

# The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls to Biblical Understanding

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Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) in 1947, scholars used medieval manuscripts for much of their understanding of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible). Two such manuscripts are the Cairo Codex of the Prophets, which dates to AD 895, and the Aleppo Codex, which dates to AD 925.<sup>1</sup> The biblical scrolls and fragments of the DSS, however, comprise texts that are one thousand years older than the previously known texts of the Hebrew Bible. Most of the biblical texts of the DSS date from 150 BC to AD 68,<sup>2</sup> although fragments from Exodus, Samuel, and Jeremiah have been dated to the middle of the third century BC.<sup>3</sup>

With the scrolls in hand, we have learned much about the history, transmission, and appearance of the Old Testament texts during the last centuries of the Second Temple Period. We have gained a great deal of knowledge concerning ancient scribal practices, including paragraphing, scribal corrections, and various other marks and notes in the text.<sup>4</sup> We have gained greater appreciation for the archaic practices of orthography (spelling practices), morphology (form of words), and epigraphy (inscriptions). Our knowledge of the development of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages and scripts has increased considerably. Perhaps most significantly, the discovery of the DSS biblical texts enables us to reconstruct portions of the Old Testament.

In this chapter I first make some preliminary remarks concerning the biblical texts discovered in the desert of Judea. Next I discuss a small sampling of the variant readings in the ancient biblical texts in light of the DSS and then demonstrate how the DSS have influenced many of the modern English translations of the Old Testament. I will refer to three major ancient versions of the Old Testament—the biblical texts of the DSS, the Hebrew Bible (called the Masoretic Text, or MT), and the Old Greek Bible (called the Septuagint, or LXX).

## Old Testament Texts at Qumran

Of the more than eight hundred scrolls and fragmented texts of the DSS discovered in caves near the Dead Sea region, approximately two hundred represent books from the Old Testament, such as Genesis, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.<sup>5</sup> The biblical scrolls' state of preservation varies considerably.<sup>6</sup> The great *Isaiah Scroll* of Cave 1 (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) comprises all sixty-six chapters of Isaiah, is twenty-four feet long, and averages ten inches in height. Similarly, the *Psalms Scroll* from Cave 11 is in a fair state of preservation. For the most part, however, the biblical books that have survived two millennia in the caves are extremely fragmented; many are no larger than the size of a postcard, and some fragments are as small as a postage stamp. Even the smallest fragment, however, can add to our knowledge of the Bible.

Biblical texts were discovered in many of the eleven so-called Qumran caves. For example, two Isaiah scrolls were discovered in Cave 1; three biblical fragments (Ezekiel 16:31–3; Psalms 2:6–7; Lamentations 1:10–2; 3:53–62) were found in Cave 3; a large number of biblical manuscripts were uncovered in Cave 4 (approximately fifteen thousand fragments of both biblical and sectarian documents); and Cave 11 produced two fragments of Leviticus (including one written in an old Hebrew script), one fragment of Deuteronomy, one fragment of Ezekiel, and four fragments of Psalms. In all, the distribution of biblical texts in the eleven caves of Qumran may be shown as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Cave 1  
Cave 2

17 texts  
18 texts

Cave 7  
Cave 8

1 text  
2 texts

Cave 3	3 texts	Cave 9	0 texts
Cave 4	137 texts	Cave 10	0 texts
Cave 5	7 texts	Cave 11	10 texts
Cave 6	7 texts		

Discoveries of nineteen other Biblical texts were also made at Masada, Wadi Murabba'at, and Nahal Hever, all of which are located in the Judean desert.

With the exception of the book of Esther, every book of the Old Testament has been found in the Qumran caves. That the book of Esther was not among the other biblical books should not trouble us: "While several explanations are possible for the absence of Esther, the most likely is simple chance. A finding of zero copies is neither surprising nor statistically meaningful, for several other books of the Writings are found in only one or two copies."<sup>8</sup> Multiple copies of books (although most are extremely fragmented) have been located. The following table lists the number of biblical manuscripts discovered among the DSS:<sup>9</sup>

Genesis	15	Twelve Prophets	8
Exodus	17	Psalms	36
Leviticus	13	Proverbs	2
Numbers	8	Job	4
Deuteronomy	29	Song of Solomon	4
Joshua	2	Ruth	4
Judges	3	Lamentations	4
1–2 Samuel	4	Ecclesiastes	3
1–2 Kings	3	Esther	0
Isaiah	1	Daniel	8
Jeremiah	6	Ezra–Nehemiah	1
Ezekiel	6	1–2 Chronicles	1

VanderKam notes that "the raw totals [of the biblical books discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls] probably also indicate which books were used frequently";<sup>10</sup> that is, Psalms (36 copies), Deuteronomy (29 copies), and Isaiah (21 copies) were likely held in great esteem by the inhabitants of Qumran.<sup>11</sup> The historical books (e.g., Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, and Chronicles) were probably less important to the religious goals of the Qumranites.

Most of the biblical scrolls are written in Hebrew,<sup>12</sup> the language of the ancient Israelites and the sacred language of the Jews. A few manuscripts including the book of Daniel, the apocryphal book of Tobit, a fragment of a targum (translation) of the book of Job, and fragments of the book of Enoch are written in Aramaic (a language that resembles and is closely related to Hebrew), the language adopted by the Jews after seventy years of exile in Babylon. In addition, a number of Old Testament manuscripts are preserved in Greek.

The majority of texts are copied on animal skin, although a few papyrus texts do exist. Black ink is consistently used, with the exception of certain verses of the book of Numbers (4QNum<sup>b</sup>) that are written in red ink (Numbers 20:22–3; 22:21; 23:13, 27; 31:25, 28, 48; 32:25; 33:1).

New Testament texts, of course, were not discovered among the DSS. The reason for this is twofold: first and foremost, the sect who inhabited the community were not Christians; and second, the texts belonging to the corpus of the DSS were created and copied before the rise of Christianity in the first century AD.

### **Tefillin and Mezuzot**

Other biblical texts, in the form of small parchments containing passages from Exodus and Deuteronomy, have been excavated at Qumran. The parchments were part of *tefillin* (called phylacteries in the New Testament; see

Matthew 23:5) and *mezuzot* (small boxes fastened to the door posts of some Jewish houses or structures). The texts are usually from Exodus 12:43–13:16 and Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9, 10:12–11:21. Twenty-one tefillin texts and eight mezuzot texts have been found in the Qumran excavations.

### **Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha, and Commentaries**

In addition to the various books of the Old Testament listed above, the DSS include a number of commentaries on individual books of the Old Testament<sup>13</sup>—including Isaiah, Habakkuk, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, and the Psalms—that reveal a striking method of biblical interpretation. In these commentaries, the passage of scripture is first quoted, followed by an interpretation. The author(s) of the commentary frequently liken the passage to the Qumran community of believers by arguing that its fulfillment had reference either to themselves or to contemporary events.

For example, a passage in the *Commentary on the Psalms* quotes Psalm 37:10: “A little while and the wicked shall be no more; I will look towards his place but he shall not be there.” The interpretation follows: “At the end of forty years {from the time that the commentary was written} the wicked will perish and not an [evil] man shall be found on the earth.”<sup>14</sup> In a passage in the *Commentary on Habakkuk*, the interest in the last days can also be seen: “And God told Habakkuk to write down that which would happen to the final generation, but He did not make known to him when time would come to an end.”<sup>15</sup>

Several Apocryphal<sup>16</sup> or Pseudepigraphic<sup>17</sup> texts were excavated in the caves, including writings that were previously known to the world—Tobit, Sirach, a Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch 6), Psalm 151, *Enoch (1 Enoch)*, *Jubilees*, and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Other writings of an apocryphal nature were unknown to the world at the time of their discovery and represent new texts. These texts possess the names of or are generally affiliated with well-known Old Testament characters such as Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Amran, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther.<sup>18</sup> These texts offer scholars a treasure chest of information into the socioreligious world of Second Temple Jews and their language, rituals, worship, etc.

### **Variant Readings and Errors in the Text of the Bible**

Although the DSS biblical texts bring us one thousand years closer to the original words of the prophets, we still do not have the so-called autograph texts, that is, those which were penned by the prophets (or the scribes of the prophets) themselves. We possess copies of the apograph texts, which were created several hundred years after the autograph texts. Throughout the history of the various biblical texts, both the Old and the New Testaments, various errors have crept in—a fact that scholars have been aware of for centuries. The Jewish Talmud, which dates to the fifth century AD, lists eighteen occasions when the scribes intentionally altered the Old Testament because they thought certain ideas showed disrespect for God, or because certain ideas disagreed with the scribes’ theological notion of who or what God is. These textual changes, called *tiqqune sopherim* (errors of the scribes) may be found in the following verses: Genesis 18:22; Numbers 11:15; 12:12; 1 Samuel 3:13; 2 Samuel 16:12; 20:1; 1 Kings 12:16; Jeremiah 2:11; Ezekiel 8:17; Hosea 4:7; Habakkuk 1:12; Zechariah 2:12; Malachi 1:13; Psalm 106:20; Job 7:20; 32:3; 2 Chronicles 10:16; and Lamentations 3:20.<sup>19</sup>

In this same light, James C. VanderKam notes that the Samaritan Pentateuch (the Samaritan version of the five books of Moses) “differs from the Masoretic Text in some six thousand readings; most of these are minor matters such as different spellings of words.”<sup>20</sup> A few variant readings in the Samaritan Pentateuch are not minor; rather,

they represent intentional theological changes dealing with the temple and temple worship. Emanuel Tov presents evidence of such theological changes:

The main ideological change in [the Samaritan Pentateuch] concerns the central place of worship. In every verse in the Hebrew Bible in which Jerusalem is alluded to as the central place of worship, the Samaritans have inserted in its stead, sometimes by way of allusion, their own center, Mount Gerizim.<sup>21</sup>

The Samaritans believed that Mount Gerizim represented the temple of Israel, not the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem. This Samaritan approach to the temple and temple worship becomes apparent in an examination of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments). Here the Samaritan Pentateuch alters the Decalogue so that the first of the Ten Commandments serves as a mere introduction, and adds a tenth commandment that refers “to the sanctity of Mount Gerizim.”<sup>22</sup>

Variant readings are frequent in the ancient versions and textual witnesses of the Old Testament. Students of biblical Hebrew simply need to look at the footnotes (called the critical apparatus) of the scholars’ edition of the Hebrew Bible (entitled *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) to discover that variant readings are listed on every page of the Bible.

The New Testament, like the Old, was contaminated through long centuries of transmission. “There are over 5,200 Greek New Testament manuscripts, no two of which are alike. They come from different areas and communities in antiquity and that accounts for some differences.”<sup>23</sup> Bart D. Ehrman points out in his *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* that John Mill’s critical apparatus of the Greek New Testament makes reference to approximately 100 Greek manuscripts and shows “some 30,000 variant readings.”<sup>24</sup> As Ehrman demonstrates, many of the variant readings are intentional theological changes.

Even after the printing press was invented, errors still occurred in different printings of the Bible. The first edition of the King James Version (KJV), printed in 1611, contained a number of errors, some of which were corrected in the 1612 edition, followed by an additional 413 corrections and changes made in the 1613 edition. For instance, the 1611 edition read, “then cometh Judas” instead of “then cometh Jesus” (Matthew 26:36); “strain out a gnat” rather than the correct “strain at a gnat” (Matthew 23:24); and “approved to death” in place of “appointed to death” (1 Corinthians 4:9).<sup>25</sup> As early as 1659, one scholar noted that some “20,000 errors . . . had crept into the six different editions printed in the 1650s.”<sup>26</sup>

Other editions have been named after major errors that have crept into the text. The so-called “Wicked Bible” was so named because the word *not* was omitted in the seventh commandment; the “Unrighteous Bible” was entitled such because it stated that the *unrighteous* would inherit the kingdom of God; and the “Vinegar Bible” set forth the “Parable of the Vinegar.” Though a few of these changes deal with major historical or theological issues, most are fairly insignificant and deal with spelling changes or minor variant readings.

Joseph Smith was fully aware that errors existed in the text of the Bible, as is witnessed by his inspired contribution to biblical studies that we call the *Joseph Smith Translation*, by the Book of Mormon texts that parallel biblical passages (especially Isaiah), and by statements he made during his sermons. On one occasion the Prophet taught, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers.” He then detailed reasons why errors exist in the scriptures: “Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.”<sup>27</sup>

## Causes of Textual Corruptions

Textual critics categorize the three major types of textual changes or variant readings in the Bible as pluses, minuses, and changes.<sup>28</sup> We define a plus as “a portion of a text not found in another text”; a minus as “a portion of text that is missing in comparison to another text”;<sup>29</sup> and changes as differences that neither shorten nor lengthen the text but that present variant readings. Most variant readings were unintentional or accidental but some were intentional or deliberate, produced by scribes who desired to explain portions of the text or alter the texts according to their theological concerns. William Hugh Brownlee has summarized the causes of variant readings:

There are numerous examples of the interchange of letters which are similar in appearance or in sound: the former are errors of the eye; the latter, errors of the ear. These errors in a manuscript might be cumulative from a series of copyists. On the other hand, both kinds of error might occur all in the same process. Thus a scribe in copying a manuscript directly by himself might misread certain words because of their similar appearance. If he read as much as a whole sentence to himself before transcribing it, it would be possible for him to make a few mistakes of “hearing,” due to his habit of thinking orally rather than visually. Similarly, if a manuscript were being read aloud by a reader in a scriptorium, with scribes gathered about a table, each of them copying by the ear, errors of seeing and of hearing could both be made. The reader might sometimes misread; and the scribes might not always understand the words, especially if the reader did not enunciate clearly. . . . There were also mechanical errors of inverting the order of letters (metathesis); of copying letters or words twice (errors of dittography); of transcribing letters or words only once which should occur twice (haplography); of omitting one of two phrases which began similarly (homoioarchton) or ended similarly (homoioleuton), the eye accidentally skipping from the first occurrence of the initial or final word to its second occurrence.<sup>30</sup>

“Errors of the ear” are common in the text and may arise when the text is dictated to a scribe, or when the text is heard and not seen. An example of such an error is the expression *you can see four miles*, which may be heard as *you can see for miles*. A common Hebrew error that falls in this category is the particle *lo* (wl) or *lo* (al), two homonyms that are translated as “to him” or “no, not.”

“Errors of the eye” may be the result of a scribe attempting to read the handwriting of an earlier scribe, whose bookhand is often illegible or who used an archaic script. Such errors include the confusion of letters that look similar. In the English, such letters include *m* and *n*, *b* and *d*, *o* and *c*, *u* and *v*, *v* and *w*, or *v* and *y*. Similar looking letters in the Hebrew alphabet include *d* and *r*, *h* and *j*, *w* and *y*, or *j* and *t*. Another scribal error results from the incorrect division of letters and words. For example, the letters *Godisnowhere*, designed to be read “God is now here,” may be misread as “God is nowhere.”

Many errors originate from the copyist’s carelessness or human fallibility. A scribe may be tired, incompetent, physically or emotionally ill, or his eyes may inadvertently skip or duplicate a single word or an entire line of text.

### Examples of Errors

A striking example of a lost passage of scripture has been discovered in the DSS texts of Samuel. The new passage, which belongs in 1 Samuel 11:1,<sup>31</sup> presents some forty-nine Hebrew words that are missing in the Hebrew Bible as well as the other ancient textual witnesses.<sup>32</sup> With the restoration of this passage, there is a better transition

from the final verse in chapter 10 to the first verse in chapter 11, and the context for the story of King Nahash is now in place:

And Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, oppressed harshly the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had fled from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead. (1 Samuel 11:1)<sup>33</sup>

The paragraph helps students of the Bible understand the situation described in chapter 11 concerning the advancement of Nahash and his troops against Jabesh-gilead and the Israelites. It was the plan of Nahash to make a treaty with the Israelites who were dwelling in Jabesh-gilead, on the condition that he “gouge out the right eye of each person in the city,” rendering them helpless in rebelling against him. The Israelites, however, rally around King Saul and the prophet Samuel (11:5–7), slay a number of Ammonites, and cause the remainder to flee. Samuel and Saul give credit to the Lord for their victory.

Many other missing texts have been discovered among the DSS, many of which may be writings inspired of God. These include Psalm 151, which is included in the Septuagint but missing in the Hebrew Bible. The Psalm deals with King David, his call from the Lord, and his defeat of Goliath. Previously unknown psalms found at Qumran include the “Prayer for Deliverance,” “Apostrophe to Zion,” and “Hymn to the Creator.” Newly discovered prosaic texts include “David’s Compositions,” the “Prayer of Nabonidus,” and a letter of Jeremiah.

Chapter 1 of the DSS Samuel texts (4QSam<sup>a</sup>)<sup>34</sup> features a number of variant readings. I will list six examples:

1 Samuel 1:11

and no razor shall *pass over* his head (DSS Samuel) shall *go up on* his head (MT, LXX)

1 Samuel 1:13

And *Hannah*, she spoke in her heart (The name Hannah is lacking in the DSS Samuel, but is found in MT, LXX)

1 Samuel 1:18

Then the woman went to her quarters, and ate *and drank with her husband* (italics represent a plus found in the DSS Samuel)

1 Samuel 1:22

[Hannah] said to her husband, As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; *I will offer him as a nazirite all the days of his life* (italics represent an addition found in the DSS Samuel)

1 Samuel 1:23

Elkanah said to her, Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him, only, may the LORD establish *that which goes out of your mouth* (DSS Samuel, LXX) *his word* (MT)

1 Samuel 1:24

When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with *three bulls* (MT) along with *a three year old bull* (DSS Samuel, LXX)

There is not sufficient room in this paper to discuss the import of these variant readings. They are set forth for the purpose of demonstrating the types of variations that exist in ancient copies of the Bible.

### **Theological Changes**

Scholars have produced evidence that textual changes were made based on a specific theological stance or agenda held by scribes or others who have had control of various biblical texts at one point or another in history. P. Kyle McCarter's *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* discusses a number of theological changes, including euphemistic insertions, euphemistic substitutions, harmonizing substitutions, and suppressed readings.<sup>35</sup> For a thorough examination of theological variant readings in the New Testament, see Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*, cited above. Emanuel Tov's *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* lists several examples of variant readings that relate to God's appearance to humans:<sup>36</sup>

"I shall never see the Lord" (Isaiah 38:11) (MT) "I shall never see the salvation of God" (LXX)

"the Lord met him" (Exodus 4:24) (MT) "the angel of the Lord met him" (LXX)

"and Moses went up to God" (Exodus 19:3) (MT) "and Moses went up to the mountain of God" (LXX)

"and they saw the God of Israel" (Exodus 24:10) (MT) "and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood" (LXX)

"and he beholds the likeness of the LORD" (Num. 12:8) (MT) "and he beholds the glory of the LORD" (LXX)

In every instance above, the LXX presents a different picture than the MT. The words of the MT indicate that humans can access and even see God, while the text of the LXX never directly states the notion that humans are able to behold God. Tov points out "anti-polytheistic alterations"<sup>37</sup> that have taken place at some point in the transmission of the Bible. Although the examples given above are not drawn from the DSS library, they illustrate the types of variations that may be found in the ancient textual witnesses.

### **The Case of the Divine Name in the DSS Samuel Texts**

One can see certain tendencies in sections of the Hebrew Bible that favor the sacred epithet *God* (Hebrew, *Elohim*) over the divine name *LORD* (Hebrew, *Jehovah* or *YHWH*, called the Tetragrammaton),<sup>38</sup> presumably for theological reasons. An examination of the book of Chronicles reveals that the chronicler preferred the term *Elohim* "even where his sources (e.g., Samuel and Kings) had employed the divine name *YHWH*."<sup>39</sup> One large section of the Psalms (chapters 42–83), shows a marked preference for the divine name *Elohim* rather than *Jehovah*, whereas the remaining Psalms frequently use the Tetragrammaton throughout. It has been suggested on

more than one occasion that a scribe who was perhaps connected with the Jerusalem Temple reworked Psalms 42–83, and for pious reasons frequently substituted *Elohim* for *Jehovah*.<sup>40</sup>

The poetic sections of Job lack the Tetragrammaton in favor of other divine names, with two notable exceptions (12:9; 28:28).<sup>41</sup> *Jehovah* is not attested in the book of Daniel (with the exception of the prayer of Daniel in chapter 9); both the books of Daniel and Ecclesiastes prefer the epithet *Elohim*.<sup>42</sup> The preference for the name *Elohim* is also found in the memoirs of both Ezra (Ezra 7:27–10:17) and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1–6; 12:27–13:31); and here it is appropriate to mention that neither of the divine names *Jehovah* or *Elohim* is used in the Song of Songs<sup>43</sup> or the book of Esther.<sup>44</sup>

The extent to which scribes contributed to the preference of the epithet *Elohim* over the name *Jehovah* in certain Hebrew texts is unclear; neither is it clear why the divine names *Jehovah* and *Elohim* are not found in the Song of Songs or Esther. Choices in favor of the name *Elohim* may have been made by the chronicler as well as by the redactor of the Psalms.

M. H. Segal summarizes the prevailing view of scholars concerning the avoidance of the Tetragrammaton and the preference of *Elohim* when he argues that during the post-exilic period, “a heightened sense of the sanctity of Deity and of the sacredness of its own proper name led to the avoidance of a too frequent employment of the name Yhwh (*Jehovah*) which gradually became ineffable, and to its replacement by a synonymous substitute. The first stage in this tendency was the revival of the use of *Elohim* which appears clearly in the book of Chronicles.”<sup>45</sup>

In a previously published paper, I examined the seventeen occasions when one or more of the divine names *Jehovah* and *Elohim* appear as a variant reading in the Qumran text of Samuel (4QSam<sup>a</sup>)<sup>46</sup> when compared with the Hebrew Bible and the Old Greek Bible.<sup>47</sup> I concluded in that paper that the DSS texts of Samuel prefer the name *Jehovah* in places where the Hebrew Bible prefers the name *Elohim*.<sup>48</sup> Of the seventeen variant readings, the Hebrew Bible avoids or lacks the Tetragrammaton on twelve occasions. If one discounts the three secondary pluses belonging to 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (1 Samuel 1:22; 5:11; 11:9) when the name *Jehovah* appears to have been added, we are still left with nine occasions when the Hebrew Bible lacks the Tetragrammaton. There is one occasion when the Hebrew Bible reads *Jehovah* against 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, which reads *Elohim* (2 Samuel 12:15).

### Using the DSS Biblical Texts in Modern English Translations

Contemporary translation committees of the Bible hold the DSS in high regard. On a number of occasions the committees have departed from traditional readings of 1 Samuel in favor of new readings. The New International Version has preferred the readings of the DSS texts of 1 Samuel on fifteen occasions over the readings of the traditional Hebrew text; the New American Bible has shown even more loyalty to the DSS by choosing 230 readings from the DSS (and LXX) over the traditional text. The other versions, as shown on the list below, have used variant readings from the DSS to varying degrees. The following list features six prominent English translations:<sup>49</sup>

<u>Translation</u>	<u>Use of Variant Readings</u>
New International Version	15
Today's English Version	51
Revised Standard Version	about 60
New Revised Standard Version	about 110

The New King James Version (NKJV) (1982), which is not listed above, does not share the same devotion to the DSS texts. Only on one occasion does it prefer a variant reading from the DSS book of 1 Samuel; in fact, it relies on the DSS on only six occasions in the entire Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32:43; 1 Samuel 1:24; Isaiah 10:16, 22:8, 38:14, 49:5).<sup>50</sup>

According to Harold Scanlin, a translation adviser for the United Bible Societies, “every major Bible translation published since 1950 has claimed to have taken into account the textual evidence of the DSS.”<sup>51</sup> Many of these recent English translations have gone through subsequent revisions to incorporate the variant readings from the DSS. For instance, the Revised Standard Version (1952) is now the New Revised Standard Version (1990), the New English Bible (1970) was revised to the Revised English Bible (1989), the Jerusalem Bible (1966) is now the New Jerusalem Bible (1985), and the New American Bible (1970) is going through a major revision at the present time.

I do not want to give the impression that a great number of theological or historical variant readings of the DSS have great significance for the student of the Bible. The Bible went through a remarkable history to make it into this century, especially in view of the ancient methods of transmitting texts by hand, sometimes in primitive conditions, and considering that the scribes lacked photocopy machines, computers, printing presses, and similar modern inventions. Individuals should not lose faith in this wonderful wealth of prophetic material called the Old Testament, which contains baskets of precious jewels and barrels of pearls. A single page of the Old Testament (with the exception of the Song of Songs) is worth more than all of the gold and silver in the entire world. I personally treasure the writings of all of the prophets in the scriptures, and now have the added benefit of examining the new readings provided by the DSS.

### Notes

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1. See James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 123.
2. Other texts of the Judean desert have different dates; that is, the texts from Nahal Hever, Wadi Murabba'at, and Masada date from about 250 BC to AD 135.
3. The dates of these three manuscripts are as follows: 4QSam<sup>b</sup>, ca. 250 BC; 4QJer<sup>a</sup>, ca. 200 BC; and 4QExod<sup>f</sup>, ca. 275–225 BC. See David Noel Freedman, “The Massoretic Text and the Qumran Scrolls: A Study in Orthography,” *Textus 2* (1962): 87–102; republished in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Frank Moore Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 196–211.
4. See Emanuel Tov, “Scribal Markings in the Texts from the Judean Desert,” in *Current Research and Technological Developments: Proceedings of the Conference on the Judaean Desert Scrolls, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 41–77.
5. For a listing of biblical passages discovered among the DSS, see Eugene Ulrich, “An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert (Genesis–Kings),” *Dead Sea Discoveries 1* (1994): 113–29; and Eugene Ulrich, “An Index of the Passages in the Biblical Manuscripts from the Judean Desert (Part 2: Isaiah–Chronicles),” *Dead Sea Discoveries 2* (1995): 86–107.
6. See P. W. Skehan, “Qumran IV. Littérature de Qumran,” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible 9* (1978): 805–28, gives a physical description of the biblical fragments.

7. See VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 31.
8. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 164.
9. See VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 30. It should be noted that VanderKam's list is preliminary; in due time scholars will be able to list, with some definiteness, how many biblical texts were discovered at Qumran. For a slightly different list of extant DSS biblical texts compare Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 163.
0. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 31.
  1. It is probably more than coincidence that the early Christian community held the same three Old Testament writings—Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah—to be of great value, for they are the most quoted scriptural books in the New Testament.
  2. The majority of the Hebrew manuscripts were written in square Hebrew characters, known as Assyrian script or Aramaic script, although several texts were copied in paleo-Hebrew script.
  3. See VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 152–3.
  4. *Commentary on Psalms* (4Q171) II, in Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 4th ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1995).
  5. *Commentary on Habakkuk* (1QpHab) VII, in *ibid.*
  6. In this paper the word *Apocrypha* is a cover term used for the books that are included in the Catholic version of the Old Testament (derived from the Old Greek translation, or Septuagint) but not included in most Protestant Old Testaments. Apocryphal books include Tobit, Judith, 1–2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, and additional sections in Esther and Daniel.
  7. *Pseudepigrapha* is a term used by scholars to represent several Jewish religious books written or extant between the fourth century BC and second century AD that did not become part of the Hebrew Bible: “One could characterize [pseudepigrapha] as a reverse form of plagiarism: the author does not publish the work of another under his own name; he publishes his work under the name of someone else” (VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 36). To our knowledge, three pseudepigrapha are attested at Qumran—*Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.
  8. For an English translation of these texts and others belonging to the same category, see Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), *passim*; and Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, *passim*. On the question of whether these books were considered to be authoritative by the Qumranites, see VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 153–7, and Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 162–7.
  9. The best treatment on the subject is by Carmel McCarthy, *The Tiquune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1981), who does not limit the scribal errors to eighteen, but discusses several additional errors. See also Christian D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1897; reprinted with prolegomenon by Harry M. Orlinsky, New York: Ktav, 1966), 352–61; and P. Kyle McCarter Jr., *Textual Criticism: Recovering the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 58.
0. VanderKam, *Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, 125.
  1. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 94.
  2. *Ibid.*
  3. James A. Sanders, “Understanding the Development of the Biblical Text,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Forty Years*, ed. Hershel Shanks et al. (Washington, D. C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991), 61.
  4. Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 43 n. 108.

5. Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible From KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book, 1982), 37–8, lists dozens of other details and examples of textual differences between English translations of the Bible.
6. The scholar's name was William Kilburne. See *ibid.*
7. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 327.
8. See Ellis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book, 1994), 108, for examples of errors. The state of the problem of errors in the MT is summarized in the preface to the first printing of the New English Bible: "The Hebrew text as thus handed down [by the Massorettes] is full of errors of every kind due to defective archetypes and successive copyists' errors, confusion of letters, omissions and insertions, displacements of words and even whole sentences or paragraphs; and copyists' unhappy attempts to rectify mistakes have only increased the confusion" (Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations of the Old Testament* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1993], 31).
9. McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 77–8.
0. William Hugh Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible: With Special Attention to the Book of Isaiah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 156–7.
1. For a complete discussion of this missing verse of scripture, see Frank Moore Cross Jr., "The Ammonite Oppression of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben: Missing Verses from 1 Samuel 11 Found in 4QSamuel<sup>a</sup>," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures*, ed. H. Tadmor and M. Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983), 148–58; and Tov, *Textual Criticism of Hebrew Bible*, 342–3.
2. Josephus refers to this incident of King Nahash in *Antiquities*, trans. H. Thackeray and R. Marcus, Loeb Classical Library, 6.68–71.
3. Translation is by the author.
4. The DSS Samuel texts (4QSam<sup>a</sup> and 4QSam<sup>b</sup>) will be published by Frank Moore Cross of Harvard University and Donald W. Parry in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. 17.
5. See McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 57–61.
6. See Tov, *Textual Criticism of Hebrew Bible*, 127–8.
7. *Ibid.*, 267–9.
8. I note, however, that not all religious texts prefer *Elohim*. For the author(s) of Proverbs, *Jehovah* is the preferred name, used scores of times against the epithet *Elohim*, which is found three times only. In addition, it is clear that the name *Jehovah* was the preference of divine names for the Elephantine Jews and was used in its absolute state as well as in a host of theophoric names. See Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 134–45. Porten asserts that "EI is completely absent from the Elephantine onomasticon" (p. 135).
9. M. H. Segal, "EI, Elohim, and YHWH in the Bible," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 46 (October 1955): 100. Similarly, Alexander Rofé detects that the author(s) of Chronicles omits the title *Sebaoth* in "three otherwise verbatim quotations from Samuel (1 Chronicles 13:6; 16:2; 17:25)" (Alexander Rofé, "The Name YHWH Sebaoth and the Shorter Recension of Jeremiah," in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel. Festschrift für Siegfried Herrmann*, ed. R. Liwak and S. Wagner [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991], 309).
0. "The preponderance of Elohim in those psalms cannot be original," states Segal in "EI, Elohim, and YHWH in the Bible" (see pp. 94, 104–5), because the psalmist would not have employed the awkward expressions *Elohim my Elohim* (Psalm 43:4) and *Elohim your Elohim* (Psalm 45:8). On the Elohistic Psalms, see also G. H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1975), 8–9; G. F. Moore, *Judaism I* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,

1930), 424; G. F. Moore, *Judaism III* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 127; cf. Patrick W. Skehan, "The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint," *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 13 (1980): 20.

1. See Skehan, "Divine Name," 20; Robert Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages: Essays in Biblical Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), 167.
2. See Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh: The Divine Name in the Bible*, 8; Segal, "El, Elohim, and YHWH," 101.
3. The Song of Songs is not divinely inspired poetry; we would not necessarily expect to find the name of God there.
4. See Skehan, "Divine Name," 20–1; Gordis, *Poets, Prophets, and Sages*, 167.
5. Segal, "El, Elohim, and YHWH," 100.
6. Notable variant readings of divine names also exist in other Samuel texts discovered in Cave 4 at Qumran. For instance, see the reading of 4QSam<sup>b</sup> at 1 Samuel 23:10.
7. See Donald W. Parry, "4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Tetragrammaton," in *Current Research and Technological Developments*, ed. Parry and Ricks, 106–25.
8. Specifically, the Hebrew Bible lacks the Tetragrammaton on two occasions against 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Old Greek Bible, which both read *Jehovah* (see 1 Samuel 2:10; 6:20); the Hebrew Bible prefers *Elohim* on six occasions against 4QSam<sup>a</sup> and the Old Greek Bible, which prefer *Jehovah* (see 1 Samuel 2:25; 6:5; 10:26; 23:14; 23:16; 2 Samuel 6:3); the Hebrew Bible (and the Old Greek) omits the Tetragrammaton on three occasions that 4QSam<sup>a</sup> reads it (see 1 Samuel 1:22; 5:11; 11:9); in addition, in the phrase *Jehovah, the God of Israel* attested in 1 Samuel 6:3 (4QSam<sup>a</sup>, Old Greek), the Hebrew Bible lacks the Tetragrammaton with the reading *the God of Israel*.
9. See Scanlin, *Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations*, 26.
0. See *ibid.*, 34.
1. *Ibid.*, 27.