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Dr. J. Randall Price, President  
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www.worldofthebible.com

Seasons Greetings to All!

It is our prayer that this special time of the year finds each of you safe within His care. As our world teeters on the edge of war in the Middle East and the US prepares for the overthrow of the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, this season is a welcome reminder that the Prince of Peace has come - and is coming again!

This issue features my special report on our excavations at Qumran in August and September. A wonderful team of volunteers from around the globe were rewarded for their hard work with some exciting discoveries. I do hope you enjoy reading about the archaeological adventures of this dedicated group. For additional pictures of the dig please visit the "Qumran Report" page at our website: [www.worldofthebible.com](http://www.worldofthebible.com).

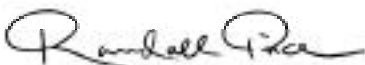
This fall the German edition of my book *Unholy War* was published in Switzerland under the title *Unheiliger Krieg* and distribution began throughout the German-speaking world. I rewrote the preface to this edition to address the unique situation of the European community which has more intensely assimilated Muslims and which is decidedly pro-Palestinian. If you would like information on how to order this book please call our office (512) 396-3799).

**The electronic version of the newsletter was sent out last month but you may not have received it! We had a unusually high return of undeliverable mail. If you did not receive the link to the electronic version you can find it at [www.worldofthebible.com/septoct.htm](http://www.worldofthebible.com/septoct.htm). For example, to reach this issue you would enter: [www.worldofthebible.com/novdec.htm](http://www.worldofthebible.com/novdec.htm). You can now reach the latest electronic version by changing the months entry after the forward slash in the address line as per the examples just given (next issue will be: [www.worldofthebible.com/janfeb.htm](http://www.worldofthebible.com/janfeb.htm)). We would also appreciate your re-sending us your e-mail address so we correct any errors in our address book.**

May I ask you to please remember World of the Bible Ministries, Inc. in your end-of-the-year giving. Our ability to continue present projects and to commit to new ministry significantly depends on donations received at this season. We do need your help at this time! Please allow me to also mention our urgent need for an LCD projector for use in our conference presentations. We had been waiting for a year for a promised grant for this need (about \$5,000). However, this past month we learned that the foundation which offered the grant was forced by circumstances to withdraw it. If you could help us with this special need please earmark your gift for "conference projector." **Please see the form on the last page of this newsletter.**

I appreciate every one of you who have faithfully supported our work through the years and look forward to having you who are new friends of our ministry partnering with us. Thank you for being a part of this ministry at this crucial time in history. May the Savior bless you richly this season and in the New Year!

Yours for the World of the Bible,



# World of the Bible ELECTRONIC VERSION news & views

“Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things” - Rev. 1:19

## New Secrets from the Dead Sea A Special Report

by Dr. Randall Price

Twenty miles southwest of Jerusalem lies the Dead Sea at a record level of 1350 feet below sea level. This mysterious body of water forty-five miles long and nine miles wide, a veritable chemical stew of 26% solid matter in the form of dissolved salts, is majestically surrounded by rugged limestone cliffs. Dotting these bleak and jagged crags are caves within which the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were hidden more than 2,000 years ago. Descending from the dusty crags one meets the sun-parched Judean desert where temperatures regularly reach 125° Fahrenheit. Scattered throughout the desert are elevated marl plateaus, chalky remnants of the ancient Dead Sea floor. On one of these plateaus, situated on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea, an Orthodox

Jewish sect established a community almost two centuries before the birth of Jesus. Known today by its Arabic name Khirbet Qumran (“ruins of Qumran”), it first attracted worldwide fame in the 1950s when its excavations unearthed the remains of the community and retrieved thousands of fragments of scrolls in a cave at the site.

Since those initial discoveries Qumran has increasingly become the attention of both Jewish and Christian scholars who have recognized its importance for understanding the Second Temple period, a pivotal time in Jewish history which saw such events as the ministry of Jesus and the birth of Christianity. Excavations of the community have revealed much about the priestly Jewish sect who inhabited Qumran. Many of this sect’s beliefs and practices appear to have been closer to those of Jesus and early Jewish-Christianity than to those of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and provide, in many cases, an improved interpretation of the social and religious customs recorded in the Gospels. Yet, despite the many revelations made over a half-century of excavation at the site, most archaeologists have focused on the northern area of the plateau where the



Dr. Randall Price with finds from the east square. Left to right: stone-lined oven (Arabic tabun) in which was discovered large amounts of ash containing small bird bones, thin-walled storage jar (in situ), Roman cooking pot (restored) and storage jar (partially restored).

community’s buildings were discovered. The barren southern end of the plateau was largely abandoned in the belief that it had never been inhabited except perhaps by the community’s sheep and goats!

However, this southern end of the plateau is within the stone wall perimeter erected by the sect (which is still in existence today) and is situated directly across the ravine from the cave in which the thousands of scroll fragments were recovered. Furthermore, in the early 1950s Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) and seismic surveys of the southern end of the plateau indicated that there were a number of deep and shallow sub-surface geophysical anomalies. The organization that conducted these initial surveys, Jerusalem Ministries International (JMI), has continued exploration of the site through their non-profit Israeli company the *Amuta Geophysica*. Several of their shallow anomalies were identified in 1994 by Operation Scroll, a salvage project undertaken by the Israeli Antiquities Authority in fear that the Qumran area might be



One of the four cooking pots discovered. This is a larger style cooking pot. The style according to Roland deVaux’s classification of pottery types at Qumran fits the Qumran II phase (31 BC-AD 68). This was the pot that contained the largest number of bones and ash.



*Work on the extension of the south balk of the east square by members of the 2002 excavation team: top to bottom: Debra Collett, Rick Schuler, Janelle Worthington, Lou Ann Messenger and Aubrey Richardson.*

transferred to the Palestinians as part of the recently initiated Oslo Peace Process. These anomalies on the eastern side of the southern plateau were revealed as stone-lined storage pits, probably for the maintenance of wine stored in large clay jars. In addition, deep anomalies on the western side appeared to be at the same level as the Dead Sea Scroll cave (Cave 4), offering the possibility of a sub-surface paleo-chamber (cavern) in which other scrolls and artifacts might still be preserved. That such items might still remain buried was revealed by the Copper Scroll. A document made of pure copper, discovered in 1953 in a cave a mile and a half to the north of Qumran, proved to be a unique inventory of treasure hidden at Qumran and throughout the Judean desert. The possibility that the plateau site might be one of these sites was strengthened by the discovery in 1996 of a 2,000 year-old Aramaic inscription (ostrakon) near the eastern wall of the southern plateau.

In 1996 I was invited by those at *Amuta Geophysica* to apply for a permit from the Israeli authorities to dig on the southern plateau and to serve as Director of Excavations. Although it took six years due to mounting political tensions in the "West Bank" (where Qumran is located), I finally received a permit in February of this year and began, with JMI, assembling a team of volunteers to work on the Qumran Plateau Excavation Project. The dig, which began on August 5 and was completed on September 13, involved nearly 40 volunteers from across the United States and five foreign countries. Awakening every morning at 4 AM, and following daily

devotions in the dark at Qumran, our team arose from prayer just as the sun began to spread its rays over the Dead Sea. Then we followed the trail through the ancient remains of the Qumran Community to our two "squares" (pre-determined archaeological areas for excavation). The western square was the search site for the deep paleo-chamber and the eastern square was the site for a conventional archaeological dig for remains of human habitation.

Work on the western square faced many obstacles from securing the uppermost sides of the dig from collapse to creating earthen platforms for the diggers to descend and for the bucket crew to safely remove tons of soil. Slowly, but surely, the team dug its way down an incredible 60 feet, positioning six ten-foot ladders on the platforms and removing via a bucket chain some 350 buckets of fill dirt an hour (about one bucket every five seconds)! Amazingly, no buckets were dropped on anyone and no one was injured in this rigorous descent! This can only be the result of your prayers. Despite our best efforts, no paleo-chamber was found. Even though we commissioned new GPR and seismic surveys at this site which continued to show deeper anomalies, and dug two test tunnels at the bottom of the square to investigate these readings, nothing but loose boulders and rock layers appeared. Because these can also account for anomalous readings, we were forced to conclude that, at least in this area, no paleo-chamber appears to exist. This conclusion, though negative, fulfilled one of our purposes in the dig, that of investigating the cause of the deep anomalies in this area. By eliminating this area from our search we are closer to reaching the eventual goal of discovering a paleo-chamber where it is believed the Qumran sect may have deposited scrolls and other treasures mentioned in the Copper Scroll.

In contrast to the western square, the eastern square yielded some significant discoveries. On the second day of the dig, volunteers uncovered the top of a large store

jar. When the dirt around the jar was removed not only did we have an intact jar, but also beside it was another tall jar with handles protruding from its rim! The dating of the jars fit the Qumran II period (from 31 B.C. - A.D. 68) or the time of Jesus and the Second Temple! We had found the remains of the Qumran sect and the evidence that the plateau in this area was far from uninhabited in antiquity. However, our discov-



*West square pit at 40 foot level as crew continues to descend in search of a paleo-chamber thought to be the anomaly at at the 55 foot level. The pit was dug using two small jack hammers, hand picks, with dirt removed by hand via a bucket chain.*

eries had just begun. Even before the excitement of this find had worn off, a symmetrical ring of stones emerged from the earth that revealed it to be an oven (Arabic *tabun*, Hebrew *tanur*). Still filled with ash and bones from a last meal some 2,000 years ago, the oven indicated that we had uncovered a kitchen (or cooking installation). Over the next week, the team continued to uncover fragments of additional pottery vessels (jars, juglets, bowls, and cups) and stone implements (such as grinders) that had been used



*Bottom of a cooking pot in situ (in the place where it was discovered) containing sheep bones and ash remains. This is the bottom of the reconstructed pot pictured on the front page.*

in this ancient kitchen. However, the most spectacular artifacts at this site were four large Roman cooking pots that had been buried about a foot below the surface. These cooking pots were filled with ash and bones (probably sheep bones). However, these were not simply the result of a meal gone bad! Similar cooking pots were discovered 50 years earlier by the original excavator of the community buildings. Scholars have theorized that these cooking pots contain the remains of a ritual meal that was part of a sacred priestly service, perhaps even a preparatory messianic banquet for the end of the age. They were purposely buried in obedience to the command of Leviticus 6:11 that ordered the priests to remove the sacrificial ashes outside the camp. Moreover, some scholars (such as deVaux) have even suggested that these are the "tithing vessels" listed in the Copper Scroll. Therefore, it may be that we found some of the treasure of the

Copper Scroll after all!

The Israeli authorities were excited by the results of our dig and would like to see the kitchen preserved for the millions of tourists from around the world who annually visit Qumran. As the excavator it is my responsibility to fund this preservation (cost \$1,200). At the time of this writing I am still waiting for the results of Carbon-14 dating by the Weizman Institute in Israel and for the restorers to complete their pottery restoration and analysis of the finds. Also, archaeological draftsmen must complete the various plans and drawings I submitted for my excavation report. All of these professional services, which amount to \$3,000, must be paid in the next month before I can apply for a renewal of our permit to continue excavating at our site. Based on the GPR readings taken at our eastern area near at the conclusion of this dig season, it is clear that much, much more awaits us just below the surface! If the Lord leads you to help us meet these expenses please make your tax exempt contribution to Jerusalem Ministries International and mail it to: **PO Box 827, San Marcos, TX 78667-0827**. May the Lord richly bless each of you

who made it possible for me to direct this excavation this summer. The Lord has used your gifts to uncover, for the first time, evidence of the Qumran sect on the southern plateau which may lead to our greater knowledge of this people who knew and who were known by Jesus and His disciples and contribute to our greater understanding of the New Testament itself.

*If you would like to volunteer for our next season (tentatively set for June 15 - July 15, 2003) please write us for details and an application or go to our website at [www.worldofthebible.com](http://www.worldofthebible.com) and click on the "Qumran Report" link located on our homepage.*



*Qumran Plateau Excavation Team (Weeks 1-3): Front row left to right: Tom Lee, Jim Higgins, Randall Price, Margaret Cotter, Charles Webber. Second row: Dennis Worthington, Aubrey Richardson, Eloise Rios, Daniel Calvo, Brian Bishop, Debra Collett and Cindy (dog), Lou Ann Messenger, Janelle Worthington, Rick Schuler. Last row: Gary Wayne Bransom, Gary Collett, Scott Barnett. , Not Pictured: Jim Swann, Dustin Moore, Ann Clark, Duane Pieper, Jonathan Price.*

## Dr. Price's Schedule

- November 6** - "Prophetic Perspectives" on Songtime USA Radio Network (check local listings for time or [www.songtime.com](http://www.songtime.com)).
- November 6** - 7:15 PM "What Christians Should Know about Islam" Hill Country Church, San Marcos, TX., call: (512) 353-5322
- November 7** - Radio interview on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Bob Dutko Show, WMUZ Detroit, MI 1:50 PM (EST) call June McClelland (313) 272-3434.
- November 13** - 7:15 PM "The Coming Last Days Temple" Hill Country Church, San Marcos, TX call for info: (512) 353-5322
- November 18-24** Evangelical Theological Society, Near Eastern Archaeological Society, and Society of Biblical Literature conferences, Toronto, Canada
- November 25-26** - 7-9 PM "Current Events in the Middle East & Islam," 9:30-10:30 AM - "God's Story in Stone," His Hill, Comfort, TX
- December 9-11** Annual Pre-Trib Prophecy Conference, Harvey Hotel, Dallas, TX
- December 15** - 10:45 AM "The Day Christ Came" Grace Bible Church, San Marcos, TX., contact Jim Davis (512) 392-6312.
- December 15** - Manuscript of *Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflict* delivered to publisher.
- December 30** - Qumran Plateau Excavation Report due to Israeli Authorities in Jerusalem.
- December** issue of *The Messianic Times* (the world's leading Messianic newspaper) - article on "The James Ossuary"
- December** issue of *True Believer* magazine - article on "New Discoveries at the Dead Sea"
- January 4-7** - Conference on Islam in Christian Perspective, Portland, OR., contact Dr. H. Wayne House (503) 874-1104.

## Report from Jerusalem



*James Ossuary*

In October newspapers, radio, and television news programs around the world aired the story of the discovery of the "James Ossuary," a first-century burial box (dated to AD 63) that may have once held the bones of James, the half-brother of Jesus.

Ossuaries were commonly used during the Second Temple period in the practice of secondary burial. Most antiquity shops in Jerusalem have at least one, but Israeli law makes it illegal to transport them outside of the country so usually sales are only to those living in the region. Therefore, it was no surprise that the "James Ossuary" should appear in the private collection of a Jerusalemite who bought it from a local tomb robber.

What was surprising was the Aramaic in-

scription that read: "James the son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." Experts have especially noted the unusual addition of the title "brother of Jesus." Such a departure from the conventional form of epitaph, which listed only relation to the father ("son of..."), would be suspect had not tests confirmed it to be genuine.

Some scholars, such as maverick historian Robert Eisenman, who believes James was the leader of the Qumran Community, are skeptical of the discovery, stating that it is "too perfect." Other scholars, such as André Lemaire who published the inscription, have been hesitant to claim that this is the ossuary of *the* James of the New Testament who was called "the Lord's brother" (Matthew 13:55), stating these names were popular in the first-century and that as many as 20 families in Jerusalem at that time could have had this combination of names. However, soil sample tests on the ossuary revealed that it came from the region of Mount Scopus that connects with the Mount of Olives. In the first-century, the Jewish-Christian community buried their dead in this area and hundreds of their ossuaries have been discovered. If this was the ossuary of a Jewish-Christian, who regarded Jesus as his "Lord," it is unthinkable that the title would have been used so commonly except

by the one individual who could legitimately claim such relationship, namely, James, the founding elder of the Jerusalem Church. However, while news reports have claimed that this ossuary is the earliest evidence of Jesus, another ossuary from the Mount of Olives dated to AD 43 contains an inscription to "Jesus who ascended." This ossuary, reported to be deep in storage within the Rockefeller Museum, was first reported by Eleazar Sukenik, late professor at the Hebrew University and father of the famous archaeologist Yigael Yadin. Its significance lies not only in being the earliest testimony to "Jesus," but possibly the eyewitness testimony of one who saw Jesus ascend to heaven from the Mount of Olives (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50; Acts 1:9-12; 1 Corinthians 15:6). Dr. Price is currently attempting to locate this ossuary and/or photo of it through friends at the Rockefeller Museum.

It also represents the earliest evidence of the early Jewish-Christian belief in a divine Messiah, a theological concept thought by liberal theologians to have been the result of Greek mythological influence through Gentile Christianity at least a century later. Is it not appropriate that such rock witnesses to Christ should come from the city to which He will soon return?

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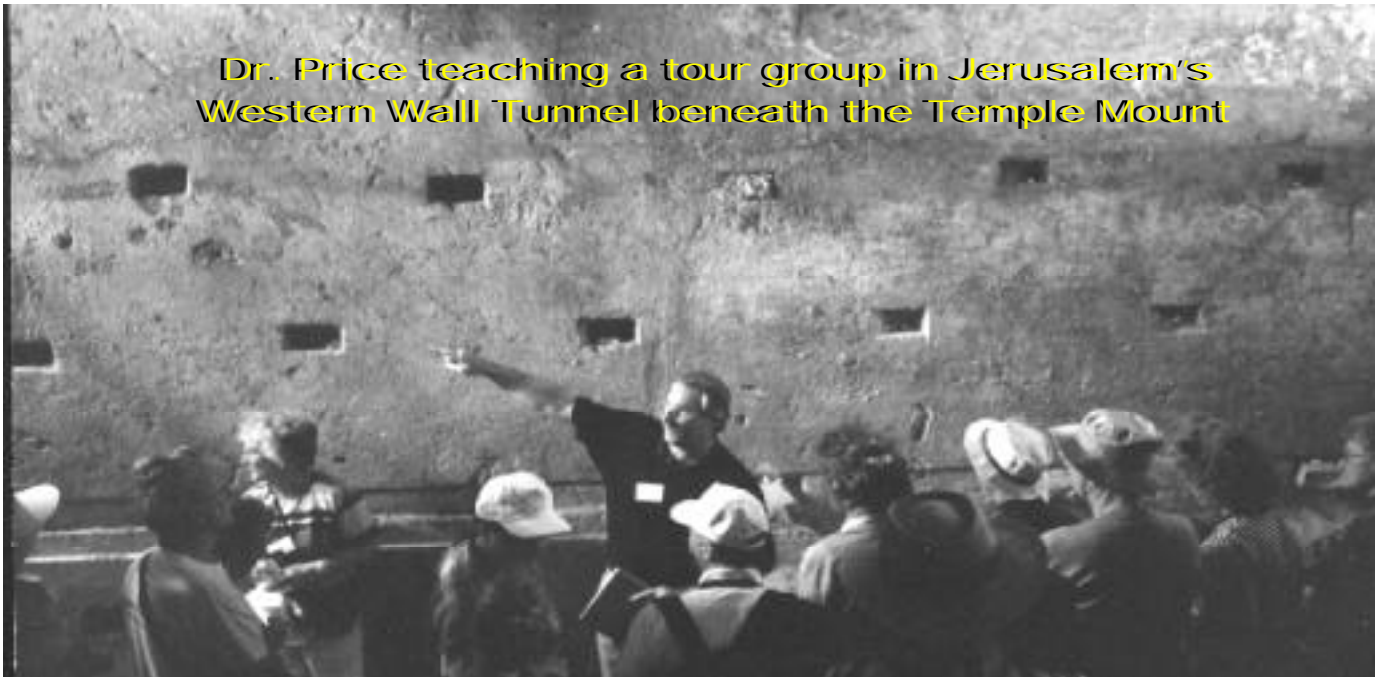
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Dr. Price teaching a tour group in Jerusalem's Western Wall Tunnel beneath the Temple Mount



## Who We Are (*The Ministry of World of the Bible*)

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