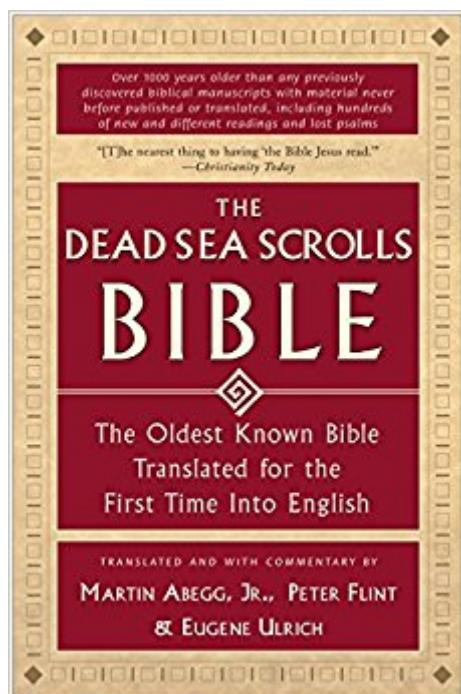


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# The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated For The First Time Into English



## **Synopsis**

From the dramatic find in the caves of Qumran, the world's most ancient version of the Bible allows us to read the scriptures as they were in the time of Jesus.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English is the first full English translation of the Hebrew scriptures used by the Essene sect at Qumran. (The Essenes, along with the Pharisees and Saducees, were among the three most influential Jewish groups of their time [150 B.C. to 68 A.D.]). Between 1947 and 1956, in 11 caves overlooking the Dead Sea, more than 800 manuscripts of two types were found. The first are called "biblical"--because they contain material that was later canonized in the Hebrew Bible; the second are called "non-Biblical"--because they contain poetry, rules for holy living, and imaginative, midrashic interpretations that are unique to the community that produced them. The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible comprises the biblical manuscripts, including many new Psalms, Apocryphal books, and previously unknown readings of Deuteronomy and Isaiah (which appear to have been among the most important books of the Bible to this group of Essenes). The translation of each book is preceded by an introduction that describes the text's importance to the Essenes, their distinctive interpretations of the text, and suggestions of how historical and political events may have shaped these interpretations. Translators Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich have loaded this volume with scholarly notes and commentary, but their interpretations are formatted in a way that

does not impede the general reader's enjoyment of the book. The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible breathes new life into scripture by delving into the earliest source material yet discovered. It is a crucial work to reckon with for anyone interested in Jewish life around the time of Jesus. --Michael Joseph Gross  
--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

âœAll those who want to know what the Bible really says will want this book. They will sing,  
â™• (Southwestern Journal of Theology)

I knew up front that there were some problems with this product. But a few things I did not know. Let me explain. I already knew, for instance that each "book" of the bible did not have "headings" at the top of the page, meaning if you opened the book randomly, you'd have to turn the pages back until you came to the beginning to know what "book" you were in. It's also true that the chapters are "out of order" in books like the Psalms (and yes, non-canonical psalms are included). My HOPE for a book like this was basically a complete "Old Testament" reconstructed to look like what the Essenes would have had at Qumran in 70 CE, but in English. Instead it's basically a supplement to the library of a scholar or budding scholar interested in the scrolls but without a command of the original languages or the budget to get their hands on the high quality photos of the scrolls themselves (if not the real thing which would be even harder). This is NOT meant as a devotional bible. The blurb on the front about it being "the bible Jesus used" is probably not accurate. While the text is closer to what was used in the first century, there is no widespread belief amongst modern scholars that Jesus was ever part of the Essene community at Qumran. Early Christians primarily used a version of the Septuagint (LXX) as Greek was the common language of the early Christians (and not just the Gentiles, remember this was a Jewish translation done more than two centuries before Jesus was born). And yes to complicate matters Jesus probably spoke Aramaic. There is controversy over whether Jesus was literate, but just going by the Gospel accounts, Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah in a synagogue, so he was at least able to read that and no indication was given in the text that this was somehow miraculous (though his contemporaries marvel at his rhetorical abilities in expounding scripture, as if they didn't know where he was trained in such things). But we know of no writing from Jesus apart from "a line in the sand" from the pericope adulterae. The transliterated passages in Greek make it clear he at least spoke Aramaic, but probably understood Greek as well. Did he speak Hebrew? Who knows, but again, he was a contemporary of the DSS community, not a member. Back to the product under review: this is basically a translation of the "Biblical" fragments that were known (at least circa 2002) from the DSS collection, focusing primarily on the parts that

were different from mainstream English bible translations of the time. The differences tend to come in the form of a few extra psalms, alternate spellings, repeated phrases and a few additional words added (or removed) here and there, that generally don't affect meaning (and certainly don't affect common doctrines of Jews and Christians). I doubt any doctrinal disputes will be resolved by this book anytime soon. It tends to show what most of us already knew, which was that the canon of the "Old Testament" (Jewish Bible) was not so firmly fixed in the early first century (and before) as it is for Jews today. It also shows that this was not a "Christian" group who put the scrolls together, but a sectarian group of Jews, who like many of the time, were awaiting the Messianic age and had their own community rules and expectations of that period. Like Jews (and Christians) of today, they read the bible, prayed with it and commented on it to try to make sense of the world they were living in and where things were headed in their time. Their contributions to scriptural studies are immeasurable in terms of the preservation of these texts and commentaries (note the commentaries are not really part of this collection, only the "biblical" texts they were using). So when you look at the table of contents, you will see books listed like "Esther" and "Enoch" but neither of these books are present in the collection. Instead there's just a placeholder saying why they didn't include it in the collection (because Esther wasn't found within the DSS as it was controversial amongst Jews especially the Essenes and because Enoch wasn't considered inspired scripture by a majority of Jews by that time). The other thing is that most modern bible translations (since this text was published) already include the best readings from the DSS, so most of the segments we read here will not be too shocking. If nothing else, it shows that the conspiracy theories popular several decades ago, that "the Church" or "the establishment" was hiding the scrolls from the general public because they contained "explosive" and "damaging" revelations about Jesus or early Christianity were completely false. It also shows that what we call the Old Testament really hasn't changed much in the last 2,000 years (certainly far less than the depressing predictions of some scholars and laypeople on the more skeptical end of the spectrum thought). I fixed the "can't tell what book you're in" problem by purchasing an inexpensive set of "bible tabs" (though I only needed a portion of them, for obvious reasons). This combined with "the Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English" will show beginners just what the DSS are all about and dispel some of the misinformation circulating about them, especially on old web pages and forums. I also heard that a couple of years ago, fragmentary evidence of Nehemiah being included in the DSS was being published, so that too would be a supplement to this material. If you are the sort of reader who is only interested in reading "the lost books of the bible" or getting the latest translation for study, I would rather recommend something like the Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV w/ apocrypha) or like the RSV-CE (revised) if you

prefer less of a "liberal" (and more Catholic) flavor. Check the copyright date and get something up to date (and at the very least later than 1997). Update; The editors mention a future edition of the material in this book, but so far none has been forthcoming as of this writing, which is too bad. A "complete" bible with color coding and the "missing" texts I think would be very useful. They could also include the recently discovered fragment(s) of Nehemiah that were reported in 2012.

This isn't a complete Bible as such, it is bits and pieces of book from the Bible. Now that the disclaimer is out of the way I feel that this is going to be a book that I will spend a lot of time in as I read my King James Version over the years. The DSSB is not a complete book in my opinion, it's a reference to a complete book, these fragments are the oldest examples of many of the Old Testament books and they make comparing what we use today with what they used back then a very interesting exercise. My biggest complaint was that there wasn't an affordable hardback version.

Useful to discern which passages can be dated back to before the middle ages and also comparatively discern where the MT is divergent/altered. Don't look to read this cover to cover or as the "bible" in it's own right, only useful as a reference.

Information is not what you might think. I would suggest buying a good Study bible in a version you trust. you would do a lot better.

Not what I thought it would be. Difficult to comprehend with so much scripture missing.

This book is not what I thought it would be. I had assumed it would be an English translation of all the texts found in the caves at Qumran, it is only an English translation of those texts that were found that are already found in the MT.

Great find, I havent studied it much yet so I only can give it 4 stars

While this edition does offer some helpful notes here and there, it does not actually include the non-biblical texts (Enoch, Jubilees, etc.) It's more of a study guide of the dead sea scrolls bible, than an actual text, which makes no sense, why would you buy this instead of a Bible? Why are there study notes on books that aren't included? Why are the books not included in the first place? I

wouldn't recommend.

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