



Sola Scriptura and *The 400th Anniversary of the KJV*

by Rev. Dr. John S. Erickson

The first of the three 'Solas' that we associate with the Lutheran Reformation is that of *Sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone. Clearly Dr. Martin Luther understood the importance of Holy Scripture as we find it in the Bible.

Let the man who would hear God speak read Holy Scripture. (W 54, 263 - E 26, 303 - SL 17, 1089).

Scripture is God's testimony concerning Himself. (W 50, 282 - E 23, 279 - ST 10, 1018),

The Holy Spirit Himself and God, the Creator of all things, is the Author of this book. (W 43, 6 - E opp ex 7, 219 - SL 2, 469).

After all, no book, teaching, or word is able to comfort in troubles, fear, mis-

ery, death, yea, in the midst of devils and in hell, except this book, which teaches us God's Word and in which God Himself speaks with us as a man speaks with his friend. (W 48, 2 - E 52, 318 - SL 9, 1788).

Because of the work of Luther and the Reformers, in seeing to it that we can have the Word of God in our own language, we today can sing, "God's Word is our great heritage." However, this great heritage that we today enjoy, God's Word in the English language, did not come easily or without cost.

As most people know, the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

(Sola Scriptura, con't. on page 2)

Also in this issue -

Bible 101 page 4

The Dead Sea Scrolls'
Influence On Our Bible . . . page 8

(Sola Scriptura, from page 1)

It was written in languages that were native and used in everyday speech by the people.

Way back in the third century B.C. a Greek translation was made of the Old Testament that came to be known as the *Septuagint* (the Latin word for seventy). A story told in the Letter of Aristeas reports that seventy-two scholars worked on the translation). It is of interest to note that of the 68 quotations of the Old Testament that we find in the New Testament, most of them are from the Greek rather than from the Hebrew Old Testament.

In the early centuries of the church, there were many places where Greek was no longer the language of the people. As a result, translations were made into Syriac, Ethiopic, as well as other languages of those places where Christianity had spread. For us, it is of significance that Latin became the language of Western Christianity. Numerous translations were made of the Old and New Testaments into Latin, but no two translations agreed. There was a need for an accurate translation to be made. Damaslis, who was Bishop of Rome, commissioned Jerome to prepare such a translation. Jerome completed his translation in Bethlehem in 404 A.D.

Jerome's translation was not welcome in many quarters of the church, however in time, the merits of his work were recognized. His Bible translation became known as the Vulgate. For over 1000 years, those in the Western Church who studied the Bible, studied the Vulgate.

Much later, the people who populated the British Isles came to speak English even though the scholars still studied in Latin. There were those who saw this for the problem it was. A man by the name of John Wycliff (1326-1384) was one of those men. John Wycliff lived in the days of Chaucer, and he and his associates worked on an English manuscript of the Bible, a Bible that could be read by the common man.

After another hundred years, the printing press was invented and the Protestant Reformation was in full swing.

William Tyndale set out to translate an English Bible so that "the boy who drives the plough" could know more Scripture than did the clerics. He paid with his life for his trouble. However, in the next eighty-six years after his death, a number of English Bibles appeared in rapid succession: Coverdale's, Matthew's, Traverer's, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible (This is the Bible from which Wm Shakespeare frequently quotes in his writings. It is also the Bible the Pilgrims brought to the New World), the Bishops' Bible, the Rheims-Douay, and then the King James Bible in 1611.

There was much opposition to the move to vernacular Scriptures. As was mentioned, Latin had become the language of the Western Church. Therefore the move for a Bible in the vernacular had three obstacles to overcome. First was the belief that Latin was the correct medium of religious expression. Secondly, there was deep concern among the clergy over offering Scripture to the laity. Concern was that unorthodox teachings might be the result. And thirdly, there was the conviction that English was not a suitable language for religious expression. For us... I would guess that most would feel that American slang would not be appropriate for an English Bible translation. In the Middle Ages, the English vernacular was thought to lack the cultural standing that was necessary.

Throughout the 1500's there was considerable disagreement as to which English translation was the best. Therefore the King James Bible was born out of a need to quiet the various critics of the available versions of that time as well as to bring some uniformity to a very confused situation. The Geneva Bible was most common in homes while the Bishops' Bible was used in most churches. There were still some

Great Bibles being used as well as some Tyndale and Coverdale Bibles. The hope of some was that there might be one translation made out of the many good ones... a translation that no one could justly object to.

A fellow by the name of John Reynolds made a proposal for such a new translation at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, and that proposal caught the imagination of King James. The result was the King set in motion the machinery to make this new translation a reality.

From what we know, various committees were at work in the years following 1604. Some of those involved died before the work was completed. Although there is some reference to some 54 translators involved in the project, only 47 names are actually on record.

How it all worked, we are not sure. However there is reference to a procedure where one person would read a text while, at the same time, scholars would follow along in Bibles of various languages. Then suggestions would be given where appropriate. Then it appears there was a final committee of 12 who reviewed what the earlier committees had worked on. Two men, Bishop Thomas Bilson and Dr. Miles Smith then added the finishing touches and also wrote the introductory material.

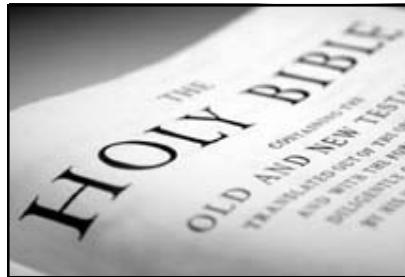
It seems that the translators of the Bible knew that their work would be criticized. Thomas Fuller stated, "Some of the brethren were not pleased with this translation." The earlier Geneva Bible had wonderful notes, the KJV had no notes. For many, it did not measure up. Beginning in 1642 there were numerous printings of the KJV Bible with the Geneva Bible notes added.

On the other hand, there were many who were happy with the new translation. And although the success may not have been immediately obvious, it was quite certain from the very start. In its first three years the KJV went through fifteen printings and over the next 30 years there were another 182 printings.

Printing outside of England was

not allowed until after America had broken away from British rule. The first English Bible printed in America was the KJV in 1782.

Not that many people are aware of the fact that the KJV Bible they may have is quite different in many ways from the 1611 version. There were any number of printing errors in the first as well as in latter printings. Intentional changes were made in 1612 and in a 1613 edition, 413 additional changes were made. One of the more obvious changes is that the Apocrypha which had been a part of all English translations of the Bible since Coverdale's Bible, and which was included in the 1611 KJV, is in few of our editions today. A 1629 edition of the KJV was the first edition to not include the Apocrypha.



Other changes were made in printings throughout the 1600's and into the 1700's. A 1762 edition modernized the language, and in 1768 an edition by Blayney added notes on weights, measures, and coins and added 30,495 new marginal references.

Other changes have continued in various editions up to the present day. The most major revisions took place in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. The most recent major revision, the fifth major revision and the first since 1769 is the New King James Version Bible, the complete version of which appeared in 1982. Ω

Considerable material for this article was gleaned from, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV, a History and Evaluation*, by Jack P. Lewis: Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI.

Bible 101

Rev. Dr. John S. Erickson



A Quick Overview

- The word "Bible" comes from the Greek word "biblos" meaning book.
- The Bible is *the* Book, containing 66 books, written by 40 authors, covering a period of about 1600 years.
- The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is made up of 39 books that can be divided into three groups: a) the historical books (Genesis through Esther), b) the poetical books (Job through the Song of Solomon), and c) the prophetic books (4 great and 12 minor prophets). The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew (a few short passages in Aramaic).
The New Testament includes 27 books and it too can be divided into three groups: a) the historical books (Matthew through Acts), b) the doctrinal books (the Epistles), and c) the prophetic book (Revelation). The New Testament was written in Greek.
- The first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) was translated into Greek in Egypt around 250 B.C. and the rest of the Old Testament by around 100 B.C. This translation was called the Septuagint and was the Bible of the early Christian church.
- The word "testament" means "covenant" or "agreement." The Old Testament is the covenant God made with man about his salvation before the incarnation of our Lord. The New Testament is the agreement God made with man concerning his salvation after the coming of Christ to this world.
- The Bible is *God's Word*. This

does not mean that God spoke every word that is found in our Bible. For example, in Genesis 3:4 we find words uttered by Satan and not by God. Those words were the devil's lie. What we do mean when we say the Bible is God's Word is that everything in the Bible is there by the direction and by the will of God's Holy Spirit.

In order for the Bible to give a complete record of God's dealing with humankind it must of necessity include the story of Satan, of sin, of fallen man and his life, of God's plan of redemption, of the continuing conflict between sinful and rebellious man and God's saving love, and of the Savior and His work and the results of that work, as well as what God has in store for those who He has redeemed. As a result, the authors of the books the Bible contains had to draw material from all phases of human life. This means that in the Bible we find history, poetry, geography, chronology, the story of sin and the story of grace... all of these were a part of the life of those to whom God's self-revelation came for the purpose of saving. All that we find in the Bible is God's message to man. This is what is meant when it is said that the Bible is God's Word.

- Three important words in connection with the Bible:
 - **Revelation.** The word 'revelation' comes from the Latin and it means "unveiling." God has acted to make Himself known. God is beyond our knowing (see

Job 11:7). We cannot know him, we cannot discover him. If we are to know Him, it is He who must act on our behalf. This is what he had done for us in His Holy Word.

- **Inspiration.** This points us to the chief means by which God has chosen to reveal himself to us. God has, and he continues, to reveal Himself to us in nature (but such knowledge of Him is limited). He has, in the second place, revealed himself to us in Christ. This is his supreme revelation of himself to us. But there is a third way in which He has revealed Himself, and that is by *speaking* to particular people. This means of verbal communication is what is meant by "inspiration."

There is a difference, a great difference, between what is meant when, for example, we say that what a musician or a speaker heard was inspired, as over against what is meant when we speak of the inspiration of Scripture. Paul helps us in this when he explains that "all Scripture is God-breathed." (see 2 Timothy 3:16).

It isn't that God "breathed" into the authors, or that he "breathed" in to what they wrote to make them something unique, rather it is that what they wrote was "breathed out by God." Or it might be better said, God spoke through them. The authors were God's spokesmen. The Holy Spirit enabled the authors to correctly understand and to convey to others that which they had acquired by revelation or investigation. He enabled them to select the right material for their purposes and from their own vocabulary, to choose the best words to correctly convey the

meaning.

- **Authority.** Authority speaks to the power of Scripture. This power or authority is there because of what Scripture is, namely, a divine revelation given by divine inspiration. The Bible is God's Word and it therefore has authority over us. Behind every word of the Bible is the Person (God) who has spoken that word. God's Word carries God's authority. Because of who God is, we should listen to, and believe what He has said.
 - Considerable of what we find in our Bible was not original to the authors. In the New Testament it is interesting to note, in this connection, the opening verses of Luke's gospel. There he makes clear that in his gospel he set about to "write an orderly account" of what had been "handed down to [him]" as well as what he had gained through his own "careful investigation."
- The Bible itself makes reference to some of these sources. Among them are the following: *The Book of the Wars of the Lord* (Numbers 21:14-15), *The Book of Jashar* (Joshua 10:12-13, the book of *The Acts of Solomon* (1 Kings 11:41), *The History of Nathan the prophet* (2 Chron. 9:29). These as well as other of these sources have been lost.
- The Bible is Christ centered. In the Old Testament everything points forward to Christ. And it isn't only prophecy, the laws, the sacrifices, the priesthood, in fact the entire history of Israel prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. In the New Testament everything centers on Him. Jesus is "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (Rev.

(Bible 101, from page 5)

22:13).

- The most important truth in the Bible is summed up in John 20:31, "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

- The Bible's Origin

Our Bible is a collection of books that were written at different times and by different authors, over a period of about sixteen hundred years. Although the authors were human beings, the historic Christian understanding is that these authors wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit. This is what is understood as "Inspiration." So while there were numerous authors, and although they wrote in the Hebrew and Aramaic and Greek languages, yet there is in fact only ONE Author of the entire Bible. This is what sets the Bible apart from all other books in the world. It is different not only in degree, but in kind. The almighty God, Creator of the world, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is the Author of the Bible. The Bible is *His* Book which does not "merely contain the Word of God, intermingled with many human additions and interpolations, but... in all its parts, [it] is the Word of God" Koehler, Edward: *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*, Concordia Publishing, p. 4).

"...the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 3:16).



"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe" (Heb. 1:1,2).

"...from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel..." (1 Thess. 2:13-14).

- How were the books of the Bible selected?

We should not think that the only books that were

around in the times written about in the Bible, were the books that we find in our Bible. This is true both with regard to the Old and the New Testaments. So how is it that the books we have in our Bible were selected and others were not?

The answer lies in the work of the Holy Spirit. Both from what we read in the Bible as well as from experience we know that in lives that are surrendered to God there is insight and guidance that comes from the Holy Spirit. People can become profoundly wise when they allow the Holy Spirit to teach them. In Luke 12:12 Jesus tells his disciples, "the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." And in John 16:13 he shared with his disciples how that "the Spirit of truth" would "guide [them] into all truth."

I doubt that I am the only one who has been amazed on not so few occasions with regard to the spiritual knowledge and understanding of persons with very little formal education but who had clearly been under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit.

It was as the Holy Spirit guided the consciousness of godly people in Bible times, that enabled them to judge what as true and what was false in the books that were in circu-

lation at that time and to discern evidences of divine inspiration. Standards came into play in time such as authorship, time of writing, language used, etc. But over it all is that it was as a result of the operation of the spiritual judgments of godly people, that there came to be, out of the writings at hand, certain books that were, by common agreement, considered to be divinely inspired. These books are what is called the *Canon* or the *Canonical Books*. "Canon" is a Greek word that means a rule or a measuring line. This means that a Canonical book is a book that meets the standard, the "Canon," or that passes the test.

- When were the books of the Bible as we know it 'fixed'?

From what can be determined it seems clear that the Canon of the Old Testament was fixed by 400 B.C. It seems that for the most part this was the work of Ezra and Nehemiah and a council of Jews that was known as the Great Synagogue. This council met after the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. However long before this time many of the books of our Old Testament had already been decided upon.

With regard to the New Testament, the Council at Carthage in 387 A.D. is the time generally accepted for the fixing of the Canon. However, there is considerable evidence that a good number of the books had been selected as early at the year 100 A.D. Ω

(Dead Sea Scrolls, from page 11)

the account of his stoning after being thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, James is addressed as "Thou righteous one, to whom we are bound to listen." In the account of Hegesippus (and others) his exceeding righteous and pious nature is mentioned. In fact, many first century disciples believed that because of this great miscarriage of justice under High Priest Festus against James, the destruction of Jerusalem was sealed just a few years later.

Dr. Gaster emphasized to me that the extensive language of the Gospel of John bore far too many similarities in the language and word usage of the Scrolls to be coincidental. Many references to "Light" as in John the Baptizer bearing witness to the light and the "true light that enlightens every man - - coming into the world." John also has Jesus saying that He is "the light of the world." This is also picked up by Paul in Ephesians 5:8 "walking as children of the Light and of the day." Also the term of "the elect" is found repeatedly in their Hymns as also in Titus 1:1, (and several other Pauline passages) and 1 Peter 1:1 and other passages bear the same close similarity. Gaster cites many other examples in his notes.

The use of the term "edah" for con-

gregation from which we derive the word "church" is used quite often as description for an assembly of purpose in many of the sectarian Scrolls including the Hymns.

John went into the desert to prepare the Way of the Lord literally fulfilling Isaiah 40:3. In that same wilderness lived the Essenes who used this same passage as a banner label to describe their purpose and mission. There they practiced a unique ritual of once and for all purification very close to the baptism that John offered to usher in the Messianic age to all who were looking for the Messiah, long promised; "repent, be baptized, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

We must remember that John the writer of the last Gospel was introduced to this emerging Messiah by John the Baptizer where he was baptizing in the Jordan River in the Judean desert within sight of Qumran with the compelling words, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John went and got his brother James and Andrew, his brother Simon and the greatest spiritual crusade in the history of the world began. A new formulation of language and words was inevitable, and it directly shaped our Bible, and the world has never been the same. Ω



The Dead Sea Scrolls' Influence On Our Bible

by
Rev. Dr. Ralph Spears

My Grandfather provided the best possible foil for a future apologist for Scripture and the Faith. Once he attacked the credibility of the Exodus account of the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea by suggesting that since that body of water was really a shallow reed sea, all that occurred was that the wind happened to blow all of the water out of the passage so that the Israelites simply walked across. "Yes Grandpa", I answered, "but isn't it at least amazing that this happened just as the Israelites had to cross the Sea, and then all of the water came back when the Egyptians were ready to take their turn". (Never mind that Exodus says that they walked across "dry shod".) Suddenly my Grandfather, a product of the Age of Rationalism, had nothing to say even though my answer was basically logical (rational).

There was a regular attack on the accuracy of Scripture which was a typical critique in Grandfather's time stated as follows; 'How could anyone trust the reliability of the Bible since it had been translated so many times from one language to another, and finally English?' The question may sound as though it has merit: however, all reliable translations of Scripture in whatever language were translated from the original language texts of Hebrew or Aramaic and Greek. In fact the assembled scholars of King James of England 1611, Luther of Germany 1525 and certainly Bruce M. Metzger of Princeton (RSV) 1946 were better equipped to provide a reliable text in their day than Jerome in Bethlehem in the 5th Century when he translated the Bible into Latin known as the *Vulgate*.

That's right; surprisingly the more recent translations of the Bible are better than the earlier translations because of a richer and older background of texts available to the later scholars. Here we would become acquainted with names such as the *Chester Beatty Papyrus*, discovered some eighty (80) years ago, the *Codex Vaticanus* now in the Vatican Library and the fabled discovery of Prof. Constantin Tischendorf of Leipzig, the *Codex Sinaiticus* which he discovered in two visits to the musty old library of St. Catherine's

monastery on Mt. Sinai a hundred and fifty years ago. The document had been waiting there for discovery for some 400 years with its several loose leaves. (Here there is enough intriguing and valid material to supply several Dan Brown novels without exaggeration of the information.)

These represent pages and portions of old priceless copies of Scripture which provide valuable insight toward a more pristine and accurate rendition of our Bible even though a fabled *textus receptus* or pure original text is hardly possible because we are always dealing with copies of copies. Surprisingly few know how our present Bible is such an amazingly reliable document.

Nothing however compares with the discovery of the *Dead Sea Scrolls*, so called, because they were discovered on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in the Judean desert by a Bedouin shepherd boy known as Muhammad ed-Dhib, the Wolf, in early 1947, possibly late 1946. These scrolls have captured the imagination of most literate people and are easily the *find of the millennium* in Biblical archeology.

[The only discovery that even comes close in value is the Nag Hammadi Codexes – fifty some in number, found a year or so later, 1948, in Egypt. The major find here is a primitive Gospel of

Thomas in Greek which may trace back to the early second century copy in Aramaic. Unlike the Dead Sea Scrolls however, none of the Canonical Scriptures are involved with these Codexes from Egypt. They are products of a much later tradition known as Gnosticism and despite what some scholars would have you believe they are interesting perhaps, but not at all reliable.]

Many know that at Qumran the Books of the Old Testament were found in jars made on site to hold them but much of the research has involved brittle, odd shaped bits and pieces primarily from Cave 4. So many scraps in fact were found there that this primary cave is thought to have been in part a *genizah* or repository of worn out manuscripts. All were found, except for Esther which was not considered acceptable by the old rabbis including the sect known as the Essenes. They were contemporaries of the Pharisees and the Sadducees who lived there in the now ruins with tower, often referred to as a monastery since the original excavation of the site by French Dominican archeologist and language expert, Father Roland De Vaux, in early 1949. His work was later taken up and largely verified by Dr. Jodi Magness of the University of North Carolina.

In addition there were scrolls highly revered and valued by the Essenes such as the books of Jubilees and Enoch found in multiple copies. The Book of Enoch was a part of the Canon of the more isolated Ethiopian Christian Church for centuries and from Ethiopia we have the most complete Book of Enoch. In our New Testament, Jude apparently considered the Book of Enoch of an inspired nature because he quotes Enoch in verse 14.

The Canonical Scriptures most duplicated among the Scrolls found were Psalms, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Daniel. There were also writings of Essene authorship such as The War Scroll, the Damascus Document and their own order of procedure known as the Manual of Discipline, all, by the way, solidly based on Scripture.

But the question is – how have the Dead Sea Scrolls affected our Bible and its interpretation today? Did they

possibly affect the writing of our New Testament and how?

First of all we must say that no direct New Testament passages have been found among the body of 800 scrolls and fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls although there are some close similarities to passages of Mark, John, James or a couple of Paul's letters, as we shall note later.

A central figure of Essene lore, known as "the Teacher of Righteousness" literally jumps off of the 'page' at the reader. Besides 'teaching aright', he, this teacher, met persecution primarily from Man of the Lie, and the Sons of Belial and eventual martyrdom at their hand.

Already by the mid-fifties, French scholar, Andre Dupont-Sommer, a prominent and influential writer in this new field of Scrolls research, noted the unmistakable similarity of this Teacher of Righteousness to Jesus with these words:

"The Galilean Master as He is presented to us in the writings of the New Testament, appears in many respects as an astonishing reincarnation (sic) of the Master of Justice (Teacher of Righteousness) in the Scrolls. Like the latter, He preached penitence, poverty, humility, love of one's neighbor, chastity. Like him, He prescribed the observation of the Law of Moses, the whole Law, but the Law finished and perfected, thanks to His own revelations."

Dupont-Sommer goes on to note that both are portrayed as "the Elect" the "Messiah of God", the "Redeemer of the World" therefore the "object of hostility" of the priests and Sadducees and for that reason, condemned and put to death.

"Like him He pronounced judgment on Jerusalem, which was taken and destroyed by the Romans for having put Him to death. Like him, at the end of time, he will be the Supreme Judge. Like him He founded a Church whose adherents fervently awaited His glorious return."

In 1952, writer Edmond Wilson, like Dupont-Sommer, having surveyed this remarkable site, drew this rather startling comparison:

"The monastery (at Qumran) the structure of stone that endures, between the

(Dead Sea Scrolls, con't. on page 10)

(Dead Sea Scrolls, from page 11)

bitter waters (the Dead Sea) and precipitous cliffs, with its oven and its ink wells, its mills and its cesspool, its constellation of sacred fonts and the unadorned graves of its dead, is perhaps, more than Bethlehem or Nazareth, the cradle of Christianity.”

Although later research and scholars distanced themselves from such sentiments, especially as the Israeli scholars came more prominently into the field in the '60s, the assertions of Dupont-Sommer and Wilson, in the long run sixty years later, were remarkably on target.

There is such a great similarity to the emerging movement known as *The Way* (Christianity) and the life and writings of the Essene brothers of Qumran (not to mention groups like the Therapeutae of Egypt who seem to have been closely allied with them), that it would take volumes to list them all. But the important similarities between the two are a strong Messianic awareness attached to an equally prominent apocalyptic flavoring.

The Scrolls help to reveal that the coming of the Messiah into the world was neither a simple nor a singular movement. The visit of the Wise men only hints at a more wide spread and magnetic attraction to Jesus from many nations and traditions that has, to this point, been given surprisingly little consideration.

However we limit our present inquiry to what the Dead Sea Scrolls might tell us specifically about our beloved Scriptures.

To answer my grandfather's question, all of our canonical books of the Old Testament came from copies made well *after* the birth of Christ or A.D., whereas the two hundred and two (202) Biblical manuscripts from Qumran are far and away the very oldest that exist anywhere - copied from three centuries B.C. to perhaps the time of the turn of the Era to A.D. or 60 A.D. at the latest. And there are few if but very minor changes to be noted. These would be of interest only to scholars because they would not change the meanings of Scripture already extant.

Case in point - the most magnifi-

cent of the Scrolls found is the Great Isaiah Scroll from Cave 1 identified as 1QIsa. This scroll was one of the very first that came to light from that cave discovered by 'the Wolf' in early 1947. It is complete in all sixty-six chapters with hardly a scrap missing (remarkable in itself) and nearly 1,000 years older than the oldest Masoretic text and *the two are nearly identical*. For instance the Masoretic (Hebrew) text says "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts" whereas the Great Isaiah Scroll reads "Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts"!

The translation known as the New Revised Standard Version, (also the work of Bruce Metzger, Princeton Seminary and committee,) is the translation to date that most takes into consideration material directly from the Dead Sea Scrolls (even though it has had its own controversies). For instance, one of several minor inclusions occurs at the end of 1 Samuel 10. The NRSV includes a four sentence unversed section from the DDS which mentions a King Nahash of the Ammorites who adopted the nasty habit of gouging out the right eye of his opponents. This scroll is known as 4QSam meaning that it is from cave 4 Qumran and is one of four known fragments of Samuel and also one of the oldest scrolls that have come to light. It has been dated to the 3rd century B.C. This passage finds some agreement with an account of the Jewish historian Josephus of the 1st Century A.D. from his *Antiquities of the Jews*.

There was also a difference in the number of those who came out of Israel with Jacob to Egypt; the Masoretic says 70 descendents while the Septuagint and 4QExodus agree at 75. (Exodus 1:5) Another passage from Deuteronomy 32:8 has "Sons of Israel" rather than "Sons of God" and is so noted in the New Revised Standard Version.

The Essenes however, favored the older Masoretic (Hebrew) text rather than the *Septuagint* which was translated by order of Ptolemy 11 into the Greek in 200 B.C. (some say earlier) by seventy scholars hence the

Septuagint, LXX or seventy. The Septuagint version of Jeremiah is one eighth shorter than the Masoretic which includes what might be called “praise” sections which is indication of its use in group readings and liturgical worship situations. However there is also a shorter Septuagint Jeremiah among the Scrolls as well in witness that the body of scrolls was indeed, a library. Again the oldest Septuagint copies that exist by far are also found among the Scrolls at Qumran. The Dead Sea Scrolls have given us a priceless insight into the development of our Bible in the manner that it was put together, used, and maintained for crucial centuries before it was delivered to us. Yes there are some glyphs, miscopies, and notes in the column but often they can be checked against other contemporary, even older, copies. Many variants were likely the result of attempting to make a passage ‘read’ better for use in group readings not unlike our present day retranlations. By their script, individual scribes are easily identified, one or two not only with steady hand but reliable copy. Still the copiers were amazingly faithful and accurate in the manner in which they copied the Biblical texts showing a great reverence among them for Scripture.

There were two different orders to the Psalms of David in the Scrolls in different sequence than we have presently. Of great interest is the fact that Psalm 91 in one version is listed as one of four psalms designated as Psalms of Exorcism. As we know this was the Psalm that was tossed back and forth between Jesus and Satan in Our Lord’s temptation narrative. (Mt 4:1- 6)

Psalm 151 preserved in just a few later canonical traditions, is found within the collection as well, a delightful self portrait of David and his ascent to near ‘rock star’ status after God called him “from following the sheep”.

One of the most helpful influences of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the understanding of our Bible is in common word and phrase usage in both.

Theodor H. Gaster, the brilliant Hebraists, and translator, and friend, early identified the undeniable paral-

els in his notes section of The Dead Sea Scriptures which went through three revisions beginning in 1956. Dr. Gaster’s volume was highly praised by scholars such as William Foxwell Albright, Frank Moore Cross, and Roland De Vaux, Director of Excavation at Qumran who is said to have kept a copy of the book handy for referral to Gaster’s translations.

[Whereas Geza Vermes provides a reliable and proven translation among at least four other translations, it does not have the life and brilliance of Gaster’s work.]

When the Epistle of James speaks of each man being ‘hooked and trapped by his own lusts’ which is what the Greek means literally (or in modern ESV translation, “lured and enticed by his own desire”) this is identical to Hymn 3:26 v. 8 of the Scrolls where the exact metaphor is used. Just three verses later James says, “every good and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights”, a phrase remarkably similar to Hymn iv, 6 and xviii, 29 which the Essene Psalm uses to explain, ‘Light Perfected’ as a quality of Faith.

We know that James, *the Righteous*, was the leader of a small band of Jewish Christians who were an urban version of the Essenes who lived very near the dung gate on the southeast corner of Jerusalem. There were indeed Essenes who lived also in cities because their *Zadokite* Document contains rules for urban communities of their brotherhood. James was martyred within a stones throw of this gate in 62 A.D. as recorded by Hegesippus but mentioned specifically by Josephus as wearing only linen garments, white robes like the Qumran group. It was this James, brother of Jesus mentioned by Paul (1 Cor. 15:7) to whom Jesus appeared immediately following the resurrection. The title of *Righteous One* is very significant because it is in the mold of the enigmatic Teacher of Righteousness of the Manual of Discipline. One current authority insists on identifying this James as the Teacher of Righteousness. In

(Dead Sea Scrolls, con’t. on page 7)

The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

For information or to make comment write:

Lutheran
Ministerium and
Synod - USA
* A Synodical Forum by Subscription *

President/Pastor, LMS-USA
2837 East New York St.
Indianapolis, IN 46201

Internet Contact: revralphs@sbcglobal.net

Table Talk
P. O. Box 31
Chetek, WI 54728

44
cents

To:

The 2011 annual Conference and Convention of the LMS-USA

- June 25-26 -

(The Ministerial will meet on the 24th)

Where - Christ Lutheran Church
Chetek, Wisconsin