

# Lessons from the Holy Lands



Bellevue Church of Christ  
Summer 2021

# Helpful Link



<https://www.teamagee.com/class/>

✎ Copies of the slides with my notes

# Qumran







# Qumran



- ❧ Site where many of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found beginning in 1947.
- ❧ Qumran was home of the Essenes during the time of Jesus, who were one of the three Jewish sects identified by Josephus.
  - ❧ Some say that John the Baptist was a member of the Essenes but this is very unlikely
- ❧ Qumran is one of the most important archaeological sites, because the Dead Sea Scrolls contain fragments from the time of Jesus and they include representations from all books of the Old Testament, except for Esther and Nehemiah, including the entire book of Isaiah
- ❧ This discovery proves that the Old Testament we have today is essentially the same as what Jesus had during his time. The wordings / translations are very similar to what we have today.



View of the mountains at the north-end of the site





“Cave 1” at the top of the mountain at the northern end of the site where three Bedouin farmers found the first 8 clay jars in 1947 (Including the book of Isaiah). These farmers had no idea what they had found and sold them to a dealer in Jerusalem for \$16.





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Replicas of the original jars that were found in Cave 1.



“Cave 4” down in a valley at the southern end of the site where they later found 15,000 scroll fragments that made up 530 total scrolls in 1952.



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First century ritual bath (Mikveh) excavated in Qumran



First century cistern at Qumran



# En-Gedi



1 Sam 23:29; 24; 2 Samuel 22; Song of Solomon 1:14; 2  
Chronicles 20:1–2; Ezekiel 47:10 Ezekiel 47:10



# En-Gedi



- ❧ En-Gedi means “spring of the goat” or “spring of the kid.”
- ❧ It gets this name from the freshwater spring located there and from the many wild goats (Ibex) which live in the area.
- ❧ En-Gedi is mentioned numerous times in the Old Testament:
  - ❧ Joshua 15:62 first mentions En-Gedi in the tribal allotment given to Judah.
  - ❧ When fleeing from Saul, David left his place of refuge in the wilderness and dwelt in the strongholds of En Gedi (1 Sam 23:29).
  - ❧ In one of the caves there, David cut off the corner of Saul’s robe when he had entered to “relieve himself” (1 Samuel 24).

## En-Gedi (Cont.)



- ✧ In 2 Samuel 22, David sings a song of praise to God for delivering him from Saul and in verse 2 calls God his rock, stronghold, and deliverer.
- ✧ The Song of Solomon (Song 1:14) describes En-Gedi as a vineyard (“fruitful of oasis”) when talking about his beloved.
- ✧ 2 Chronicles 20:1–2 says that in the reign of Jehoshaphat (800 BC) during the Divided Monarchy, an army of Moabites and Ammonites camped at En-Gedi in preparation to invade Israel.
- ✧ Ezekiel prophesies a time when fresh waters will flow from the Temple in Jerusalem down to the Dead Sea and make the Dead Sea fresh: “From Engedi to Eneglaim it will be a place for the spreading of nets” (Ezekiel 47:10).



Wild goats (Ibex) at En-Gedi





Wild goats (Ibex) at En-Gedi



Wild goats (Ibex) at En-Gedi





Mountains at En-Gedi



Mountains at En-Gedi / Filled with Caves



Wild goats (Ibex) at En-Gedi





Lower waterfall at En-Gedi



Upper waterfall at En-Gedi



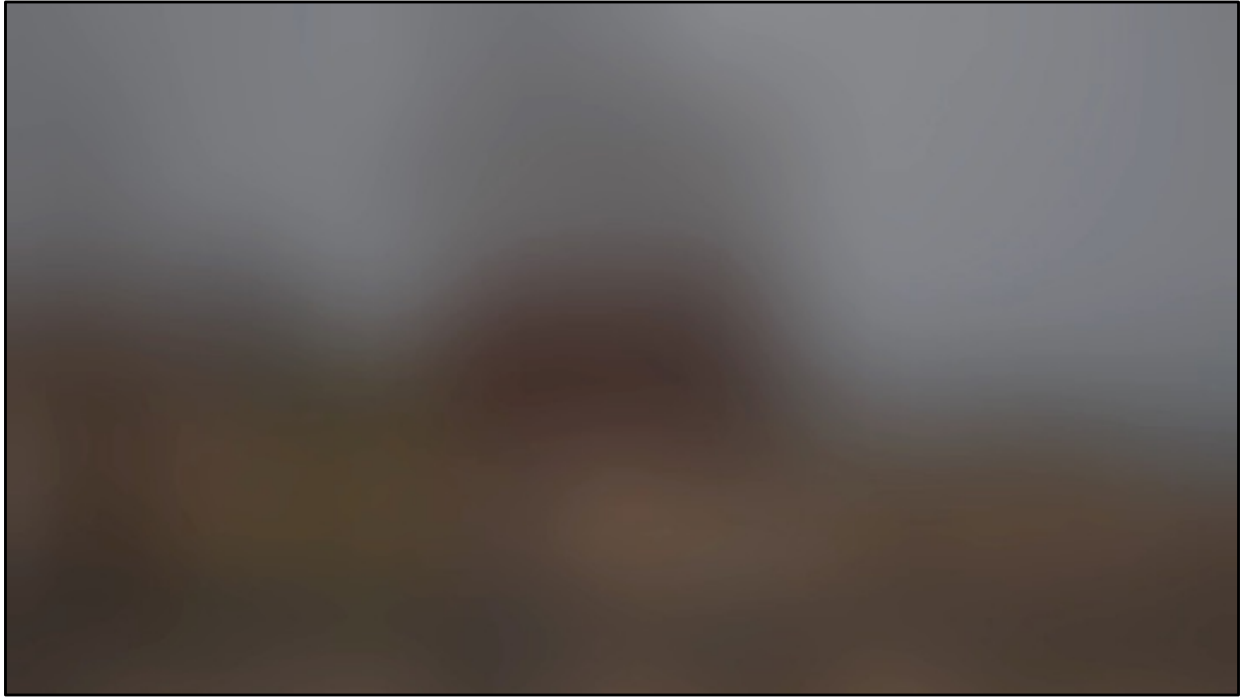
View toward the Dead Sea from up on the mountain at En-Gedi





Listening to a lesson about David from Dr. Rodney Cloud while on top of En-Gedi





Short video of hike up to the top of En-Gedi

# Masada





# Masada



- ❧ The name Masada means “fortress.”
- ❧ Masada is a mountain (mesa) that rises almost 1,500ft above the Dead Sea, but this is still just barely above sea level.
- ❧ Everything we know about Masada comes from Josephus and archaeological excavations.
- ❧ Herod the Great built two palaces on the mountain and fortified Masada between 37 and 31 BC.

# Masada



- ✧ The palaces of Herod the Great were essentially abandoned by his sons after his death in 4 BC.
- ✧ The site was taken over by the Jewish zealots (the Sicarii - knife-wielding zealots) and became the last stronghold of the Great Jewish Revolt (66 to 73 AD). The Romans brought 8,000 troops to Masada in 73 AD and defeated the Jews who were living there.
- ✧ According to Josephus, the siege of Masada by Roman troops from 73 to 74 AD, at the end of the First Jewish–Roman War, ended in the mass suicide of the 960 Sicarii rebels who were hiding there. However, the archaeological evidence relevant to this event is ambiguous at best and rejected entirely by some scholars.



Masada – rising 1,500 ft above the Dead Sea



View of the Dead Sea and the Judean Wilderness from the top of Masada





Squares in the valley below the mountain where they have excavated the Roman encampments from when they brought 8,000 troops against Masada in 73 AD



The Snake Path and Snake Path Gate, from the time of Herod the Great, that were used to access Masada from the valley below. The Snake Path today is a hiking trail that provides access to the top of the mountain.



A quarry from the time of Herod the Great that was used to mine the rocks needed for building the palaces and other structures.





Northern Palace Complex



Northern Palace Complex - The storehouses. This storehouse had holes in the bottom that were silos for wheat and barley. It also had a two-handled jar for wine.





Northern Palace Complex – Terraces or Balconies / Picture taken from the upper terrace toward the middle and lower terraces / Built in “stair-steps” down the side of the mountain.



Model from the three terraces of the Northern Palace Complex



The remains of the three terraces today from the Northern Palace Complex



A bath house with the same 3 types of rooms from the bath house in Beth-She'an: (1) Cold room (2) Cool room (3) Hot room or sauna.





There was a very short and skinny door in the bath house between the cool room and the sauna. This may say something about the stature of Herod the Great.





In the Sauna, the floor was raised by series of short pillars. Fires were set through arches under the floor by the servants. Water was run under the floor and up the walls to make the surface hot and then cold water was poured on the walls and floor to make steam.



According to Josephus, when it became clear that the Romans were going to take over Masada, on April 15, 73 A.D., on the instructions of Ben Yair (in the synagogue), all but two women and five children, who hid in the cisterns and later told their stories, took their own lives rather than live as Roman slaves. Today it is hard to believe that the women in the cisterns could have heard what was being said in the Synagogue, which was relatively far away.



A synagogue from the time of the Jewish control of Masada. Josephus records that a speech was made at this synagogue by Eleazar ben Ya'ir during the Roman attack in 73 AD, and that 10 men were chosen to kill all the remaining Jews to prevent their capture (cast "Lots"). It seems almost impossible for Josephus to know this. Many today still hold to the traditional view of what happened at Masada, some modern scholars believe that Josephus adapted a story from his past when he was a Jewish commander, and that this "suicide" was a myth given to strengthen the state of Israel. My opinion is that all of the Jews at Masada died at the hands of the Romans.



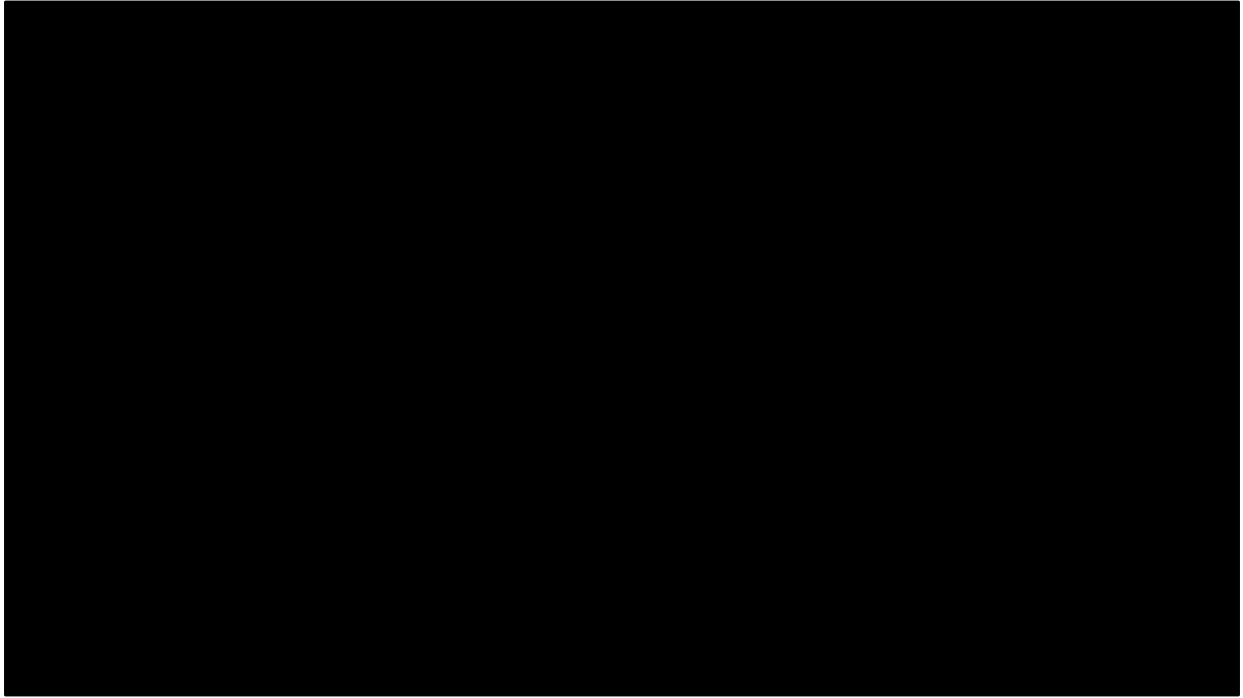


A section of the outer casement wall from the time of Herod the Great known as the “Casement of the Scrolls.” It was given this name because two of the Dead Sea Scrolls were found there. One of these two scrolls contained the passage from Ezekiel about the vision of the valley of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37).



The point where the Romans built a ramp and breached the casement wall during the attack in 73 AD.





Short video of Masada