



The Incredible
Journey

THE SILVER SCROLLS

GARY KENT



THE SILVER SCROLLS

Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem is the site of one of the most exciting and amazing archaeological discoveries in modern times, involving a hoard of treasure, including two silver scrolls that carried an ancient inscription that surprised the world.

Across from the old city walls of Mt Zion, the Tower of David and the famous Jaffa Gate, is the beautiful St Andrews Church in Jerusalem. It was built as a memorial to the Scottish soldiers who were killed fighting the Turkish army during World War I, and bringing to an end the Ottoman Rule over Palestine.

This Scottish church overlooks the Hinnom Valley, also known as Gehenna,

and the valley of Hell. The view of the old city across the valley is magnificent.

Archaeologist Gabi Barkay had a hunch that this rocky knoll had some secrets to tell.

He'd taken a survey and collected pieces of broken pottery there immediately below St. Andrews Scottish Church. And he found that the pottery shards dated back to the time of the Old Testament Israelite kings. This convinced him that this rocky knoll may well conceal some long-hidden secrets.

And so, in 1979, he organised a small excavation on the site. But he had a meagre budget and so could only afford a team of 12 and 13-year-old helpers from a local archaeology club. Not to be deterred, Barkay began to investigate the site in earnest with his small work crew of young students and volunteers.

Before long the workers had unearthed nine caves that had been hewn into the

limestone and used as tombs. These burial caves had benches cut into the rock on which the dead had been laid to rest. As Barkay examined these tombs, he realised that they were from the First Temple period. Any jewellery or gifts – oil lamps, perfume jars – had been looted centuries before. A few broken bits of pottery were all that remained.

As they started to work on the last cave, the archaeologists noticed that it was different. A row of six headrests had been sculptured into the rock along the entire length of one of the benches. Apparently one of the stone benches had collapsed.

Among the 13-year-old diggers from the archaeological club, was one particularly demanding child named Nathan, who was always tugging at Barkay's shirt. Well, here was Barkay's chance to give him a job. The Repository was the ideal place to put him to work.

Barkay told Nathan that the Repository had to be as clean as his mother's kitchen, even if he had to lick it clean.

To Barkay's surprise, Nathan cleaned out the Repository meticulously. But then Nathan gets bored. He has a hammer in his hand. In his boredom, Nathan starts banging his hammer on the repository rock floor.

And this is where truth becomes stranger than fiction. The floor cracks, opens up and reveals an ancient treasure trove. Apparently, a layer of rock from the cave's ceiling had collapsed and covered the Repository floor. Nathan's hammering had broken it up and revealed the hidden treasure below.

As the stone and rubble was removed, a small dark chamber was exposed. It contained a literal treasure trove, more than 1,000 pieces from antiquity – 2,600 years old. There were oil lamps,

jars and decanters, silver earrings and precious stones.

Among this treasure were found two small silver scrolls. They were actually amulets. An amulet, also known as a good luck charm, is an object believed to confer protection upon its possessor.

They had holes through their centres for strings and had once been worn around the neck of an ancient Israelite. Barkay was convinced that the scrolls held an ancient message, but they were so brittle that they could not be unrolled. The scrolls were sent to laboratories in Britain and Germany for unrolling but were immediately returned because of their fragility.

Then the Israel Museum lab, situated in the suburbs of Jerusalem, had to devise a means of its own to unravel – literally – this mystery. They smeared the scrolls with an acrylic glue to give them strength. After this, they carefully

unrolled them, a millimetre at a time, adding glue as they went. It took two months to unroll them.

The inscription on these scrolls stunned the scholarly world. It was the **PRIESTLY BLESSING** found in the biblical book of Numbers. The words are those that Moses brought from God to Aaron to bless the people. The inscription reads: **THE LORD BLESS YOU AND KEEP YOU; THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE TO SHINE UPON YOU AND BE GRACIOUS UNTO YOU; THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON YOU AND GIVE YOU PEACE.** Numbers 6:24-26. (NKJV)

This was the oldest Biblical text ever found. When the ancient craftsmen inscribed these silver scrolls 2,600 years ago, Solomon's Temple was still standing. The prophet Jeremiah was still alive. The heirs of King David were still on the throne, and the Dead Sea Scrolls would not be written for another 400 years.

You see, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, they were the oldest Hebrew Biblical inscriptions ever found. They were 1,000 years older than any of the other manuscripts in existence.

Now, the Silver Scrolls are four hundred years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls. And the amazing thing is, the words on the Scroll are identical to the words we find in our English Bibles! These ancient Scrolls enable us to be certain that our Bible is virtually the same as when the prophets wrote it.

Leaving Jerusalem, going down towards the blistering basin of the Dead Sea, one passes the sea-level sign, and although the plaque says, "SEA LEVEL", one has to keep going down and down to the lowest place on the earth's land surface.

The Dead Sea is the world's saltiest body of water, some seven to eight

times saltier than sea water. In fact, nearly a third of it consists of dissolved salt and other minerals. It is so salty that you cannot sink in these waters. You can float in the Dead Sea and read a book without fear of sinking. The salt and minerals keep you afloat.

Near the north-western shore of the Dead Sea, in a wilderness of terrible beauty, is a hillside that is honeycombed with caves. This is the site of one of the most exciting discoveries of all time.

Archaeologists are convinced that the treasure found in this area is more valuable than all the wealth of Pharaoh Tutankhamen. The discovery happened by accident.

One day in 1947 a Bedouin boy called Mohammed the Wolf was minding some goats near these cliffs along the shores of the Dead Sea. These goats are very agile and able to climb incredible heights in search of the tender green

tufts of grass that grow in springtime among the pebbles and sand of this desert region.

One of the shaggy goats that Mohammed the Wolf was minding chanced to stray from the rest of the flock. While searching for this irritating animal, he noticed a small cave in the rocky cliffs that he hadn't seen before.

Thinking that his goat may have taken shelter in the cave from the blistering summer heat, Mohammed picked up a stone and threw it into the cave. The sound that came back to him was not the familiar echo of stone striking stone. He was startled to hear the strange, echoing sound of shattering pottery.

Panic-stricken, he rushed away in fear of evil spirits. That night he told his cousin of his experience and the next morning found the two boys on the mountainside at the cave. Dreaming of hidden treasure, the two boys squeezed

through the narrow opening and dropped into the cave.

To their amazement, they discovered that there were a large number of dust-covered pottery jars standing on the floor of the cave. Eagerly the boys removed the lids.

Imagine their disappointment when they discovered that the jars contained only rolls of old leather covered with strange writing, all carefully wrapped in cloth. They had hoped to find a hoard of treasure of gold and silver, but instead they found brittle old scrolls that were not much use for anything. They were deeply disappointed.

Actually, they had found treasure, even though they did not know it. They had made the greatest manuscript discovery of all time. They had found the treasures now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

These Bedouin boys belonged to a group of smugglers, who were trying to get their goats and other goods out of Jordan into Palestine. They had detoured so far south to dodge the Jordan bridge which customs officers guarded with guns. They were now on their way to Bethlehem to sell their goods on the black market.

The scrolls were left in a bag in the boys' tent for several weeks. Eventually, the Bedouin took the scrolls and two jars to a shopkeeper friend in Bethlehem. At first no one was interested in the dirty old scrolls. An employee of the Department of Antiquities even called them "worthless".

The scrolls ended up in Jerusalem where they were sold for a few dollars. However, when they reached the hands of experts a few months later, their true value was recognised. Four of the scrolls sold for a quarter of a million dollars.

Well, I don't need to tell you that as the news reached the Bedouin and his friends, the region near the Dead Sea became a hive of activity. Soon thousands of Bedouin swarmed over the area. They searched every conceivable crevice, rock formation and hillside cave that might possibly hide more of the precious scrolls. They found 11 more caves with scrolls hidden in them.

One cave, Cave 4, once had 400 scrolls in it. Most of these scrolls had been broken into small pieces. The Bedouin took some, then the archaeologists caught up with them. Altogether, about 40,000 pieces came from Cave 4. Each one had to be bought from the Arabs who found them, at an average price of \$4 per square centimetre. These thousands of fragments were brought to the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem.

They were laid out there in the courtyard and sorted. Then specialists began the long and tedious task of

piecing the scrolls back together again – and deciphering the strange writing, an ancient form of Hebrew.

Archaeologists returned to the rugged Dead Sea shore line and re-explored the area. Their efforts were rewarded when they found a cave that contained a most unusual scroll. They discovered three strips of finely beaten copper that had been inscribed and rolled up into a scroll.

As the archaeologists searched the caves and found more fragments they realised that these scrolls had been part of a large library. But who wrote them, and why did they hide them here in the desert? The answer lay less than 100 metres from the cave where they found the largest cache of scroll fragments.

There in some old ruins, Qumran Ruins, that had been on maps for decades, were mistakenly assumed to be remains of an old Roman fort. Now archaeologists

began excavations which revealed that the ruins had been a monastery of a Jewish sect, the Essenes, around the time of Christ.

They had large cisterns for storing water. The region was very dry and in order to obtain water the people made a canal to draw rain water from the hills behind. There were storage rooms where they kept their produce and supplies. They had workshops for potters, and laundrymen.

Nearly every phase of the life of these remarkable people was pieced together by the scholars who unearthed this self-sufficient community.

But why did these people choose to live in such an uncomfortable, out-of-the-way place? The nearby cliffs are rugged and bare, the plateau is flat, dry and barren. There are no trees to give shade. Why did these people built quite an elaborate settlement here?

Well, the answer lay at the nerve centre of the Essene community. They came to this inhospitable region to live in seclusion and spent their lives copying out the Bible.

One room is called the Scriptorium – or writing room. Originally it was a two-storied building that housed a library and a writing area. There the Essenes worked, carefully copying out the Scriptures, commentaries, and other works.

Their whole lives revolved around this work. They had copies of the Old Testament part of the Bible, and they spent their time carefully copying it out. In that very room, where the copying of the Scriptures was done, the archaeologists found the desks and inkwells the Essenes used.

Scientists have analysed and compared the ink in the inkwells with that used on the scrolls and found it to be identical!

They also found pottery jars that were identical to those found in the caves which contained the scrolls.

As the experts pieced together and deciphered the scrolls, they discovered some interesting things. For example, there was the Copper Scroll which had an inventory of 61 hoards of treasure – gold, silver, incense and other valuables.

This treasure, according to the scroll, had been hidden in a number of secret places near the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. But what interested scholars most was the fact that the majority of the scrolls were copies of the writings of the Ancient Biblical Prophets.

Today, the vast majority of the Dead Sea Scrolls are housed in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem. The building is designed to look like the lid of the scroll jars from the Dead Sea.

In the month of June, in 68AD, death came to Qumran. That was the time

of the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans. On their way to attack Jerusalem, the Roman legion destroyed the Essene settlement at Qumran.

Those residents that did escape, just had enough time to hide the sacred scrolls they could not carry in cliffside caves before they fled from the Romans. They hoped that, when the Romans had gone, the scrolls could be rescued. However, they did not live to return. Some of the scrolls were lost in landslides or through dampness.

However, many survived and lay undisturbed in the caves for almost 2,000 years, to become the greatest manuscript discovery in history.

As scholars deciphered the Dead Sea Scrolls, they were surprised to find portions from virtually all the books of the Old Testament. This is what makes the Dead Sea Scrolls so important to us today.

When the words of these ancient scrolls were compared with the words of our Bibles, they were found to be virtually identical.

Do you see what this means? It means that we can know that our Bible today is virtually the same as when it came from the hands of the prophets.

Civilisations long dead are speaking from their dusty graves to confirm the accuracy and reliability of God's Word.

Another fascinating archaeological site is Tell Mardikh, the ancient city of Ebla. It electrified the archaeological world by providing evidence that the Bible stories are true.

It all started when a local farmer struck a large carved stone while ploughing his field. Archaeologists were summoned to the site and soon discovered more of these carved stones.

For fifteen painstaking years, in the dust and heat of the Middle East, the archaeologists doggedly probed the secrets of Tell Mardikh. These were exciting years for the archaeologists because they realised that this was no ordinary site.

Digging methodically into the mound, they unearthed a splendid gate, an enormous city wall, the outlines of a royal palace, temples and many houses. In 1974, in one of the palace rooms one of the workmen found 42 clay tablets covered in signs and inscriptions. The following year they discovered another two rooms, full of clay tablets, more than 20,000 in all. The sheer size of this royal archive is astounding. It is over four times greater than all other surviving records from the same period put together.

The clay tablets were piled on the floor where they had fallen when fire destroyed the shelves on which they

had been stored. At first, no one could decipher the cuneiform, or wedge-shaped signs on the tablets. They were written in an unknown language.

Well, the breakthrough came with the discovery of more than 100 bilingual tablets – the world's earliest known foreign-language dictionaries. Syllable by syllable, word by word, the scholars were able slowly to come to grips with the ancient language of Ebla. And as they did so they made some amazing discoveries.

They found that 3,500 years ago Ebla was a sophisticated city in ancient Syria with about 300,000 inhabitants.

They had a democratic style of government. The King was elected by popular vote and remained as long as he did his job correctly. Women had similar rights to men. They could own property, take legal action, and train as doctors and scribes.

All this information was contained on the Ebla tablets written 3,500 years ago.

Now, some historians questioned whether the Hebrews had developed the art of writing by the time of Moses. No historical evidence existed up to the 19th century to verify it.

However, the Ebla tablets date back far beyond the lifetime of Moses and so show that the art of writing was well and truly developed by this time. The Ebla tablets refer to a Creation story and a Flood story.

Also mentioned in the Ebla tablets are names and places which coincide with Biblical ones: Esau, Abraham, Adam, David and Israel.

But the real bombshell is the mention of the two 'sin cities', Sodom and Gomorrah. Before the discovery of these tablets, no historical reference to these cities had been known except in the

Bible. Therefore, Sodom and Gomorrah were considered by many people to be just folklore and myth.

But with the discovery of the Ebla tablets, all that has changed. You see, the discoveries at Ebla have confirmed the authenticity of the Bible.

You see, the Bible is God's Word. It is one of the most important ways that He communicates with us. For this reason, it is important that we study and understand the Bible. There is certainty on every page. No speculation, No unreality. No 'maybe' or 'perhaps'. It's a Book you can count on!

NOTES



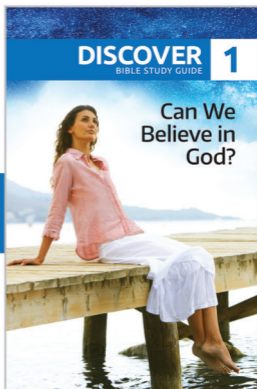
BIBLE STUDIES

THAT COULD
CHANGE YOUR LIFE

FOREVER!

- We Can Believe in God
- We Can Believe the Bible
- Your Home in Heaven
- Is God Fair?
- How Soon Will Jesus Return?
- The Secret of Answered Prayer
- The Secret of Happiness
- The Secret of a Healthy Lifestyle
- What and Where is Hell?

26 Study Guides



To request these Bible Studies:

Website: www.tij.tv

[Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry)

Australia

0481 315 101

info@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey
GPO Box 274
Sydney NSW 2001

New Zealand

020 422 2042

infonz@tij.tv

The Incredible Journey
PO Box 76673
Manukau, Auckland 2241



**WATCH OUR PROGRAMS
ON DEMAND:**

**youtube.com/TheIncredibleJourney
www.tij.tv**

Editors: Irene Relihan, Dorothy Pansare
Graphic Design: Delyce Liggett

Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are
from the New King James Version

Published by The Incredible Journey

Copyright © Eternity Media Productions Ltd.
Printed in Australia | All rights reserved

ISBN: 978-1-922817-51-8

Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem is the site of one of the most exciting and amazing archaeological discoveries in modern times, involving a hoard of treasure, including two silver scrolls that carried an ancient inscription that surprised the world.



Pastor Gary Kent is Speaker for The Incredible Journey ministry. He holds a B.A. in Theology, M.A. in Ancient History & Archaeology, and M. in Divinity. He has produced and presented numerous documentaries on subjects including the Bible, Bible prophecy, world events and natural health. His passion is to share the good news of Jesus' imminent return.

The Incredible Journey
Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry
Website: www.tij.tv

Australia
0481 315 101
info@tij.tv

New Zealand
020 422 2042
infonz@tij.tv



The Incredible
Journey