

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

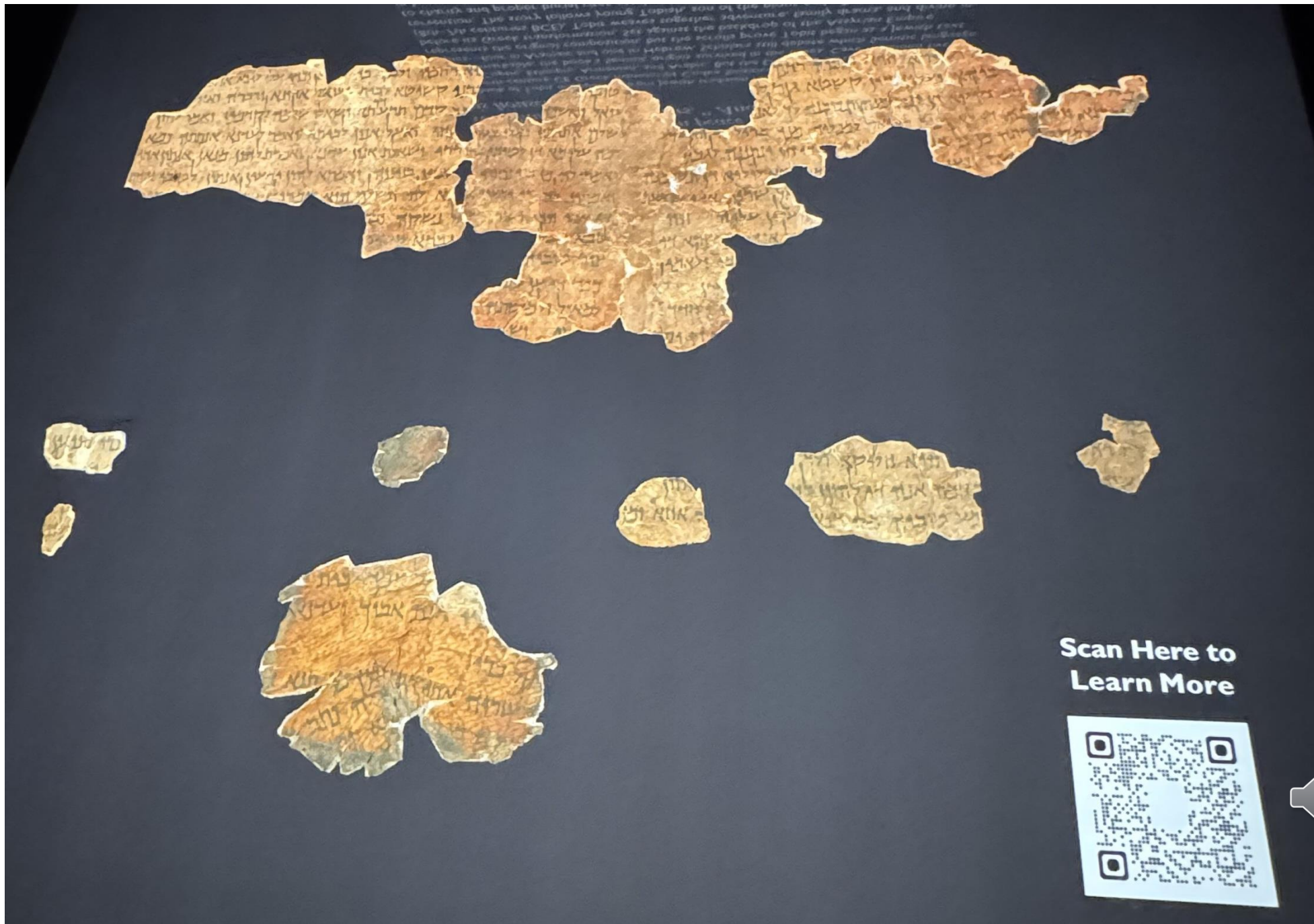


Dead Sea Scrolls

- A Bedouin Shepherd threw a rock into a cave and heard a clay jar break.
- He and others crawled inside and found jars containing leather scrolls wrapped in linen.
- **1948–1956:** Archaeologists and Bedouin explorers searched nearby cliffs. They eventually found over 900 manuscripts across a total of 11 caves in the area
- The texts include biblical books from the Hebrew Bible, community rules, and religious writings written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
- Widely believed to be from the Essenes, an ancient Jewish sect from the Second Temple period.









The Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee are about 65 miles apart

Jerusalem is about 15 miles from where the scrolls were found.



Its surface and shores sit roughly 1,448 ft below sea level.

Dead Sea has no outlet.

Evaporation made it 10x more salty than normal sea water.

Why where the Dead Sea Scrolls hidden?

- The Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden in desert caves to protect sacred and historical manuscripts from destruction during the Roman military campaigns of the First Jewish-Roman War (66–73 AD)
- Some historians suggest that as the Romans besieged and destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple in 70 CE, refugees or temple authorities transported these libraries away from the capital and stored them in the quiet caves near Qumran.
- Intent to Return: The caretakers placed the scrolls inside sealed ceramic jars expecting to retrieve them once the conflict ended, but they likely did not survive or return to collect them.



Do the Scrolls shed light on the Book of Tobit?

- Before the discovery of Tobit manuscripts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the text was assumed to have been composed between the first and third centuries **AD**. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery, the only text even found was written in Greek.
- However, of the five copies found in Cave 4, one has been dated to **100 BC** pushing back the likely date of the tale's composition considerably. Scholars are unclear as to the original language of Tobit's composition.
- No Threat to Faith: Catholic biblical scholars view the scrolls as a monumental confirmation of the historical and textual reliability of the Bible
- Ancient Textual Accuracy: The biblical scrolls (dating from the 3rd century B.C. to the 1st century A.D.) match the traditional Hebrew texts closely, proving that scriptural transmission of over a thousand years was remarkably precise.



Hebrew and Aramaic Languages

- While they started together, over 3,000 yrs ago, their paths crossed dramatically over time:
- **Early Era:** Hebrew was the primary spoken and written language of the Israelites.
- **The Shift:** When the Babylonians exiled the Jewish people in the 6th century, (500-600 BC) the Jews adopted Aramaic, which was the regional superpower language.
- **The Result:** Aramaic eventually replaced Hebrew as the everyday spoken language in Israel. ***By the time of Jesus, everyday people spoke Aramaic, while Hebrew was used primarily for scripture, prayer, and elite study.***
- **Greek** was the main language of trade and commerce. **Latin** was the language of the Roman soldiers and governors. Although even Romans had a working knowledge of Aramaic.
- **Saint Paul** wrote, or had transcribed, his letters to his Gentile audience in Greek.
- By the 9th century, (800-900 AD) Arabic had largely supplanted Aramaic as the popular daily tongue for both local Christian and Jewish communities. ***Today's language of Israel?***
- **The Modern Revival:** In **1881**, lexicographer Eliezer Ben-Yehuda immigrated to Palestine and began the monumental task of turning classical Hebrew into a spoken, modern language suitable for daily life.
- By the time the **State of Israel** was founded in **1948**, Modern Hebrew had successfully become the primary spoken language for the region's Jewish population. 