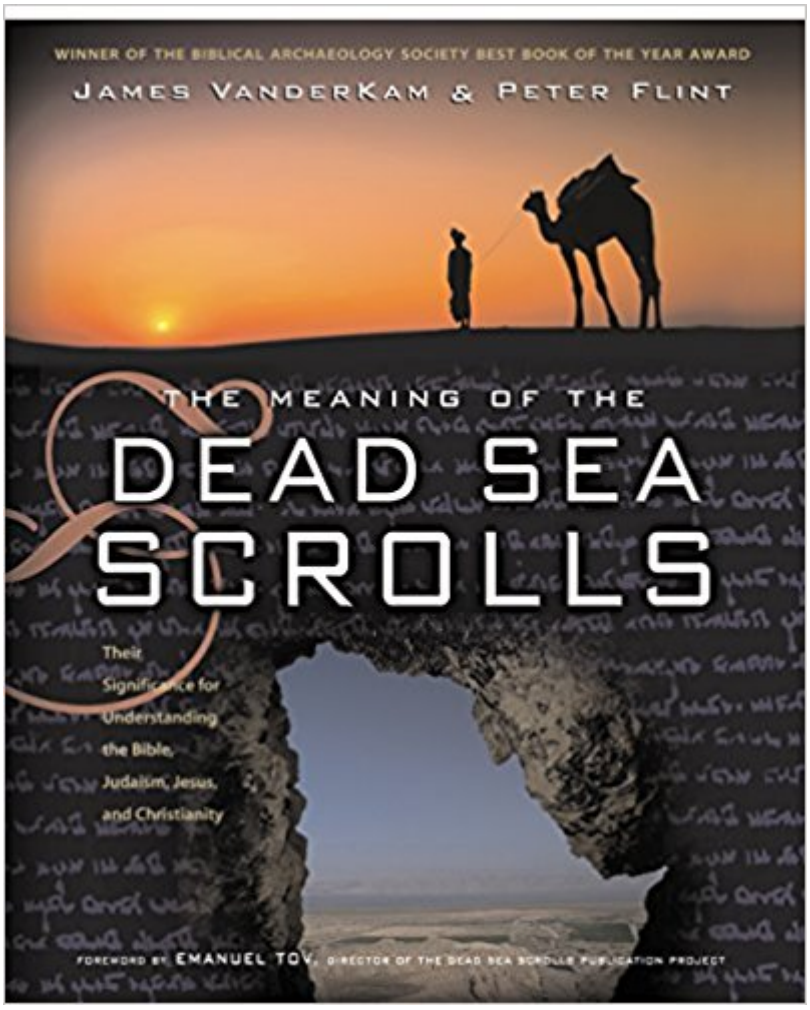
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The Meaning Of The Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance For Understanding The Bible, Judaism, Jesus, And Christianity



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Synopsis

The story of the discovery of the first Dead Sea Scrolls has become a part of Western lore. Who has not heard about the Bedouin shepherd who threw a rock into a cave, heard a crash, went in to explore, and found the scrolls? The story in that form may be accurate, but it turns out to be something of a simplification. As a matter of fact, much remains unknown about the exact circumstances under which those scrolls were discovered. The story of the discovery at first deals with just one cave; the other ten were located at later times.

Book Information

Paperback: 480 pages

Publisher: HarperOne; Reprint edition (October 12, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060684658

ISBN-13: 978-0060684655

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 1.2 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 29 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #117,309 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Additional Texts > Dead Sea Scrolls #129 inÃ Â Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Sacred Writings #236 inÃ Â Books > History > World > Religious > General

Customer Reviews

This sweeping and up-to-the-minute introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls includes many recent developments in Scrolls research, bringing readers current information on new DNA dating techniques, discoveries in linguistics, and archaeological findings. VanderKam (The Dead Sea Scrolls Today) and Flint (The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible) are clearly experts in their field, familiar with all the major (and minor) issues at stake. At times, they become submerged in questions that only other specialists will care about, or render unnecessarily detailed information on particular points (for example, providing a paragraph on each of the major photographers who have worked with the Scrolls, or debating the intricacies of Paleo-Hebrew). Despite these forays into arcana, the authors usually manage to keep their prose free of scholarly jargon. Moreover, the accessible design is first-rate, with helpful sidebars and information boxes to aid the reader. VanderKam and Flint pay special attention to the Scrolls' relationship with biblical and apocryphal literature, offering nuanced

discussions of the formation of the biblical canon and the development of various lines of scribal transmission. One section deals with the non-biblical Scrolls and attempts to reveal more about the Qumran community, with VanderKam and Flint coming down heavily in favor of Essene authorship of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Overall, this is a superb introduction to all of the major points, though novice readers may wish to skim the more concentrated academic debates.Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

VanderKam (Univ. of Notre Dame; The Dead Sea Scrolls Today) and Flint (codirector, Dead Sea Scrolls Inst., Trinity Western Univ., B.C.) have produced a richly informative and insightful book. The content is not all that unusual among recent books on the Scrolls, but the sober, thorough, and balanced presentation sets it apart. The book begins with an examination of the discovery and dating of the Scrolls, which includes the results of new technology. The authors discuss the text and canon of the Hebrew Bible in addition to the Apocrypha and New Testament in relation to the Scrolls. This is followed by a review of the nonbiblical Scrolls and their message. They also evaluate some earlier books on the Scrolls that make outlandish, unfounded claims concerning what they purportedly reveal about Jesus and early Christianity, then present some well-documented ways the Scrolls do offer important background material for understanding Jesus' teachings. The final chapter closes with a review of the controversies surrounding the Scrolls. Each chapter contains helpful sidebars and ends with a useful "Select Bibliography" for further research. Highly recommended as a clear, scholarly, and balanced presentation that helps the reader grasp both the significance of the Scrolls and their value as background material for our understanding of the Bible.David Bourquin, California State Univ., San Bernardino Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

If you want to hear the different explanations of the early Christians and the ancient sects known as the Essenes this is a must buy. One treasure is the confirming of many books of the Psudeographical works such as Jubilees and 1Enoch, and the Apocryphal writings as well, as an index of the findings. If you are a fan of "the Book of the Parables" be prepared to be disappointed, it wasn't found with the other four books, BUT there is a book of the giants that was found. Bought the HARDBACK version for a buck... Wow!!!

Required for school. Kept my attention while in class.

Supreme service and excellent reading!

Many readers will enjoy this textbook that gives an overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It will help to guide novices and even more experienced readers through the meanders of the problems, establishing also the academic landmarks that indicate the limits of subjective interpretations.The information the book contains can however be easily found elsewhere and in that respect is more helpful as a good reference book than as a goldmine of original thought.This is not a book for readers who are hoping for fresh paths to be disclosed between the Scrolls and what came later.

Ever since their discovery in 1947 the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) have been the subject of a prodigious amount scholarly research and popular speculation. In this wonderful tour de force leading DSS scholars James Vanderkam and Peter Flint provide an outstanding overview of these ancient documents and their relevance to Jewish and Christian religious traditions. While the book has much strength, the overview of contextual and technical issues; the DSS relevance to the Old Testament (OT)/Hebrew Bible and New Testament (NT) and the refutation of some leading speculative theories, are particularly valuable.* First, with respect to broad contextual issues, the authors provide an excellent overview of the discovery, the various documents and salient technical issues such as translation, reconstruction and dating. The discussion of the different archaeological, palaeographical and carbon- 14 dating techniques is particularly helpful and informative* Second, the text provides a comprehensive book-by-book analysis of the scrolls and their relationship to the major OT textual traditions (Masoeretic, Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch), which also includes the respective Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox apocrypha and pseudepigrapha. This compilation and synthesis is an invaluable reference - articulate, concise and even-handed..* Third, while the DSS have less direct reference to the NT the analysis in this area is also a valuable asset to NT students and scholars. The chapter dedicated to O'Callaghan's claim that NT fragments are included in the Dead Seas may be of particular interest to Christians. While not definitive the authors make a strong case that the specific fragments identified are unlikely to be NT excerpts. The analysis of contextual and stylistic similarities between DSS and NT books also provide helpful historic context.* Finally, while not a primary focus of the book, the gentle yet firm refutation of the silly sensationalist theories advocated by Allegro, Thiering, and Eisenman is a worthwhile read for the general reader. Unfortunately, this text is probably not an ideal forum to reach the popular audience that would most benefit from this discussion.Overall, this is the definitive DSS overview - to date - essential reading for all NT and OT students. A good reading companion to this text is the

DSS translation by Wise, Abegg and Cook.

In this book VanderKam and Flint present an in-depth survey of the Dead Sea Scrolls with many insights making the book worthy enough of a scholar to read, or in another sense, worthy of the two scholars who wrote it.The book begins with the discovery, dating, and preservation of the DSS. The archaeological work of de Vaux is well spoken of, but V and F point out his dating may need some adjustment. The site may not have been occupied until the 1st century BCE. There may have been no 30 year gap between Periods I and II. And Yaakov Mosherer (more of his work on coins ought to be read) points out that coins from years four and five of the Revolt are rarer, so there is no need to posit that Qumran was destroyed before 73 BCE.In their survey of the DSS and Scripture, V and F mention that Psalm 145 is an acrostic poem with a verse missing. For those who do not know, an acrostic poem is one in which the successive verses begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Masoretic Text and English versions based upon it, Psalm 145 skips the "nun" verse which would occur right after verse 13 in English versions. One of the DSS texts contains the missing verse. The verse from 11QPsA may be translated "God is faithful in his words and gracious in all his deeds."One will want to grab her/his favorite version of the DSS texts as he makes his way through the sections on the non-biblical texts. There is no text of the Book of Esther among the DSS. However there is a *proto-Esther* to be found. The fragments known as 4Q550 clearly show similarities with the Book of Esther though the same story is not told. For all of the scrolls found among the DSS, one might get the impression that the library was comprehensive. Actually it was not. Works such as the Wisdom of Solomon and other Jewish Greek works are absent. Also notably absent is the pro-Hasmonean 1 Maccabees.Most readers will pay avid attention to Part Four of the book on the relationship of the DSS to the New Testament. Dispelled are the theories of O'Callaghan, Allegro, and others. The connections between the DSS and the NT are generally nuanced. 4Q521 supports the idea that Jesus saw himself as Israel's Messiah. However Luke 7.21-22 is not a direct quote of 4Q521. Rather it shows that Jesus adopted an extant manner of speaking and gave it his own spin. Common to nowhere else in ancient writings than in 4QMMT and the Pauline writings is thephrase "works of the law." Because of 4QMMT some scholars are rethinking the traditional Protestant thinking of the use of the phrase in Paul.The last section is on controversies surrounding the DSS. The recent availability of the DSS in such books as Abegg's _DSS Bible_ and Garcia Martinez's _DSS Translated_ have made us forget that once upon a time Solomon Zeitlin wrote a series of articles in which he claimed the DSS were medieval documents. More recently was the lawsuit by Qimron against Shanks. This section is followed by four

appendices one of which is a bibliography of translations and editions of the DSS.In sum VanderKam and Flint have written a very thorough and very readable survey of the DSS. It is surely worthy reading for those of us who like to read and worthy reading for a scholar as well.

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