whereby man could believe and be saved, but his faith was placed in the finished work of Jesus.

As we read from the Qumran Commentary of Habakkuk further on in its commentary on Habakkuk 2:1-4, we find the following statement on this passage, “But the righteous man will live because of their loyalty to him.],” a very interesting note to this commentary is found in 1QHab 8:1-3: “Its interpretation concerns all observing the Law in the House of Judah, whom 2 God will free from the house of judgment on account of their toil and of their loyalty 3 to the Teacher of Righteousness.” Thus, what has happened is a transference from the Lord as their security and source, to this man, the “Teacher of Righteousness,” as their source. So, in one very important way, they have gone backwards, not forward, and in one sense, they are becoming the very thing they disdained and criticized the most.

C. 4Q246

Col. i 1 [...] settled [up]on him and he fell before the throne 2 [... k]ing for ever. You are angry, and have changed you 3 [...] ... your vision, and everything that shall come for ever. 4 [... mi]ghty ones, oppression will come upon the earth 5 [...] and great slaughter in the provinces 6 [...] king of Assyria [and E]gypt 7 [...] **and he will be great over the earth** 8 [...] they [will d]o, and all will serve 9 [... gr]eat will he be called and he will be designated by his name. Col. ii 1 **He will be called son of God, and they will call him son of the Most High.** Like the sparks 2 that you saw, so will their kingdom be; they will rule several year[s] over 3 the earth and crush everything; a people will crush another people, and a province another provi[n]ce. 4 Blank Until the people of God arises and makes everyone rest from the sword. Blank 5 **His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom,** and **all his paths in truth. He will jud[ge]** 6 **the earth in truth and all will make peace.** The sword will cease from the earth, 7 and all the provinces will pay him homage. The great God is his strength, 8 he will wage war for him; he will place the peoples in his hand and 9 cast them all away before him. **His rule will be an eternal rule,** and all the abysses

The above is an Aramaic, apocalyptic document, but it recalls Luke 1:30-35:

And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.’ 34 And Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ 35 And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.’

It also recalls Jesus’ statement in John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”

One last comparison with 4Q246 are those passages that affirm the “peace” we receive from Jesus:

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. (John 14:27)

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

D. *The Ten Commandments – 4Q41*

There are two presentations of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament: Exodus 20:1-17, and Deuteronomy 5:1-21. I want us to do a comparative analysis of these two portions of Scripture. Those commandments that are written identically are the following:

- #1** – Ex. 20:2-3; Dt. 5:6-7 = Same
- #2** – Ex. 20:4-6; Dt. 5:8-10 = Same
- #3** – Ex. 20:7; Dt. 5:11 = Same
- #4** – Ex. 20:8-11; Dt. 5:12-15 = Different
- #5** – Ex. 20:12; Dt. 5:16 = Different
- #6** – Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17 = Same
- #7** – Ex. 20:14; Dt. 5:18 = Same
- #8** – Ex. 20:15; Dt. 5:19 = Same
- #9** – Ex. 20:16; Dt. 5:20 = Same
- #10** – Ex. 20:17; Dt. 5:21 = Different

The following are the three commandments that differ in their form and content. However, these differences do not cancel out each other, but rather they supplement each other, and in fact, we see them used in the New Testament. The differing commandments are:

#4 – Ex. 20:8-11:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

The word for “Remember” is זָכוֹר (*zachōr*), and it carries the idea of personally keeping it in the forefront of one’s mind and thinking for recall with reference to the practical importance of resting and focusing one’s attention on the Lord. The word for “holy” means to keep it separated in one’s mind as far as a time for personal reflection over one’s life the previous week, and recommitting one’s focus to correct the previous mistakes and follow the Lord anew the coming week. Therefore, the importance of resting not only one’s body, but also resting one’s mind and emotions from the everyday pressures of life to be renewed in one’s spirit by the Spirit of God is of just as much extreme importance today as it was some 3400 years ago.

#4 – Dt. 5:12-15:

Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, **as the LORD your God commanded you.** 13 'Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your **ox or your donkey** or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, **so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.** 15 '**And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.**

The word for “Observe” is שָׁמַר (*shamōr*), and it carries the idea of preserving and maintaining the Sabbath day as a day of rest, versus letting it slip into a compromised day in which no one truly rests, but work and simply go through the motions of religious activity. Thus, here in Deuteronomy 5, the focus on the Sabbath is maintaining and preserving it as a significant day in the lives of the people so that they won’t let keeping the Sabbath in their own individual lives, as well as their family’s life, fade into meaninglessness and religious boredom. The same is true for us in our day as well; i.e., we need to discipline ourselves to take time to rest and be with the Lord in prayer and His Word with ourselves, our families, and others.

#5 – Ex. 20:12: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

#5 – Dt. 5:16: “Honor your father and your mother, **as the LORD your God has commanded you**, that your days may be prolonged, **and that it may go well with you** on the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

#10 – Ex. 20:17: “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

#10 – Dt. 5:21: “You shall not covet your neighbor's wife (2), and you shall not desire your neighbor's house (1), **his field** or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

E. Samuel *4QSam*

The Book of Samuel appears as one book in the Hebrew Bible. At Qumran, there were four manuscripts of Samuel that were discovered: one in Cave 1, and three in Cave 4. What has been most interesting to observe is that where there are differences between the LXX and the MT, the *4QSam* texts at times agree more with the LXX than with the MT, and in one very important instance (*4QSama*), the Qumran text differs from both. This in turn has led to the observation that there were at least two other Hebrew text types from which the LXX and the Qumran texts were translated and copied, versus being limited only to the text from which the MT had its origin.

Concerning the contents of these manuscripts, the one from Cave 1 is listed as *1QSam*, and it contains only eight fragments, each being the size of a quarter. On the other hand, those manuscripts found in Cave 4 have yielded a far greater amount of the text of Samuel than Cave 1. The texts found in Cave 4 are listed in the following manner: *4QSama* – this manuscript is very important due to the preservation of its hundreds of fragments, which cover the entirety of I & II Samuel; *4QSamb* – is the oldest of the manuscripts, dating to ca. the middle of the 3rd century BC, and it comprises one large fragment of nineteen successive lines, as well as seven small fragments; *4QSamc* – this manuscript was copied ca. the beginning of the 1st century BC, and it has one small fragment that comprises I Samuel 25:30-32, as well as numerous fragments that, pieced together, form a major portion of 2 Samuel 14-15. All totaled, there are sixty-seven partial lines

preserved in *4QSamc* (Martin Abegg, JR., Peter Flint, & Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* [New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999], 213-214).

As I stated earlier, there is one very important passage found in *4QSama* that is different from both the LXX and the MT, and it is found in the beginning of I Samuel 11. The context of this passage is that Saul has just been announced as God's choice for King of Israel. Most all of the people were excited about it, but I Samuel 10:27 indicates that not all were pleased: "But certain worthless men said, 'How can this one deliver us?'" And they despised him and did not bring him any present. But he kept silent." The "he" in the last sentence is Saul, and he chose not to respond to their malignment. It is here at the end of 10:27 and into 11:1-2 that we see the difference between the MT, the LXX, and *4QSama*. In 1Sam. 10:27-11:2 in the MT we read:

But certain worthless men said, 'How can this one deliver us?' And they despised him and did not bring him any present. **But he kept silent.** Now Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, 'Make a covenant with us and we will serve you.' But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, 'I will make *it* with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel.'

The LXX reads from 10:27-11:2 as follows:

But evil men said, Who *is* this man *that* shall save us? and they despised him, and brought him no gifts. **And it came to pass about a month after this,** that Naas the Ammanite went up, and encamped against Jabis Galaad: and all the men of Jabis said to Naas the Ammanite, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. Naas the Ammanite said to them, On these terms will I make a covenant with you, that I should put out all your right eyes, and I will lay a reproach upon Israel.

The one difference between the LXX and the MT is that the MT has at the end of 10:27, "But he kept silent," whereas the LXX has, "And it came to pass about a month after this." However, it is at the beginning of chapter 11 in *4QSama* that we see the difference between the LXX, the MT, and *4QSama*. The following is *4QSama* from I Samuel 10:27-11:2:

But certain worthless men s[aid, 'How will this man save us?' And] they despise[d] him and brought him no *gift*. **[N]ahash king of the [A]mmonites oppressed the Gadites and the Reubenites viciously. He put out the right [ey]e of a[ll] of them and brought fe[ar and trembling] on [Is]rael. Not one of the Israelites in the region be[yond**

the Jordan] remained [whose] right eye Naha[sh king of] the Ammonites did n[ot pu]t out, except seven thousand men [who escaped from] the Ammonites and went to [Ja]besh-gilead. Then after about a month, Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-[gilead]. So all the people of Jabesh said to Nahash, [‘Make a covenant] with [us, and we will serve you.’ But] Nahash [the Ammonite said t]o [th]em, ‘I will ma[ke it with you on this condition: that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so disgrace all Israel].’ (Abegg, Flint, & Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 224-225)

The highlighted and underlined areas are those that are not in the LXX and MT, but are in *4QSama*. Now the phrase, “Then after about a month,” is the LXX, but it is at the end of 10:27, whereas in *4QSama* it is at the beginning of 11:1 in the traditional reading of the MT. However, what is of greatest interest to us is the fact that Josephus, the early Jewish historian (37-100 AD), apparently used the Hebrew text that is found in *4QSama* as the source for his description of this conflict between Nahash and the Israelites. The following is Josephus’ account of this event:

After one month, the war which Saul had with Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, obtained him respect from all the people; for this Nahash had done a great deal of mischief **to the Jews that lived beyond Jordan** by the expedition he had made against them with a great and warlike army. He also reduced their cities into slavery, and that not only by subduing them for the present, which he did by force and violence, but by weakening them by subtlety and cunning, that they might not be able afterward to get clear of the slavery they were under to him: **for he put out the right eyes of those who either delivered themselves to him upon terms, or were taken by him in war;** and this he did, that when their left eyes were covered by their shields, they might be wholly useless in war. (*Ant. 6.5.1*)

Those portions that are highlighted and underlined correspond with what is in *4QSama*. Josephus makes mention of the fact that “After one month” into the conflict with Nahash and Saul, the war escalated, and this corresponds with what the LXX and *4QSama* both state. However, in both the LXX and the MT, the extrication of the “right eyes” is presented as only a threat, whereas in *4QSama* and Josephus, it is presented as an accomplished fact, and they both also confirm that it was done against those Jews who “lived beyond the Jordan,” but neither in the LXX or the MT is any direct mention made of this atrocity being committed against the Jews who lived “beyond the Jordan.”

Therefore, it is clear from looking at *4QSama* and Josephus that another Hebrew text was in circulation in addition to the MT, as well as the text that in many instances the LXX drew from. In this particular example, we can see evidence of these three texts: (1) The MT contains the phrase, “But he kept silent” in I Samuel 10:27, whereas in the LXX, this phrase is excised altogether and replaced with “and it came to pass after about a month”; (2) *4QSama*, like the LXX, excises the phrase, “But he kept silent,” at the end of 10:27, and adds the phrase, “and it came to pass after about a month,” but the latter is not added until the beginning of 11:1 after an alternate addition. Thus, in these two examples, we see evidence of at least one other Hebrew text besides the MT in circulation; (3) However, in *4QSama* we have an additional portion that is neither in the LXX or MT, but is witnessed to have been in circulation as late as the 1st century AD from the writings of Josephus, which is the text that he must have been reading from in order to write his history of this event concerning Nahash the Ammonite.

What does all of this tell us about scriptural inspiration and accuracy? It tells us first of all that the innate limitations of humanity do not, in any way limit the divine and sovereign power of God to establish, convey, perpetuate, and authenticate His absolute and unequivocal truth in the person of Jesus Christ, Who is the Living Word! Secondly, just like with the Gospels, we find that different men can see the same event, or hear the same words, and when writing down what they have seen or heard, give a bit different perspective to the same account, and, as with the Gospels, the accounts, though written a bit differently, are nonetheless true. The same is true here with these at least three different Hebrew texts. The writer of the MT indeed recalls the fact that Saul “kept silent” after hearing the criticism directed toward him, but the other writers did not include it because it was not brought to their mind by the Holy Spirit as significant. On the other hand, the writers of the two texts that the LXX and *4QSama* drew from did think it was noteworthy, as the Holy Spirit brought it to their memories, that “after about a month” into the conflict between Saul and Nahash, the war escalated, but it was not something that the MT writer was inspired by the Holy Spirit to include. And finally, that portion which is included in *4QSama*, but which is not in the LXX or the MT, is something that particular was inspired to include, but which neither of the writers of the other two texts were inspired to do so.

Thus, what we have is God working in and through the weaknesses and flaws of our human limitations to minister His divine, inspired, authoritative, and infallible truth through fallible men! To God be the glory!

F. David & Goliath

One very interesting portion of Scripture that is presented at the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibition is the account of David killing Goliath. What has been discovered is that whereas the MT and a copy of the LXX have Goliath standing 6 cubits and a span (i.e., 9 ft., 9 in. tall), *4QSama* & a different LXX manuscript read 4 cubits and a span (i.e., 6 ft., 9 in. tall). Another LXX manuscript has Goliath standing 5 cubits and a span (i.e., 8 ft., 3 in. tall). Which is the correct translation? The words for four, five, or six in the Hebrew are respectively: אַרְבַּע & אַרְבַּעָה ('*arba*' & '*arbā'â* - masc., & fem. for "four"); חַמֵּשׁ & חַמֵּשָׁה - (*hāmēš*) & *hāmišâ*) – masc. and fem. for "five"); שֵׁשׁ & שֵׁשָׁה (*šēš* & *šišâ* - masc. & fem. for "six"). Thus, as we look at these words for these three, different Hebrew numbers, we see that each of the Hebrew words is quite different, and therefore, it doesn't appear that there was some type of misreading that could justifiably occur between "four" אַרְבַּע, "five" חַמֵּשׁ, and "six" שֵׁשׁ. Only the numbers "five" and "six" have a similar letter, but even at that, it would be a real stretch to say that a scribe misread "six" שֵׁשׁ for "five" חַמֵּשׁ. Thus, it would appear that this was an overt act on the part of a scribe to give what he perceived was the correct measure of Goliath's height. Therefore, *4QSama*, which is the Hebrew text of I Samuel 17:3-6 that gives Goliath's height, is in line with the Greek LXX that places Goliath's height as "four cubits and a span."

And once again, in addition to this combined agreement of the LXX and *4QSama* with regard to Goliath's height being "four cubits and a span," we also find Josephus stating the same:

Now there came down a man out of the camp of the Philistines, whose name was Goliath, of the city of Gath, a man of vast size, for he was of **four cubits and a span in height**, and had around him weapons suitable to the size of his body, . . . (*Ant. 6.171*)

The Greek in the bold, underlined quote reads as follows:

ἦν γὰρ τεσσάρων καὶ σπιθαμῆς ("for he was of four cubits and of a span").

Therefore, as Josephus was in agreement with the Qumran text of I Samuel 11:1, so too here, in I Samuel 17:3-6 concerning the height of Goliath, Josephus is once again in agreement with the Qumran text, as well as the LXX text that states the same.

Another very interesting point to make is that the oldest, extant Hebrew text that we have that contains the “6 cubits and a span” as being Goliath’s height dates back to 935 AD, which is consistent with the reading of the Masoretic Text witness. However, there is a Greek witness to the “6 cubits and a span” for Goliath’s height, and it is from that of a man named Symmachus who wrote a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament for the Jewish community in Caesarea ca. 200 AD. Symmachus’ goal was apparently to provide a reliable and consistent translation of the Hebrew into Greek for this Jewish community. In his Greek translation from the Hebrew text he was using, he gave Goliath’s height as “6 cubits and a span.” Thus, as J. Daniel Hays points out:

The fact that he gives Goliath’s height as six cubits and a span is strong evidence that this variant reading was already present in the proto-MT or vorlage to the MT, i.e. the Hebrew text tradition that had by this time become the standardized text of the Jews. (J. Daniel Hays, “*The Case for a 6’9” Goliath: Theological Implications*,” [Ouachita Baptist University, Nov. 2004], 7)

That is, by the time Symmachus wrote his translation from the Hebrew text he was using, which text in turn became the foundation for the Massoretic Text (the Massoretic Text is that Hebrew text that the Massorites used, beginning in the 6th century AD up through the beginning of the 10th century AD, to write in the diacritical marks in order to aid in being able to read and understand the biblical Hebrew text), that Hebrew text was apparently the common and accepted Hebrew text of that time.

In addition, Origen, an early Church Father (185-253) produced the Hexapla, which was a six columned translation of the Old Testament:

Column 1 = Hebrew text in Hebrew letters

Column 2 = A transliteration of the Hebrew text into Greek letters

Column 3 = The Greek translation of Aquila (written ca. 125 AD)

Column 4 = The Greek translation of Symmachus

Column 5 = The LXX

Column 6 = The Greek translation of Theodotion (written ca. 150 AD)

In this presentation, his Hebrew text, as well as his fifth columned LXX translation, included the “6 cubits and a span” height for Goliath, which means that the Hebrew text he had was indeed that which became the foundation for the later Massoretic Text. On the other hand, we find that

Codex Vaticanus (4th cent. AD) and Codex Alexdrinus (5th cent. AD) both contain the “four cubits and a span” height for Goliath.

What is to be made of the differences in these various texts? It is clear, that there are two, credible renderings of Goliath’s height – one being 9 feet, 9 inches, and the other being 6 feet, 9 inches. But which is the correct account of his height? In this particular instance, it must be said that either one could be correct. We do not know just how tall David was, but it is safe to assume that, according to the height of men at that time, he was likely between 5 feet, to 5 feet, 6 inches. He may have been a bit shorter, but let’s assume that he was 5 ½ feet tall. That would mean that at the least, if Goliath’s height was 6 feet, 9 inches, he was 15 inches taller than David! If, on the other hand, David was closer to 5 feet in height, then Goliath was 21 inches taller than David, which would be approximately 2 feet taller. However, if Goliath was 9 feet, 9 inches tall, then that would equate to him being between 51 inches to 57 inches taller than David – almost five feet taller, which would be equal to two 5 feet tall people, standing on top of each other.

Regardless which one is the accurate reading of Goliath’s height, that which is important is that he was such a fierce fighter and warrior, that there was not a single Israeli soldier willing to fight him, except for David, who was no match at all, from a human perspective, against this skilled, experienced, and successful warrior. Thus, let us not get side tracked about which measurement is correct – whichever one is the correct one, they both indicate that in either case, David was outmatched in every way from a human vantage point. However, his confidence was not limited to human appraisal, but his confidence was in the Lord’s strength and power within him, which power and strength had enabled him to kill a lion and a bear. Therefore, that which is the focus is that God enabled him to do that which was seen as a human impossibility by others, and that is the message that God intends FOR US TODAY – “For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37); “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

G. 7Q5

In 1972, the Spanish, Jesuit Papyrologist, Jose O'Callaghan, after some rather intense investigation, concluded that the Greek fragment, 7Q5, was a portion of the Gospel of Mark, precisely, Mark 6:52-53. This caused a real stir among the scholarly community, which, for the most part, rejected O'Callaghan's identification for the following reasons: (1) the text was and is extremely fragmentary; (2) since the Qumran community disbanded by 68 AD, that would mean that the Gospel of Mark was most likely written ca. 50 AD, but a great number of New Testament scholars have believed that not even the original composition of Mark was written by that time, thus that would negate the possibility that a portion of Mark would exist before 68 AD; (3) some scholars have felt that the differences between the Essene community of Qumran and the early church would have been so great that the two groups would not have been associated with each other, but indeed, would have avoided one another.

However, as we look at these three basic arguments against 7Q5 being a portion of Mark 6:52-53, I personally view points (2) and (3) as the weakest of the three in that from my perspective, they display a theological bias, versus real objectivity. On the other hand, I see point (1) as having the most validity against 7Q5 being a portion of Mark 6:52-53. Below is a picture of the fragment:



Mark 6:52-53 reads as follows: “For they had not understood about the loaves, but their heart was hardened. And when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and they were anchored.” Below is the Greek text:

ὅυ γὰρ συνῆκαν ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄρτοις· ἀλλ’ ἦν αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία πεπωρωμένη. Καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἦλθον εἰς Γεννησαρέτ, καὶ προσωρμίσθησαν.

For the 7Q5 fragment to be identified with Mark 6:52-53, it would need to be reconstructed in such a way that would fit with the above Greek text, and that would include a transition from some of the Greek letters above to a phonetic synonym in order to make the fit work. The following, therefore, is a suggested reconstruction in order to make the 7Q5 fragment fit with the received Greek text:

Ου γαρ συνηκαν] ε [πι τοις αρ
 Τοις αλλ ην α] υ των η [καρδια
 Πεπωρωμεν] η και τι [απερασ
 Αντες ηλθον εις γε] ννησ [αρετ
 Και προσωρμισ] θησα [ν



7Q5 Original Photograph
from "The First New Testament" by
David Estrada & William White, Jr.
Photograph by David Rubinger, 1972



Photograph used with permission of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

In order, therefore, for this 7Q5 fragment to actually be a part of Mark 6:52-53, the suggested delineation of the lettering, according to O’Callaghan’s scenario, would need to be this fit as we view it again:

Ου γαρ συνηκαν] ε [πι τοις αρ
 Τοις αλλ ην α] υτων η [καρδια
 Πεπωρωμεν] η και τι [απερασ
 Αντες ηλθον εις γε] ννησ [αρετ
 Και προσωρισ] θησα [ν

The following is the original Greek text once again with the highlighted areas being the letters suggested by O’Callaghan:

ὄυ γὰρ συνη̃καν (ε̃)πι τοῖς ἄρτοις·
 ἀλλ’ ἦν α(ὕτων ἠ) καρδία
 πεπωρωμέν(η Καὶ δι)απεράσαντες
 ἦλθον εἰς Γε(ννησ)αρέτ,
 καὶ προσωρίσ(θησα)ν.

One major difference that you will notice is that in line 3 of the fragment, the Greek letter τ has replaced the Greek letter δ in the received Greek text, and the reason given for this is that phonetically, in Palestine, the “t” sound could replace the “d” sound, and vice versa. The term typically associated with this interchange of sounds is ‘proto-semitic phonemes’, which is referring to the universal sounds that are throughout the Semitic languages of the Middle East. The word in question is διαπεράσαντες (*diaperasantes*), and the translation for it is, “when they had crossed over.” The English equivalent of this interchange might be seen with the word “when,” where one might possibly leave out the letter “h” and the pronunciation would simply be “wen,” versus “when.” You can see how the two sound very much the same. The question, however, is whether or not that is what is occurring here in this fragment.

Another letter that has come under much scrutiny in this Greek fragment is the Greek letter ν (English “n”) in line 2. There are those who say it is a ν, while there are others who affirm it isn’t. If it is not a ν, but rather some other letter (e.g., a Greek ι [English “i”] connected to a Greek Α [English

“A”]), then we have a completely different text. In fact, in 1992, Vittoria Spottorno, a Spanish scholar, proposed that the fragment was actually Zechariah 7:3-5 from the LXX, which I will not take the time nor space to evaluate in this presentation. Suffice it to say, however, there are other legitimate views and critiques that see 7Q5 as not being a portion of Mark 6:52-53.

Thus, if this is not a part of Mark’s Gospel, the truth of the matter is that it is entirely reasonable, in my opinion, to assume that there were Essenes who became Christians, and consequently, the Gospels could quite likely have been a part of Qumran literature in some form.

Conclusion

As we conclude our overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls, I believe it is clear that there was a close connection with the Judaism of the 2nd Temple period (520 BC – 70 AD) and the inhabitants of Qumran, who, by all reasonable calculations, were the Essenes. In addition, it is also quite reasonable to assume that John the Baptist had contact with the Essenes of Judea during his life and ministry. In fact, it is not too far a field to assume that some of his disciples may have come out of the Essene community. In addition, it is also reasonable to assume that some of the early Christian believers were very likely Essenes. The connection between the writings of the Qumran community, the Gospels, and New Testament epistles is unmistakable. How do we explain that connection? I believe that the Essenes were men who were intently looking for the promised, Messianic kingdom, and I also believe that a great many of the Qumran community were true believers in the Lord as were the Old Testament saints. However, just as with many of the early New Testament believers (e.g., Corinth, Galatia, etc.), the Qumran community had some misguided beliefs, including some intense legalism (e.g., no bowel movements on the Sabbath). All in all, however, they did not have the fullness of the truth, but they were approaching it.

With the birth of Jesus, the fulfillment of biblical prophecy is reached with the promise of the coming Messiah, who was and is the God-man, the one and only one who fulfills Isaiah 53 in every way. John the Baptist’s statement of who Jesus was constitutes the fulfillment of all that the Qumran community accurately perceived about the coming Messiah:

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.' 31 "And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." 32 And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. 33 "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' 34 "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God." (John 1:29-34)

Thus, Qumran was definitely approaching the truth of the coming Messiah and what that would mean to mankind, but Jesus was and is the fulfillment of that truth, and indeed is the truth: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (John 14:6). Thus, Qumran was a precursor to the truth, but Jesus and the New Testament is the fulfillment of that truth!

In the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, we have the "faith" chapter, which is absolutely one of the most important chapters in the entire Bible. As the writer delineates the work of faith in the lives of the Old Testament saints, he sums up the culminating work of faith in their hearts by looking to the fulfillment and completion of that faith as follows:

And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 11:39-112:2)

Therefore, Jesus is the fulfillment of everything the Essenes and the Qumran community were looking for. That fulfillment was further attested through the very 'Life of Christ' that began to be manifested in and through the lives of New Testament believers by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, and this is evidenced in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

Jesus Himself affirmed the final fulfillment of His life being lived in and through the lives of His followers in the following passage in John's Gospel:

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him,

but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a little while the world will behold Me no more; but you *will* behold Me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him. Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, 'Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us, and not to the world?' 23 Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.' (John 14:15-29)

Indeed, it is all about Jesus, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the root and offspring of David, the bright morning star (Rev. 22:10-16).