

St. Stephen's News

St. Stephen's Traditional Episcopal Church, Timonium, Maryland

Vol. XX, Number 30

Edited by Anne Hawkins

August 4th, 2009

FROM THE RECTOR

Prosaic potters, mad monks or bookworms

CLAIMS that the Dead Sea Scrolls are the most sensational archaeological find of the century might well be justified. They do not, however, contain material that requires us to radically revise our thinking on the Christian faith.

Certainly, the scrolls are greatly increasing our knowledge of Jewish religious thought before and at the time of Christ. But far from undermining the Christian faith, they uphold and affirm it.

Indeed, the most striking thing about them – as the late Israeli archaeologist and soldier Yigael Yadin observed – is that they confirm that Holy Scripture has been transmitted from generation to generation with quite remarkable accuracy since at least 200 BC.

This much, at least, is clear – for every book of the Old Testament is represented in this cache of documents. However, many of the other conclusions scholars have drawn from them are controversial – some of them extraordinarily so

People who have read or seen television programs on the

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scrolls will, no doubt, be under the impression that the "library" unearthed in the caves at Qumran, near the Dead Sea, belonged to an obscure Jewish sect called the Essenes. Indeed, a ruined building complex which was discovered not far from the caves is popularly known as an "Essene Monastery."

Visitors to the site are invited to view the "scriptorium" where some of the scrolls were supposedly written. They may gaze upon the "refectory" where the Essene monks allegedly ate and the "lustration baths" where they underwent their complicated ritual ablutions.

This Essene theory is attractive to many scholars. It affords rich opportunities for speculation and, publication – a most important consideration in the "publish or perish" world of modern academia.

Very little is known about the Essenes, you see. They receive a cursory mention from Josephus, the First Century A.D. Jewish historian. But he tells us little beyond the fact that they were celibate, pacifist, austere and rigorous in matters of Jewish Law, which they interpreted in their own eccentric fashion.

This offers glittering prospects for archaeologists and scriptural scholars. So little is known about the outfit that the details are all up for grabs. It is much easier to speculate in scholarly fashion about obscure folks like Essenes than people who are rather better known such as the Pharisees.

Indeed, unhampered by facts, one can make assertions of the most exotic nature and be treated, if not seriously, at least not with open derision. And some folks have not been slow to take advantage of this.

What is rather less well known about the scrolls is that the Essene theory is by no means generally accepted. In fact, it is hotly denied by a number of distinguished academics, all of whom offer less exciting, but rather more persuasive explanations for the ruined building complex and the hoard of scrolls.

The first cache of scrolls was unearthed by a Bedouin shepherd

who sold them on the black market. Some came into the hands of Father Roland de Vaux, a French Dominican friar-archaeologist, who tracked down the site of the discovery and excavated the bulk of the hoard.

Fr. de Vaux was the originator of the Essene theory. And while he never actually referred to the building complex, itself, as "a monastery," he constantly relied upon monastic imagery to describe it – "scriptorium," "refectory" etc. Fr. de Vaux died with his work unfinished in 1971.

In 1988, his institution – the Ecole Biblique et Archeologique Francaise de Jerusalem – engaged two Belgian scholars Robert Donceel and Pauline Donceel-Voute to analyze Fr. de Vaux's material and produce a final report on the excavations.

The husband and wife team came to a quite different conclusion from that apparently espoused by Fr. de Vaux. They offer persuasive evidence indicating that the buildings were too luxurious for a monastery. They think the complex was a luxury villa.

Yet a third theory comes from Professor Norman Golb of the University of Chicago. He contends that the building complex was a fortress, basing his argument on the fact that it was clearly destroyed after a bitterly fought siege.

Golb's claims are dismissed by most scholars on the grounds that the site not suitable for a fortress, even though the complex sports a solid fortress-like tower.

Golb's explanation for the scrolls is, however, much less easy to dismiss. He points out that this region was the last open area accessible from Jerusalem when it was besieged by the Romans from AD 66 to AD 70. The desperate citizens hid their valuables to the Caves of Qumran in order to save them from pillage. Among their most valued possessions, Golb, points out, would have been their books.

Yet a fourth theory arises from large deposits of potters' clay found in the pools that protagonists of the Essene theory claim are ritual baths and the folks who advance the luxury villa theory describe as cisterns for drinking water.

The potters clay, coupled with the 700 or so earthenware bowls found on the premises, lead some archaeologists to postulate the place was simply a pottery factory.

As the medieval philosopher William of Ockham famously pointed out, the simplest answer is usually the right one. But academic publishers are canny enough to know there's more mileage in mad monastics than prosaic potters or a horde of terrified book worms. **GPH**

Join us to hear

**ST. STEPHEN'S
CHOIR OF MEN & BOYS
CHORAL EVENSONG**

6.00 PM Sunday, August 2nd, 2009

FROM THE TREASURER

Pity the poor treasurer in earnest this summer

ABOUT this time of year I usually start writing tongue-in-cheek articles beginning "Pity the poor treasurer . . ." They are intended gentle reminders that the parish's bills don't take a holiday when our parishioners set off on vacation. The message is that we would much appreciate you paying your pledges before you go away rather than after you come back.

The reason for this is that sacred institutions -- in common with many secular ones -- suffer from cash flow problems in

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR
THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**
Sunday, August 9th, 2009

8:00 AM & 9.15 AM
HOLY COMMUNION
The Epistle: I Corinthians 10:1-13
The Gospel: St. Luke 15:11-32
11.15 AM MORNING PRAYER
The Psalter: Psalm 51
First Lesson: Lamentations 3:40-58
Second Lesson: St. Luke 15:11-32

the summer months. Your kind response my reminders over the years have enabled us to get through the summer doldrums without having to dip too deeply into our modest reserves.

This year, however, is different. The recession continues to bite hard. Overheads have been rising -- and rather more steeply than usual. At the same time, the summertime cash flow blues are a much deeper shade than usual.

I and the vestry would very much appreciate it if you were able to help us out this summer by bringing your pledges up to date before you head for the hills or the seaside. Of course, we understand that some folks will find it difficult to do so. Summer sometimes spells cash flow shortages fro people as well as parishes.

But if you are able to bring your pledge up to date without putting yourself into the poor house, I'll guarantee there's one parish treasurer who'll fervently give thanks for your thoughtfulness. **God bless & bon voyage, BILL HAWKINS**

COLLECT FOR THE WEEK

Seventh Sunday After Trinity

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us will all goodness, and

✠ **St. Stephen's Traditional** ✠
Episcopal Church

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ORGANIST & CHOIRMASTER: Adric
DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL CARE: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)
WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR: Anne Hawkins (410-308-2771)

SUNDAY SERVICES
8.00am -- Holy Communion
9.15am -- Holy Communion (Nursery & Church School)
11.15am -- Morning Prayer (Nursery)
(1st. Sun. of the month: Holy Communion at 11.15am)

WEEKDAY SERVICES
Wednesday: 6.00pm Evening Prayer
Friday: Noon: Healing Eucharist
Saturday: 5.00PM Family Eucharist.

of thy mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *AMEN. Book of Common Prayer. Page 198*

✠ **PARISH PRAYER LIST** ✠

OUR Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List and guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, call the office at 410 560 6776.

RECOVERY: Rachel, Frank, Carl, Charlotte, Cal, Catherine, Algin, Sam, Rosemary, Ruth, Kristi, Paul, Sue, James, Patty, Antonio, Lauren-Michelle, McKayla, Randy, Rosemarie, Debbie, Jack, Grace, Bob, Fran, Doris, Carolyn, Ken, Serina, Wyatt Bobby, Alexander, Erlene, Kathleen, Earle, Judy, Polly, Katherine, Helen; William, Betty, Cal, Wendell, Trisha, Peggy, Linda, Millie, Dorcas, Walt, Bruce, Cienna, Tracy, Tom, Leliliah, Jennifer, Miriam, Harriet, Karen, Steve, George, Eliza, Mel, John, Randy, James, Sarah, Linda, Suzanne, Marian, Edith Anne, Steven, Jeanne, Judith, Angela, Tammy; Ellen, Jim, Patricia, Bonnie, Mary Ann, Robert, Christine, Ruth, Dee, Brian, Barbara, Gillian, Eileen, Matthew, George, Bryan, Jason, Jane, Joan, Frances, Ernie, Pat, Lynn, Michael, Ray, Leslie, Brandon, May, Scott, Stephen, Robert, Danny, Billy, Betty-Ann, Mildred, D'Metrius, Rachel, Laura, Stacey, Frank, Alma, Christine, John, Henry, Naomi, Pam, John, Ben, Kevin, Gwen, Elizabeth, Gloria, Lee Emily, Elsie, Bruce, Regina, Lewis, Madolin, Eudora, Carol, Bernie, Charlene, Josephine, Margaret, Mackie, Jody, Sheila, Jo Anne, Thomas, Jeanne, Sister Catherine-Grace, Mae, Anita, Marilyn, Lawrence, Rebecca, Dorothy, Joanne, ✚ Albion, Martha, Jackie, Charles, Tony, Edward, Kim, Vivian, Geraldine, Maxine, Ann Sharon & Dennis.

LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Richard, Donna, Melba, Debbie, Phyllis, Georgetta, Carolyn, Perry, Suzanne, Tony, Robert, Doris, Drake, The Norris family; Gillian, Beverley, Adrienn, Jhana, Marla, Matthew, Joan, David, Laurie, Ellen, Lynn, Mildred, Sarah Lee, Tom, Susan, Debbie, Kathy, Owen, Douglas, Amy, Jo Anne, Mary, Gregory, Isabel, Bobby, Dorothy, Harriet, Darren, Scott, Rebecca, William, Charles, Joyce, Asfa, Eleanor, Kathy, Linda, James, Barry, Ann, Evelyn, Jeanette, Elizabeth, Virginia, Mildred, Chris, Micki, Stephen, Erik, Carol, Sandra, Elsie, John, Robert, Mary, Michael

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Col. Scott Taylor, U.S. Army, Alex Bursi, US. Navy; Capt. Charles Bursi & Lt. Col. Harry Hughes, U.S. Air Force; Lt. Col. R. J. Lytle & PFC Charles E. Heintz, IV, U.S. Army.

**THE HYMNS FOR THE
EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Sunday, August 2nd, 2009

PROCESSIONAL: 783 (Cwm Rhondda)

God of grace and God of glory

GRADUAL HYMN: 347 (Alleluia)

Alleluia! Bread of Heaven

SERMON : 435 (Hermann)

Dear Lord and Father of mankind

COMMUNION: 195 (Rendez a Dieu)

Father, we thank thee who has planted

RECESSIONAL: 389 (National Hymn)

Rise, crowned with light

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