

THE WORD OF GOD STANDS FOREVER Isaiah 40:6–8

The Discovery & Implications of the Dead Sea Scrolls

1. How do we know if the Bible has not been altered?

- a. I remember asking my dad this question—He said, If I send you a book would you read it?
- b. That began the discovery of how amazing God's word the Bible is!
- c. We all know the 2nd law of thermodynamics. Everything is breaking down.
Plant, animal, human life ages and breaks down over time.
- d. The Bible explains the beginning of this degenerative process (Gen 3:17-19)
- e. Isaiah also speaks of this (Isa. 40:7-8) But he also shows one exception...

"The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Jesus said: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. (Mt 24:35)

I. DISCOVERY OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A. THE CAVES OF QUMRAN

1. The Dead Sea is located on the border of Israel and Jordan [MAP]

- a) Because of its low elevation and arid location, the climate is unique.
- b) The Low humidity and high evaporation is very favorable for the preservation of materials like the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- c) The caves are so remote and inaccessible they're almost impossible to see

B. THE DISCOVERY

1. Through a strange and fortunate accident—a young Bedouin goat herder was searching for his lost goat in the cliffs along the Dead Sea...

- a) He threw a rock up into a cave that he thought his goat entered... but he heard the unmistakable sound of breaking pottery...
- b) In this cave (now called cave 1) he discovered several clay jars containing 7 ancient scrolls—one of them was a complete scroll of Isaiah.

C. THE GREATEST MANUSCRIPT FIND IN HISTORY

1. Little did he know at the time, he had made the greatest manuscript find of the century, maybe the greatest Biblical archeology find of all time.¹

- a) In these caves was an ancient library containing the oldest Hebrew scrolls of the Bible dating centuries before the time of Jesus Christ.

2. But this was a very dangerous time...

- a) The British starting to pull out of Palestine... UN creating new nation-state of Israel
- b) Jewish and Palestinian bombings... Arab-Israeli War Was About to break out...
- c) So the Bedouins kept the location of the caves a secret and sold these manuscripts to an antiquities dealer in Bethlehem named Kando.
- d) These Bible manuscripts had to be smuggled through barbed wire border checks!
- e) Only years later did Archeologists find 10 other caves w/ hundreds of other scrolls

¹ See: The Dead Sea Scrolls, by Don Patton; also: DDS 75th Anniversary, Bible Study Magazine, Jan 2022; Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, F.F. Bruce; The Bible from God to us, Geisler and Nix.

II. CONTENTS OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Two types of manuscripts were found: The Bible Manuscript & Non-Biblical writing

A. THE BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS

- 1. Every O.T. Book of the Bible Except one—the book of Esther**
 - a) Someone checked the book of Esther out from the Library and forgot to return it!
- 2. Multiple Scrolls of Many Books of the OT** Genesis (21). Exodus (20). Leviticus (15). Numbers (9). Deuteronomy (25). Psalms (34). Isaiah (20 copies).
- 3. These are now the oldest Bible Manuscripts ever found...**
 - a) Before the discovery of the DSS the oldest OT Bible manuscripts we had were dated 1,000 Yr. after the birth of Christ. Aleppo Codex [900AD] Leningrad Codex [1008 AD]
 - b) With the DSS we now have OT Mss. from 2-3 centuries before the birth of Christ!
- 4. 40,000 inscribed fragments... more than 500 books...**
 - a) Reconstruction of the fragments is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle
 - b) But DNA samples of all the fragments have given researchers a much easier method
 - c) DNA tests allow them to assemble the fragments into “Families”.

B. THE NON-BIBLICAL WRITINGS

- 1. Along with Bible Manuscripts there were many other scrolls written by men**
 - a) EX: In my office I have probably 10 or 12 different Bibles...
 - b) But most are Bible Commentaries, Bible Dictionaries, Encyclopedias written by men
 - c) So it was with the Community at Qumran...
- 2. CHART: Among the Non-Biblical Scrolls:**
 - a) Manual of Discipline (1QS) Hymn Scroll (1QH) War Scroll (1QM)
 - b) Commentaries; Temple Scroll; Copper Scroll.
- 3. NOTE: The scholars allowed to study the DSS were not so much interested in the Bible manuscripts—but in these non-Biblical writings.**
 - a) Just like Today—there is always the Temptation to be more interested in the Writings of men than in the inspired word of God.
 - b) They wanted to publish all their theories about the DSS to make a name for themselves in Academia... But to do so they had to keep the scrolls to themselves

C. THE SECRET THAT COULD NOT BE KEPT HIDDEN

- 1. For decades the self-appointed scholars who studied the Dead Sea Scrolls Kept them hidden from the public...**
 - a) Only a select few scholars were allowed access for their publication
 - b) There were custody battles between Israel and Jordan over ownership
 - c) When other DSS scrolls were later found—the archeologists would be attacked or defamed as fraudsters and then ostracized from the scholarly community.
 - d) But in time the photographs were smuggled out and released to the public

2. The control of the scholars began to weaken and eventually the public outcry was too great.

- a) The Dead Sea Scrolls were finally released to the world.
- b) Today they are on display in Israel and now at the Ronald Reagan Library in CA
- c) Google made high definition photographs of the major scrolls for anyone to study

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

A. THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD TO YOU

- 1. These Bible Manuscripts Passed from Desert Scribes, Shepherds**
 - a) Bedouins, Scholars, Muslims, Christians, Jews...to translators... to you and I.
- 2. The Word of God was not given to self-anointed pharisees or scholars to hide it or control it—it was give to all the world!**
- 3. Think about the Inspired Writers of the Bible Died bringing you the Truth!**
 - a) Of the 12 Apostles: 11 were killed for the Faith, 1 banished to island of Patmos
- 4. Many Bible Translators were killed for bringing the Bible to the people**
 - a) William Tyndale was a member of the Bow Lane church of Christ in London England²
 - b) He was the first to translate from the original Hebrew and Greek into English rather than from the Latin Vulgate. The first to translate YHWH as Jehovah.
 - c) His translation of the Bible into English changed the world—and got him killed.
Oct. 6, 1536 he was publicly strangled and burned at the stake...
 - d) But before His execution He yelled out: “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.”
 - e) 4 Yrs Later Tyndale’s Translation of the Bible was printed by the King’s request

B. GOD’S WORD ENDURES FOREVER (Isaiah 40:6)

- 1. THE ACCURACY: There were no photo-copiers in ancient times.**
 - a) To share the word of God, Scribes had to meticulously copy by hand, letter by letter, line by line an entire scroll of scripture.
 - b) Furthermore, eyeglasses were not invented until the 18th century.
 - c) So you can imagine the difficulty for accuracy.
 - d) This was the responsibility God gave to His people **(Romans 3:1–2 NIV)**
- 2. The discovery of the DSS was a perfect case-study to see how accurate our Bible is to the earliest ancient copies of the Scriptures.**
 - a) Were the Scrolls and Manuscripts of God’s Word handed down from Generation to Generation accurately and completely?
- 3. Now We Know the Answer!**
 - a) The Dead Sea Scrolls are word for word accurate to our present-day English translations of Bible.
 - b) The only differences are the most minor slips or the pen or variations of spelling.
 - c) **“It is a matter of wonder that through something like a thousand years the text underwent so little alteration.” (Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 304)**

² William Tyndale, by J.D. Tant, LaVista CofC website, citing ‘Traces of the Kingdom’ Keith Sisman p.284

C. GOD'S WORD ACCOMPLISHES HIS PURPOSE (Isaiah 55:6-11)

1. THE AGE: Physical Forensic Evidence of Fulfilled Prophecies

- a) Remember before the DSS were found our oldest OT Mss were from 900AD
- b) This gave skeptics of the Bible the chance to say all the professing concerning Jesus were altered to make them fit!
- c) They Claimed that Isaiah was not really written by Isaiah. Isaiah may have written the first half. But some scribe claiming to be Isaiah wrote the second half, and made all the Messianic prophesied up to fit Jesus!

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls Exposed These Lies!

- a) When the great scroll of Isaiah was found in Cave 1—it was not found in two parts,
- b) The entire scroll in one piece with no break.
- c) AND it was dated over 2 centuries before the birth of Jesus!

3. The Discovery of the DSS was Devastating to Bible Critics...

- a) Because it is Physical Forensic Evidence that ALL the Messianic Prophecies of Jesus were written centuries before His birth
- b) and stored away like a Time-Vault in the Caves of Qumran.

4. OVER 330 OT PROPHECIES ARE SPECIFICALLY FULFILLED IN CHRIST

- a) A Professor of Mathematics used a team to examine the statistical probability...
- b) 1st He took Just 8 Main Prophecies...**
- c) Place of His Brith, Time of His Birth, His Betrayal 30 pieces of Silver, His Crucifixion, pierced hands and feet, Casting lots for His Clothes, the Mocking and the Burial...
- d) "We find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} " (10 to the 17th power). That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (17 zeros after the one)."
- e) **To help us comprehend this staggering probability, he described it this way:**
"If you took this many silver dollars and laid them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars... blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one..."³
- f) **Next He Ran the Numbers of 48 prophecies and reports:**
"48 prophecies to be 1 in 10^{157} ..." To Understand the staggering probability - A Quarter is Much to Big... It Would Need to be the size of ONE ELECTRON!
- g) **The mathematical probability of 332 specific Prophecies Concerning Christ is beyond comprehension. [1 in 84×10^{123} rd power (84 followed by 123 zeroes)]**

5. Yes, God's Word Will not return to Him Void!

it accomplishes what He set it to Do! (**Romans 1:2-4**)

CONCLUSION:

1. The Word of God Stands Forever!

You Can Be Assured of the Promises of God—Promise of Eternal Life

2. There was a Man in the Gaza Desert—reading the Scroll of Isaiah. (Acts 8)

3. Only the Word of God Can Impart the Words of Life! –Bill Turner 2/2025

³ Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell. p. 175