

Qumran



Description

Qumran is located about one half mile from the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. It was here that one of the most incredible of archaeological finds was made in 1947, when a young Bedouin boy unknowingly discovered a large collection of ancient manuscripts, the Dead Sea scrolls, high up in a cave at Qumran.

At Qumran, there had been a Jewish population as far back as the 8th century B.C., but it wasn't this settlement that made the site famous. The Essenes arrived at Qumran towards the end of the 2nd century B.C. In 31 B.C., during the reign of Herod, there was a major earthquake in the area and the sect abandoned the site. About 25 years later, during the rule of Archelaus, Herod's son, the Essenes returned to Qumran and rebuilt it. In 68 A.D. during the great Jewish revolt, the Romans conquered Qumran and dispersed the sect. The last known inhabitants of Qumran were members of a Roman garrison stationed there during the Bar Kochba revolt (132-135 A.D.). When the garrison was relocated, the site was abandoned and forgotten.

The search for the center of Essene activity began in 1947, the year the Bedouin shepherd boy found the seven ancient scrolls. The boy who found the scrolls took them home. His mom, not realizing what they were, took the leather parchment and was going to make a pair of shoes out of them for her son. Thankfully, before that was done, someone else realized that this was more than just a piece of leather!