

## **“Dead Sea Scrolls Challenge Us”**

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Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are from the NIV Bible.

### **We live in an Age of Doubt and Deception**

**Luke 18:8b** “However, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith on the earth?**” (Emphasis added.)

“Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: **“Take heed that no one deceives you”** Matthew 24:3-4 (NKJV) (Emphasis added).

**Matthew 24:24** “For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles **to deceive even the elect — if that were possible.**” (Emphasis added.)

**Daniel 12:1-4** Knowledge will be increased - worldly knowledge and biblical knowledge.

**Luke 19:39-40** “Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples!’ ‘I tell you,’ he replied, ‘if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’”

**Matthew 22:37** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and **with all your mind.**” (Emphasis added.)

### **Location of the discovery:**

The Judean Wilderness east of Jerusalem and south of Jericho near the Dead Sea.

(Aaron and I to decide on photos)

### **Discovery:**

Cave #1 - **found in the spring of 1947** by an Arab shepherd who had lost a goat, threw a rock into a cave, and heard pottery crack. Entering the cave they found jars - 10 inches wide by 25-29 inches high. **Inside were 7 "mummified" leather scrolls covered by linen and pitch.** They were bought for 20 Pound by a Cobbler - later sold for \$250,000 to Israel.

- **In 1951-1954, more caves were found near an Essene community called Khirbet Qumran.**
- **Cave #4 - in three weeks they found 800 fragments - thumbnail to legal size - total later increased to 500 manuscripts – then a whole library at Cave #4.**
- **The total manuscripts from all caves is 800.**

### **The Qumran Manuscripts – A closer look:**

- **Over 100,000 fragments - thumbnail to legal size**
- **They were written in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek.**
- **800 different manuscripts from 37 caves**
- **1/3 of the manuscripts were Old Testament books – all the books except Esther.**
- **They were defined in three periods of history**
  - **Archaic Period = 200-150 BC copiers and collectors**
  - **Hasmonean Period = 150 - 80 BC**
  - **Herodian Period = 30 BC - 70 AD**
- **Their authenticity is unquestioned by 3 methods.**
  - **Radiocarbon dating = 175 BC - 225 AD**
  - **The materials they were written on – animal skin**
  - **Paleographic evidence = science of comparative writing styles of literature from the same period of time = 180 BC - 70 AD**

### Location = Khirbet Qumran:

- It was central community for the Essenes - "the people of the scrolls"
- It was a **Monastery with defense towers.**
- It had a great assembly hall and dining hall; pantry and laundry area; spacious courts; and an **impressive water system to bring water to the community.**
- It had extensive pools for bathing and baptizing.
- **It had a scriptorium** - 43 ft. x 13 ft. room with a 16.5 ft table for copying scrolls, plus basins for ritual washing before and after copying scrolls.

### The People = The Essenes: The Pharisees of the Pharisees

- **Semi-monastic split of orthodox Jews and Pharisees** (Josephus, Philo, Pliny)
- They removed themselves (**about 4000**) from the evils that surged up in cities.
- There was a **rigorous interrogation** for those that wanted to belong.
- They considered themselves **God's chosen people - salvation was only for them.**
- They were called by God to go into the desert to prepare the way of the Lord.
  - They believed in repentance as a prerequisite to water baptism for salvation.
- They believed in the "Age of Consummation" - the Messiah would come soon bringing a sword and...The Messiah would be the Son of God.

### John the Baptist vs. the Essenes:

- John grew up near them and was probably influenced by them.
- John had an active ministry to the nation of Israel to prepare the Lord's way.
- John was not monastic or cultish.
  - John was missionary and evangelistic vs. sectarian and self-centered.
- **Repentance and water baptism** were more than a ritual for community membership.
  - For Christians, **it was an outward sign of an inward change of heart** to prepare the way of the Lord, so they could recognize the Messiah when he came.

### The Significance of the Scrolls:

- All are photographed and dispersed to many interpreters.
  - God preserved these scrolls for us, our generation of doubt.
  - God gave the Essenes the wisdom to mummify His Word for all generations.
- The Sin Hoax was dispelled.
  - Our Old Testament was based on the Masoretic Hebrew Bible from 800 AD.
  - The Dead Sea Scrolls **show no significant changes** in translation **but are 1,000 years earlier, establishing the credibility** to our modern Bible **back to 200 BC.**
  - God's Word had not changed.
    - The sins that were supposedly 3<sup>rd</sup> century plots were still in the Bible.
  - A 1,000 year gap was filled in to answer the skeptics.
- The Messianic Prophecy Hoax was dispelled. **Isaiah = 66 chapters = 52 pages**
  - The Hebrew text of Isaiah dates to 150-125 BC (Isaiah lived 739-685 BC).
  - This proved that Isaiah's Messianic prophecies were written before Christ came.
  - The book of Isaiah was not doctored up by Christians as claimed by the Jews.
  - **A complete copy of the scroll of Isaiah** is on display in Jerusalem with all the Messianic prophecies about the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, their Messiah, Savior, and King. No changes to Isaiah – only 3 spelling variations = love vs. luv.
- The Gospel Hoax was dispelled - The gospels can no longer be a third century plot.
  - These documents have purged out radical views.
  - The Gospel of Mark can be no later than 45 AD (Jesus died 33 AD).
  - The Gospel of John was formerly dated 150 AD - now no later than 90 AD.
  - Book of Revelation now dates to 70-100 AD.
  - Book of Hebrews-now dated before the destruction of Jerusalem 70 AD.

- **The generation that saw Jesus crucified and wrote about it were still living!**
- **The scrolls are an extra biblical confirmation of the death and resurrection of Christ.**
  - Some Jews were looking for a Messiah and believed Jesus to be the Messiah.
  - The Essenes as a whole group did not embrace Jesus as the Messiah, but some believed.

**Archaeology does not replace faith** or prove things beyond a shadow of a doubt. However, it adds statistical information to build a better case for the reliability of the Bible and its' message.

- **7,000,000 to 8,000,000** Christians did not die for their faith in the first three centuries over a hoax.

## **Isaiah lived 739-685 BC, and he prophesied the coming of Christ.**

**Isaiah 7:14** "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV).

**Isaiah 11:1-3** "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him — the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD — and he will delight in the fear of the LORD."

"He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, **And by His stripes we are healed**" Isaiah 53:3-5 (NKJV) (Emphasis added).

## **What will you do with Bible evidence and Jesus?**

**Romans 10:10-11** "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." (Emphasis added.)

**Thomas had doubts about the resurrection of Christ.**

"Then Jesus said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" John 20:27-29 (Emphasis added).

"Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'" John 6:28-29 (NKJV). (Emphasis added).

**What will you do with Jesus? Will you doubt or believe?**