

Qumran

Qumran is 25 miles SE of Jerusalem next to the Dead Sea in the Judean Wilderness on a little plateau. This is most likely the source of John the Baptist who preached and baptized in this same area. The Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in caves surrounding this settlement. In fact, the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls led to the



excavation and discovery of many buildings in this community. The people who settled Qumran were Essenes of the NT time, a rival sect of Jews who separated from the corrupt temple practices and religion of the priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and other contemporary world views such as the Herodians, Zealots and Sicarii (first century terrorists). In 700's BC the Israelites had established a small fort here that may be the "City of Salt" of Joshua 15:61-62. In 150 BC the Essenes (The Teacher of Righteousness and 50 followers) fled here. After the corrupt reign of John Hyrcanus (a Hasmonean, 134-103 BC) many new converts flooded the settlement to join the Essenes. Extensive building programs followed. During Herod the Great's war with the Jews who resisted his appointment as king by Caesar (40-37), the Essenes had to flee Qumran. In 31 BC the site was damaged by an earthquake. The Essenes returned a few years later (enter John the Baptist) and continued here until the Romans expelled them in 68 AD during the Jewish Wars of 66-70 AD. At this time the Essenes hid their scrolls in caves to preserve them in hope of returning. Their return never occurred and these scrolls were not discovered until the 1900's when they became famously known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Today visitors can see: aqueduct, decantation pool, cisterns, ritual baths, refectory (cafeteria), council chamber, scriptorium, pottery workshop, cemetery and Cave 4 and 6.

In the Bible: **Js.15:61**, "the City of Salt"; **Mt.3:1**, "In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea."



#4 of 11 caves were the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Over 550 manuscripts fragments were found in this cave.#4.



The scriptorium where the Essenes wrote the scrolls. Benches, inkwells, etc. have been found in this room.