

THE ESSENES - WHO WERE THEY AND WHY SHOULD WE CARE?



I suppose that everyone has heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were first discovered in caves near the Dead Sea, in Israel, in the 1940s. These scrolls were written more than 2,000 years ago. Most scholars think the Dead Sea Scrolls were written by a group of Jewish men, who lived in a community called Qumran, on the shores of the Dead Sea.



Historians refer to this group of men as the Essenes. This newsletter is just an overview of the Essenes, the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Additional lessons concerning the Essenes, their beliefs and their prophecies, can be found on my website (ngcarraway.com).

Who Were The Essenes?

The Essenes were a group of righteous, Jewish men who lived over 2,000 years ago. During the time of Christ, the Essenes were the smallest of three religious groups which existed in Israel. The other two groups were the Pharisees and the Sadducees; all three groups were mentioned by Josephus, the Jewish historian.

The Essene community existed more than 200 years *before* Christ and until the end of the first century *after* Christ. They are credited with the writing and the preservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in jars in Qumran. Almost all of the scrolls have been dated to 100-400 BC (before Christ was born!). Most of the scrolls were written around 200 BC, but a few were written *after* Christ, between 30-70 AD.



The time period *after* the last book in the Old Testament was written, until the *first* book of the New Testament was written, lasted about 400 years. These 400 years are sometimes called 'the 400 silent years'. Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, it was thought that God did not speak to *any* prophets, therefore this time was called the silent years. Now, as the Dead Sea Scrolls are translated, we know that God was certainly *not* silent; he was speaking to the righteous prophets who were part of the Essene community. They were known to be 100% accurate in their prophecies. See the document on my website called Essene Prophecies.

For hundreds of years *before* the birth of Jesus, the Essenes served as scribes and assistants to the Jewish priesthood in Jerusalem. One of their primary duties was to copy the sacred scrolls, which were

originally stored at the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The sacred scrolls included copies of the books of the Old Testament and also scrolls which were originally written by the Jewish patriarchs. As the older scrolls wore out and were no longer usable, the Essenes would carefully create an exact duplicate to replace the old scroll.

The ancient scrolls found at Qumran contained copies (or fragments) of the books of the Old Testament. The scrolls also contained the testimonies of the Jewish Patriarchs, going all the way back to Abraham! Some scrolls even mentioned the testimony of Adam, the first man created by God himself. A copy of Adam's scroll has not yet been found, but Josephus mentioned this scroll as one which he himself read. Some of these scrolls have only been made available, to scholars around the world, in the past 20 years. As these scrolls are translated into English and other languages, the translations are providing new information which has previously been unknown.



The Jewish Calendars

Some of the most interesting scrolls are the ones which mention a solar calendar that the Essenes believed was the *true* calendar, ordained by God. The Essene calendar begins at creation and contained references, and dates, for specific events, such as the flood and the

birth of Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith. The Essenes insisted that *their* calendar was the correct, religious calendar to be used to determine the dates for celebrating the Jewish feasts. This belief was in direct opposition to the calendar which the Pharisees apparently adopted during their Babylonian captivity, and is still in use today.

Most scholars believe that during the time the Jews were in captivity in Babylon, they adopted the lunar calendar from *that* culture, which became the Jewish lunar calendar, used by the Jews *today*. This is supported by the fact that the Babylonian names, for the months, was adopted into the Jewish calendar. In the Bible, God only calls the months by their numeric name (first month, second month, etc.).

Why is this important to us today? Because 2,000 years ago, the Essenes prophesied that the first coming of the Jewish Messiah was at hand. Today, scholars believe that most of the Essenes recognized Jesus as the Jewish Messiah and they became followers of Jesus. In essence, the Essenes became the first century Christians!

So while this is exciting news, why should we care, 2,000 years later? As the calendar of the Essenes has

been discovered and decoded, some scholars believe that the Essene calendar predicts the end of *this* age and the soon coming Millennial reign of Jesus on the earth; the 1,000 years of peace!

The Essene calendar will be discussed in more detail, in another lesson. But, in general, the Essene calendar contains a timeline for *all of human history*, recorded in the pages of the Bible. From the



creation of Adam and Eve to the current time, there have been almost 6,000 years of human history. The Essene calendar divides history into blocks of 1,000 years. The writings of the Essenes states that there will only be 7,000 years of human history on earth. And, the last 1,000 years will be the kingdom reign of Jesus. We are almost at the end of 6,000 years, so the millennial reign is prophesied to begin soon. Watch for another lesson on this amazing calendar and what it predicts.

Check my website for additional information, such as:

- Essene Prophecies
- Essene Beliefs
- Religious Jewish Groups During the Time of Jesus



For more teaching from N. G. Carraway, visit ngcarraway.com.

This primary purpose of this website is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and to educate and enlighten those who put their faith and trust in him, as their Messiah and soon coming King.

Shalom and God bless!

