



THE QUMRAN CAVES

Qumran is located on the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, some 28 miles southeast of Jerusalem. It is here that a second century Essene community lived. The Essenes, meaning “pious ones,” lived here as a community, writing the Scriptures on scrolls and preserving them for future generations. It is believed that while under attack from the Roman armies, this community bound the scrolls in leather and hid them in the caves above the village. The Essene village was probably wiped out and the scrolls became an unfound treasure until 1947. It was then that two young Bedouin shepherds discovered an ancient scroll several yards long bearing the Book of Isaiah. Several other scrolls have been found in these caves, making this archaeological find one of the greatest of the 20th century.

There were 11 caves. The most famous of the Dead Sea Scroll caves, Cave #4, is also the most significant in terms of finds. More than 15,000 fragments from over 200 books were found in this cave, nearly all by Bedouin thieves. 122 Biblical scrolls (or fragments) were found in this cave. From all 11 Qumran caves, every Old Testament book is represented except Esther. No New Testament books or fragments have been found.

