



## The Half Shekel Journals of 2023 by Pastor Ed Rice #23021 Sun 26 Mar Qumran, Ein Gedi

It was a beautiful Sunday morning, sunrise March 26th. Any Sunday is a beautiful day, it's a Lord's Day, this one was the more beautiful because we awoke in Jerusalem. Before the sun started its Psalms 19 circuit, Bev and I had all our worldly possessions packed into two suitcases and two backpacks. This was our last night in Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem; tonight we would dine and rest in the David Hotel on the Dead Sea, 1,385 feet below sea level.

Pastor Lee's booklet, "Bible Berean Israel Tour 2023 hosted by Pastor Lee Pickett March 16th through 30th 2023" described our Day 11:



Day 11 Today we check out of our hotel in Jerusalem, bring your bags. We now descend down to the lowest place on earth, the Dead Sea. It lies 1,385 ft below sea level. (Make sure you have everything.)

1. As we descend we go down into a very hot dry desert climate. Our first stop is at Qumran where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in 1947. These are a "National Treasure of the Jewish People." They are one of the oldest Scriptures in the world. Acts 7:38, Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 16:17. (What do we take away today?)

2. Our next stop is at Ein Gedi, where David hid from Saul in a cave. Here the Lord provided for David. 1Samuel 23:29, 24:1-22

3. We now go down to the Mountain Top fortress of Masada. This is one of the Palaces built by Herod the Great. It was there in 73 to 74 AD that 960 Jewish people held out and eventually committed suicide rather than

become slaves to Rome. In modern Israel this is the equivalent of their Statue of Liberty or their Plains of Abraham. It is here we will have a short worship service today as this is the Lord's Day.

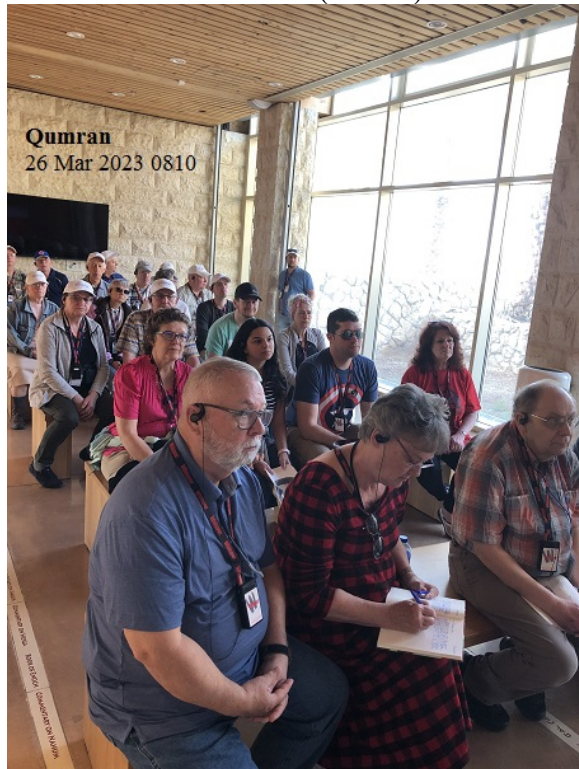
We end our day as we check into the David Hotel, Dead Sea. I encourage all to go down to the Dead Sea and experience the water. If you do not want to do that the water is brought into the hotel and heated and available for you to use. Have a good night.

We ate a deluxe kosher breakfast to prepare us for a great day. Suitcases were stacked when Costia pulled the tour bus in and we loaded and boarded. Pastor Lee Pickett gave us a morning devotion; we were sad to be leaving Jerusalem today, but refreshed as he read Psalms 122:6-7, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." Pastor Lee did, and prayed we would.

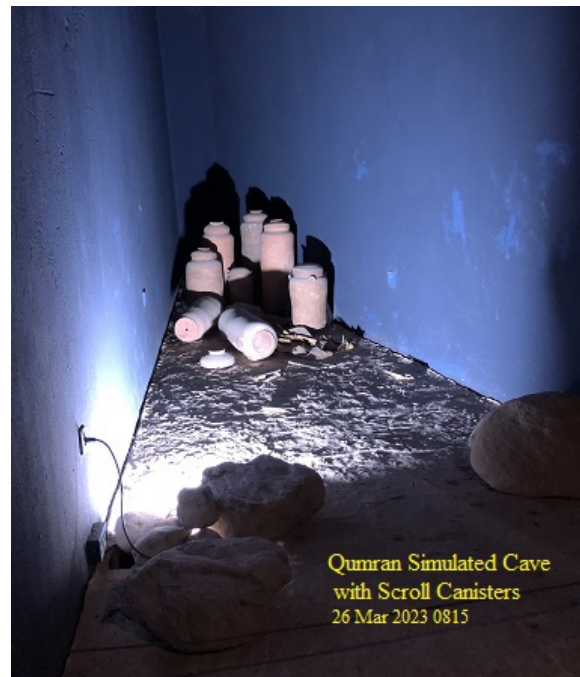
Eli, excited to be on mic, began an on going discourse as the bus headed out of



Jerusalem, and headed into the rugged terrain of the Bedouin West Bank wilderness, headed toward Jericho (I think).



Over the years several ideas have floated up about who it was that hid the scrolls in caves at Qumran. Eli gave us the latest. Jews had fled the corruption of Jerusalem; the



priesthood were the very elite, the commoners, the very poor. Fleeing Jews established a “New Jerusalem” with celibate men, taking ritual baths five times a day, and living with very aesthetic rigor, with no deviations allowed. They became very dedicated scribes, living a monkish life, and copying the Scriptures. The Roman takeover of Jerusalem was certain; the burning of the city was certain; and the burning of the “New Jerusalem” or Qumran, was certain. Consequently scrolls were hidden everywhere that would not burn, and most stayed there until 1947!

The Bedouin Shepherd boy, who threw stones into a cave to scare out his goat, heard ceramic pots breaking and sold them for a whopping \$25 a piece. (He got all he needed to buy his dad a brand new oxcart!) The buyer sold them for \$100 a piece before the value was understood. In 1954 a middleman bought a scroll for 1 million dollars! (Dr Indiana Jones used a copper scroll from Jordan to find “Temple Treasures”, but no royalties actually went to or from Indiana Jones.) The result was that Bedouins quit shepherding and went wholesale into spelunking. We pulled in the Qumran Park and went to hear even more about the Essenes community and the exciting scrolls found here.

I was very excited to revisit Qumran, Lee Pickett and I, with our wives were here in Feb 2009. There used to be more to imagine than there was to see, but now the whole Essenes community area had been excavated and made accessible. The Dead Sea scrolls unearthed here, around the year of my birth, have stirred a lot of excitement in the 76 years of their new life. From the rock precipice where the Qumran community was found and Eli, our guide, could point to a distant cliff containing what was called 'Cave 4.' There, in 1947, the Bedouin shepherd boy made the discovery that started an amazing sequence of events. Eli's intriguing skill unveiled the long untouched jars that the



Bedouin's removed, the seven scrolls found inside, the authentication process riddled with excitement and adventure, and the profound importance of where we were standing.

Eventually, without question, the Israeli government paid the Bedouins \$10,000 per scroll, and as the realization of what they had in hand bloomed, that was a small price. On this craggy eastern slope overlooking the Dead Sea, 15 miles from the temple of Jerusalem, God had provided a below sea level, deep basin desert environment that could preserve Hebrew scrolls for 2,000 years! Untouched by human hand and sealed in ceramic jars, the Bedouin desert wanderers discovered 972 manuscripts and fragments



from 11 caves around Qumran. Bedouins could quadruple their profits by tearing whole scrolls into hundreds of fragments, and they did. Such wasted resources had to be collected and digitally reassembled, and they were.

The community that lived in these hills before Christ's arrival has been fully excavated and well imagined. Remember, archeology is 10% discovery, and 90% imagination. Here at Qumran there was still room for much imagination. There were excavated ritual baths called Mikvahs, cisterns to hold the precious little water that came into this area, and waterways carved into rocks around the whole general area. There was a flower mill, and a



potter's kiln, and evidence that they made and sold honey, ... that would be date honey not bee honey. Recall there was a very large Grove of date trees in the valley towards the Dead Sea.

And then there are the bones of John the Baptist found in the Qumran cemetery, ... in 2010 National Geographic gave that fiction a good go, but any Bible student knows that, although John was radical, he baptized in the Jordan River not in the Dead Sea; and in Bible accounting he never was at Qumran. They may have found bones of a Qumran leader in their cemetery, but they were remiss at connecting anything found here to Bible characters (only to Bible copies, which was a very big deal, still is).

These scrolls and fragments were archaeological gold and were bought and sold, smuggled and stolen for the many years of their discovery from 1947 on. When the Israel Antiquities Authority inventoried the whole collection, they found intact every book of the





Hebrew Bible except Esther, all the Apocryphal (pseudepigraphical) books (books that provide inter-testament history which Jesus, Jews and Baptists never called Holy Scripture, but Catholics, and ergo many Protestants, errantly did). Two things are firmly settled with this find. First, history, linguistics evidence, paleographic and carbon 14 dating established the date of the actual scrolls from 200 BC to 68 AD. That is just 100 years after the prophet Malachi wrote, and just two years prior to the Roman ransacking and destruction of the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.

But more marvelous than man's dating is God's preservation! Not the preservation of rolled up animal skins in a dry desert with a high evaporation environment, but the preservation of God's Words so that *“not one jot or one tittle would pass away!”* (Matt 5:18). There was not a word difference found between the whole of the discovered Hebrew Bible, and that found in the Masoretic copies put to print in 1524 (and put in English in 1611). God had, for over a millennium of hand copying, exactly preserved His words just as He said He would. God's words are 'Preserved': *“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever”* (Psalm 12:6-7).

They are 'Perfect' words: *“The law of the*



*LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple”* (Psalm 19:7).

They are 'Pure' words: *“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes”* (Psalm 19:8).

They are 'Powerful' words: *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb.4:12).

They are 'Pleasant' words: *“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.”* (Prov.15:26).

The little I knew about the thousand scrolls found around the Qumran ruins



stimulated a renewed interest in the review of these treasures. Back in November I visited The Dead Sea Scrolls Museum, which had on full display The Great Isaiah Scroll, one of the original seven Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in Qumran in 1947. It is the largest, oldest, and best preserved of all the Biblical scrolls. Dated from 125 BC, the 54 columns contain all 66 chapters of the Hebrew copy of the book of Isaiah. The Shrine of the Book Complex displays the oldest extant Biblical manuscripts in the upper galleries, and the Aleppo Codex, being the most accurate manuscripts of the Masoretic text, in the lower galleries. The Aleppo Codex is generally in full agreement with the The Great Isaiah Scroll except for some spellings which reveal minor pronunciation differences of the Second Temple Period.

That is miraculous, and exactly what the Biblical doctrine of preservation would expect. This Masoretic Hebrew text was used in the translation of the Authorized King James Bible. The white dome of the Shrine of the Book is a portrayal of a lid of the ceramic jars found in the caves near the Dead Sea in 1947. The complex, dedicated and opened in 1965, is intended to be a sanctuary expressing profound spiritual meaning. There was no photography allowed and any audible voice was shushed in a “this-is-a-library” fashion. It was holier than a library.



While there in November I circled The Great Isaiah Scroll several times looking for anything that might point me to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. I held a paper containing

the chapter in Hebrew. I was even accompanied by our Israeli Guide, Joe, who had a similar interest, and could read Hebrew. We were unsuccessful, but did find the close of the book and were working our way backward through thirteen unmarked chapters to try and find the text “*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*” written in Hebrew, of course.

It was not futile, just unsuccessful. It was a memorable adventure, and if ever I get back to the Shrine, I will be far better prepared. Electronic viewing of the scrolls



can be done online. One can completely view The Great Isaiah Scroll at <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>. I made an extensive comparison of the Isaiah 53 text and wrote up my findings in my previous journal, published this past November.<sup>1</sup>

It was a beautiful Lord's Day, a first day of the week, a Sunday, and we sat in the excavated center of a 2,000 year ago Qumran encampment as Pastor Lee Pickett opened our Bibles to Psalms 12 and read us verses 6-7 out of the Holy Bible, "*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*" (Psalm 12:6-7).

Pastor talked of The Wonder of the find in the caves at Qumran and describe the cave-like display we had just peered into, to see the earthen vessels used to preserve the scrolls for 2,000 years, a heavenly treasure, the preserved Word of God. He spoke of the wonder that the Dead Sea scrolls presented when not a word of the Holy Bible was changed. He spoke of the disparity that we now have as anyone wanting a copyright can change the Words of God, willy-nilly<sup>2</sup>.

On this Sunday morning, sitting in the middle of an archaeological site exposing a 2,000-year-old Essenes community called Qumran, we worshiped "The Word"; the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, as our righteous Lord, and the Word that is preserved by Jehovah God to every generation.

I had previously done a lot of research on what Pastor Lee had just called "willy-nilly" Bible changes sought by modernist copyright mongers.



Some of those findings are rehearsed here:

It is appalling what modernist ecumenical copyright seeking liberals have done to Psalm 12:6-7 "*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever*" (Psalm 12:6-7).

That is clearly what it says

1 Rice, Edward, "*Journaling a Preacher's 2022 Pilgrimage to Israel, Half Shekel Journal #10 Thur 3 Nov The Israel Museum*", Pg 70-72. Available at [www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22](http://www.GSBaptistChurch.com/israel22)

2 'willy-nilly', meaning "whether one likes it or not and without direction or planning" may have developed from two Latin participles that have the definition, "unwilling, willing". William Shakespeare first used a form of this expression in *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1596 (And, Will you, nill you, I will marry you).



in the WCL<sup>3</sup> Hebrew Bible as well:

אמרות יהוה אמרות טהרות כסף צרוף בעליל לארץ מזקק שבעתים:  
אתה יהוה תשמרם תצננו מן הדור זה לעולם:



*Thou shalt keep them (the words of the LORD), O LORD, thou shalt preserve them (the words of the LORD) from this generation for ever”*

And it is what modernists needed to change, the words of the LORD, to get a lucrative copyright. Look what they did:

Psalm 12:6-7 from an NIV<sup>4</sup> bible, “And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold [fn more probably “earth”] refined seven times. You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked.”

Psalm 12:7 from an ESV<sup>5</sup> bible, “You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us [fn or “guard him”] from this generation forever.”

Psalm 12:6-7 from an RSV<sup>6</sup> bible, “The promises of the LORD are promises that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. Do thou, O LORD, protect us, guard us ever from this generation.”

Psalm 12:7 from a CSV<sup>7</sup> bible, “You, LORD, will guard us;[fn LXX (Septuagint), Jer (Jerome’s Latin Vulgate); other Hb mss read “them”] you will protect us[fn LXX (Septuagint), other Hb mss read “him”] from this generation forever.”

And consider what they did; in each modernist ecumenical copyright version they removed the text about keeping and preserving words of God', and stuck in their idea that he will “keep the needy safe and protect 'us””, or “keep 'them' and guard 'us””, or “protect us, and guard us”, or “guard us, and protect

us”! ... Protect 'us' from what? ... from this generation! No, we need protected from modernist text changers seeking lucrative copyrights!

Another look at this calamity is provided from an excerpt from my “*Systematic*

3 This Hebrew text is a digital version of the Leningrad Codex developed by the Westminster Hebrew Institute and made available by The J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research. This version is based on the January, 2016 WLC v4.20 release. The morphology is provided by the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible project. Lemma and morphology data are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license. The text of the WLC remains in the Public Domain. See the LICENSE file at the Open Scriptures Hebrew Bible project for more information.

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**The Issue of the Copyrights.**

If you use a modernist bible you should know that it has SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS from the HOLY BIBLE.

In order to secure a copyright on a new bible translation it must be demonstrated legally that there are SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS from any previous work, roughly 64,000 of them! The race to get copyrights on so many SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS has been so intense that now the NIV is proposing a (per)version that changes God the Father to Mother God, just to secure another lucrative copyright on what used to be GOD'S uncopyrighted WORDS. Shame on Ecumenical Modernists. Stay away from their bibles and bad doctrine. Only their 64,000 SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS have allowed them to get several copyrights, but there is only one Holy Bible, and it has no copyright held by mere man.



Baptists believe that “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2Tim.3:16). This was written about the copies of copies of copies. Modernist translators reject this truth.

**Modernist ecumenical scholars contend that no Bible in existence today is inspired.** They contend that only the original manuscripts were inspired, i.e. only what came from the apostle's pen! All these original manuscripts are lost and consequently there is no inspired Word of God in existence. However, they think their excellent and revered 'textual criticism' will be able to restore the originals from the two oldest existing manuscripts from Alexandria Egypt. Both manuscripts came from the pen of Roman Catholic Church Fathers, Clement

of Alexandria and Origin of Alexandria. Catholic Saint Origin is considered the Father of Textual Criticism and the Father of the Allegorical Method, whereby Scripture “conceals a secret hidden meaning that only the supremely spiritually astute can see and comprehend.” Baptists never have trusted Catholics, especially their textual criticism,



and allegorical methods. Look what the ecumenical “scholars” did to the **WORDS OF GOD:**

Psalm 12:6 The <u>words</u> of the LORD are pure <u>words</u> : as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (Holy Bible)	6 The <b>promises</b> of the LORD are <b>promises</b> that are pure, silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. RSV
7 Thou shalt keep <u>them</u> , O LORD, thou shalt preserve <u>them</u> from this generation for ever. (The Holy Bible)	7 Do thou, O LORD, protect <b>us</b> , guard <b>us</b> ever from this generation. The RSV
Psalm 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his <u>truth</u> endureth to all generations. (The Holy Bible)	5 For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his <b>faithfulness</b> to all generations. The RSV
Prov 22:12 ¶ The eyes of the LORD <u>preserve</u> knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. (The Holy Bible)	12 ¶ The eyes of the LORD <b>keep watch over</b> knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the faithless. The RSV



*The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God*

*shall stand for ever* (Isaiah 40:8). (The Holy Bible)

While I am out here on a “rabbit trail” let me mention that previously a Messianic Jew (he was born-again, but would not accept the title “Christian”, calling it a Greek title) shared this insight with a group of Independent Baptist Preachers. You see, said he, Jews do not live according to the Jewish law, but according to the 'interpretation' of the book of law, the Mishna, or '2<sup>nd</sup> book.' It is the 1<sup>st</sup> book of interpretation, made in Tiberius, with corrections published later in the Talmud, or '3<sup>rd</sup> book', ... and 2<sup>nd</sup> interpretation. This later became Shulhond Alhugb (spelled by my phonics, not by my Hebrew friend), or 3<sup>rd</sup> interpretation. ... So Judaism, today, is just as man made as Catholicism, they are both a bunch of man-made rules vaguely based on what Scripture almost





says.

The bus loaded, we pulled away from Qumran, still relishing all of its marvelous assurances of Bible preservation. We moved south on Route 90 in this great sunken valley holding the Dead Sea, and came to an interesting commercial stop called “Ahava, 30 Years of Patented Dead Sea Cosmetics.” It was “Factory Outlet: Visitor Center – Masada – Ein Bokek – Neve Midbar” and a delightful stop and shop that excited all, well not quite all. Beverly has allergic reactions to most perfumes and (I think) all men’s colognes, so I slipped in and bought ice cream treats and we sat in their beautiful garden until the rest were all shopped out and loaded up with Dead Sea cosmetics. Ahava is Hebrew for love <0160> אהבה ‘ahabah [a-hab-aw], Authorized Version - love 40 times.



It was just 9:55 a.m. and we were to be at Ein Gedi at 10:00, and Masada by noon. Eli gave us more background on the bus, *Ahava* is Hebrew for love, *Qumran* actually means two moons (one reflected from the sea), and *Ein Gedi* is a combination of *Ein*–“spring or oasis”, and *Gedi*–“goat-kid, i.e. Ibex.” The water level of the Dead Sea is receding 3 ft per year and when they tried to import sea water from the Red Sea or Med-Sea the solution produced gypsum (used as a fertilizer) and many environmental concerns.



The Ein Gedi Nature Preserve was an amazing stop for two reasons; first, it had areas where we could clearly visualize David, and his 600 companions, hiding out from the pursuits of King Saul. At Ein Gedi we could see David resting in a cave where Saul slipped in to take a nap. And it was easy to comprehend David standing on one slope talking to Saul with his armies standing on an adjacent slope. They might be separated by a deep valley, but by land



travel they might be over an hour apart.

The second amazement here was all the water just springing out of the rock. These not uncommon springs bring to life many common Bible referencces.

*They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. 9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof (Psalms 65:8-10).*

We had only an hour here and we had to be off to an exciting visit to Masada.



#### Image Location Index

IMG_1222.jpg	Prima Kings Hotel	26Mar 0621	31°46'30.64"N 35°13'03.56"E
IMG_20230326_082147.jpg	Rt90 Al Bahr Al Mayet	26Mar 0821	31°45'59.41"N 35°29'44.40"E
IMG_20230326_083538.jpg	near Qumram NPark	26Mar 0835	31°45'06.63"N 35°28'53.20"E
IMG_20230326_085751.jpg	Qumran NPark	26Mar 0858	31°44'25.38"N 35°27'31.13"E
IMG_20230326_102904.jpg	Ein Gedi	26Mar 1029	31°28'10.55"N 35°23'31.03"E
IMG_20230326_112826.jpg	Masada NPark	26Mar 1128	31°18'43.29"N 35°21'43.82"E
IMG_20230326_124454.jpg	Masada Ed	26Mar 1244	31°19'02.54"N 35°21'11.36"E
IMG_20230326_150429.jpg	Dead Sea David Hotel	26Mar 1504	31°12'09.23"N 35°21'41.03"E





There is a misleading chart published by ecumenical, modernist bible promoters. I was given a copy from someones Thompson Chain Reference Bible, and for a hermeneutics class I taught, I corrected their chart. No charge.

No. 4220  
Stands Corrected

## THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE The Corrected Version

