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MISSION**

JESUS *and*
the DEAD SEA
SCROLLS

Revealing the Jewish Roots of Christianity

JOHN BERGSMA



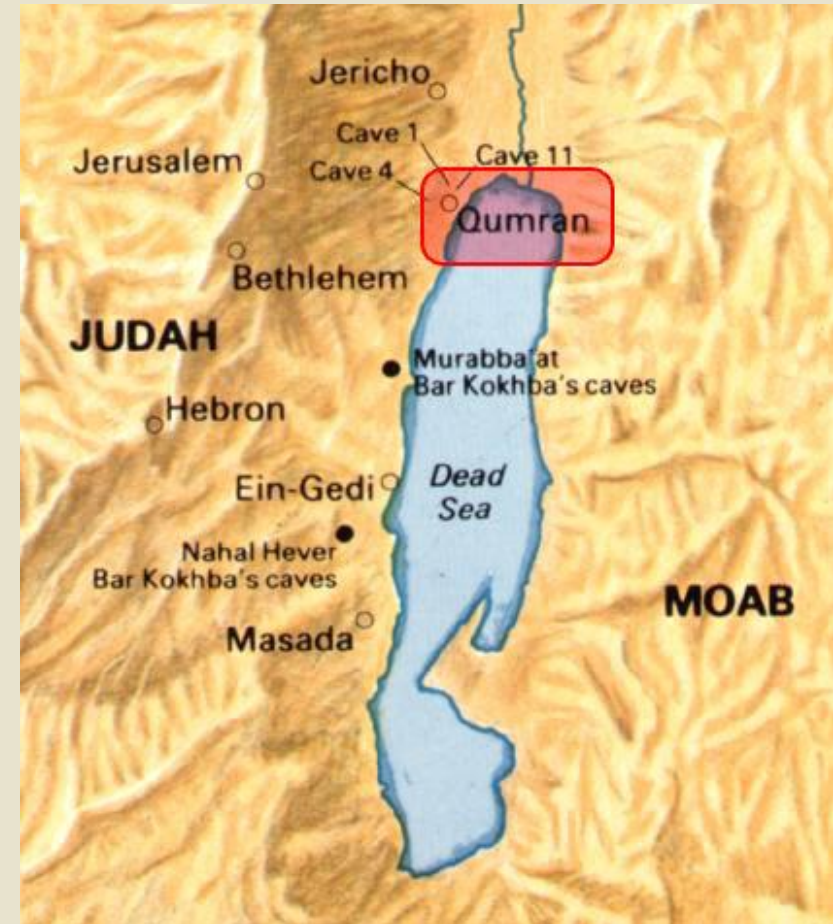
Revealing the Jewish Roots of
Christianity



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The Archeological Find of the 20th Century

- ❑ Finding the Scrolls
 - ❑ 1946 Arab shepherds looking for treasure
 - ❑ Three old scrolls in a jar
 - ❑ Complete Isaiah from 125BC
- ❑ 1949-1956 found 11 scrolls around Qumran
 - ❑ 1/4: Books of the Bible: Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms
 - ❑ 3/4: Writings for the Qumran community (Essenes)
- ❑ Contemporaneous sources: Josephus, Pliny, Philo





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Significance of the Scrolls

- ❑ Brings the likely date of Gospel of John much closer to time of Jesus
- ❑ Illuminates the details of the third large Jewish sect at the time of Jesus
- ❑ Instructions for monastic Essene community at Qumran
- ❑ Apocalyptic view of Armageddon (final battle between good and evil)
- ❑ Temple instructions that were different from the Sadducees and Pharisees
- ❑ Prediction of the return of Melchizedek priest-king figure at the end of time
- ❑ Rule of the congregation: how to extend community rule to cover all Israel



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Three Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus

Sadducees

- ❑ Chief Priests & wealthy people
- ❑ Controlled the Temple
- ❑ Blessings of this life
- ❑ No angels/afterlife
- ❑ Only the Penteteuch

Pharisees

- ❑ Scholarly movement
- ❑ High standards for ritual purity
- ❑ Added the History books, the Prophets, Wisdom books

Essenes

- ❑ Angels/demons, heaven/hell, judgment & resurrection
- ❑ Authority of oral tradition
- ❑ Looking for the return of Israel



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Essene Characteristics

Would live in poverty, holding goods in common.

Rejecting physical pleasures.

Most gave up family life to live in celibate community. (Living in “perfect holiness.”)

Married members lived “in accordance with the law.”

Devoted to study of Scripture and prophecy.

Dressed in simple white garments, and daily ritual bath followed by common meal.

Common meal hosted by a priest who blessed the bread and wine.



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Important Qumran Scrolls

The Great Isaiah scroll: Hebrew text similar to Masoretic text used even today.

The Community Rule: constitution of the religious order (cf. Rule of St. Benedict)

Damascus Document: describes the aims & rules of the greater Essene community

War Scroll: Qumran's view of Armageddon

Temple Scroll: Qumran's view of proper Temple governance vs. current Sadducee rule

Melchizedek Document: Predicting the return of a priest-king Melchizedek at the end of time when a year of Jubilee would be declared

Rule of Congregation: Appendix to Community Rule explaining how Qumran would be applied to all of Israel



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Waiting for the Messiah

Isaiah 40:3 – A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

Literally, the route the Messiah would take. The wasteland by the Dead Sea.

Illegitimate high priests running the Temple since King Jonathan (last Maccabean king) in 152 BC.

“Teacher of Righteousness” founds the Essenes/Qumran to wait in exile for the return of the Messiah (“anointed one”).



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Expecting Two Messiahs or One Messiah?

One, from the priestly line of Aaron, and one from the royal line of David.

Jeremiah 33:17-18 – For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to make grain offerings, and to make sacrifices for all time.

Genesis 14:18 – And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High.