

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND: ISRAEL
CHAPTER 6 – Bethany Beyond the Jordan – Qumran

[Bus ride to the Baptismal Site]

Marian: “Moses reads the commandment and makes sure everyone is circumcised. When Abraham makes his agreement with God, and God promises the land for him and his seed, the covenant is sealed with the circumcision of Abraham. And for the Jewish people, circumcision is of major importance. Remember, a lot of the Jewish people are not practicing the religion completely. But, circumcision – that’s one of the things that even non-practicing Jewish people will be doing.

“We had a large immigration in the 1990’s from Russia.

Paul: “Oh yeah, talk about that.” [I was curious to hear about it because of my Russian-Ukrainian heritage]

Marian: “And the first thing they asked for – they were not all young people – because they were not allowed to do it in Russia. They would do it in hospitals – that’s what they explained to us when they came – they would do it in order to fulfill that commandment. But a lot of them were unable to do it, and as they came into Israel, they all had this special surgery – the circumcision. It was amazing to me, you know, when they were talking about it – when I learned it – because it just reminded me of Joshua. You’re about to enter the Promised Land, you’d think you’d give battle orders to your troops – and instead of that, he gets everybody ready – to circumcise.

“And then the first battle. The first battle is a miraculous battle, because that is way God tells us that he is giving us the land. All the other battles -- the children of Israel will fight for themselves. But the first battle – Jericho – that is the miraculous one. I actually think that the miracle is that the people who lived in Jericho must have been really stupid. (slight laughter) You know, how can you have an army go around your city for seven days – seven times each day – and not take potshots at them? What did they think they were doing? Anyway, the people of Jericho just stared at the Israelites as they went round and round the wall, and then on the seventh day – for the seventh time – the walls come tumbling down at the shout of the trumpets. And that I mentioned also yesterday.

“We’re going back to the site that I didn’t want to miss. It’s just opened up. I’ve been there once or twice, and I’m really happy to get back there. Because so much is going on in that spot. We talked about Elijah going up to heaven – I just

remind you of that. Elisha receiving his cloak. Elisha belonged to a school of prophets, where people studied and learned how to be a prophet. And from Elijah and Elisha we go on to the story of John the Baptist. Then I mentioned that from the baptism, Jesus went ‘straightway’ to the wilderness.

“We call the area on our left-hand side ‘the wilderness of Judea.’ Because the Judean mountains on one side – on the western side – are extremely fertile, with 600 millimeters of rain, and this side – the eastern side – just 25 millimeters of rain. One inch opposed to 32 inches of rain. So this whole area is barren. Once again, you’ll see the flat-top mountains that I showed you yesterday. And that’s where there is a monastery – the flat-top is actually the wall of the monastery. The monastery that we call Quruntul (from Quaranta meaning forty), the 40 days of temptation.

http://www.atlastours.net/holyland/monastery_of_temptation.html

“John the Baptist is very similar to Elijah in many ways. He wears hairy garments. He lives in the desert. And he was much beloved by the Jewish people. And that’s why, when Herod Antipas takes John the Baptist into prison, he doesn’t put him in prison in Jerusalem.

[A camel on the right, and a baby camel on the right – a delightful distraction]

“John the Baptist is very popular, so the only place he can put him in prison is Samaria. Remember we talked about the Samaritans? And the Jewish people not going there? And now we know that Jewish people means from the tribe of Judea. And several people were asking me, ‘If you’re born in another country, are you still Jewish?’ Jewish is a nation and a religion. So it’s just like if you have American citizenship, and your child is born in another country, he’s still American – even though he’s born in another country. So we’re Jewish, even if we’re born somewhere else. So you’re always going to belong to the Jewish nation.

“The Jewish nation loved John the Baptist. The only place where Herod (Antipas) could keep him in prison was Samaria, and in Samaria he is beheaded. If he had done that in Jerusalem, there would have been rioting.

“I didn’t speak much on the way – because the view is absolutely beautiful, and I was hoping you were enjoying it. And also to give you a little siesta time as we came along. Now, on the left hand side is the enormous oasis of Jericho. The largest, and lowest, oasis in the world. But this area – which today is Palestinian Autonomy – is a very different area from Jerusalem. Jerusalem up in the mountains – cold, distant; down here – easy going, hot, people don’t run around too fast in this area.

[More camels are spotted – a lot of excitement from the tourists – ‘oo-la-la’, ‘picture time’]

“The largest concentration of Jewish population was in Russia, because each time the Jews were persecuted, they would travel further east, northeast. (answer to question about Jews populations)

“And now, we dears, we’re going – hopefully – successfully this time. I don’t want to tell you what my face looked like when I saw the gate was shut yesterday. Hopefully, successfully this time – to the Jordan River. And I share with you now why it’s such an important place. There’s nowhere else in Scripture that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit appear together. Where the Father calls out. The word is of major importance in the Jewish religion.

“So I didn’t teach you yet a Hebrew word today. So I’m going to teach you one now. And the word is ‘Abra-ca-dabra.’

Response: “Abracadabra?” (amused chuckle)

Marian: “That is Hebrew.”

Paul: “What? I thought it was ...”

Marian: “Abra means, ‘I will create.’ Bara, create. Ca means ‘as’ and (kedabra), ‘I will speak.’ ‘I will create as I speak.’ And that is why it is used by magicians. [Response: “Ohhh.”] Because they create and pull something out of the hat. If they say, ‘abracadabra’ and something disappears, they are very bad magicians. So our word for today – when we talk about this particular spot – we have the Word, we have the Spirit, we have the Son all together. The only place in scripture where the three unite. That tells you how important the Jordan River is.

“So we’re going to make a stop for at least 20 minutes so that we can just go down to the bank, find somewhere nice to sit, and have some quiet devotional time.”

[The source is three Hebrew words, ab (father), ben (son), and ruach acodesch (holy spirit). רוח הקודש, אב, בן - av, ben, ruach hakodesh - "father, son, holy spirit"]

[At the original baptismal site, Bethany Beyond the Jordan.]



<http://www.your-guide-to-aqaba-jordan.com/bethany-beyond-jordan.html>

Marian asks Paul to leads the song that went well with the site. [Elisha followed Elijah to the Jordan River, where he watched Elijah ascend into heaven by a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:6-12). The Kabbalists have a secret teaching about the chariot of fire; they call it the Merkabah, the chariot of righteousness.] I lead the group in singing the favorite Negro spiritual song:

**Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home;
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.**

**I looked over Jordan,
And what do I see,
Comin' for to carry me home,
A band of angels comin' after me,
Comin' for to carry me home.**

**Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home;
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' for to carry me home.**

**Pastor Tom Burns leads a devotion and reads a passage from Scripture:
“... inspiration for this site, and the previous site of Ein Gedi, and maybe we can**

tie it to this dry lifeless wilderness – and here we have all this life in the middle of the desert. It really does represent what Christ does to us. . . .Christ’s ministry, which carries on to us ... (singing from another group in the area makes it difficult to hear Tom’s soft-spoken voice) ... Christ is our strength, even though we are in the wilderness. No matter what the difficulty – what we’re facing – Christ will give us that strength that began with our salvation and our baptism. And I thought – being a group here – you could say how it relates to you. (looks to the group for volunteers to give their testimony or word of inspiration).

John Miller: “You know, John the Baptist is called – kind of the flashlight, the small light that would shine on the greater light – and so it says in Isaiah 40:3: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord, and prepare a highway in the wilderness.’ [“The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” King James Bible (Cambridge Ed.)]

"John the Baptist had a lot of followers – I mean, he was baptizing people for repentance of their sins, and they were following him – and right here is where he passes it off, and he says, ‘This is the one whose sandals I am unworthy to untie.’ [Luke 3:16 - “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”] We’re not sure how much he knew, but we know later, when John the Baptist was in prison, he needed some affirmation as to who Jesus was at that point. Doubt, and questions, can creep in. But here he made some powerful statements. And it’s awesome to think that this was the beginning of the ministry of the Savior of the world. Right here. And that’s why the Spirit descends upon Jesus.

“And the Father – before Jesus does one thing, before he does one good work in terms of his three-year ministry – the Father says, ‘This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ [Luke 3:22 – “and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.”] And to me that’s a picture of God’s grace, God’s unmerited favor, unconditional love. What a wonderful thing. We don’t work or earn our salvation. It’s a gracious gift, and God is excited about us and loves us deeply before we take one foot – before we take one step – to do anything to serve him. So right at the beginning – and I think all of you sense this – that God is saying to us, ‘You are my beloved son and daughter, and I am well pleased before you start off to work.’ So, your desire – your response – in service to him is out of love, not out of duty, and not out of gaining brownie points with God. So it’s a beautiful beginning . . .”

[Marian discusses Victor Smadja, a Messianic Jewish Movement person, with someone, “He’s a wonderful man.” Later, we would get a chance to hear him

speak.]

<http://www.tjcii.org/userfiles/Image/messianic-jewish-movement-an-introduction-Eng.pdf>

Wilfred Mund's testimony: "It's so good to be in the presence of something so important. And I think – along with having biblical hope, the hope of salvation – a lot of times it lays heavy on my heart, the whole area of the darkness of the world and deception. And so I guess I just want to express how this – the whole identity, as Christ said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' – and within all the deception of the world – trying to find God. So much source of evidence within the written word, right from the beginning of the writings, the wording indicating the promise of God which came into being 2,000 years ago. And I think, as my wrestling at times, I can identify with a lot of the people of the world, and it is so hard in my conception to miss in one's struggle to find God – but to miss all the evidence within the scriptures to what happened here 2,000 years ago. And I guess it just makes me feel how I can feel so wise – we look at the works of the Romans, the wisdom to create all that happened, and to make it happen, yet not have the wisdom to identify the evidence as it was produced in the past and not come to this point of understanding. I guess the word that I have is: Let this be to me and to everyone else – all believers – that I remain on the rock, and look at its strength. No matter what difficulties and valleys come. Thank you."

Response from several: "Thank you." (for such a touching testimonial)

Time for silent meditation and personal reflection on the significance of the baptismal site. A group of pilgrims (or tourists) appear on the Jordan side of the Jordan River.

As I contemplated the site known as Bethany Beyond Jordan, I recalled an allegorical teaching about the Holy Land that compared it to the human being: Judea represented the navel, the lower physical aspect of man; Samaria represented the heart, the emotional aspect of man; and Galilee represented the head, the mental aspect of man. And Bethany Beyond Jordan represented the inner kingdom, the place of the spirit of man. The generative aspect in man was represented by the Dead Sea, the regenerative aspect in the brain was represented by the Sea of Galilee, and the river of life (the Jordan River) flowed from the higher to the lower (within the spine of man).



<http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=16143>

The Baptism Site, also known as Al Maghtas in Arabic, is becoming an increasingly popular destination for hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims, especially during Epiphany and pilgrimage day, according to the JTB (Jordan Times).

This point on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, where John the Baptist lived, is considered one of the most significant religious discoveries in biblical archaeology. Excavations have already uncovered more than 20 churches, caves and baptismal pools dating from the Roman and Byzantine periods. It is also the river in which John baptized Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17). John 1: 28 – “This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.”



<http://www.baptismsite.com/index.php/archeological-findings.html>

The Bible clearly identifies the place where John the forerunner started his ministry. It is Bethany beyond Jordan. John came in the spirit and strength of Elijah, who ascended to Heaven east of the Jordan opposite Jericho. Jesus came to the place where John was baptising and was baptized by John. So, were these churches built at this particular location to mark this important event?

Pilgrims' Accounts --

Old pilgrims' accounts show how closely their descriptions matched with what was discovered:

Theodosius (A.D 530) wrote "5 miles north of the Dead sea ...In the place where the Lord was baptized there is a single pillar and on the pillar an iron cross has been fastened, there too is the church of St. John the Baptist, which the Emperor Anastasius built: this church is very lofty, being built above large chambers, on account of the Jordan when it overflows." The remains of the piers over which the church was built was discovered. Forty years later (A.D 570) Antoninus of Piacenze added: "By the side of the Jordan, where the Lord was baptized, at the place where the water returned to its bed, marble steps descend into the water." Remains of the marble steps were found too.

Epiphanius (A.D 750-800) mentioned a huge church (the church of the trinity) being built at the bank of the river, a mile west of John the Baptist monastery (Elijah's Hill) where he stayed overnight.

After the destruction of the 4 churches mentioned above, a chapel was built on the remains of the northwestern pier. Abbot Daniel (A.D 1106-1107) wrote: "The place where Christ was baptized is distant from the river Jordan as far as a man can throw a small stone. There is a little chapel with an altar. This marks the place

where John the Forerunner baptized our Lord Jesus Christ."

The succession of uniquely designed churches at the edge of the river then, is testimony to the forces of nature and to the determination of the believers to build unique memorials at the spot they believed Jesus was baptized. To our excitement, our questions were answered and the rediscovery was complete.

I chat with Professor Ron Moseley, the "Hebrew Baptizer." He tells me about his book on Yeshua. When I return to the States, I buy the book and write a review online for Ron in appreciation for revealing the Messianic message of Yeshua Meshiach ("the redemptive factor of God") to me.

After talking with Ron, and after having him initiate me in the Hebrew baptism at Yardenit, I was convinced that the ritual of cleansing (Hebrew baptism) was the authentic depiction of what happened in the gospel account at the Jordan River. According to Dr. Moseley, the Hebrew baptism is described in Matthew 3:16 – "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water." Hebrew ritual bathing was performed by a person going down (fully immersed) and coming straight up out of the water. Thus, the baptizer simply said a few words "to fulfill all righteousness" and then the participant simply immersed himself – according to the rules of ritual bathing.



Review of Yeshua: <http://wigowsky.com/travels/israel/tour/yeshua.htm>
Yeshua, A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church by Dr. Ron Moseley

Review by Paul J. Wigowsky
I met the author (Dr. Ron Moseley) of the book during a recent (Oct.2011) Pilgrim

Tours of the Holy Land (Israel). I was impressed with his knowledge of Jewish Second Temple history and his overall understanding of Yeshua, the Messiah, or “the redemptive factor of God,” as he called it. That was why I was anxious to buy and read his book about Yeshua, A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church.

I quickly realized that the book was for Messianic Jews and for college students who were most likely enrolled in one of the classes in his institute (American Institute of Middle Eastern Studies) in Little Rock, Arkansas. [www.aihls.org] His emphasis on the Jewish aspect of the historical Jesus, and the extensive apologetic defense of the Pharisees and their rabbinical tradition, sets the tone and scope for the book. His layout of the book as a course for Bible college students is evident from the study questions (with blanks to be filled in) that he supplies at the end of each chapter. Thus, he accomplishes his task of providing a primer on the Jewish aspect of what came to be known as Christianity (or the Christian church), and he simultaneously provides a textbook for religious schools and colleges. That is the positive aspect of his erudite book with lots of biblical references and quotes from other biblical scholars.

The negative aspect, in my humble opinion, is that he limits Yeshua (he uses the Hebrew name only in his title, choosing to use the Greek form Jesus throughout the book) to his Jewish roots, emphasizing only his affinity for the Pharisees – even though most of us Bible students grew up seeing the hypocritical Pharisees of Yeshua’s day and age as contrary to the teachings of Christ (the Messiah). Ron Moseley even devotes four chapters to an in-depth analysis of the Pharisees prominent position in Jewish Second Temple history (chapter 6-9) and their influence on the early (Messianic) church. “Was Jesus a Pharisee?” becomes a central issue in his study. However, he does not provide a definitive answer, except to say that “the teachings of Jesus had more in common with the teachings of the Pharisees, especially the school of Hillel, than with any other group of his time.” (p. 107)

And that is where my enjoyment of the book came to a disappointing end. I expected the knowledgeable scholar of Yeshua to expound on the Essene roots of Yeshua’s mission on earth – to preach “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 10:7) After all, many biblical scholars are aware of the Essenes, especially through the glorious treatment of Josephus (Jewish Wars, Book II, chapter 8, sections 2-13), where Josephus devotes twelve sections to a thorough description of the community of Essenes, and only one section to the Pharisees. Many scholars are also aware that the ascetic John the Baptist most likely came from the community of Essenes, who held everything in common just like the Early Church (Acts 4:31-35). Ron Moseley does not mention that. He only curtly mentions the common

beliefs and practices of the Essenes and Pharisees (p. 87-88). That is the shortcoming of his book on Yeshua.

To be honest – Dr. Ron Moseley is a very erudite scholar and his defense of the Pharisees was very convincing. Also convincing was Dr. Moseley’s treatment of the Mosaic Law and the commandments of God that were given to the children of Israel and carried on through Jewish tradition by the Pharisees to the present day (modern rabbinic Judaism, as Dr. Moseley calls it). However, when he tries to glorify the concept of the Law over and above the concept of Grace (“there can be no grace without Law,” p. 63), the argument in support of Judaic Law using Christian terminology (primarily from the Book of Romans) becomes very confusing. It becomes hard to differentiate between specific Jewish (Mosaic) Law (and commandments) and the general concept of the “law of sin” (sinful nature of man) in contrast to the “law of Christ” (spiritual nature). It would have been simpler to say that there were ancient (primitive) laws given to Mesopotamia (Hammurabi Laws) that were handed down to Moses – and these laws included stoning to death for sexual, and other, infractions. We don’t stone people for adultery anymore! Jesus (Yeshua) said, “He that is without sin let him cast the first stone.” (John 8:7) Contrast that with the Law: Deut. 17:1-7. I would say Yeshua showed the preeminence of Grace (mercy) over Law.

I know Dr. Moseley has a different interpretation of Luke 16:16 – “The law and the prophets were until John (the Baptist), but since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached.” (p. 41) I would advise Dr. Moseley to follow the thread of “the kingdom of heaven” and discover that the Pharisees had a physical kingdom in mind instead of the spiritual kingdom that Yeshua tried to bring to the hearts and minds of his listeners (and followers). For example: the Pharisees asked Yeshua, “When will the kingdom of God come?” and Yeshua replied, “the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21) On another occasion Yeshua told the Pharisees – “For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither allow ye them that are entering to go in.” (Matt. 23:13) The Gospel of Yeshua – after all – was the same gospel that John the Baptist (the Essene) preached: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (here in your midst).” (Matt. 10:7, Mark 1:14-15)

In conclusion, I would like to share a positive experience that I had at the Jordan River when Dr. Ron Moseley administered the “Hebrew baptism” for me, teaching me that the baptism of Yeshua was a form of the Jewish ritual of purification, performed by self-immersion as stated in Matthew 3:16 – “Yeshua... went straightway (up) out of the water.” To me it was a re-enactment of following in the footsteps of the Messiah, fulfilling all righteousness (self-purification) and

immersing myself in the purifying waters of Life (living the life of transformation and renewal).

I believe I can learn many more things at the feet of this learned man. Someday, I would like to have him expound to me what he meant when he said, "the Eternal Messiah." (p. 56) What is that all about?



<http://www.baptismsite.com/index.php/authentication.html>

BIBLICAL Evidence:

Wadi al-Kharrar is the modern name for the site of "Saphsaphas", which is depicted on the 6th century mosaic map of the Holy Land in Madaba. The site lies east of the Jordan River, just west of the village of Al-Kafrayn and within sight of the famous town of Jericho west of the river.

ARCHEOLOGICAL Evidence:

At the beginning of Wadi al-Kharrar, near the monastic complex, or "Lavra", Christian pilgrims have traditionally been shown a hill (known as Jabel Mar Elias in Arabic) where the Prophet Elijah ascended into heaven. Here, you can see a sanctuary that attracted pilgrims well into the medieval period.

HISTORICAL Evidence:

The Russian pilgrim Abbot Daniel was impressed by the place and in 1106 he wrote: "Not far away from the river, at a distance of two arrow throws, is the place where the Prophet Elijah was taken into Heaven in a chariot of fire. There is also the grotto of Saint John the Baptist. A beautiful strong fast stream (torrential rain) full of water flows over the stones. The water is very cold, has a very good taste and is the water that John drank.

[Our devotion time (and sight-seeing time) was over, and we headed to the bus for a short ride to Qumran.]

Marian: “Our site for today is Qumran, the place where the Dead Sea scrolls were found. We’ll have a short film show. We’ll go around the site, and then we’ll start our way towards Jerusalem.

“The timing was amazing, because it was the eve of Israeli independence. Now, we’re talking about cave one. Do you remember I also said, ‘if they had discovered cave eleven first, a lot of what was written about the Dead Sea scrolls would never have been written.’ And I need to take you back just a little bit in history for the moment, and most of it we’re going to do when we actually see the Dead Sea scrolls in Jerusalem. But, we are going to a site called Qumran, and Qumran was a settlement below the caves where the scrolls were found. So, when they discovered the scrolls, and then a settlement nearby, they made a connection that should not have been made – I think. And a lot of is being written right now about that connection. And what they said was: ‘Well, if the scrolls are here, they must have been written here.’ And what misled them was one of the scrolls in cave number one.

“In cave number one – the first cave, which is discovered by the Bedouin boy – you remember the story, he’s going with the sheep and goats, and one gets lost, and he goes after him, and he throws a rock into a cave. And instead of the sound of earth or instead of his goat coming out – he hears ‘chink,’ like pottery, and he wants to know what that is. So he goes in and finds the jars. By the way, it was quite normal to keep scrolls in jars. That’s what protected them. Also, another amazing thing – if these scrolls had been hidden on the western side of the Judean hills, they would never have survived 2,000 years that they survived here. We are in the desert. It’s a dry area. It’s a beautiful area, and I hope – by the way – that you feel the calm of this area. And it’s natural for people to come to this area when they want to be on their own, because the desert area has always been empty of big cities and big highways – in the ancient past, not today.

“If those scrolls had been hidden on any other side of the mountain – north, south, or west – they would not have remained. The dryness of the desert is what kept them. In cave one were seven scrolls. And one of them was called, ‘The Community Document.’

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/deadsea.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_Scrolls

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_Rule

[Sighting of more camels]

Marian: “These camels, by the way, are the lowest two camels in the world.” (joke about lowest sea level, which brings laughter to Kim)

“The scroll is called the Community Document. First of all, it tells us what these people called themselves. They did not call themselves the Essene sect. (Marian pronounces it ‘Essen’) There is nowhere in all the thousands and thousands of scrolls found any reference to the name Essenes. They called themselves the ‘Yahad’ – ‘Yahad’ means ‘the community, the people who live together.’ In Hebrew Serekh ha-Yahad - ‘The Community Scroll.’ And it was the things read in that scroll that misled – in my opinion – the early ideas about the Dead Sea scrolls. Because, the way they lived as a community sounded very much like early monastic movements. Are you with me?

“So this particular scroll, which talks about a community, also talks about purification. They were purification maniacs, if you like. What do I mean by that? They were bathing every day. Look where we are. We’ve just come from the site of the baptism. It only takes a few minutes to get from one site to the other. When they made the excavation here, they found no end of enormous reservoirs of water. You have a scroll that talks about ritual bathing, you find enormous reservoirs of water in the desert, you’re not far from John the Baptist – how can you not put it all together? And they did. And that’s why I say, if they discovered cave eleven – you see over there, the big cave over there on the right, above the trees – that’s a kibbutz, by the way, on top – if they had discovered that cave first, and not this one, the whole thing would be there. Because in that cave they found the Temple Scroll, and a lot of things connected with the temple.

“So I’m introducing you to some new ideas. Today it is an open subject for discussion about: who wrote these scrolls, who the scrolls belong to, and why they’re here. I want to offer some ideas – they’re just ideas. You can, of course – I don’t want to say ignore them, but you can just pass over them as just ideas. But do be aware that today there is a change from the original ideas of the Dead Sea scrolls, and that’s what I’m going to offer to you.

“OK, we leave the bus, and we go to the site, and we have a little film . . .”



The Qumran Caves are a series of caves, some natural, some artificial, to be found around the archaeological site of Qumran. It is in a number of these caves that the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The limestone cliffs above Qumran contain numerous caves that have been used over the millennia: the first traces of occupation are from the Chalcolithic period then onward to the Arab period. The artificial caves relate to the period of the settlement at Qumran and were cut into the marl bluffs of the terrace on which Qumran sits.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran_Caves

Marian: “...what happens is they find this site. There are seven enormous pools of water going along there (points further away, where a group is walking towards). Seven enormous pools of water. And then here we’re going to see some more pools of water. So we have Professor Sukenik saying, ‘Essenes,’ we have the great archaeologist Yigael Yadin agreeing with him – so we have in effect a Jewish sect living during the time of Yeshua, and they are doing ritual bathing. John the Baptist is baptizing over there – this is going to be for the Christian world ‘Eureka.’ And the excavations were done here in 1950. So they’re up there, they look down here and see this ruin. They come and excavate it – excavated by a church father, and he has an agenda. He has an agenda because of the monastic life of the Catholic church – he wants to have a solid foundation for that, and so whatever he finds, he puts into monastic life.

“So, the fact that we have an enormous tower here, which is a massive structure – which means fortification – nothing was written about that. See this room down here (pointing below) – it has no windows. Not the one that has all the

little lamps – because I’ll tell you what that is in a minute. But this room here with – the one with no windows – can you see the one I mean? Very important. The long one. Does anyone have any idea what that room can be?”

Responses: “Food, storage.”



The largest building was the main assembly hall. Much pottery was found, some of which was used for housing the scrolls, which were copied in the writing room. There were no manuscripts found in the ruins of Khirbet Qumran, however, the pottery was very similar to that in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in Cave I. This clearly shows that there is a link between the ruins and the manuscripts. Small plaster tables or benches, together with inkwells dating from Roman times, were also found during excavation in the writing room, or scriptorium.

Marian: “Oh, you guys are clever. Thank you very much. And I’m so glad. Because, you see, if you don’t come with an agenda – and you’ve been to Masada, and you’ve seen what storerooms look like – you immediately know that high walls and no windows means a storeroom. Your mice can’t get in, your sunshine can’t get in – because you need to keep the stores, right? – OK. Not for the excavation here. They find a room with no windows, you want to prove it was a monastery, then it is a scriptorium. Why would it be a scriptorium? Simple. You wouldn’t want someone to be looking at the view, because then he would have no idea of writing – he’d be daydreaming all the time. So you don’t want the writer of the scroll to be looking at the view – so you don’t have windows. So it’s going to be a scriptorium.

“Small problem. I can’t even tell you how many thousands of scrolls were found. I can tell you it was 930 texts. A text means from one book, or another book, two or three from the same book – 930. 930 texts on thousands of pieces of scroll. How many inkwells do you think that would need? How many?”

Paul: “Thousands and thousands.”

Marian: “I should think so, too. Can you guess how many they found here?”

Paul: “One.”

Marian: “For many years there was two. And recently they found a third.”

Paul: “Oh, wow.”

Marian: “Another problem. No writing equipment. No quills for writing, and when you prepare parchment for writing, it’s full of space you haven’t written on. Guess what? In all this complex, not one single piece of parchment. They wrote on parchment. So, three inkwells, no quills, not one single piece of parchment – we’re already realizing that something a little wrong is going on.

“Now, in the scroll of these guys – you know, I mean these Essenes – they want to prove is the Essenes, is says that they read into one-third of the night. One-third of the night means it gets dark. If it gets dark, you need a candle. So, in that room there (pointing to the scriptorium) they found lots and lots of candles. And therefore, that room is ... (waiting for an educated guess)”

Paul: “A reading room.”

Marian: “Exactly. A library. You can’t go far wrong. And it makes sense. If that’s where you have the scriptorium, that is where you have the library. How exactly that size could be a library for 930 texts, I don’t know. So, you see what’s going on here. The evidence is pretty difficult to come to, unless you have a fixed – a pre-fixed – idea in your head.

“What we’re going to do is we’re going around, then we’re going back to see the film, and then we’ll decide if we want to come back out here or not – according to if you’ve had enough or not. OK? “

Paul: “Where is cave number eleven?”

Marian: “Number eleven -- I showed you – is above the trees. You can’t see it from here. But we saw it from the bus.”

(walk to visitor’s center to see the film) -- Waiting outside for doors to open.

Marian: “I’ve been telling you what they said they found. What I haven’t said is what is now proposed, what the modern historian and archaeologist is proposing. I first want to go to the scrolls before we get to that. The scrolls are all sacred texts. What do I mean by that? We have other scrolls that are not far away from here – we call the Bar Kochba scrolls. That was a rebellion in the year 135 AD – Jewish people rebelled.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kochba

“At the end of the rebellion they come and hide in the caves. And when they come and hide in the caves – they write, and we find their letters. Letters from one person to another is not sacred scrolls. OK? Everything of the 930 texts is sacred. 200 of them are scrolls that we know – that we have in the Bible, that we can relate to. But then there’s a whole load of scrolls that are not in our Bible. Now, these are sacred texts, written by somebody, and those books didn’t get in the Bible.

“Now, one of the books that was probably one of the most important for them, is considered to be heretical to read from it in the Jewish religion. Have you ever heard of a guy named Enoch?”

Paul: “Yes, Apocalypse of Enoch.”

Marian: ‘Enoch walked with God and was no more.’ [Genesis 5:24] That’s what we have in the Bible, in Genesis. Does anybody know how long Enoch lived?”

Paul and Ken: “365”

Marian: “365 years. Does that number ring a bell?”

Paul and Ken: “Days in a year.”

Marian: “365 days in a year. This people – who had the scrolls – I’m not talking about the building area. The people who were writing those scrolls had not one book of Enoch, but three books of Enoch. And lots and lots of copies of Enoch. That means Enoch was very important for them. And in their books of Enoch they tell what Enoch was doing when he was taken up to God. Now first of all, the name Enoch comes from the Hebrew word ‘Hanokh,’ which means to educate. He’s an

educator. That's his name – 'the Educator.' And in the book of Enoch, he's taken up to God in order to get ... (pause for a response)

Paul: "Knowledge, wisdom."

Marian: "The Calendar."

Paul: "The calendar, oh, yeah."

Marian: "365, you said it. 365. But the Enoch calendar has only 364 days. Amazing. But the Enoch calendar that has 364 days is even more amazing, because it's exactly divided into 4 x 91. Each season is 91 days. OK?"

[Doors open for viewing the film]

"We're going to be the next group to go in to see the film. So I'm not going to give you all the answers just yet. But I do want you to realize that amongst those scrolls found here – if they would have found Enoch before they found the Community scroll, they would have probably come to a whole different decision. They found the Community scroll, they found this place that looks like people living in a community – they put the 2 and 2 together, and they came to the famous 22."

[Go in the small auditorium to see the film]

[Qumran (film) - with background music]

Narrator: "A new morning is rising on our community (Vahad). We can here to the edge of the country -- facing the Dead Sea – from Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the plains. We came with family and friends to a place where we could purify ourselves and prepare for the final war. Every Jew who came along did so to get close to the right Way, and to stay away from the sons of darkness – evil people. Among them you will find high priests from Jerusalem. He who believes in our way is the son of light. And when the final war begins, all our opponents will be destroyed.

"But in the meantime, we are here – here in this holy place – where no one can distract our minds from worshipping the Lord. We don't possess much, and the little we have we share equally. The good Lord, he supplies us with all our needs, even in this barren desert.

"This morning, while working in the date grove, a neighbor from Ein Karem, a five hour walk from here, passed by. He told us of John the Baptist, whose head was severed by King Herod. Suddenly, I remembered – we had one by the name of John. Years ago he came to us and requested to volunteer. Each new candidate

undergoes a thorough examination, and – once accepted for a season of study – joins us in work as well. At the end of two years time, he arose and left. [Ein Karem (Hebrew: lit. “Spring of the Vineyard”, and Arabic: - ‘Ein Kārem), is an ancient village of the Jerusalem District and now a neighbourhood in southwest Jerusalem in Israel. According to Christian tradition, John the Baptist was born in Ein Karem.]

“Twice daily we bathe in the purification pool in order to be sanctified in the pure waters. After bathing, we gather together to dine. First, we taste from the pure bread, which is prepared by the high priests, and then we dine. . . . At the end of the days work, we bathe together, and after purifying ourselves, we gather together for the evening meal. We dine in reverent silence, even when troublesome thoughts prey upon us.

“After the meal, I arose and asked for permission to speak: ‘Could it be that the man who was with us – and whom we heard of from the passer-by – be the same John who was with us?’ Another man said, ‘It is not the same man.’ But the high priest said, ‘And in truth you would be better employed in the studies of the holy Scriptures rather than wasting our time in idle chatter.’ The wrath that ensued was so great that the remark was noted in the book in my disfavor. After having been punished, things calmed and we resumed our studies, as we do every night until a third of the night is passed. But of these things I am not permitted to tell you.

“We may not reveal our secrets to anyone. Only we – the sons of light – are allowed to share the secrets of Yahad (the community). Only this may be revealed: All is predestined. There is no free will. Even before creation it was inscribed that you – somewhere in the future – would hear and see these words. It is God’s wondrous plan that brought you today to this pure and sacred place. And, God willing, perhaps the secrets may be revealed unto you. [sound of jars breaking]

“In the year 68 CE – just before the Roman army arrived in this part of the country – members of the Yahad (community) hid their writings, putting them safely in caves surrounding us. Only 1,900 years later was the treasure accidentally found inside vessels like those you see before you. . . (end of film – view of jars in adjacent room)

Marian: “Make sure you all get in under the screen, because it goes down in a few minutes for the next group.”

Kim: “Get beamed by a screen.” (laughter)

**Marian: “Make sure you get in under the screen.”
[walk to adjacent room to view the exhibit of jars]**



Bedouins discovered this cave in August of 1952. Fourteen thousand fragments of scrolls were unearthed as they sifted through the dust within. Archaeologists, who reached the cave later, uncovered an additional 1,000 fragments. Scholars believe that a Roman soldier who entered the cave in 68 CE tore the scrolls intentionally, and that later, ravages by animals and climate inflicted further damage. As research proceeded, the fragments of these scrolls were pieced together to produce 530 different scrolls. Publication of these scrolls was completed in 2001.

“See that they have a beautifully shaped lid, which actually is quite unique. It’s not unique – it’s quite unique. In other words, there are lots of others like that, but they’re only found in this area. Now when you have something that’s quite unique – and only found in this area – you could, once again put 2 and 2 together, and say, ‘um, quite unique, only this area – they were especially made for the scrolls.’ Right? But that’s not what happened. These were made, and then somebody used them for the scrolls.



“Now, let’s have a look over here. You have this plan – actually nicely laid out for you – in your brochure. But, just because this one is here – let’s have a look (points to exhibit of the Qumran community): ‘Pool of water, pool of water. See this tower – that’s where we were standing. We were standing on the tower, and I said, ‘Behind us, where all those people are, are pools of water.’ And so much water for such a little community, it does sound like the scroll telling (the text), ‘We bathe ourselves at least twice a day.’ Otherwise, why would they need so much water? [walk on in the small museum]

“This is an important moment for those who were at the Jordan River and could not understand – if that was a main highway – why we were baptizing there. It’s because it was a main highway that we were baptizing there, because we weren’t baptizing. Anybody who saw how Paul and Tony did the Jewish ritual bath (at the Jordan, Yardenit), all you do is you dip yourself into the water.

“Now, the River Jordan is the border of Israel, but it is also the border of the Promised Land. How do we know? Moses is not allowed to cross the Jordan River. And therefore, we know it has to be the border. So what people are doing is spiritually cleansing themselves as they come into the Holy Land. OK, look at the proximity. Everybody says, ‘cleansing here, cleansing there.’ It’s all connected.

“A typical ritual bath would have some kind of a division – you can see these steps going down, and that’s a person plunging into the water there (pointing to diagram of person in the ritual bath). And you go down one side, and then you

would come up on the other side cleansed. You wouldn't go back up from the same one – it's just the steps on the other side have stopped working. So what they're trying to show is: you go into the water, you come up, and you pick up a clean robe, because now you're spiritually cleansed – you don't go back into the (old) robe, that's what the robe is doing there on the side. And that's what they found. And by the spirit of holiness, which lives in him, and his truth – he is cleansed of all his sins. So, this is the community rule, which I said is Serekh ha-Yahad, is what we found in cave one.

[The Community Rule (1QS), which was previously referred to as the Manual of Discipline and in Hebrew Serekh ha-Yahad is one of the first scrolls to be discovered near khirbet Qumran]

“Then, let's see what Josephus has to say. (walking to the next exhibit in the museum) It's not quite the same, but it's enough to realize that -- in the Community scroll -- they have their meal after purification. That's what Josephus says, 'After the purification is over, they meet together, and in a pure manner, they enter into the dining room. Come . . . (exit museum and follow the guide to the ruins)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIH8hneeeK0> (Qumran reconstructed)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6SG6_cEcdc&feature=related (Robert Eisenman in cave 4)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mozxYE2scE&feature=related> (Qumran, part 1) Tour Guide Leor Ilan (2008)

Marian: “In 2004, there was an archaeologist called Chanan (Hanan) Eshel, and he thought, ‘Why don't I check out the silt in the base of the pools?’ Nobody had done that – in the base of the pools. We have seven enormous pools. Why don't I check it out? He found that the water for the pools was coming from the hills there. And he said, ‘I think I'll just check it out.’ Now, in the first pool he found that the sediment was the sediment that was brought down from the mountains. When he checked the sediment in the next pool, it was a little bit finer. When he checked the sediment in the next pool, it was a little bit finer still. And by the time he got to the seventh pool, the sediment that had fallen to the bottom of the reservoir was extremely fine. And guess what? It was exactly the same clay used for making the pottery.

“In other words, if you have a lot of pottery here, it could be a pottery workshop. But that – in the time of the 1950s – didn't suit what everybody wanted to hear. Everybody wanted to hear other things. Today I have to offer you that as a possibility. They've offered the possibility of a farmhouse. But the most

conclusive is – the most conclusive is – pottery.”

http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/Ben-Ami--The_Enigma_of_Qumran.htm

Marian takes us through the ruins at a fast pace. Closing time is approaching, and she wants us to see some of the other interesting parts of Qumran, like the ritual bath area.



The Ritual Bath area (Miqva'ot), used by Essenes in their Ritual cleansing rituals. The elaborate water system in the area had many round and rectangular cisterns that collected water from the mountains to the west, probably used for ritual purifications and baptism by the Qumran group. Hundreds of coins from the Greco-Roman period have also helped in telling us when the area was occupied. 'Ain Feshka, an oasis and spring about two miles to the south, was probably used as an agricultural outpost of Khirbet Qumran.

The cistern is the main water source for the community. Qumran's water arrived perhaps twice a year from run off of water brought down by rain. Water was one of Qumran's most valued commodities and water management is an integral part of the site, as seen with the numerous cisterns and channels (aqueduct system).



Walking on the constructed boardwalk (walkway) made it easier to navigate through the maze of excavated sites.



The Assembly hall and Refectory.



The Potter's Workshop, with a view of the Dead Sea in the distance.



Classic view of Cave 4. This is another view of Wadi Qumran taken from the esplanade abutting the southern side of the Qumran settlement. Cave 4 can clearly be seen. It is an artificial cave cut into the cliff face by men. Several hundred scrolls were found in the cave. It was found and opened up in the 20th century by local bedouin who had been searching for scrolls. Behind the cave on the cliffs the upper course of Wadi Qumran can be seen as it cuts its way down toward the wadi floor.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran>

Among the treasures found was the unique Copper Scroll, describing the Temple treasures and listing the places of their concealment, and the Temple Scroll about the Temple itself. Some of the scrolls contain the oldest existing Old Testament texts; parts of all books were found as well as some books of the Apocrypha, showing that the texts have not basically changed in two thousand years. Other scrolls are sectarian works describing the sect's code of ethics and beliefs. One of the most fascinating describes the War between the Sons of Darkness and Light before the start of the Messianic Age. Some of the scrolls are housed in the Shrine of the Book in the Israel Museum.



The heaped-up ruins of Qumran at the foot of bleak, cavern-pitted cliffs aroused no particular attention until 1947, when two Bedouin shepherd boys found seven earthenware jars containing priceless biblical manuscripts. Sensing that they might have monetary value, the Bedouins took some of the linen-wrapped rolls to Bethlehem. Further searches uncovered a wealth of parchment fragments and scrolls which were hidden two thousand years ago. The ancient community of Qumran was described by Josephus, Pliny and Philo and has been identified with the Essenes, a monastic brotherhood which devoted itself to asceticism. They probably lived in caves and tents and were celibate. Ritual purification was an essential part of their lives.

Marian calls out to the group: “We’re being kicked out, guys -- [we have to move along, it’s closing time]

We quickly leave the premises as we are ushered out by the workers at Qumran National Park. We could have spent more time at that the world-famous

archaeological site, but we had to go. Nevertheless, the pictures of Qumran were etched in our minds, and in our digital cameras.