

Dead Sea Scrolls-

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<https://av1611.com/kjbp/articles.html> (kjv-av-1611.lima.net.pe/lesson09.html) :
excerpts from Dr. Thomas Holland's lesson on Dead Sea Scrolls

1. Shows the Masoretic text existed 2000+ years ago.
2. Show there were variant/corrupt type texts also 2,000+ years ago, these were probably the ones Origen used to construct the so-called Septuagint in his Hexapla.
3. Show that we can thank God He preserved His Words in the Hebrew Masoretic text right to the Ben Chayyim/Bomberg 2nd edition text, providentially seeing to it that the corrupt text type was rejected in the Masoretic text.

Many claims have been made about the Scrolls. Some, while drinking at this newly found fountain of knowledge, have seen the scrolls as a pool of Bethesda offering spiritual or academic healing of some kind. Others have seen them as the waters of Marah, bitter and full of corruption. Perhaps the best way to view them is to see them for what they are--scrolls written by scribes. Like the many writings of men, they offer things which are both sweet and bitter. At least five hundred different scribes were responsible for writing the Dead Sea Scrolls (see *Who Wrote The Dead Sea Scrolls?* by Norman Golb. Scribner Publishers, 1995. p.154.). Most are dated before the time of Christ, while some are dated during and after Christ. One cannot but wonder if any of the writers of the scrolls heard the message of Jesus Christ and His condemnation for not practicing what they had copied. What is certain, however, is that those scribes who heard the Savior's message had access to what became known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN KJV LITERATURE:

The scrolls have found their way into the literature of those who support the Traditional Text and the Authorized Version. Dr. Edward F. Hills devotes three pages of his book, *The King James Version Defended*, to the Dead Sea Scrolls. After correctly stating that the scrolls do not always agree with themselves, he writes:

Thus we see that, despite the new discoveries, our confidence in the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text must rest on some more solid foundation than the opinions of naturalistic scholars. For as the Qumran studies demonstrate, these scholars disagree with one another. What one scholar grants another takes away. Instead of depending on such inconstant allies, Bible-believing Christians should develop their own type of Old Testament textual criticism, a textual criticism which takes its stand on the teachings of the Old Testament itself and views the evidence in the light of these teachings. Such a believing textual criticism leads us to full confidence in the Masoretic (Traditional) Hebrew text which was preserved by the divinely appointed Old Testament priesthood and the scribes and scholars grouped around it. (p. 102).

Giving claim that the scrolls were produced by the Essenes, a strict Jewish sect, Dr. Donald A. Waite writes,

“[The Essenes] left the Jewish beliefs their fathers had. They were an offshoot and a false, heretical cult. There are two reasons for questioning these Dead Sea Scrolls where they might differ with the Masoretic Hebrew text: (1) They might have had corrupt Hebrew texts that they began with, at least in some places; (2) They might have been careless in the transmission of these texts. These are both unknown, hence, they should never be used to replace the Masoretic Hebrew text. (Defending the King James Bible, p.30)

And, as close as this scroll is to the Masoretic tradition, the Hebrew University's Isaiah scroll is still closer. Again, Mansoor writes, "Unlike the St. Mark's scroll, the Hebrew University scroll agrees closely with the Masoretic text." (Ibid., p. 79). Dr. Ernst Würthwein adds to this by writing,

. . . the agreement of the second Isaiah scroll (i.e. 1QIsa b.) with (the Masoretic text) is striking . . . it has been taken by some as evidence for the existence of the type of text we identify as Masoretic long before the Masoretic period. Although the text of this scroll presents very few problems in itself, it poses for us the basic and still unsolved problem of the age of the Masoretic text. (The Text of the Old Testament, p.144).

About 40% of the Biblical texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls are Masoretic. Further, the group of manuscripts listed by Dr. Tov as unique to Qumran also, "resemble the later Masoretic Text." (VanderKam, p.143) These texts account for 25% of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, as one can see, among the Biblical books of Dead Sea Scrolls, 65% reflect the Traditional Text of the Old Testament.

Adding additional support to the Masoretic readings among the Dead Sea Scrolls we must also consider the findings at Wadi Murabbaat and Masada. In 1951 caves at Wadi Murabbaat, which is south of Qumran near the Dead Sea, were discovered which contained Biblical manuscripts. The difference here is that these Biblical texts reflect the Masoretic Text and exclude other textual types. Dr. Menahem Mansoor wrote, "The biblical manuscripts found at Wadi Murabbaat are important in that, unlike the Qumran manuscripts, they uniformly exhibit a text coinciding with the Masoretic text." (The Dead Sea Scrolls, Eerdmans, 1964. p.2 . These manuscripts, however, are slightly younger and are believed to have been written between 132-135 AD. Concerning their content, Mansoor informs us that Biblical fragments dating from the first and second centuries AD were found. The fragments from the Murabbaat caves provide a text identical with that of the Masoretes in the texts of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, and Psalms, whereas this is not true of the biblical texts found at Qumran. (Ibid., p. 31).

Between 1963 and 1965 additional manuscripts were discovered while excavating Masada, the famous rock fortress where Jewish nationalists withheld the advances of the Roman army in 73 or 74 AD. Fourteen scrolls containing Biblical texts were found which, "agree extensively with the traditional (i.e. Masoretic) Biblical texts--only in the text of Ezekiel are there a few insignificant variants." (Ernst Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament, Eerdmans; 1979. p.31). Masada is even further south of Qumran than Wadi Murabbaat along the western coast of the Dead Sea. These manuscripts must date before the fall of the fortress, which places them before 74 AD. Yet, they reflect the Masoretic Traditional Text of the Hebrew Old Testament.

There are, of course, places where the New Revised Standard Version agrees with the King James Version in selecting the Masoretic Text over both the Qumran text and the Septuagint. For example, in 1 Samuel 17:4 both the NRSV and KJV follow the Masoretic Text in rendering Goliath's height as six cubits. The Qumran text and the Septuagint state that Goliath's height was four cubits. A cubit is equal to about a foot and a half (some measure it at 1 foot, 7 inches). Taking 1.6 times 6 we have 9.6, or nine and a half feet, truly a giant. The NIV recognizes this and reads, "He was over nine feet tall." However, if we take 1.6 and multiply it by 4 we have 6.4, or a little over six feet tall. This would undoubtedly take away Goliath's giant status and place him just slightly over the height of the average man today.

It is also interesting to note that of our twenty-one examples, the New International Version agrees with the King James and the Masoretic Text all but one time. In 1 Samuel 1:24 the NIV takes the reading of the Qumran text and footnotes it as support for its rendering here. Why the Masoretic Text is rejected in this place in favor of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint, while these documents are not incorporated into the text of the NIV in the other examples, is a mystery. It is also interesting that the NIV did not make use of Q4Sam b., while the NRSV did. This manuscript (Q4Sam b.) is considered one of the oldest manuscripts extant. Yet the translators of the NIV did not use it. This seems to be in conflict with their approach to New Testament textual criticism, where older is looked upon as better.

Perhaps, as with all who believe in the purity of God's word, variant manuscripts were not considered as important as the Traditional Text was.

Regardless of these reasons, we again have a case study of scholarship usurping authority over the preservation of scripture by God. Those of us who believe the King James Bible are often fallaciously asked if we had to wait until 1611 AD to have the preserved words of God. Those who have studied these lessons so far know the fallacy in such argumentation. We have shown time and again that God has kept what He promised to keep and has done so ever since He gave it. The words of the Lord were preserved before 1611 and after 1611 (Psalm 12:6-7). However, modern scholarship would not have us believe in such Biblical preservation, but instead would have us look to them as the finders and presenters of God's holy word. Such is the case with the Dead Sea Scrolls when left to the hands of modern scholarship. Dr. James C. VanderKam writes,

The books of Samuel are represented on four copies from Qumran, . . . These copies have received extensive study because they clarify some of the complicated history that the text of 1-2 Samuel has experienced in the different traditions. (The Dead Sea Scrolls Today, pp. 129-130)

In reference to the extended passage in 1 Samuel 10:27, VanderKam states,

It appears that a scribe skipped from the end of the first to the end of the second, and in this way he omitted the paragraph that came between them. One can account for the situation in other ways, but the explanation presented here seems most likely. The extra material furnishes a suitable context for understanding what Nahash proposed to do to the residents of Jabesh in Gilead. (Ibid., p. 132).

By so stating, VanderKam has provided for us the belief of modern scholars in the final authority of modern scholarship. , According to the thinking of modern textual critics, not only are some of the difficult places in 1 Samuel now made clear by the findings at Qumran, but what has been missing from the text for at least two-thousand years has now been 'restored'. To which the question begs to be asked, "Did we have to wait until 1947 to have the preserved words of God?" Or, since the NRSV is the first to included the so-called missing passage, we must have had to wait until it was published in 1989. In either case, the Qumran scholar would have us believe that for two thousand years a section of God's word was missing. Therefore, for at least two thousand years, God's people were without it. This, obviously, stands in direct conflict with Biblical preservation.

The problems found within the text of the Old Testament are not to be answered by textual criticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, or modern scholarship. The problems are resolved by careful study of the scriptures themselves, as they have been presented and preserved by God. It is by comparing scripture with scripture that we find the answers to textual problems. And it is by trusting in the conservation of the scriptures by their Author that we have our final authority.

Yours in Christ Jesus, Thomas Holland Psalm 118:8