



# The Dead Sea Scrolls

*The most significant  
literature found in  
the history of the  
Church*

Dr. Rick Griffith • Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary  
BibleStudyDownloads.org

Location of  
the Dead  
Sea

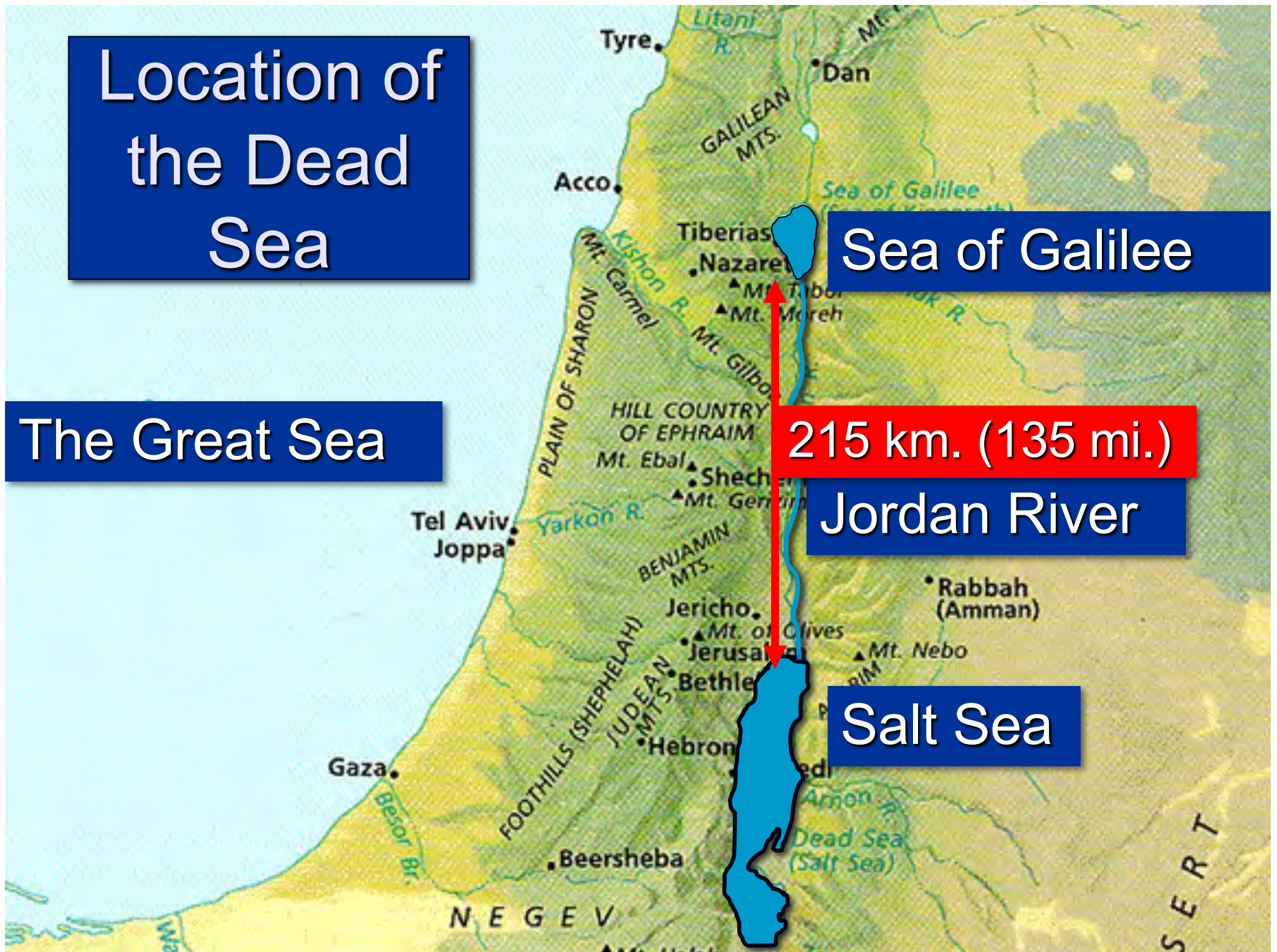
The Great Sea

Sea of Galilee

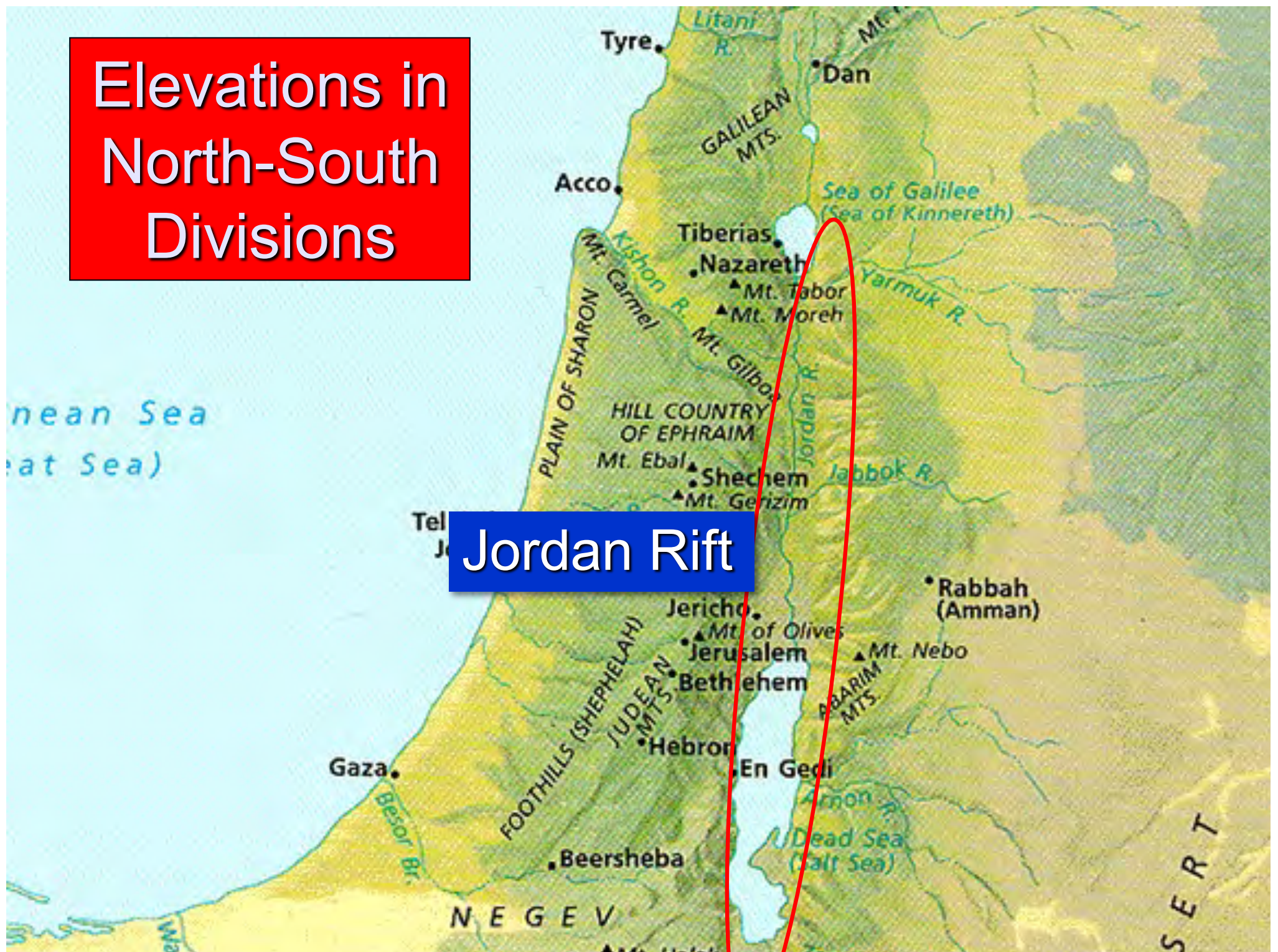
215 km. (135 mi.)

Jordan River

Salt Sea



# Elevations in North-South Divisions



Jordan Rift

# Baptismal Site of Jesus



# The Jordan Rift

## ■ Deep Depression

From the  
Wilderness  
of Judea  
looking east  
to the Salt  
Sea below



# From the Heights



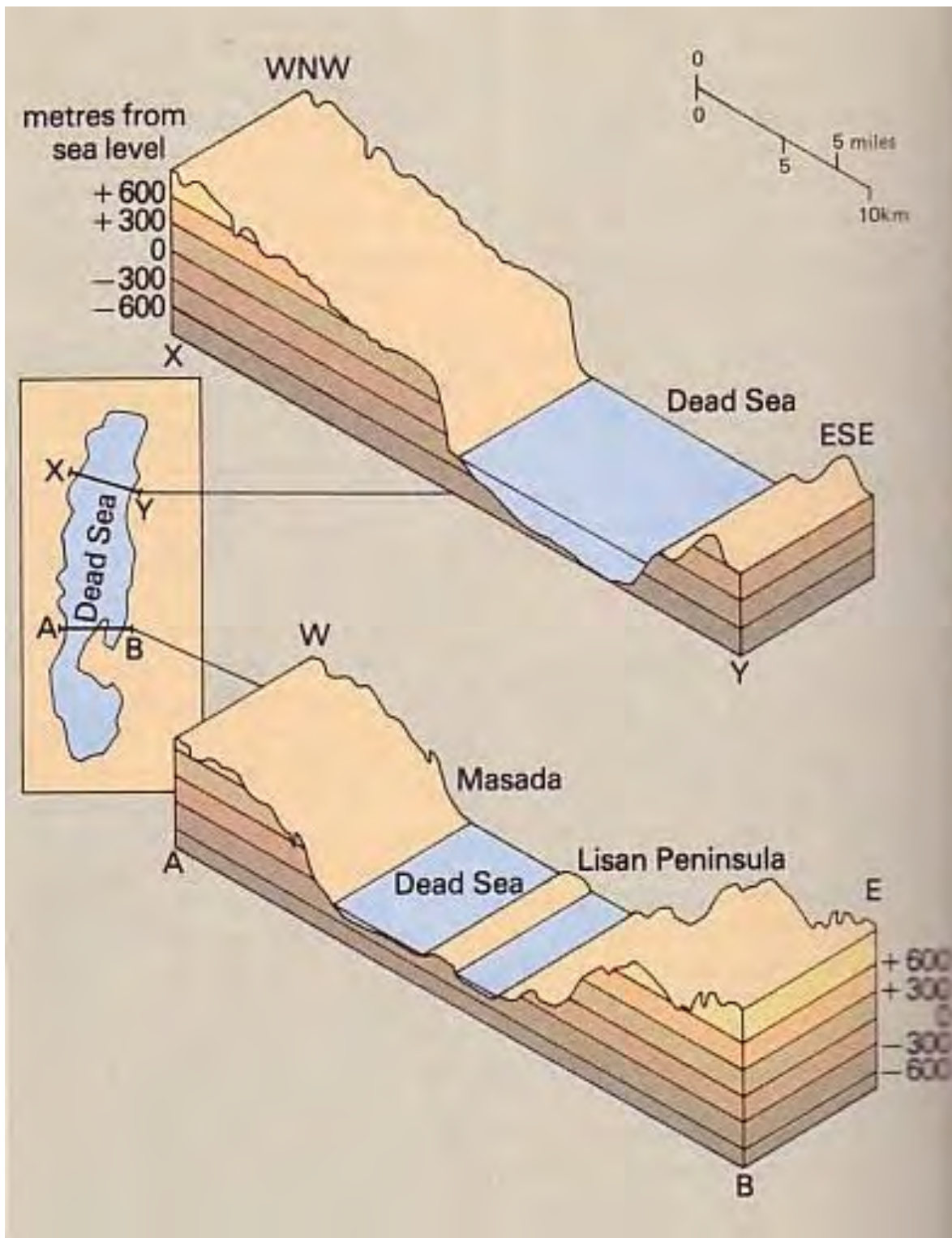
# The lowest spot on earth (-394 m.)

3-4 in. rain/year

3 sections now

Dropped 12 m. since 1975—was 20 m. higher in the 1<sup>st</sup> cent. AD

Israel makes US\$1 billion/yr. from potassium for fertilizer

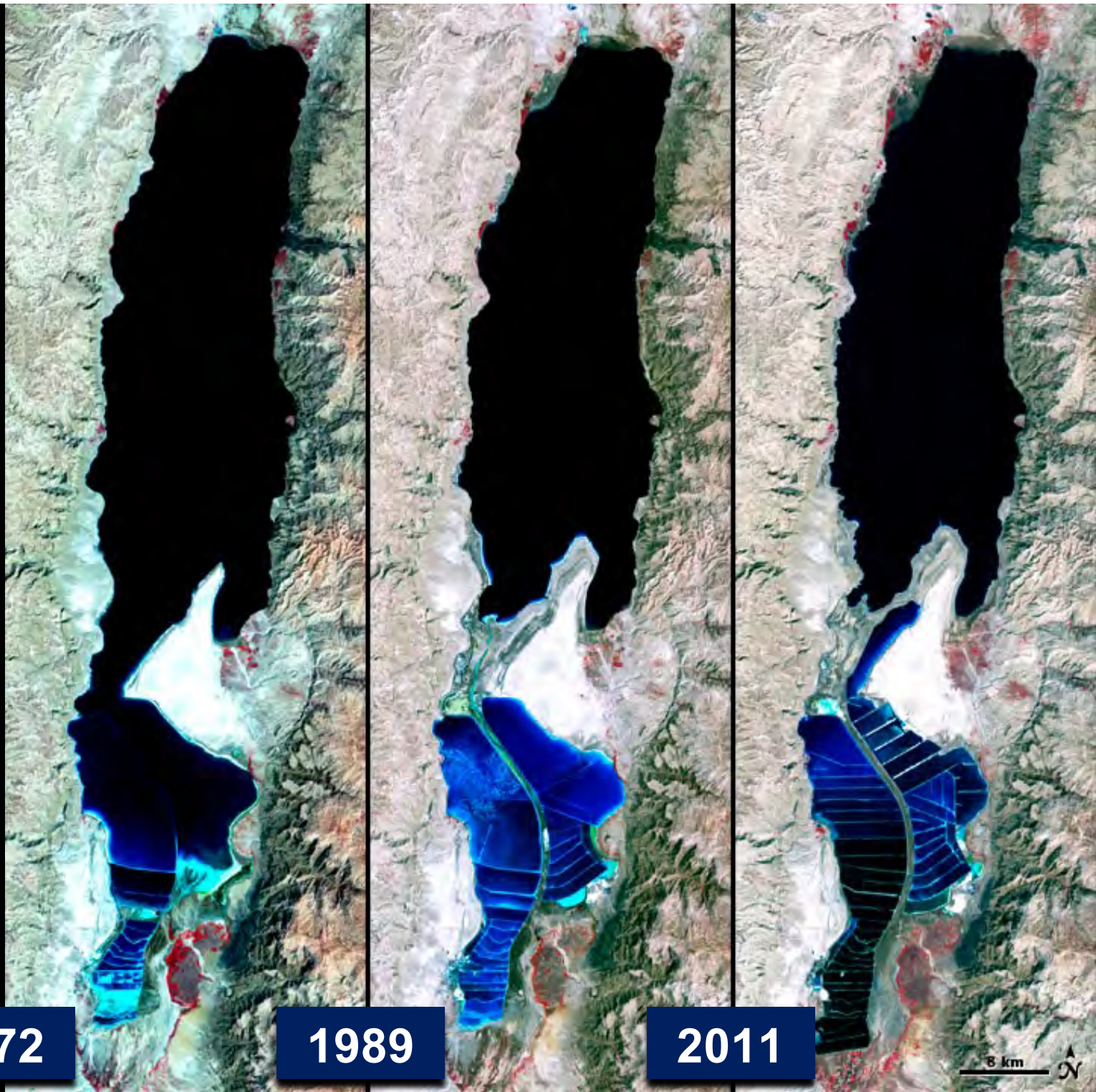


1972

1989

2011

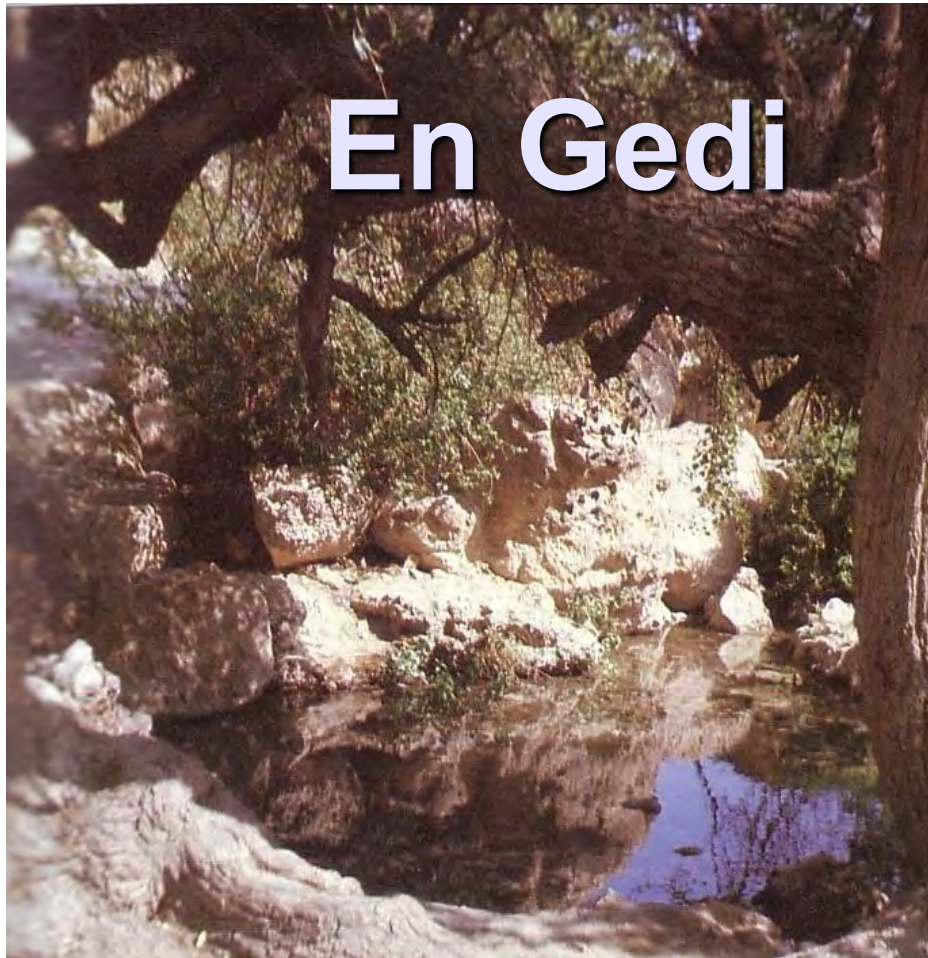
8 km





**Crops from a Fresh Water Oasis**

**En Gedi**




**The Salt Sea**



# Resorts of Salt?





# The Highest Salt Content on Earth

6 times the salt content of sea water

27% solids with 7% salt

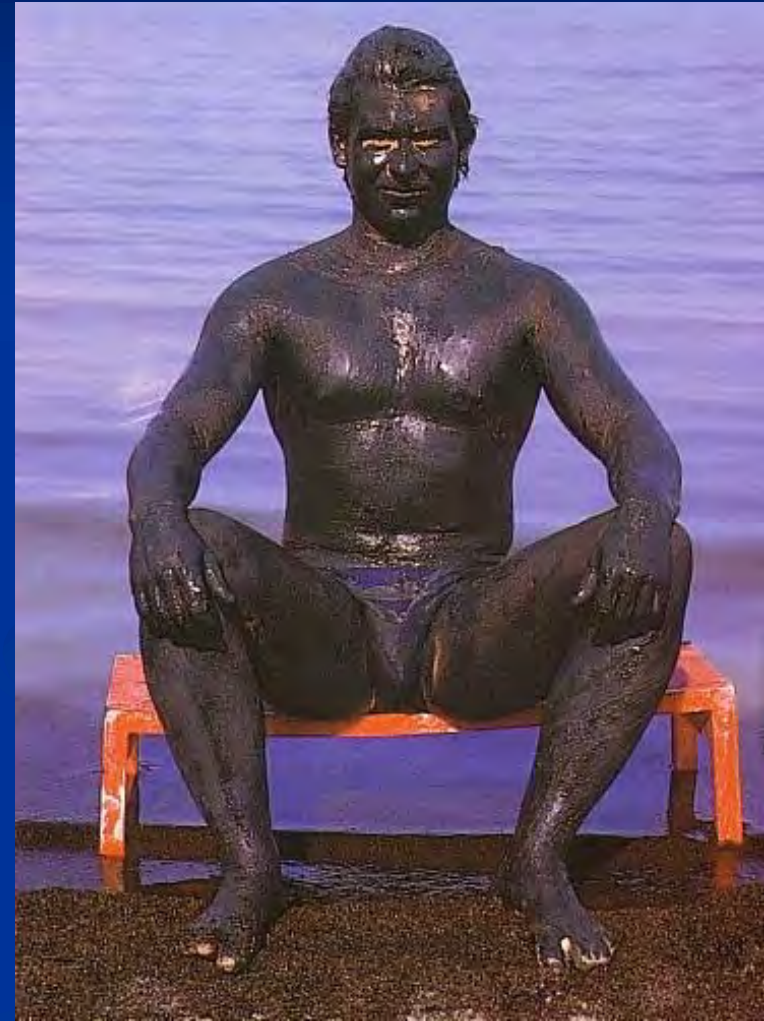
Float effortlessly

No outlet

**I enjoyed it too!**



# Dead Sea Mud



- Great for the skin (they say)
- You can't get too much



**Rick, Randall, Tim**

**Stings the  
skin but  
feels great!**

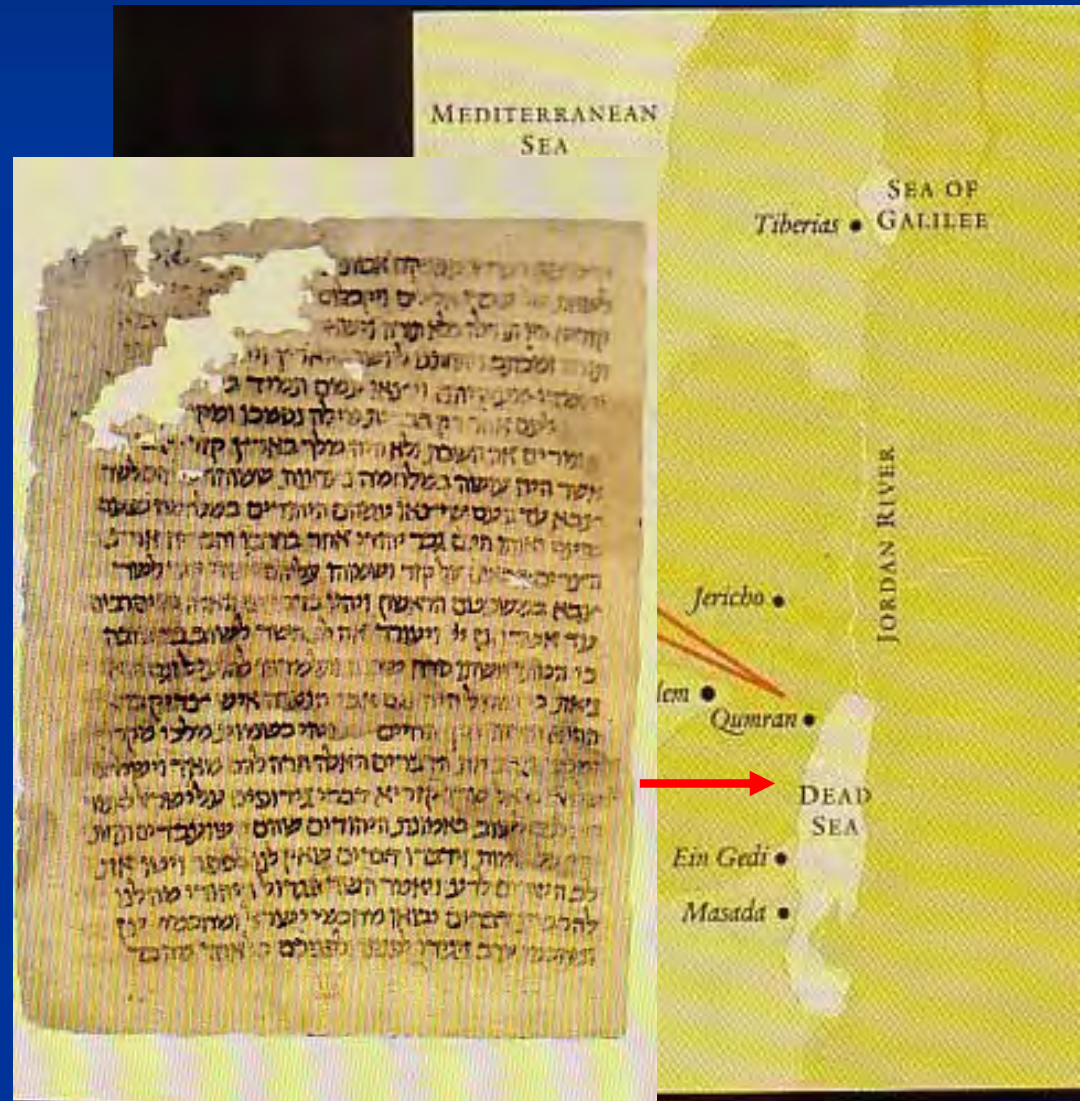




Pure  
Pleasure!?

# History of the Dead Sea Scrolls

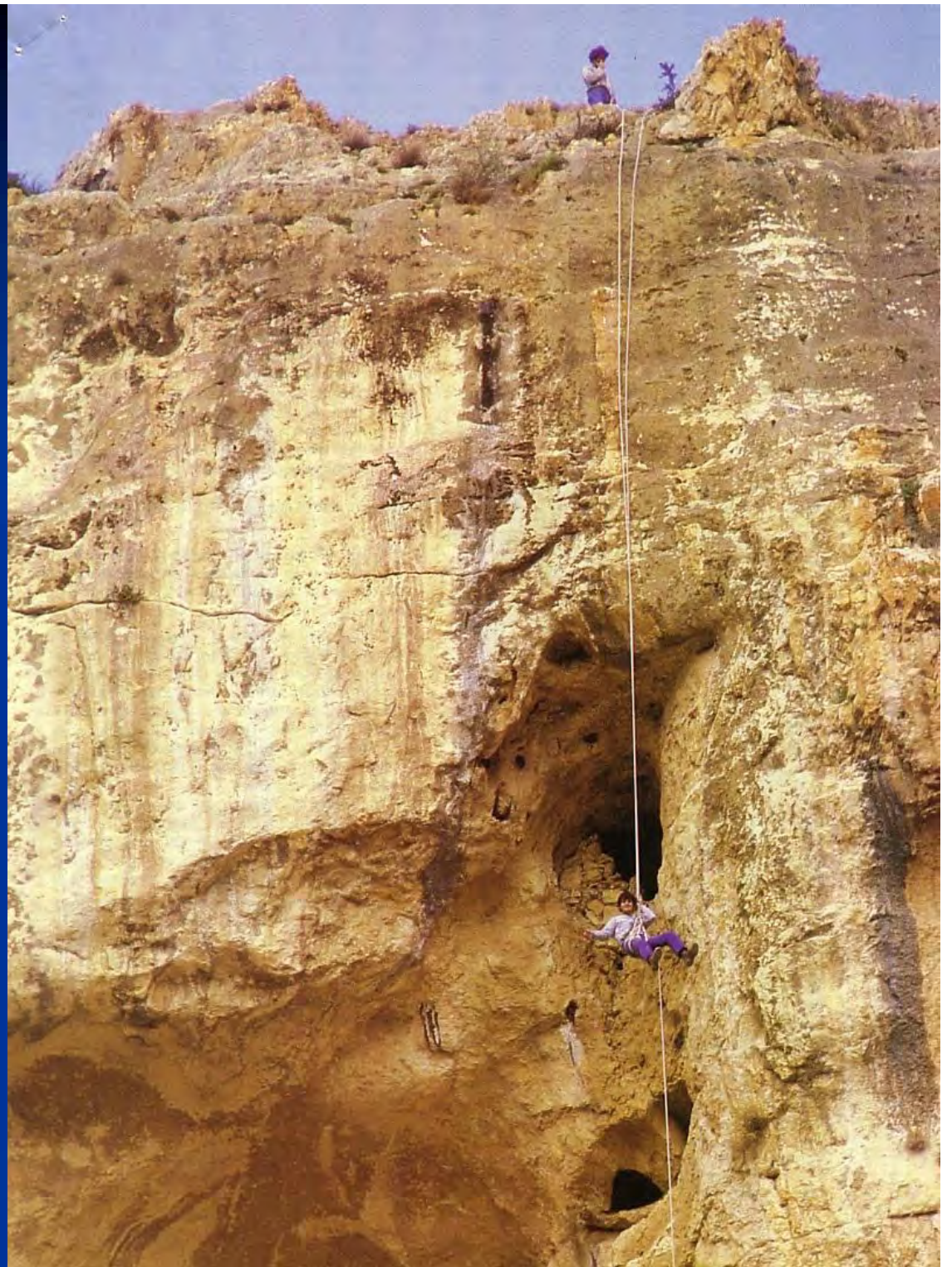
- Seven scrolls were found (1947) and quickly published
- Bar Kochba letters (1952, 1960-61)
- Hundreds of scrolls and 18,000 fragments followed (1947-1956)





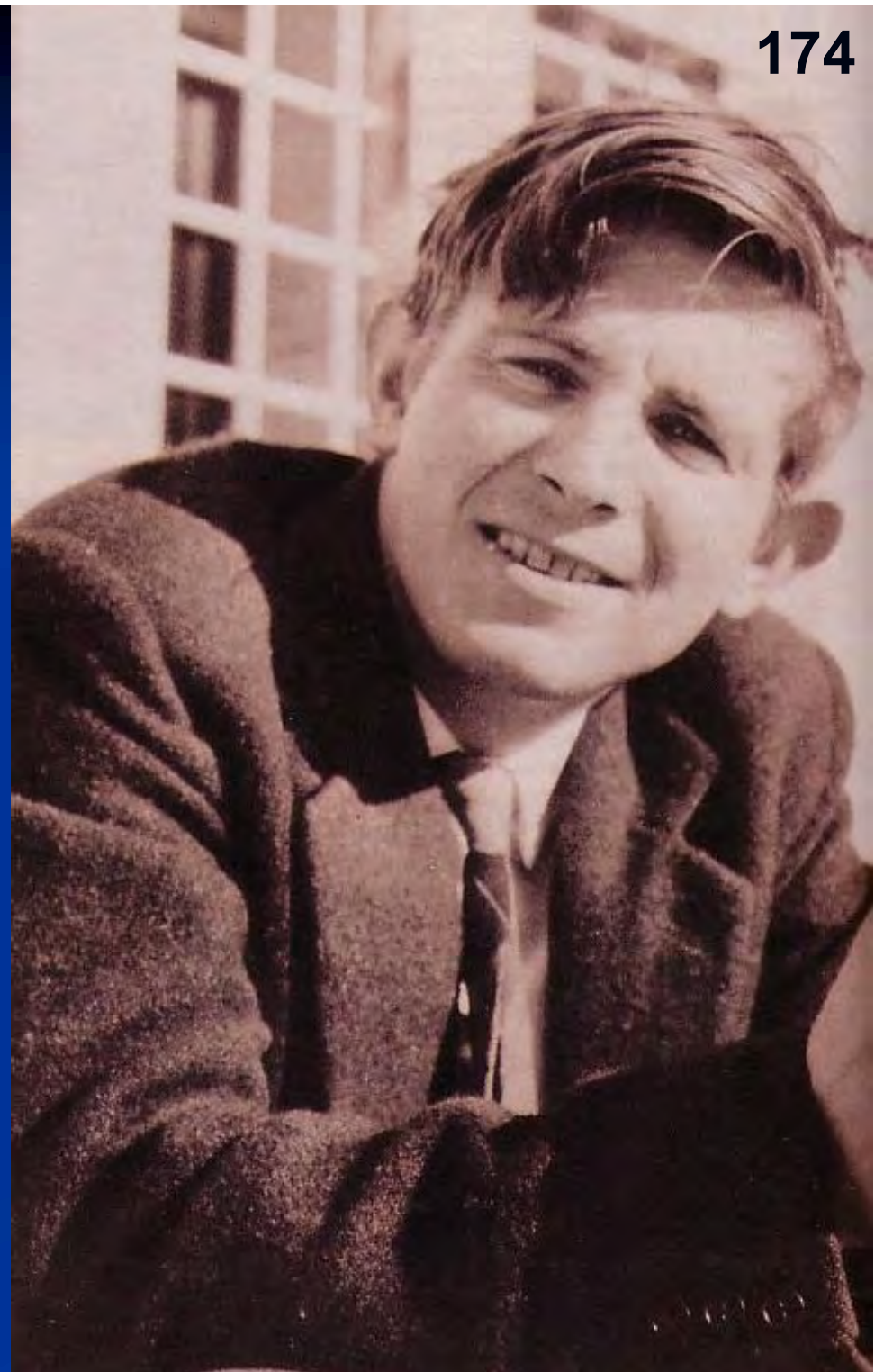
- Often getting scrolls from the hills wasn't easy

■ Sometimes it was near impossible!



# Evaluating the Scrolls

- Fragments were assigned to John Strugnell and his small team of scholars

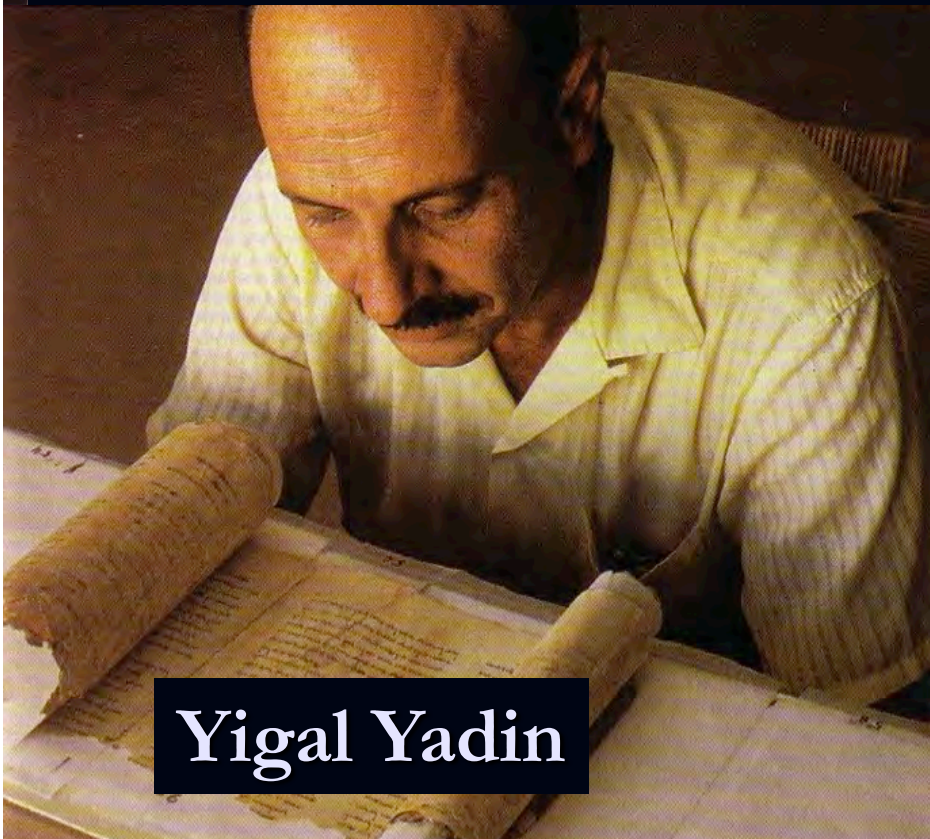




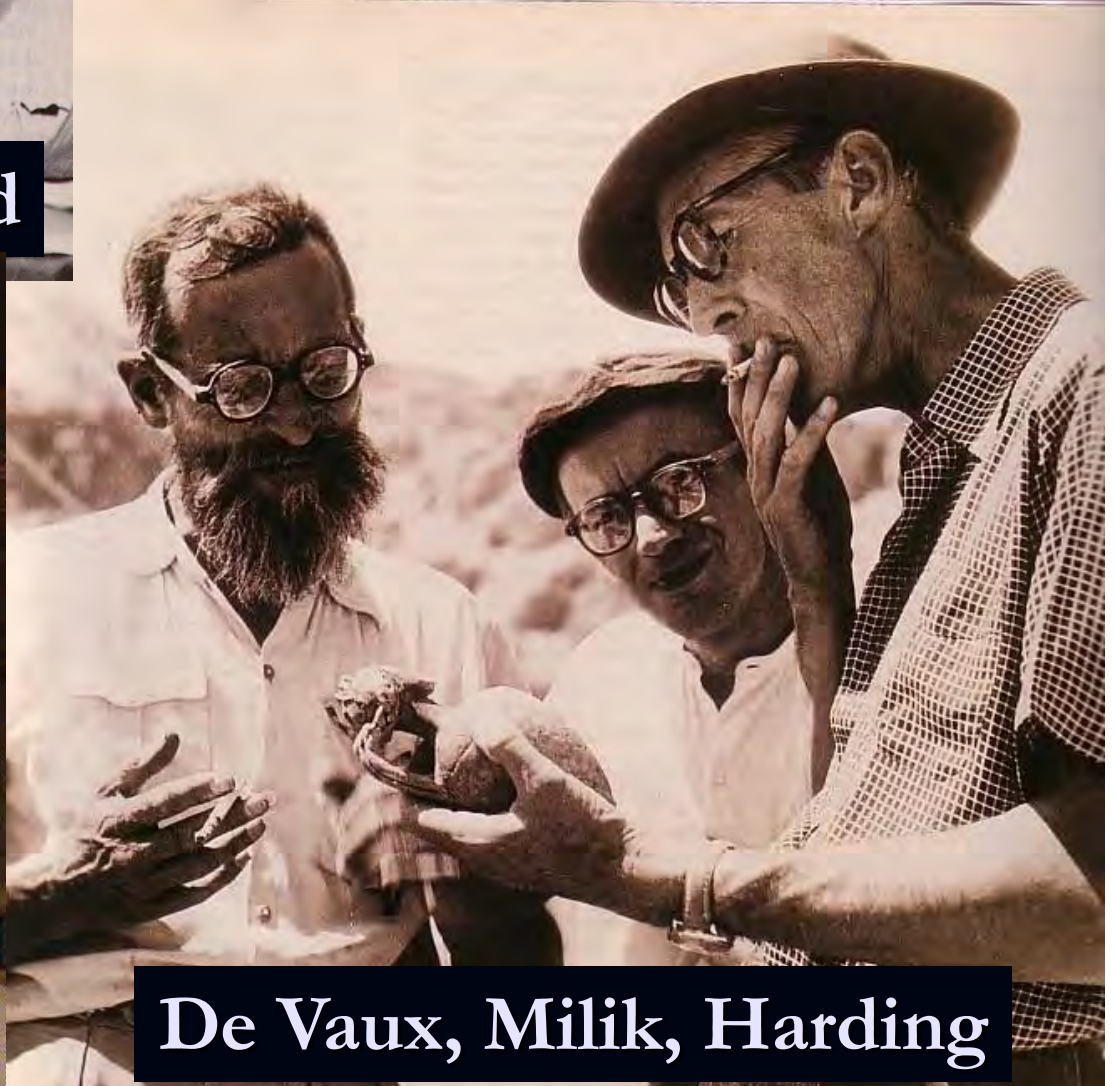
**Talmon, Puech, Greenfield**

# Strugnell's Team

- They alone could see the fragments



**Yigal Yadin**

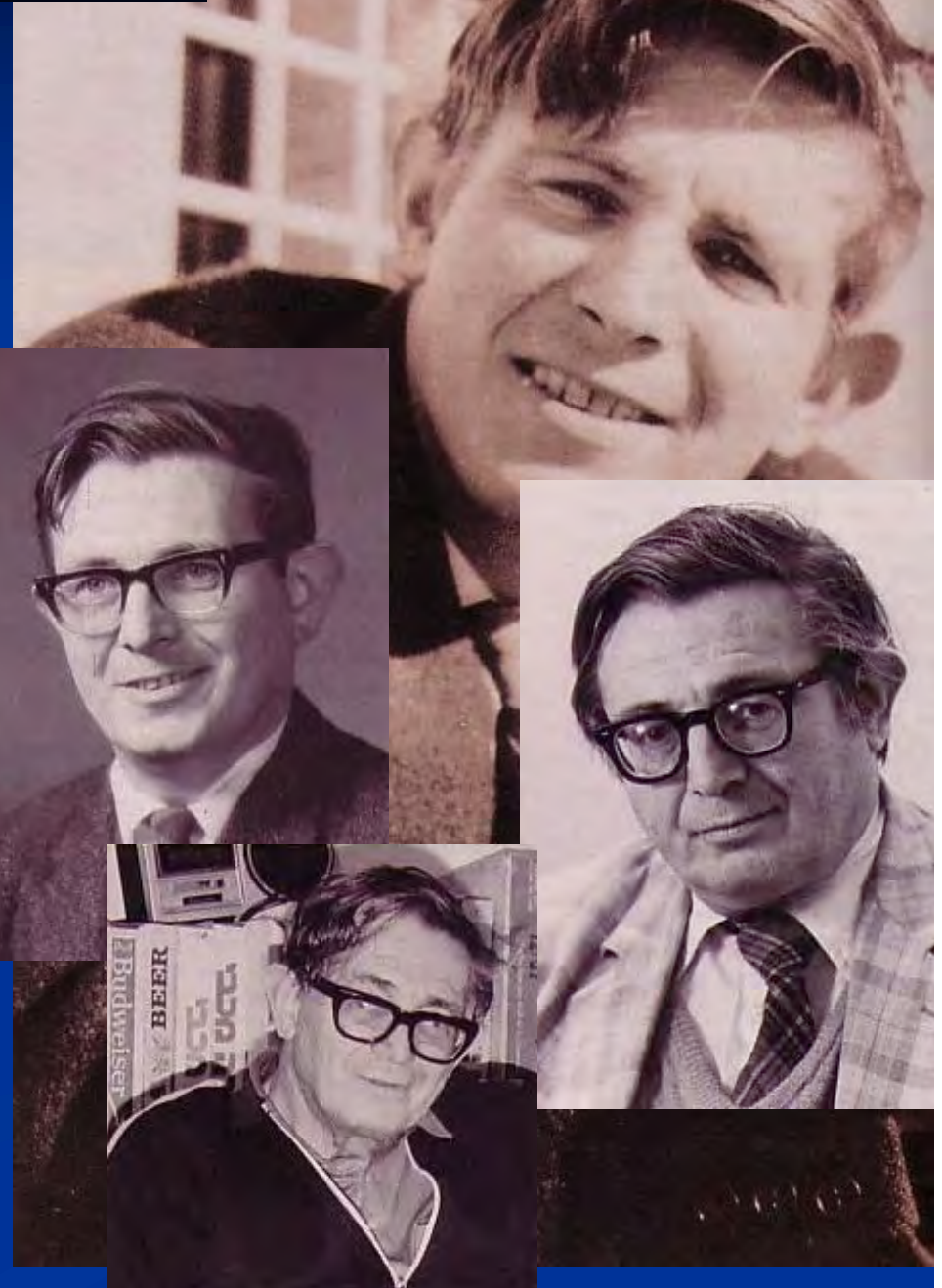


**De Vaux, Milik, Harding**

# Ever-so-slow work...

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- Fragments were unpublished for almost 40 years by John Strugnell's small team of scholars
- None of his scholars were Jewish
- Meanwhile, Strugnell aged

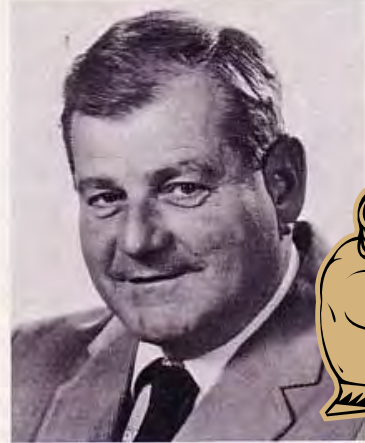


## Dead Sea Scrolls Scandal

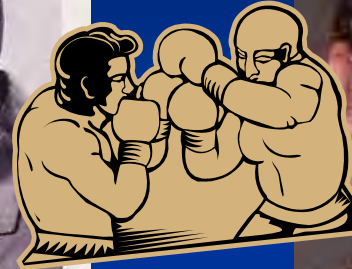
*Israel's Department  
Joins Conspiracy to*

They will never do it. They will never do it because they cannot do it. They have failed—utterly and completely. The time for equivocation, explanation and apology has passed. It is now time to face the situation squarely and unflinchingly: The team of scholars assigned more than 30 years ago to publish the Dead Sea Scrolls will never publish them because they cannot! The task was simply too great.

The team of editors has now become more of an obstacle to publication than a source of information. The Department of Antiquities and its staff are appointed to oversee the



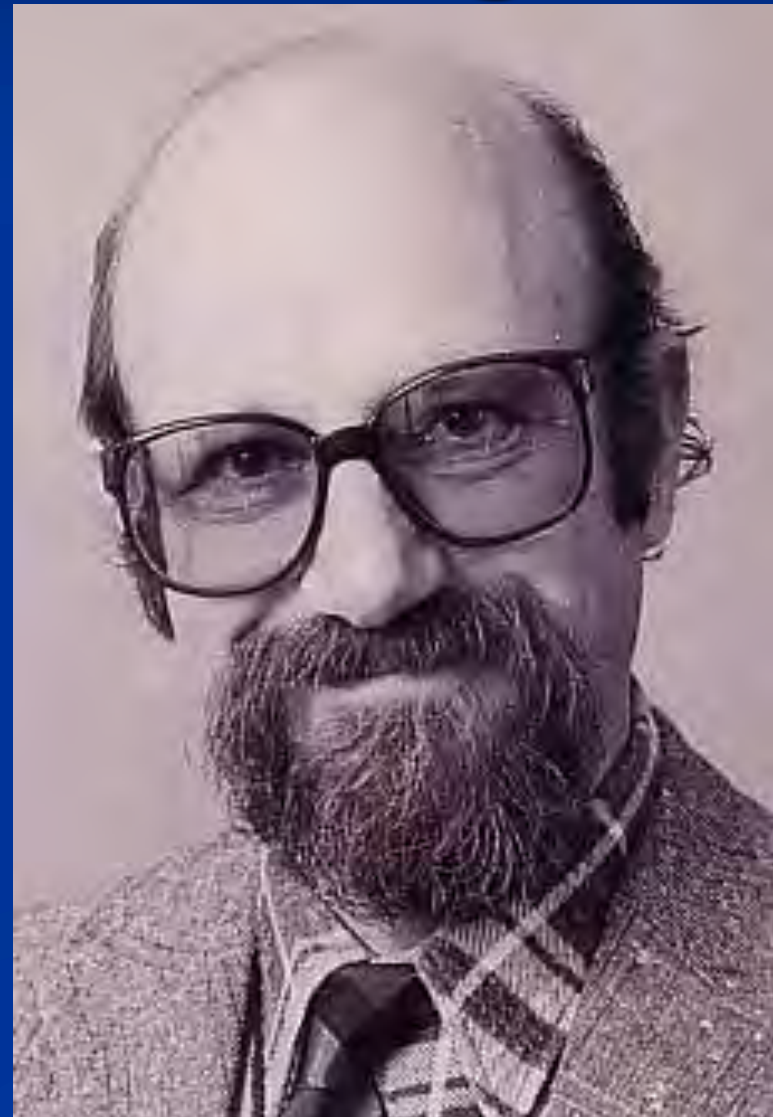
Amir Drori, director of Israel's Department of Antiquities, refused to answer questions about the "Suggested Timetable."



## What Should Be Done About the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls?

- Strugnell denounced Israel and was sacked (1990)
- Strugnell was replaced by Emmanuel Tov, who expanded the translation team to 70 scholars from 8 countries, including 13 women

## What happened to Strugnell?



# Evangelical DSS Scholars

- Martin Abegg let the cat out of the bag



# MMT

- The only letter in Qumran



## MIQSAT MA'ASE HA-TORAH

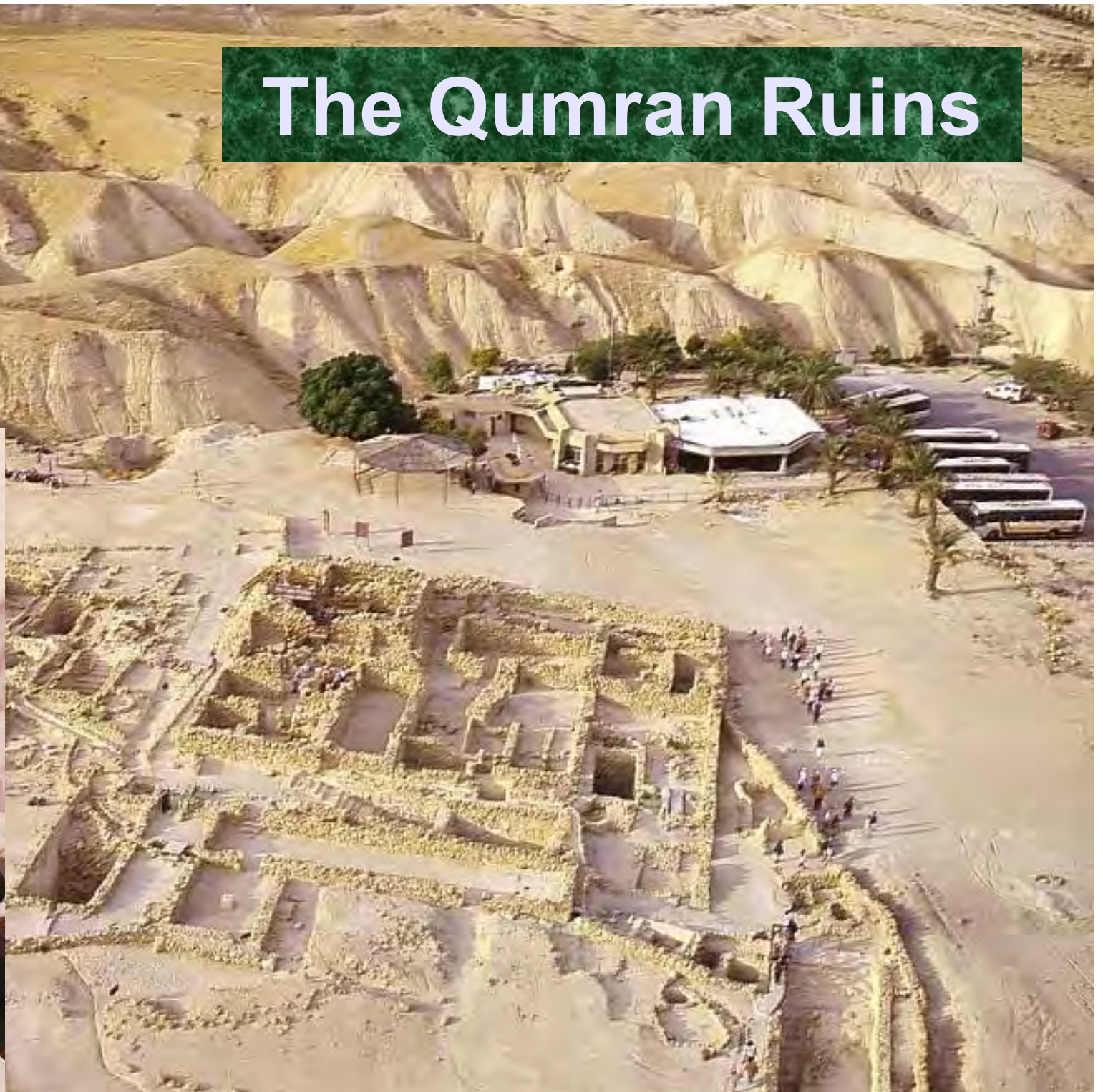
- "some precepts of the Torah" (Qimron)?
- "some legal rulings of the Torah"?
- "works of the law" (Abegg's translation shows that this is evidence for rabbinic belief in salvation by works, which Paul argues against in Galatians.)



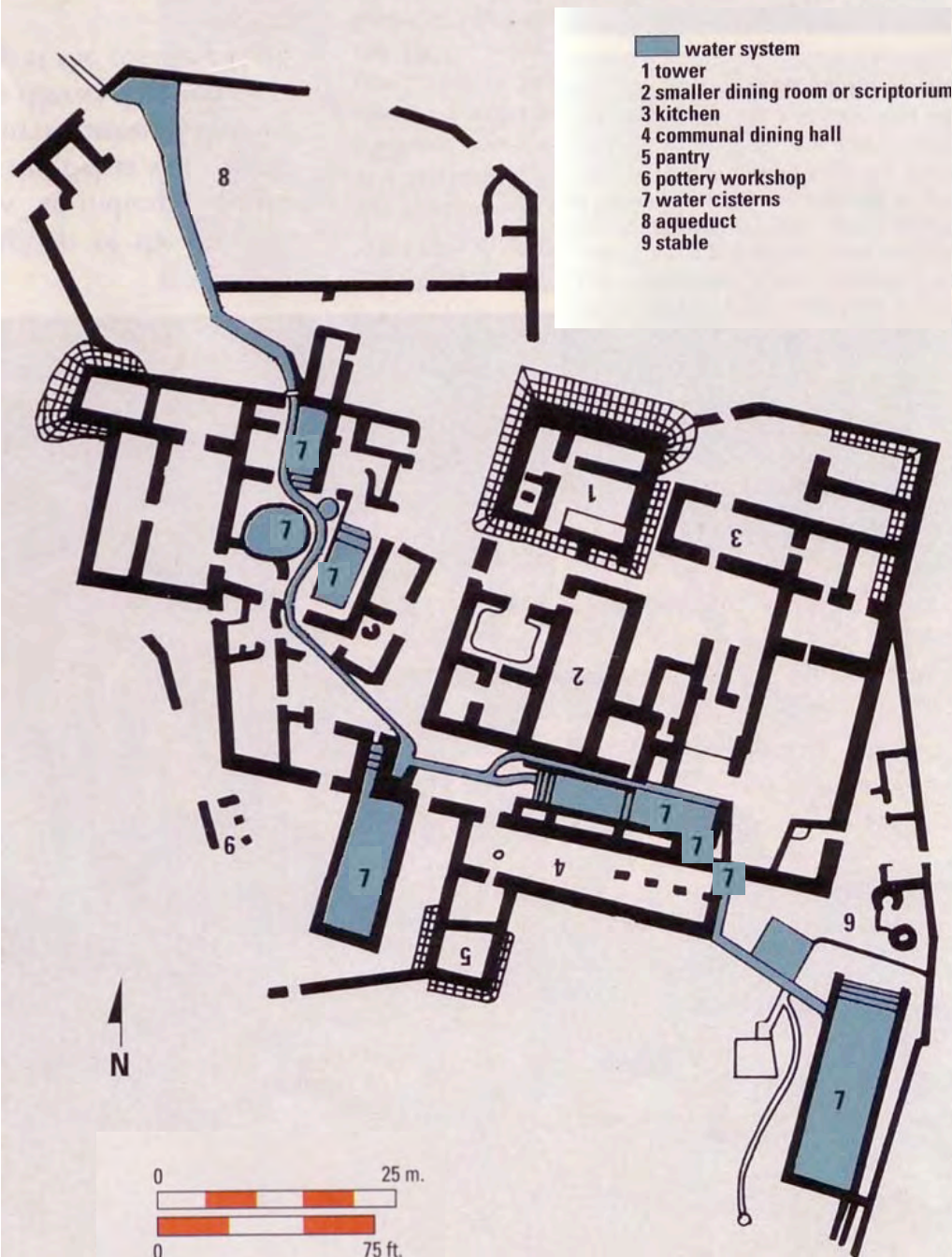
Elisha Qimron



# The Qumran Ruins

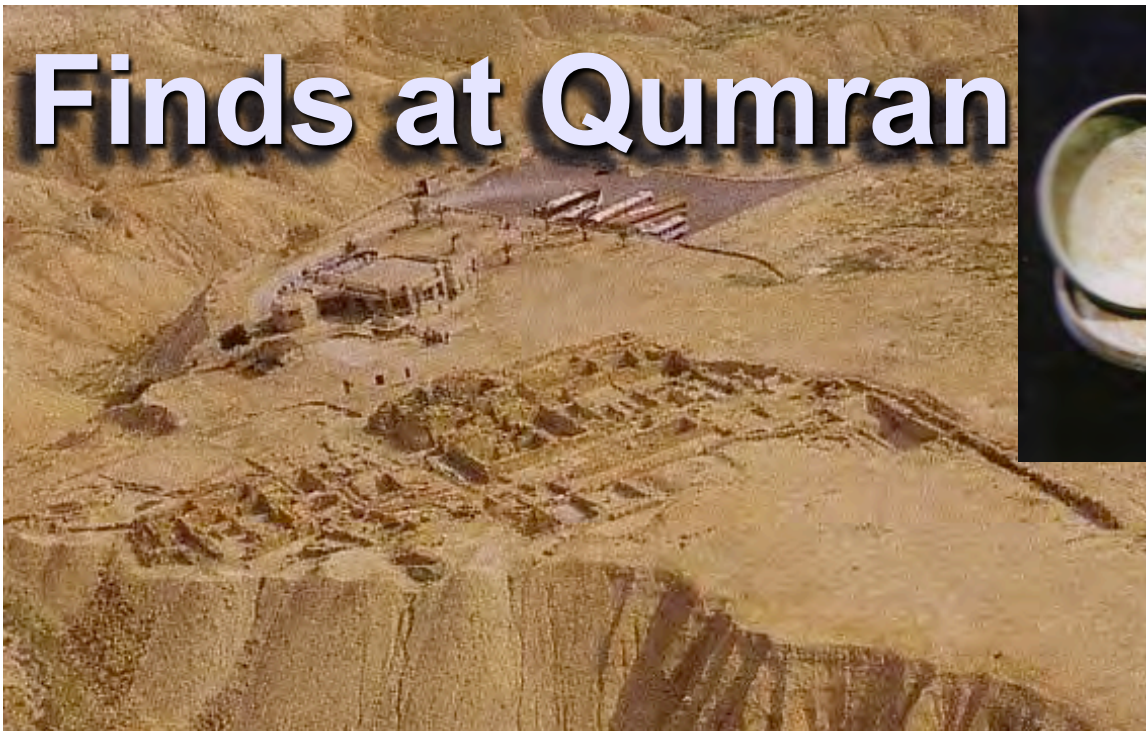


# Map of the Qumran Community

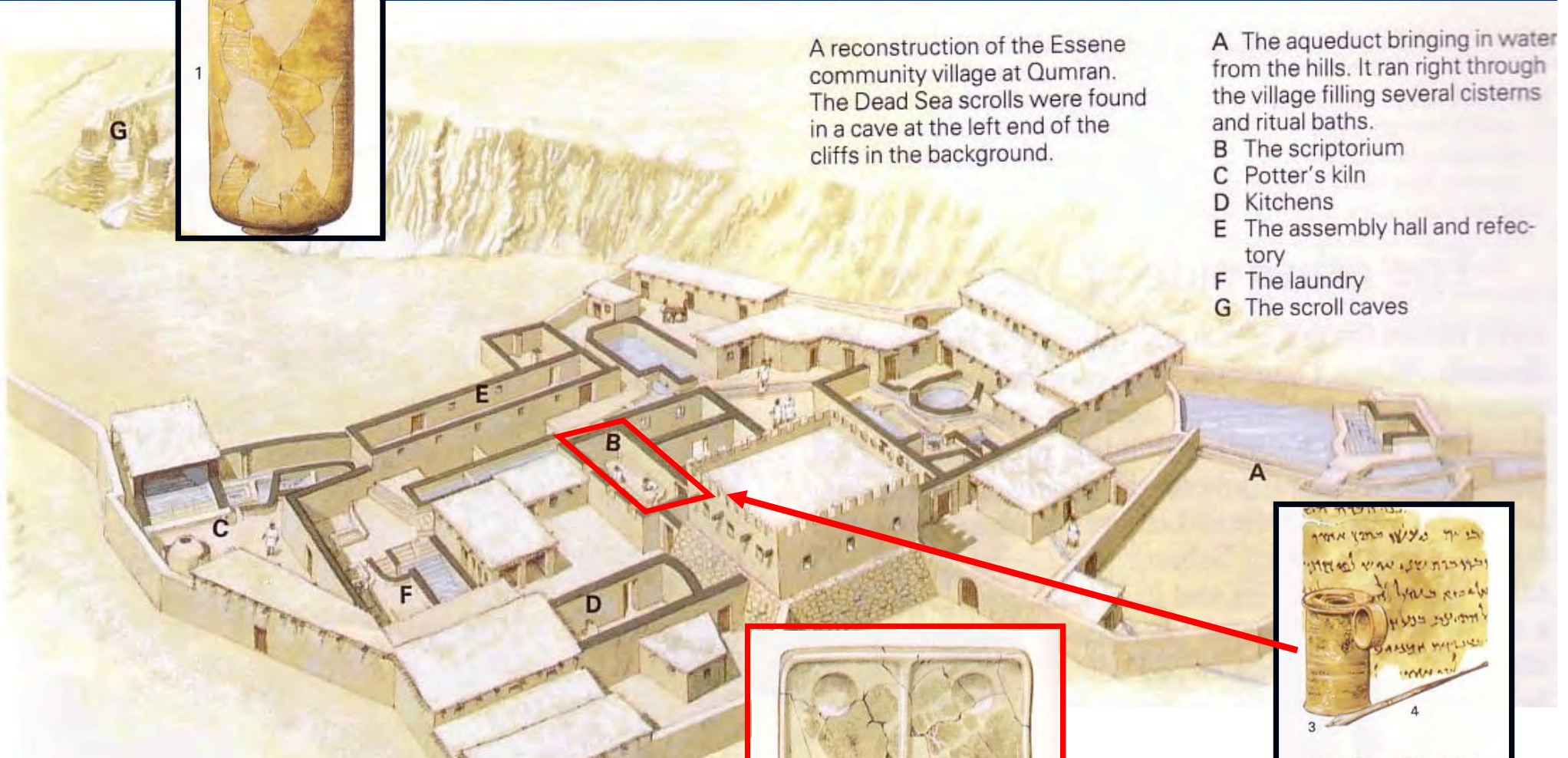


THE SIMPLE GRID of the Qumran settlement (left) has perplexed scholars trying to determine who lived here. Rooms 2 and 4 on the plan would have provided ample dining space for large crowds, and the sophisticated water system (in blue on the plan) snaking through the Qumran settlement ensured the availability of water even after several dry seasons.

# Finds at Qumran



# The Qumran Community



A reconstruction of the Essene community village at Qumran. The Dead Sea scrolls were found in a cave at the left end of the cliffs in the background.

- A The aqueduct bringing in water from the hills. It ran right through the village filling several cisterns and ritual baths.
- B The scriptorium
- C Potter's kiln
- D Kitchens
- E The assembly hall and refectory
- F The laundry
- G The scroll caves

RIGHT: a writing palette found in the scriptorium at Qumran.

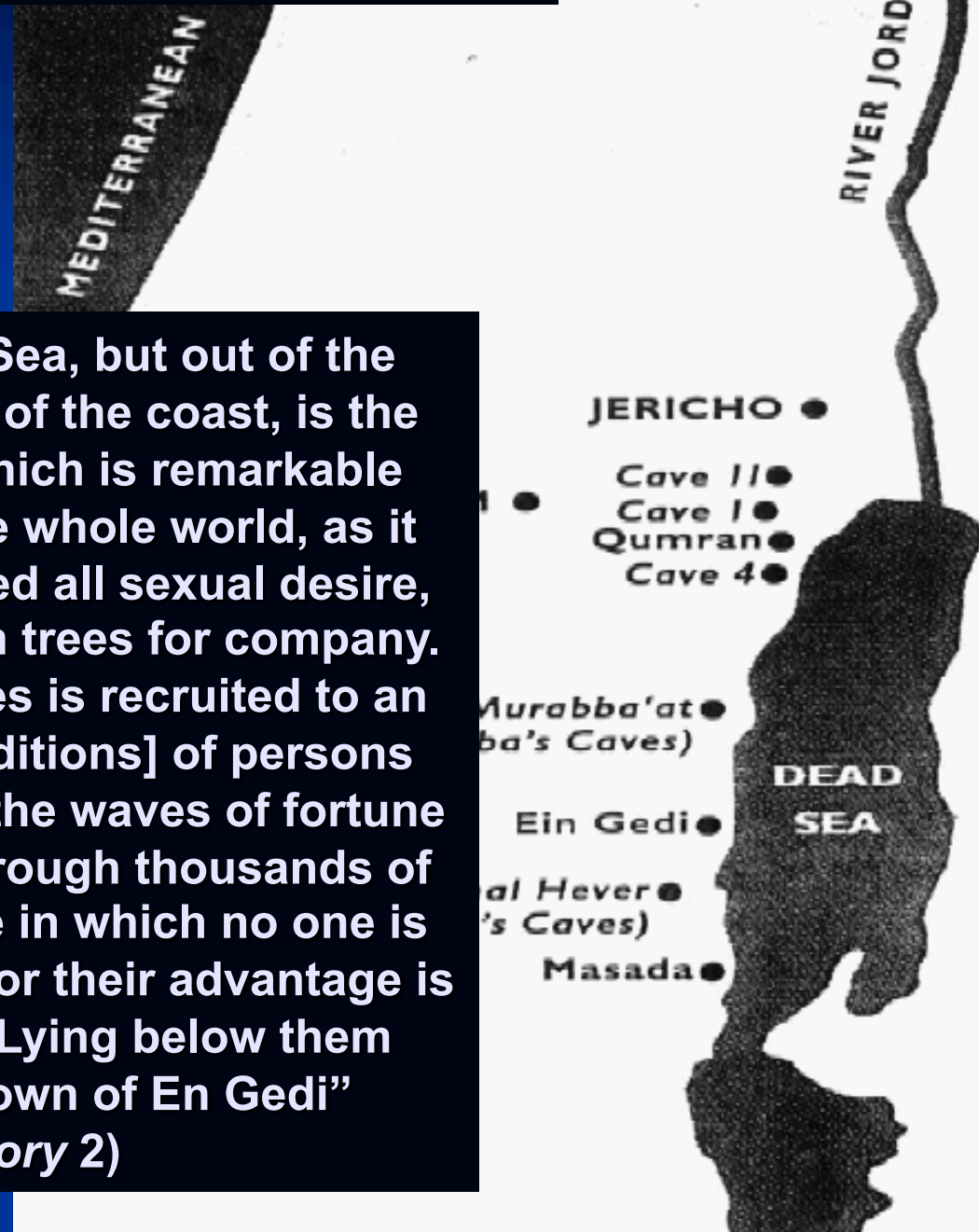


ABOVE: 1 One of the jars containing the Dead Sea scrolls  
 2 A fragment of one of the scrolls  
 3 A clay inkwell  
 4 A reed pen

# Who were the Essenes?

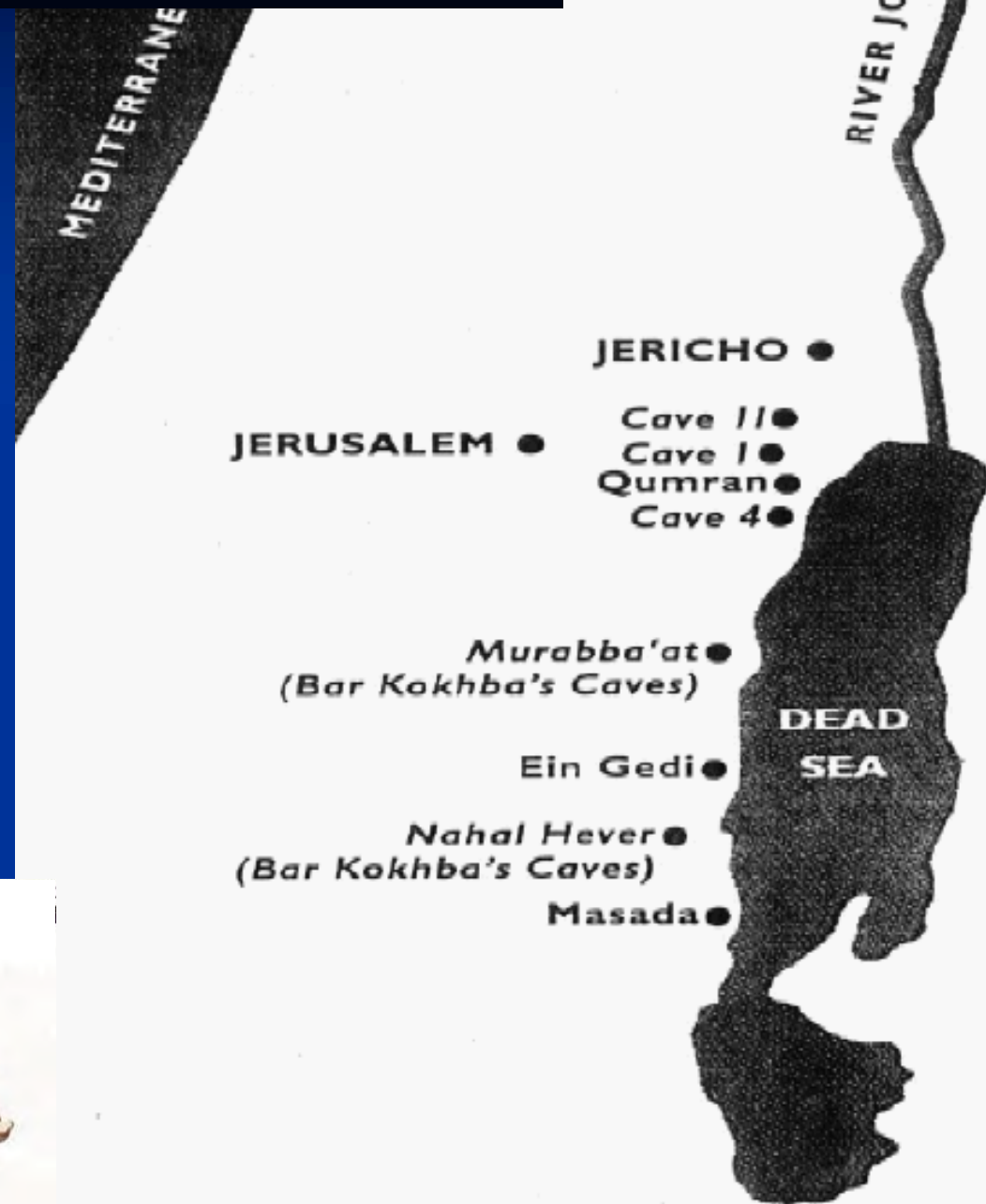
## ■ North of En Gedi (Pliny the Elder)

“On the west side of the Dead Sea, but out of the range of the noxious exhalation of the coast, is the solitary tribe of the Essenes, which is remarkable beyond all the 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. Day by day the throng of refugees is recruited to an equal number by numerous [additions] of persons tired of life and driven thither by the waves of fortune to adopt their manners. Thus through thousands of ages (incredible to relate), a race in which no one is born lives on forever; so prolific for their advantage is other men's weariness of life! Lying below them [Essenes] was formerly the town of En Gedi”  
(Pliny, *Natural History* 2)



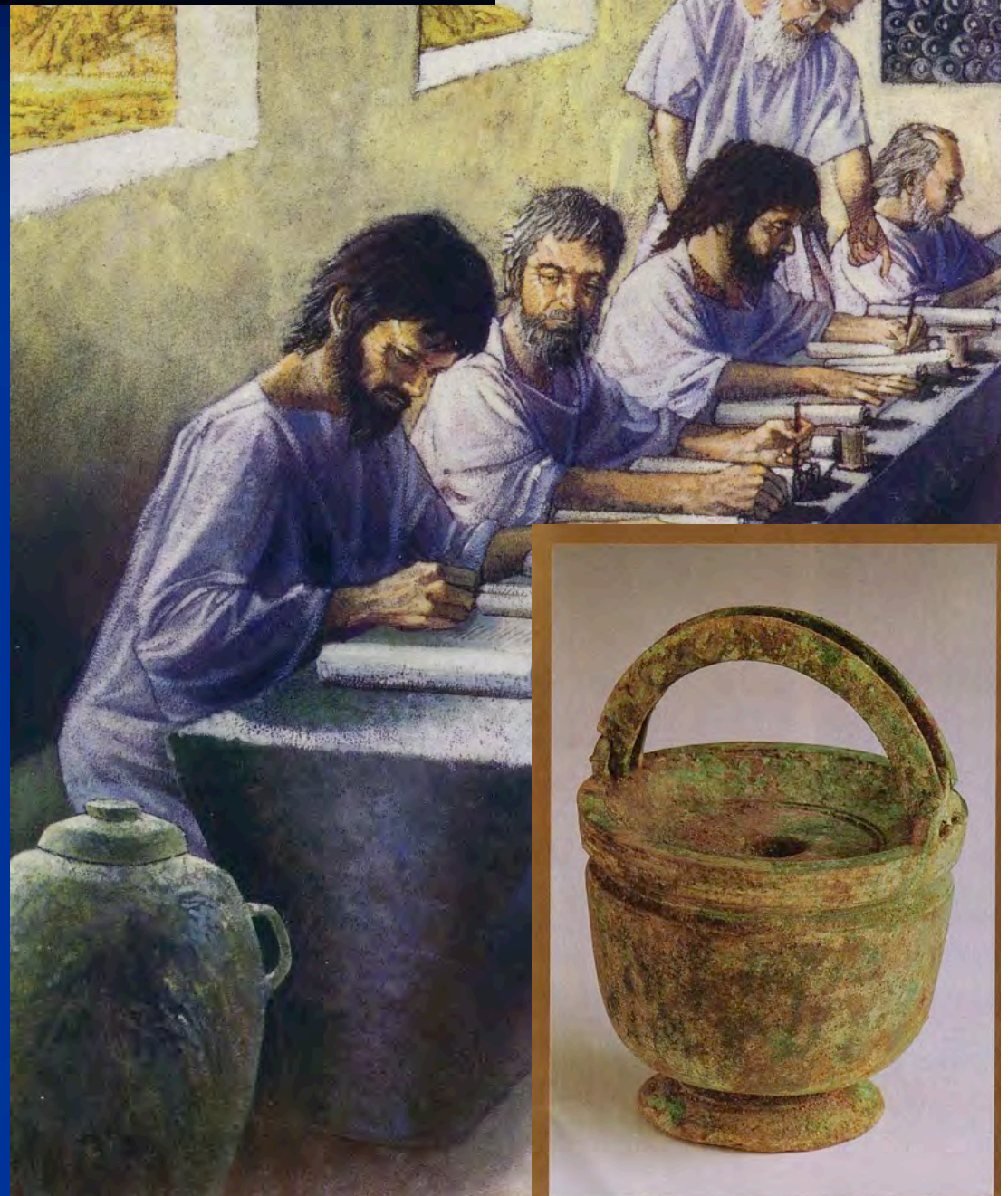
# Who were the Essenes?

- North of En Gedi (Pliny the Elder)
- No marriage (Josephus)



# Who were the Essenes?

- North of En Gedi (Pliny the Elder)
- No marriage (Josephus)
- Scriptorium
- Sectarian writings



# Why did the Essenes form?

67, 180

- **The high priesthood was corrupt**



**Annas & Caiaphas of the NT era continued the corrupt practices of Jason and Menelaus (175 BC). So the Essenes withdrew to the desert during the reign of Simon (143-135 BC)**



**Peter fought against the corrupt priesthood, but the Essenes...**

# Essenes chose to withdraw...

67, 180



**versus**



**Essene:  
"Teacher of  
Righteousness"**

# Why did the Essenes form?

67, 180

- The high priesthood was corrupt
- The temple was mostly a marketplace



# Other views of who lived at Qumran

- Sadducees?
- Pharisees?
- Roman fortress?
- Zealots?
- Christians?
- Jerusalem theory (many sects)?
- Wealthy man's estate?



**Conclusion: The Essene view is still the most plausible**

# Others Doubt the Essene Theory

184a

Alan Crown, "Qumran: Was It An Essene Settlement?" *BAR* 20 (Sept/Oct 94): 30

## WHY THE QUMRAN INHABITANTS WERE NOT ESSENES

Essene Characteristics		Qumranite Characteristics	
Evidence from Ancient Texts		Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls	Archaeological Evidence from Qumran
<b>Peace-loving</b>	vs.	<b>War-like</b>	
"The Essenes hate war and love peace. They will not fight." Epidorus, <i>Historia Palestina</i> 6.7.		"When you approach a city to fight it, [first] offer it peace.... If it does not make peace but is ready to fight a war against you, besiege it and I will deliver it into your hands." Temple Scroll (11QT) 62.6-9.	Partial destruction of the fortified tower. Suggests that Qumran residents fiercely resisted attack.
<b>Celibate</b>	vs.	<b>Married</b>	
"[They live]... without women, renouncing love entirely." Pliny, <i>Natural History</i> 5.15.73.		"A man may marry a beautiful captive woman, but he must first let her mourn a month for her parents." Temple Scroll (11QT) 63.11-15.	Women's and children's skeletons in the Qumran cemeteries.
<b>Opposed to Slavery</b>	vs.	<b>Owned Slaves</b>	
"They acquire no slaves;... they consider slavery an injustice." Flavius Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i> 18.21.		"[H]e shall not sell them [the Gentiles] his manservant or his maidservant." Damascus Rule (CD) 12.10.	
<b>Scorned Wealth</b>	vs.	<b>Wealthy</b>	
"They despise riches." Josephus, <i>War</i> 2.122.			High-quality stoneware from Jerusalem, luxurious glassware and a hoard of coins were found.
<b>Refused to Swear Oaths</b>	vs.	<b>Oath-takers</b>	
"They refrain from swearing, considering it worse than perjury." Josephus, <i>War</i> 2.135.		"When a man makes a vow to me or swears an oath to take upon himself a binding obligation, he must not break his word." Temple Scroll (11QT) 53.14-16.	
<b>Held No Private Property</b>	vs.	<b>Private-Property Holders</b>	
"It is the law that those who enter the sect shall surrender their property to the order." Josephus, <i>War</i> 2.122.		"They shall place the earnings of at least two days out of every month into the hands of the guardian... and from it they shall succour the poor and the needy...." Damascus Rule (CD) 14.13.	

# What Scrolls were Found?

- Every OT book but Esther (e.g., 11QPs)
- Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
- Commentaries (e.g., 1QpHab)
- Collections of OT passages on a theme
- Sectarian writings
  - *Manual of Discipline*
  - *Temple Scroll*
  - *War Scroll*

# The Copper Scrolls



- Provide detailed plans for the third temple

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  - *Temple Scroll*
  - *War Scroll*

**No NT manuscripts**

# Many scrolls have missing parts



דגלה על ידי עתה ודוא ונתת העץ לחבל עננתך באשתי

But many are clearly readable!

אמרתי ונתתי עשתי תגדלתי אכסחתי כי ציה בעיה אלה  
לא כבא ותי שמונת דגא פוטחות בשאח ועוד הארבע  
הכפית על הדל עתה על שמים סוכותך על שיה חפית  
על אשן כרוב על אריות ענין סין ושניה תעלה נה על חלפת  
כישוש סיהת עלמה נה ארבע נטש והנז עור עוב עתה דגון  
ודוד בעה בערות עוי עולם כישוש כראיתך נרצח לעידיך  
על הערה עלות יוחגמיות ודוד ממש עוקל ונדמ למען  
הז שם וסלך כגיבת ששן דניחא כפינל ושם ודוד  
מעשור דניחא לשלח ועבדות דניחא השקט ופסח  
עו עולם נמשכ ענה כעא שלח רבגשנות מבסחתי  
ששן יאונדת וכוד כרית ודוד ובשנה תשם ודוד  
אשחזק ודעה על צול כפיך רב שלח רגל ודוד נכחנת  
דוד שנתה נאנה לרא שמוך וביה ודוד כמי פכחנת

# Contents of the Scrolls

***Biblical Manuscripts*** e.g., Isaiah, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

***Commentaries*** e.g., Genesis, Job, Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, Habakkuk, Psalm 37, 45

***Apocrypha*** e.g. Epistle to Jeremiah, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus.

# Contents of the Scrolls

***Pseudepigrapha*** e.g., Book of Jubilees, Book of Enoch, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (fragments).

***Previously Unknown Pseudepigrapha*** e.g., Sayings of Moses, Vision of Amram, Psalms of Joshua, Daniel cycle (The Prayer of Nabonidus), Book of Mysteries.

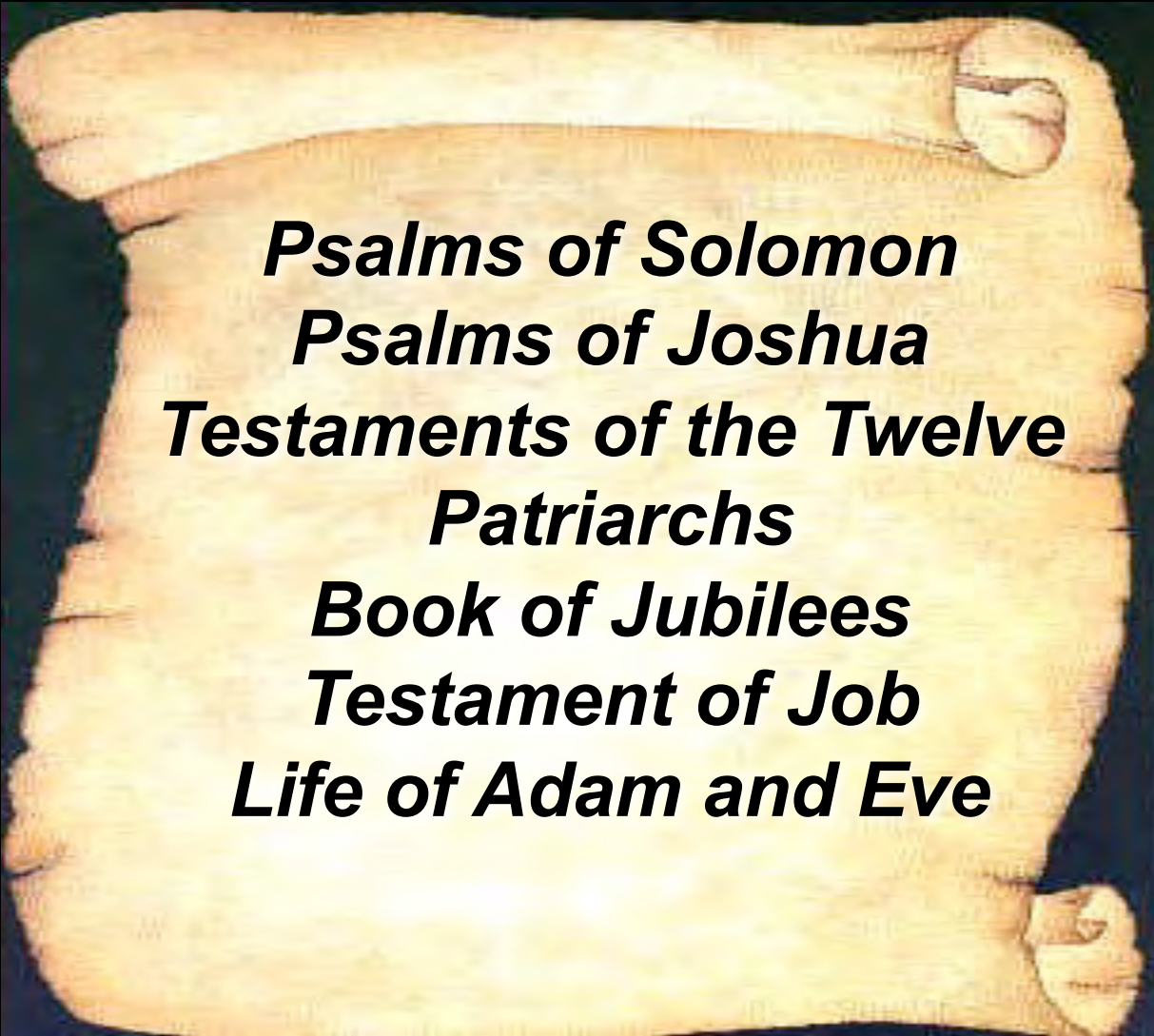
The background of the slide is a photograph of an ancient scroll, likely made of parchment or leather, with Hebrew text written in dark ink. The text is arranged in horizontal lines and is somewhat faded and difficult to read. The scroll is the central focus of the slide, with the title and other text overlaid on it.

# Contents of the Scrolls

***Community Documents* e.g., The Manual of Discipline, Damascus Document, Thanksgiving Psalm, War Scroll.**

# Pseudepigrapha

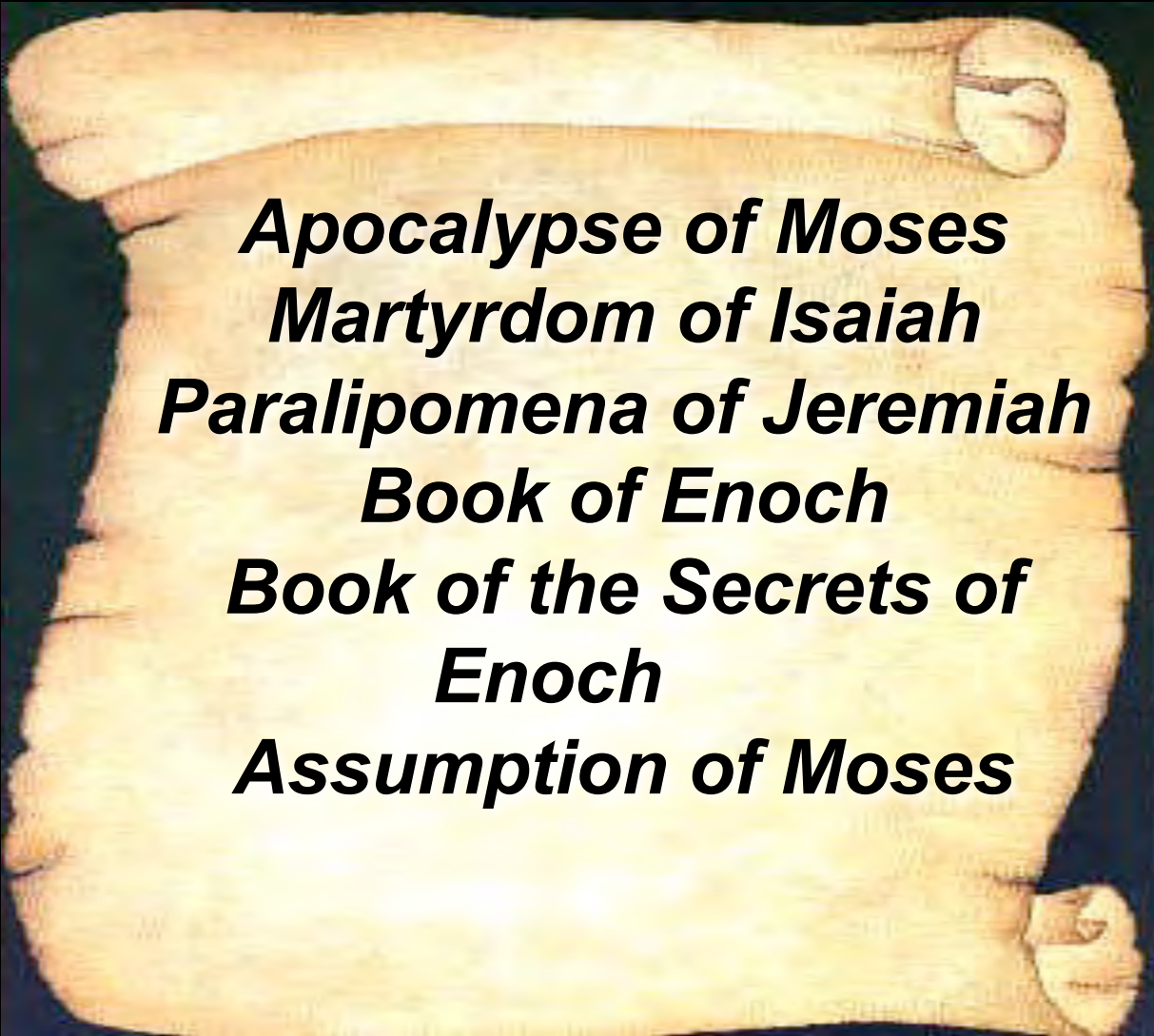
## I. The Palestinian group



***Psalms of Solomon***  
***Psalms of Joshua***  
***Testaments of the Twelve***  
***Patriarchs***  
***Book of Jubilees***  
***Testament of Job***  
***Life of Adam and Eve***

# Pseudepigrapha

## I. The Palestinian group

A scroll with a light brown, textured surface, possibly representing parchment or papyrus. The scroll is partially unrolled, showing a list of books in bold, italicized black text. The scroll is set against a dark blue background.

***Apocalypse of Moses***  
***Martyrdom of Isaiah***  
***Paralipomena of Jeremiah***  
***Book of Enoch***  
***Book of the Secrets of Enoch***  
***Assumption of Moses***

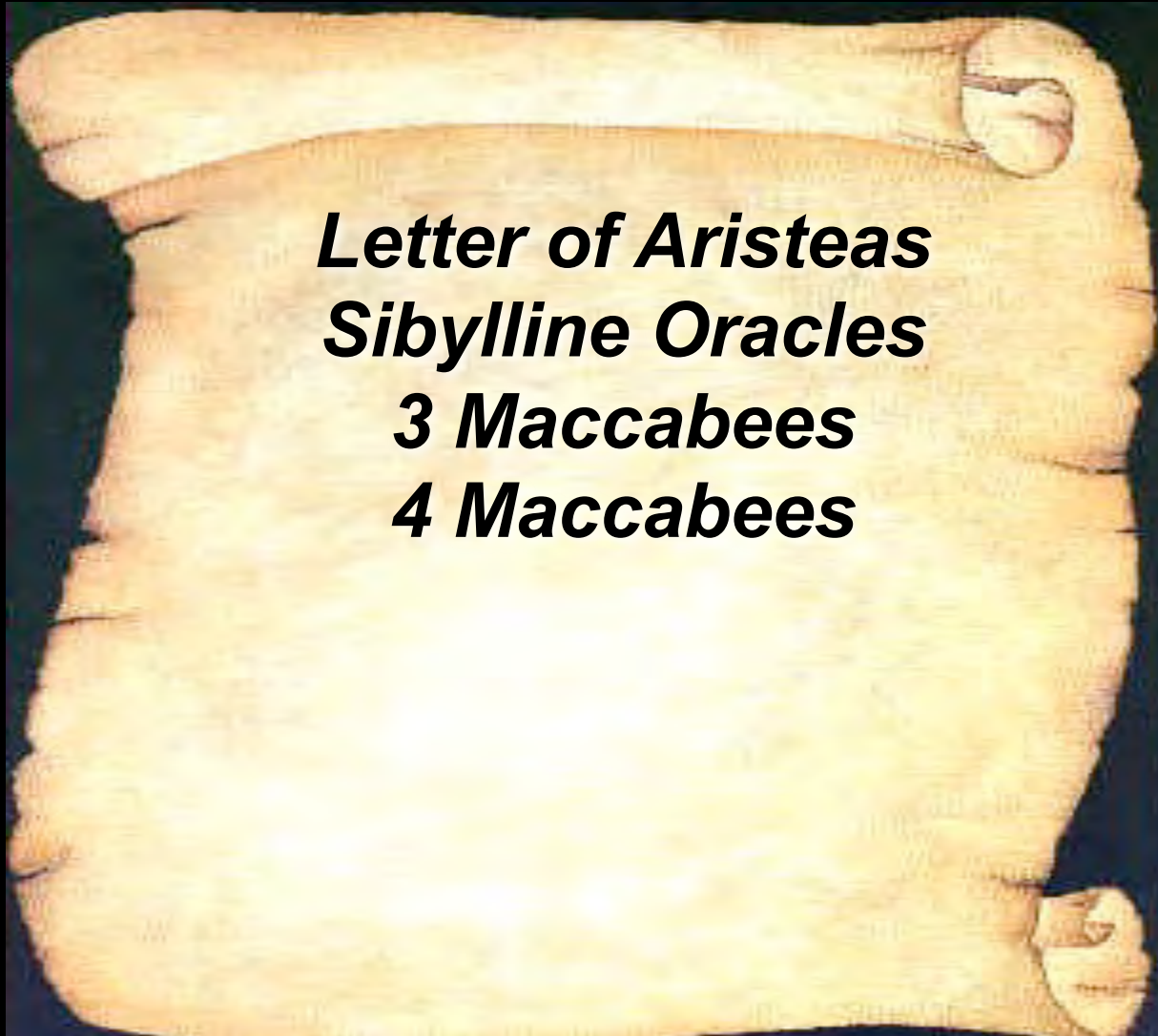
# Pseudepigrapha

## I. The Palestinian group



# Pseudepigrapha

## II. The Jewish-Hellenistic group



***Letter of Aristeas***  
***Sibylline Oracles***  
***3 Maccabees***  
***4 Maccabees***

## RELIGION

# Is Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls?

Newly revealed texts offer tantalizing—and controversial—evidence on Christian origins

By RICHARD N. OSTLING

**T**HE DEAD SEA SCROLLS ARE AN endless source of sensationalism. American supermarket tabloids would have readers believe these ancient Jewish texts reveal visitations from outer space, the cure for AIDS and the date the world will end. In a new book somehow inspired by the scrolls, Barbara Thiering of Australia's University of Sydney tells of a Jesus who was crucified but secretly revived at the Dead Sea and who wed a woman bishop at midnight on March 17, A.D. 50.

Amid all the hokum, however, the latest discoveries on actual details in the scrolls are startling enough to generate legitimate headlines. Texts that are only now becoming widely available establish the first connection between the scrolls and Jesus' New Testament words about his role as the Messiah. The debate over all the possible interpretations is bound to be fierce.

At one extreme, liberal scholars will undoubtedly argue that early Christian writings may have been largely mythological, derived from the scrolls or other earlier Jewish texts. On the other side, Christian conservatives will reply that such scrolls demonstrate more clearly than ever that the Gospels are authentic, reflecting 1st century conditions, and that God was preparing the Jews for the Messiah's advent.

The new evidence is just being revealed because many scrolls remained unpublished for decades after they were found in the years following World War II near the site of ancient Qumran. The scrolls came under the control of a cliquish committee that currently consists of Christian and Jewish scholars loosely overseen by the Israeli government. Most of the major



Interpreters of the latest finds: Robert Eisenman of California State-Long Beach and Michael Wise of the University of Chicago

texts were issued long ago, including ancient copies that demonstrated anew how remarkably accurate scribes were in transmitting the Old Testament.

The unpublished material was mostly thousands of fragments, making reconstruction extremely difficult and interpretations open to dispute. Scholars on the official committee worked on these remaining texts at a painfully slow pace, while granting others severely limited access to them. By the late 1980s, scholarly temperatures reached the boiling point. One recent book claims Roman Catholic priests beholden to the Vatican conspired to cover up the texts lest they

## FORESHADOWING JESUS?

They said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" . . . [Jesus] answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me."

—THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, 7: 20-23

Surely the Lord shall visit the pious and shall call the righteous by name. His spirit shall hover over the poor; by his strength he shall renew the faithful. He shall glorify the pious upon the throne of the eternal kingdom. He shall release the captives, restore sight to the blind, make straight those who are bent double . . . He shall heal the wounded, resurrect the dead, preach glad tidings to the poor.

—FROM WISE'S RECONSTRUCTED DEAD SEA TEXT 4Q521

shake the doctrinal foundations of Mother Church. The true reasons are more mundane: too few scholars monopolizing too much material, team members' personal problems, shortage of money, political and

■ What's the answer?

# Beliefs & Characteristics of Essenes

- Study of Torah & devout life
- Sovereignty of God
- Eschatological themes
- Communal
- Legalism

Cave 4 brought forth the most scrolls

## 1. Qumran community study



# Jesus versus Tradition

## Qumran

"[God] shall admit into the Covenant of Grace all... that love all the sons of light... and hate all the sons of darkness..."

Rule of the Community  
(1QS 1:4; cf. 9:21)

## Jesus (Matt. 5)

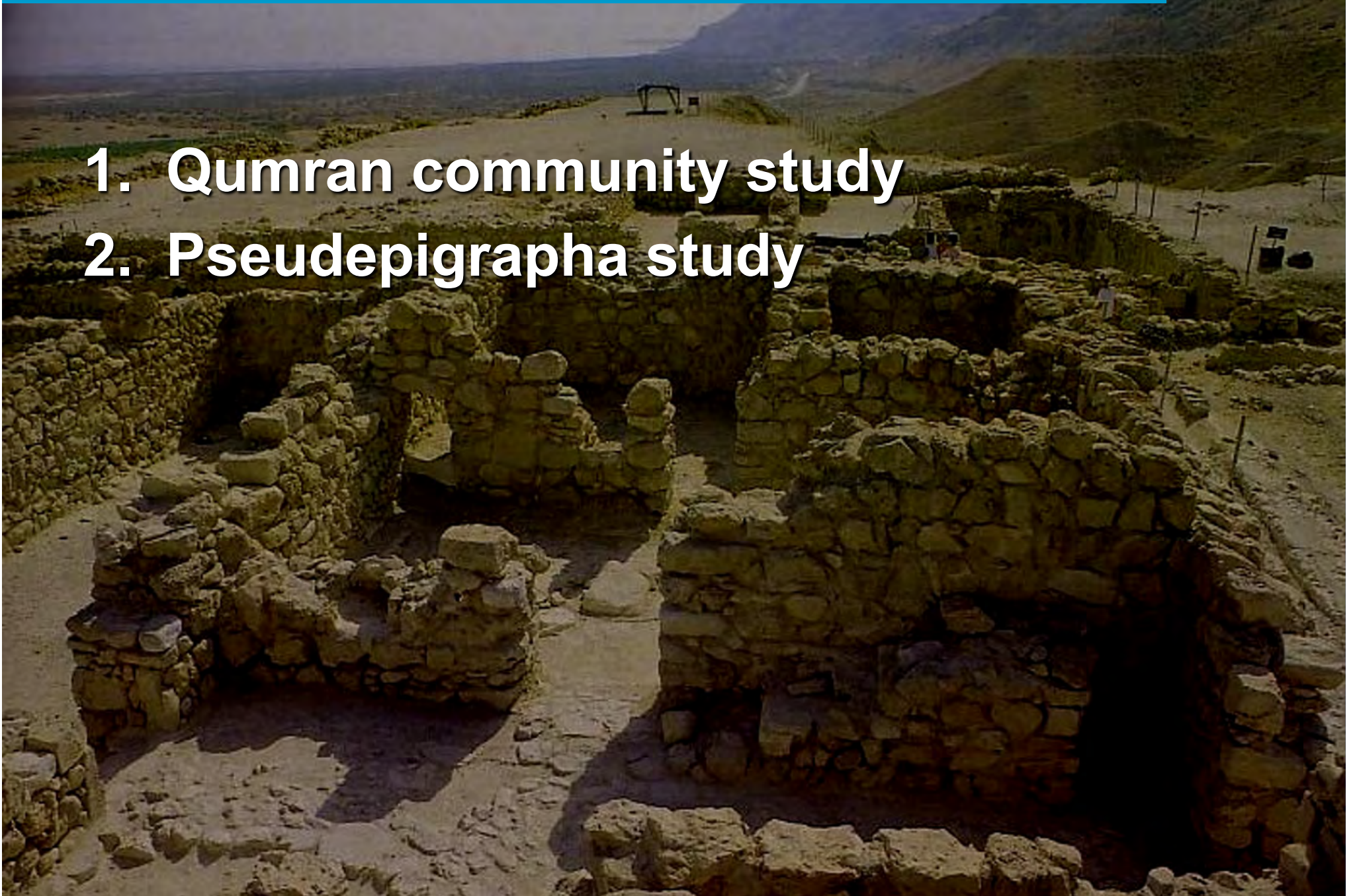
"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy'" (5:43)

"But I tell you, 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you'" (5:44)

# Significance of the DSS

182

1. Qumran community study
2. Pseudepigrapha study



## 3. Hebrew study greatly advanced



Cave 4 view of the Community across the wadi

## 4. Masoretic study advanced



## 5. Proves conservative dating of OT books

When was Daniel written?

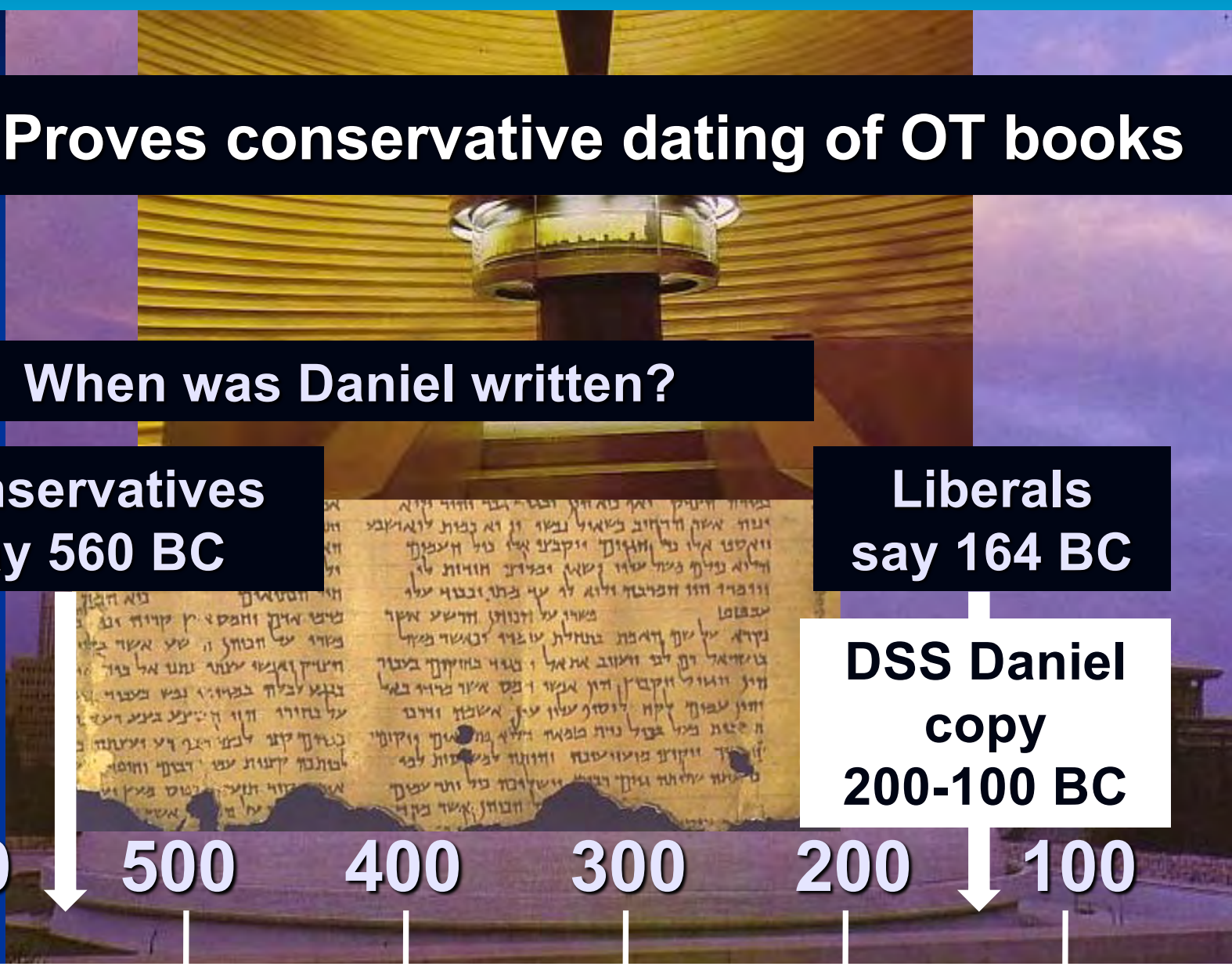
Conservatives  
say 560 BC

Liberals  
say 164 BC

DSS Daniel  
copy  
200-100 BC

600 500 400 300 200 100 BC

Shrine of the Book



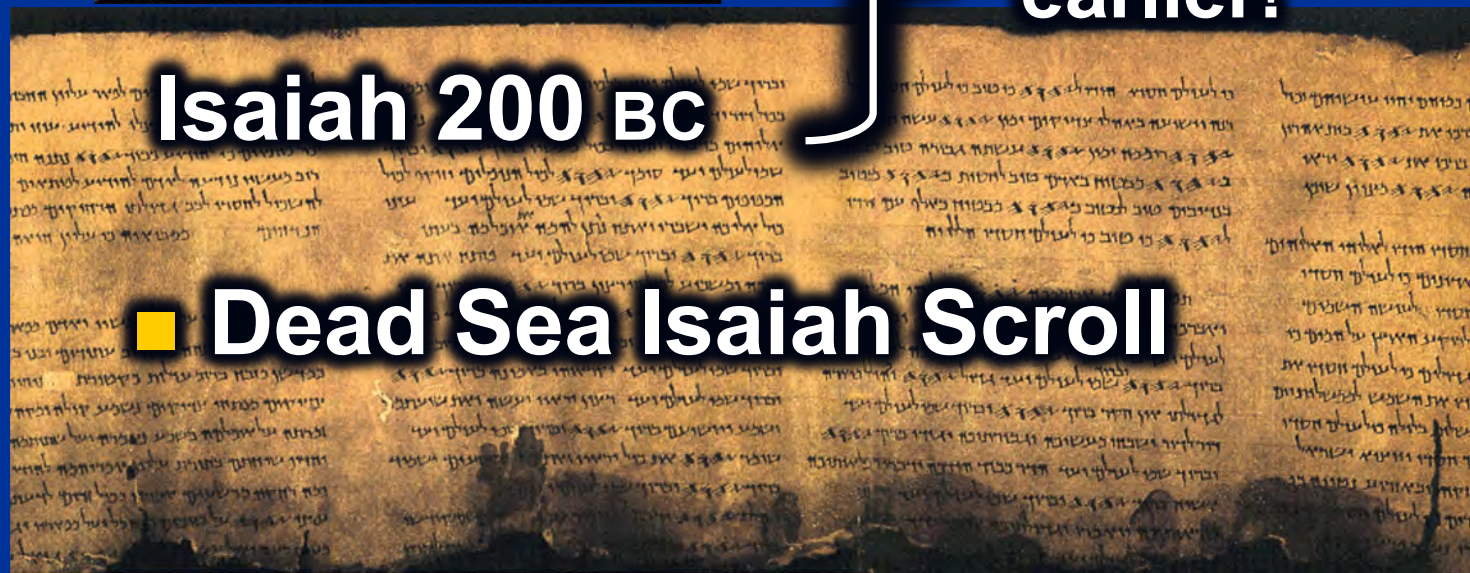
## 6. Transmission of OT accurate

### ■ Masoretic Isaiah Scroll



**Isaiah AD 1000**

**1200 years earlier!**

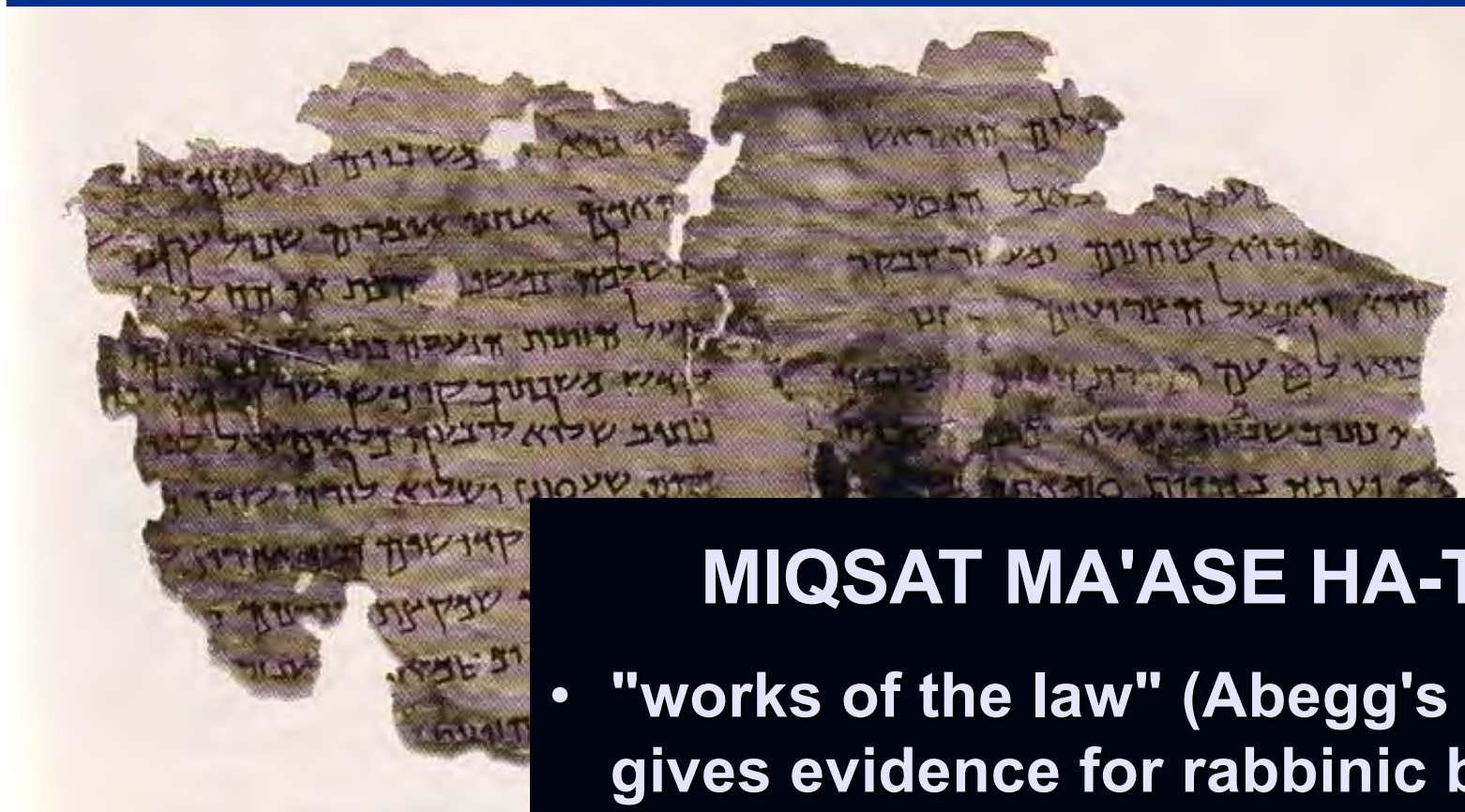


**Isaiah 200 BC**

### ■ Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll

This Isaiah scroll matches the A.D. 1000 Masoretic Text upon which all modern translations are based 99% of the time.

7. MMT shows that Paul's opponents who taught salvation by the law were indeed real people.



## MIQSAT MA'ASE HA-TORAH

- "works of the law" (Abegg's translation gives evidence for rabbinic belief in salvation by works, which Paul argues against in Galatians.)

# Paul versus Legalists

## Legalists

"The one who does righteousness stores up life for himself with the Lord"

*Psalms of Solomon*  
(about 50 BC)

"Miracles, however, will appear at their own time to those who are being saved by their works"

*2 Baruch*  
(about AD 100)

## Paul

"But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him **without keeping the requirements of the law**, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. <sup>22</sup> We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are"

(Rom. 3:21-22 NLT)

# Paul versus Legalists

154k

## Legalists

"The one who does righteousness stores up life for himself with the Lord"

*Psalms of Solomon*  
(about 50 BC)

"Miracles, however, will appear at their own time to those who are being saved by their works"

*2 Baruch*  
(about AD 100)

## Paul

"Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit **by obeying the law of Moses**? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ."

(Gal. 3:2 NLT)

# Where did John grow up? <sup>184</sup>

**NIV Luke 1:80** And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.

**The Wilderness of Zin**

# John the Baptist

- Where did John get the concept of immersion and repentance?

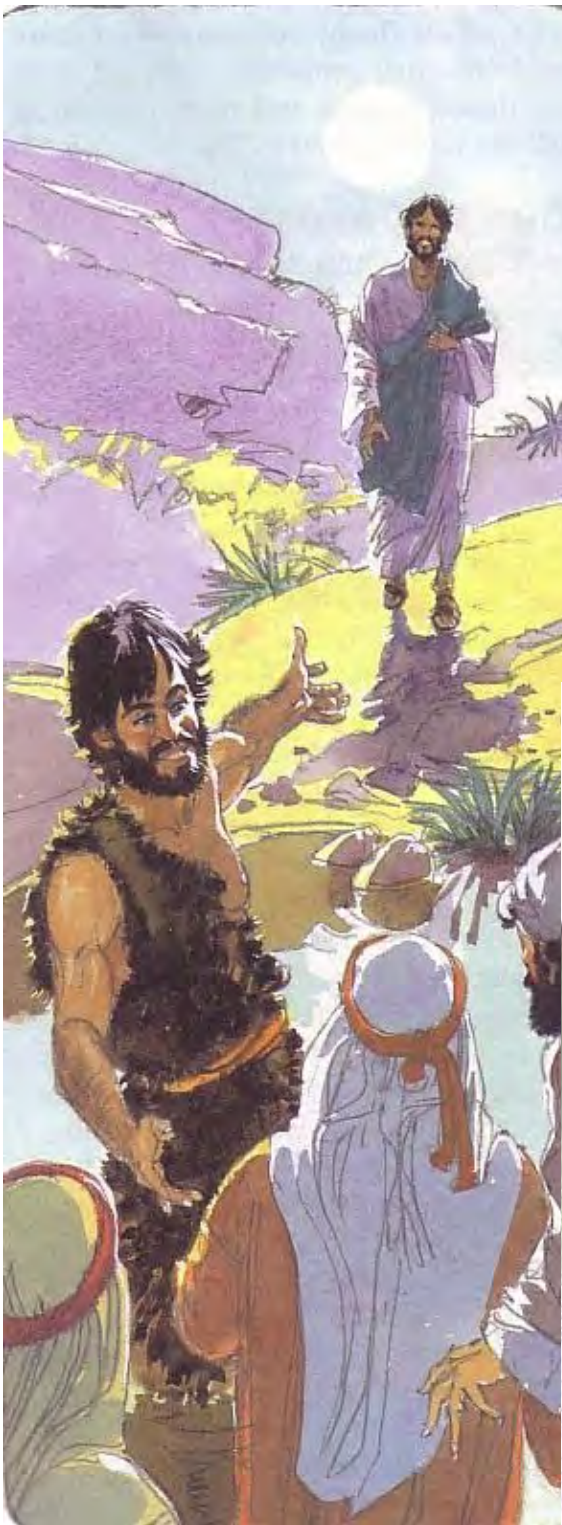


# Essenes loved the Word of God



# John the Baptist

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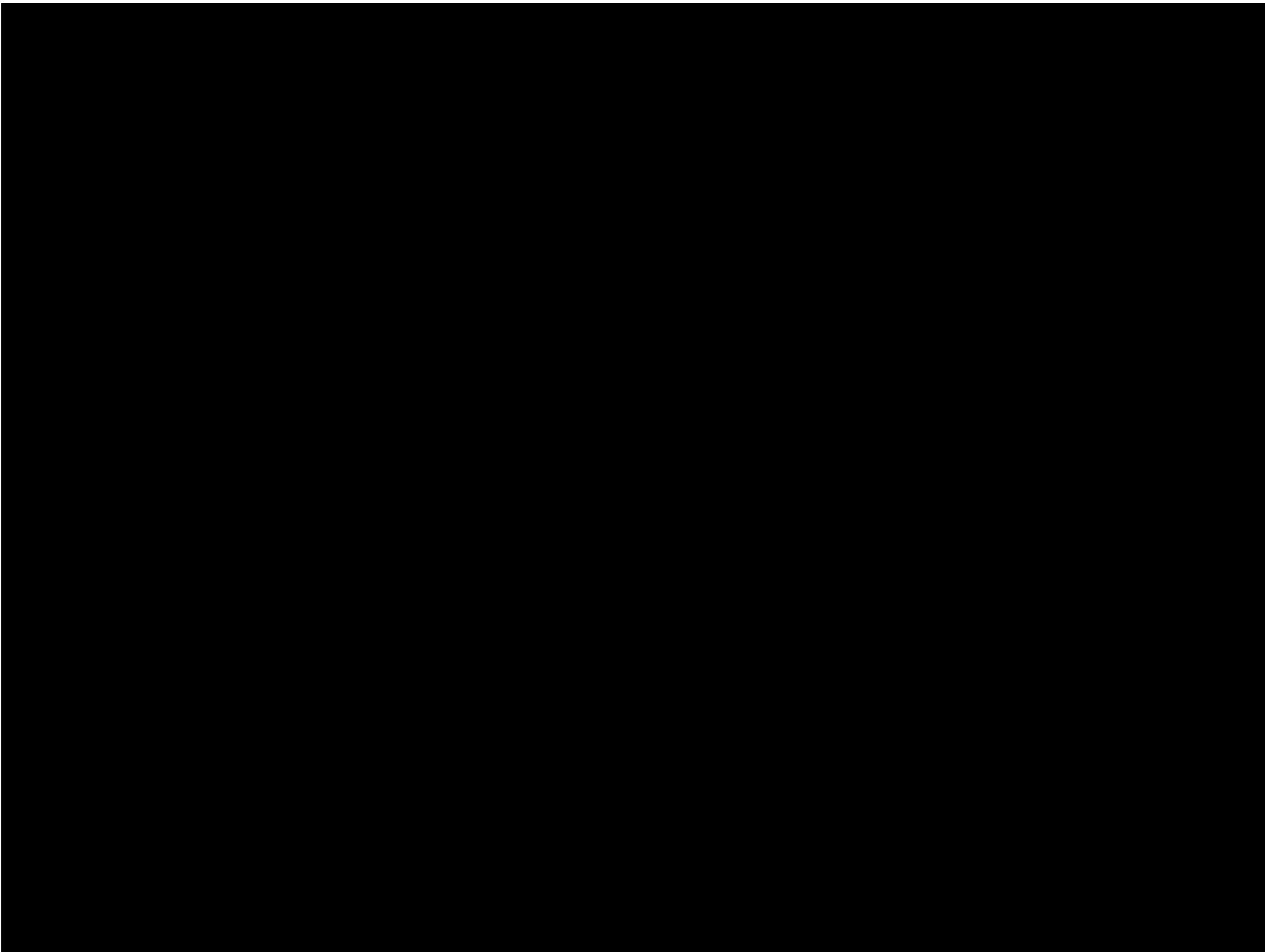
# The Essenes vs. John & Jesus

## Essenes & John

- Appeal to Isaiah 40:3
- Call to repentance & baptism
- Anticipated imminent kingdom of God
- Water, spirit, & fire
- Strange diet
- Criticized religious leaders

## Essenes & Jesus

- Criticized temple leaders
- Forbade divorce & remarriage
- Spiritual offerings
- Saw God's people as spiritual temple



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