

## Short Description of Scrolls at Exhibition

### **1. Paleo-Leviticus 11Q1, 1st century CE (1-50 CE), Hebrew (written in paleo-Hebrew script)**

Leviticus dwells on legal rules and priestly ritual. Probably composed by the Jerusalem priesthood, this book addresses the details of sacrifice, purity, and observance of holy days. Leviticus also defines the rituals of the New Year Festival (Rosh Hashanah), the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and the Sabbath, still observed by modern Jews.

### **2. Deuteronomy (NEW) 4Q31, Biblical text, Date: 125-75 BCE, Hebrew**

Thirty-two Deuteronomy scrolls were discovered at Qumran—the text is second only to Psalms in its popularity. The biblical book of Deuteronomy contains Moses' farewell speech to the Israelites, chronicling their history and journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. The text includes teachings of the law and emphasizes God's "covenant" with Israel, a common theme in the Qumran community's writing. This text celebrates the success of some Israelite tribes in occupying territories east of the Jordan river, including the famous passage where God tells Moses to look across the river to see the Promised Land that he will not be permitted to enter.

### **3. Isaiah (NEW), 4Q56, Biblical text, 1st century BCE (75-1 BCE), Hebrew**

Twenty-one copies of the book of Isaiah were discovered at Qumran, making it the third most popular text in the Dead Sea Scrolls library. The most famous—the "Great Isaiah Scroll" from Cave 1—is the longest biblical scroll discovered. The Qumran Isaiah scrolls span more than 185 years, from 125 BCE to 60 CE. The sayings of the prophets—Isaiah son of Amoz, so-called "second Isaiah" and "third Isaiah"—emphasize predictions of the end of times, a theme prevalent at Qumran. They interpreted events in their own age, as if predicted by the biblical prophet. The scrolls at Qumran include at least five commentaries on Isaiah.

### **4. Psalms, 11Q5, Biblical text, 1st century BCE (1-50 BCE), Hebrew**

The book of Psalms, represented by 35 manuscripts from 250 BCE to 50–68 BCE, is the most frequently found biblical book in the Qumran caves. This scroll (a portion of the Great Psalms Scroll) is the earliest known copy of the book of Psalms and the most substantial, with 51 individual psalms. The text names King David as author of the psalms and demonstrates the ancient tradition of David as the greatest of poets. The order and content of psalms in this scroll do not correspond with present versions of the Bible.

### **5. Targum Job (NEW), 11Q10, Biblical text, 1st century CE (30-50 CE), Aramaic**

Four manuscripts of the book of Job were discovered at Qumran. These fragments are from one of two targums, or translations, of the original Hebrew of Job into Aramaic, the predominant language of Judea after the Babylonian Exile. This text is the earliest targum of a biblical book. The Hebrew text of Job, full of contradictory ideas and grammatical problems, is the most difficult book in the Hebrew Bible to understand. Around the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Job probably challenged the most educated of readers. The story of Job's suffering raises difficult issues regarding God and his intentions toward humanity. The Aramaic deviates from the Hebrew version, which illustrates the difficulty of translating the scroll.

### **6. Minor Prophets in Greek, 8HevXIIgr, Biblical text, 1st century BCE, Greek**

The presence of Greek biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls illustrates that many Jews of this time could speak and read Greek, rather than or in addition to Hebrew. During the last four centuries of the Second Temple Period (536 BCE-70 CE), the Greeks and then the Romans conquered the land of ancient Israel and Judah, and many Jews also dispersed throughout the Middle East under Greek influence. Although the scroll text appears in Greek, this translation follows the Hebrew original, rather than the widely-used Greek translation from 300-200 BCE called the Septuagint. The so-called "minor prophets" appear as 12 individual books in the Greek Septuagint and in the Christian Old Testament, but as a single volume in the Hebrew Bible. Dead Sea Scroll fragments contain prophetic writings of Jonah, Nahum, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah.

### **7. Commentary on Nahum, 4Q169, Biblical commentary, 1st century CE, Hebrew**

This scroll contains excerpts from the biblical book of Nahum, followed by an interpretation or commentary. The word *peshet*, which means "its interpretation concerns," links the excerpt with the commentary. The community at Qumran believed the Bible contained hidden messages concerning their future that their righteousness empowered them to reveal. They wrote biblical interpretations relating to events of their time, hence these commentaries (Hebrew *peshet*, plural of *peshet*) provide important information from the era of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The book of the prophet Nahum describes the last days of the Assyrian Empire. Nahum speaks of the destruction of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria, and the downfall of the Assyrian king. In this commentary, the

writer draws a connection between Nineveh and the Pharisees, considered by the author(s) to be false interpreters of Torah, the five books of Moses. The text mentions "Demetrius," a Greek King who waged war against Jerusalem and the "Lion of Wrath," possibly a Jewish ruler (103–76 BCE). The text also uses the term Kittim, possibly referring to the Romans. From these and other references, we learn how the author(s) understood biblical prophecies as relating to their own time. They considered their commentaries as authoritative as the original biblical prophecies.

#### **8. Papyrus Bar Kokhba 44—the Alma Scroll, 5/6Heb 44, Simple deed, 134 CE, Hebrew**

This scroll demonstrates that people outside the Qumran community also hid scrolls in the mudstone caves. It is a lease agreement, which dates to 134 CE, after the destruction of the Qumran settlement by Roman soldiers. It describes a transaction for land previously owned by the government of Simeon Bar Kosiba (Bar Kokhba); leader of the second Jewish Revolt against the Romans (132-135 CE). The document mentions Bar Kokhba by name and as the "Prince of Israel," a historical reference to his brief tenure as leader in this period. Latter-day Saints find this scroll of particular interest, because it specifies "Alma son of Judah" as one of the people involved in the agreement on the fourth line and at the bottom of the document. This text contains the oldest known occurrence of the name "Alma" outside of the Book of Mormon.

#### **9. Songs of the Sage, 4Q511, Non-biblical text, 1st century BCE, Hebrew**

The Songs of the Sage are prayers of exorcism. The community responsible for their composition seems to believe that by engaging in the act of praising God, the power of demonic beings could be thwarted; by praising God one could instill fear in the demons.

#### **10. Book of War, 11Q14, Non-biblical text, 1st century CE (20-50 CE), Hebrew**

Based on this fragment, scholars believed the scroll contained the text of a blessing, until they discovered more. Other caves held multiple copies of the Book of War, which included this ceremonial blessing to be recited over the surviving community of Israel after the final battle at the end of time. The blessing describes how God will cause the universe to produce fertility and will prevent disease and destruction by wild animals and plagues. The blessing weaves in familiar quotes from the Bible, including a paraphrase of Numbers 6: 24-25, "May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face to shine upon you."

The Book of War describes in detail the apocalyptic war between the forces of good and evil, "the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness," presumably the members of the Qumran community and possibly the Romans or those in Israel not in the Qumran community. Angels, both good and bad, join the fight. After 40 years and seven battles, God tips the balance at a predetermined time initiating a new world order. "His exalted greatness shall shine eternally to the peace, blessing, glory, joy, and long life of all the Sons of Light."

#### **11. Damascus Document, 4Q271, Non-biblical text, 30-1 BCE, Hebrew**

The text of the Damascus Document addresses a community which fled from Judea to the "Land of Damascus," a possible reference to the city in Syria or symbolic of exile in general. The text urges the community to remain faithful to their covenant with God. It outlines legal rules and rituals for the community to observe by quoting and then interpreting biblical texts.

#### **12. Community Rule, 4Q258, Non-biblical text, Date: 1 CE (paleographic dating), 95 BCE-122 CE (carbon dating), Hebrew**

The Community Rule, or "Manual of Discipline," defines the rules that govern the community, referred to as the yahad (Hebrew for unity). The caves held 13 copies of this document, which served as a constitution and contained guiding principles and details regarding religion, conduct of members, justice, and punishment. It includes rules for entry into the community, physical and moral requirements of potential members, and the selection and probation period for new members.

The Community Rule prescribes the details of daily life, when and how to work, bathe, eat, speak, pray, and study. Explanation of a social hierarchy—priests, members, and new initiates—reinforces their rules, focused on physical and spiritual purity. The text defines their belief in predestination, that God had already determined who was good or bad, and how events would unfold—the great paradox in light of their strict practices. The Community Rule led many scholars to equate the Qumran community with the Essenes, an ascetic Judaic group, described in historical accounts by Josephus and Philo.