

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

THE DISCOVERY OF THE SCROLLS

Winter 1946/Spring 1947—3 Bedouin shepherds tending flocks, threw a rock into a cave, heard shattering, two days later another shepherd entered and found ten jars, 8 empty and two full, scrolls were brought to antiquities dealer Kando.

Seven scrolls—*Community Rule* or *Manual of Discipline*, Isaiah (1 fairly complete, 1 partial), a commentary on Habbakuk, *The Hymn Scroll*, *The War Rule*, and the *Genesis Apocryphon*

Four scrolls bought by St. Mark's Monastery--\$100. Is./Com.Rule/Hab.Com/Gen.Apoc
Three scrolls by Eleazar Sukenik

June 1, 1954 Wall Street Journal ad—head of monastery, Metropolitan Samuel offered 4 scrolls for \$1 million but sold for \$250,000. Yadin purchased them through an agent and reunited them with the three his father purchased.

All seven now housed in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum

THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

Geography—located on the NW side of the Dead Sea—10 miles s. of Jericho, 15 miles e. of Jerusalem. 1100 feet below sea level. Limestone cliffs on west.

History—Essenes mentioned by Josephus and Pliny the Elder—1st century AD, pagan historians. Pliny—“On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of range of the noxious exhalations of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all other tribes in the whole world, as it has no women and has renounced all sexual desire, has no money, and has only palm trees for company.”

Archaeology—occupied 150BC-about 70AD. Early 1950's full scale excavation of Qumran.

Theology— **Predeterminism:** (Josephus, *Antiquities* 13.171-73)—“Fate is mistress of all things, and nothing befalls men unless it be in accordance with her decree.”

The Two Ways: (*Community Rule* 4.15-18)—Way of light and way of darkness.

Conflict will end when God comes in final judgment and gives victory to the sons of light.

Community of the New Covenant: (*Community Rule* 2.19-25)—organized after the structure of Israel's wilderness wanderings. Annual covenant renewal. Ate pure meal. Prayed, studied scriptures. Leader taught true knowledge and mysteries of God, presided at meetings, examined candidates, supervised finances.

Scriptural Interpretation: Teacher of righteousness, leader, insider to prophetic secrets, disclosed latter days had arrived. Strict rules following purity.

Worship: (*Community Rule* 9.4-5)—no animal sacrifices, prayer and praise

Two Messiahs: one from priestly line of Aaron and one from royal line of David

End Times: After final war, eternal communion with God and angels, return to a purified Jerusalem and temple

Practice— Use of oil: (*Damascus Document* 12.15-17)—did not use on body because it could increase danger of contracting impurities from unclean objects or persons

Property: (*Community Rule* 6.18-23)—communal. After one year the property reverted to the community

The Pure Meal: (*Community Rule* 6.3-6)—communal meals similar to passover and Lord's Supper

Bodily functions: Rigid guidelines during war and no restroom facilities on sabbath

Spitting: (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.147; *Com.Rule* 7.13)—“They are careful not to spit into the midst of the company or to the right.” Josephus. “Whoever has spat in an assembly of the congregation should do penance for 30 days.” *Community Rule*

DATING OF SCROLLS

Archeology: Coins, pottery, architecture

Paleography: Script of writing

Carbon—14 dating: Using DNA samples from leather parchments

SURVEY OF SCROLLS FOUND

Biblical: scrolls or fragments from all the biblical books except Esther; no copies of Nehemiah were found (a scrap has now been identified) but at this time Ezra (which was found) and Nehemiah were considered one book and were written on the same scroll.

Significance: Dead Sea Scrolls over 1000 years older (150BC) than previous known Hebrew manuscript (900AD). Textual History: Masoretic Text, Septuagint (LXX), Samaritan Pentateuch reflect that there were several versions of the Hebrew Bible (OT) being used at the time the Dead Sea Scrolls were written. The DSS manuscripts have shed new light on grammatical forms, spelling and punctuation. No doctrinal differences in manuscripts.

Commentaries: verse by verse and thematic commentaries (peshers) on biblical books (Habbakuk, Micah, Zephaniah, Psalms, Isaiah, Hosea, and Nahum)

Commentary on Hosea 2:9-10 (Eng.) 4Q166

Its interpretation: he has punished them with hunger and with nakedness so they will be a shame and disgrace in the eyes of the nations on whom they relied. But they will not save them from their sufferings.

Non-canonical Writings: Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, Psalm 151

Pseudepigrapha: Enoch, Jubilees, Testaments of 12 Patriarchs, Genesis Apocryphon & others

1 Enoch 4Q201

Words of blessing with which Enoch blessed the chosen just ones, who will be present on the day of distress to eliminate all the enemies and wicked people, while the just will be saved. Enoch, a just man to whom a vision of the Holy One and of heaven was revealed, announced his oracles and said: The vision of the Holy One of heaven was revealed to me, and I heard it all from the words of the Watchers and the Holy Ones and because I heard it from them, I knew and understood everything not for this generation but for a future generation I shall speak. Now I speak about the chosen, concerning them I declare my oracle saying: The Great Holy One shall leave his dwelling and the eternal God will descend upon the earth and will walk to Mount Sinai.

Community Texts: *Damascus Document, Community Rule or Manual of Discipline, Temple Scroll, worship writings, poetic and hymnic compositions (Thanksgiving Hymns), eschatological texts (War Rule), wisdom texts, and Copper Scroll.*

Damascus Document 4Q271

No one should intermingle voluntarily on the sabbath. No one should go after an animal to pasture it outside his city, except for two thousand cubits. He is not to raise his hand to strike with the fist. If it is stubborn, he should not bring it out of his house. No one should remove anything from the house to outside, or from outside to the house. Even if he is in a hut, he should remove nothing from it nor bring anything into it. He is not to open a sealed vessel on the sabbath. No one should wear perfumes to go out or come in on the sabbath. In his dwelling no one should lift a stone or dust. The wet-nurse should not lift the baby to go out or come in on the sabbath. Do not press one's servant or one's maidservant or one's employee on the sabbath. No one should help an animal give birth on the sabbath day. And if it has fallen into a well or a pit he should not take it out on the sabbath. No one should stay in a place close to gentiles on the sabbath. No one should profane the sabbath for riches or gain on the sabbath. And any living man who falls into a place of water or a well no one should take him out with a ladder or a rope or a utensil.

Community Rule 4Q258

Midrash for the Instructor concerning the men of the law who freely volunteer to revert from all evil and to keep themselves steadfast in all he commanded. They should keep apart from the congregation of the men of injustice in order to constitute a community in law and possessions and acquiesce to the authority of the many in every affair involving the law and possessions. They must exercise humility, justice and right, compassionate love and seemly behavior in all their paths. No one should walk in the stubbornness of his heart in order to go astray, but one should establish a foundation of truth for Israel, for the community, for all who freely volunteer for holiness in Aaron and for the house of truth in Israel and for those who join them for the Community.

Torah Precepts 4Q396

And concerning pregnant animals: we think that one should not sacrifice the mother and the fetus on the same day. And concerning the uncleanness of the corpse of a man: we say that every bone, whether stripped of flesh or complete, is subject to the law concerning a dead or murdered person. And concerning the pure animal it is written that he shall not let two species mate; and concerning clothing, that no materials are to be mixed; and he will not sow his field or his vineyards with two species because they are holy.

War Rule 4Q285

As the Prophet Isaiah said "And they shall cut the most massive of the forest with iron and Lebanon, with its magnificence, will fall. A shoot will emerge from the stump of Jesse... the bud of David." And they will go into battle.

Beatitudes 4Q525

Blessed are those who adhere to her laws, and do not adhere to perverted paths. Blessed are those who rejoice in her and do not burst out in paths of folly. Blessed are those who search for her with pure hands and do not pursue her with a treacherous heart. Blessed is the man who attains Wisdom and walks in the ways of the Most High.

RESOURCES

Best Introduction and Overview:

The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls by James Vanderkam and Peter Flint (2002).

Covers the scrolls discovery, the manuscripts found, the Qumran group, the scrolls connection to the OT and NT, controversies surrounding the scrolls, and how science is aiding in understanding the scrolls.

Translations of Non-Biblical Scrolls:

The Dead Sea Scrolls translated by Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr., and Edward Cook (2005)

Web Sites:

Israel Museum

<http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/>

Hebrew University in Jerusalem

<http://orion.mscc.huji.ac.il>

Dead Sea Scroll Digital Library

<http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il>