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Question 75 - What are the facts regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls?

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101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

75. What are the facts regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls?

- A. During 1947, in a series of caves near the Dead Sea, a discovery was made that would soon excite the entire religious world. These were the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dr. William F. Albright states this find was “the most important discovery ever made concerning the Old Testament manuscripts.” These scrolls were probably hidden there sometime during the second century B.C. by a Jewish group called the Essenes. They included fragments of every Old Testament book in the Hebrew Bible with the exception of the book of Esther.

Especially exciting was a complete scroll on the book of Isaiah. The reason this discovery was so important was that until this event the earliest copy we had of Isaiah’s writings were made during the twelfth century A.D. Now scholars could move back over 1,000 years closer to the time when the prophet actually wrote (around 700 B.C.). When a comparison was made between the Dead Sea copy and the tenth-century A.D. copy, they were found to be almost identical, there once again reassuring us that our copy of God’s Word today is indeed accurate and reliable.

- B. Most of the manuscripts are very fragmentary. When completed, they amounted to some 500 documents. Of these 100 are biblical texts; all the books of the Hebrew Bible except Esther are represented.