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Book Review

The book is titled "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls" written by Jodi Magness. I believe this would be a great book for one who is beginning and interested in learning about the archaeological aspect, the dead sea scrolls, the land of Qumran or just interested in general. Looking from the outline it involves all three of the topics and a bit more at the end such as the living environment, such as chapter seven to chapter ten are somethings I have never heard or do not remember being mentioned. But this book at first glance carries a lot of information for one who is looking more into the Dead sea scroll and the qumran community.

Honestly in chapter one under the topic of "Why is qumran controversial?" There is a discussion that Jodi Magness is having over the question being given which is "whether I think we would interpret Qumran as a sectarian settlement had the Dead Sea Scrolls not been found." Which in return she goes into two answers but I like her second answer better "Qumran provides a unique opportunity to use archaeological evidence combined with information from historical sources and scrolls to reconstruct and understand the life of a community. But as Jodi Magness continues she gives me a better understanding of what goes on in the mind of an archaeologist compared to a scholar who focuses of the scrolls and one who does not know much such an example being on page fifteen the second paragraph line three to four "the presence of a potters'

workshop does not mean qumran was pottery manufacturing center.” Also on page fourteen shows us the imagination one kinda needs to have when having missing pieces of a puzzle and have to try to figure out how it may look complete due to the fact many artifacts and structures are not always gonna be fully intact when found many centuries later. This example also goes for those who study centuries old scrolls, rare to see a whole scroll fully intact without damage throughout many years.

The next chapter that I found helpful was in chapter three under the topic of “What is the connection between the community at Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls?” The discussion Jodi Magness was over a question she considered to herself asking “whether it is possible to establish a connection between the inhabitants of Qumran and the scrolls.” Jodi Magness says this became problematic due to the fact that no scrolls were found in the settlement. Instead the scrolls were found in the surrounding caves of the sites. Which those who make that point is understandable for those who have not been there and for those who have not read the scrolls. But with the scrolls it is written that the dead sea people were very high on purification and in those times purification was through baptism or ritual submerging under “natural, clean” (meaning untouched water “rain water”). Also Jodi Magness goes on to bring up the reason the scrolls were stored in the caves, one being surprisingly they knew that the caves held a perfect temperature in preserving scrolls and another thing if I am not mistaken they hid in the caves because the Romans were going on a rampage burning things down and they fear that their settlement was next on the hit list from the Romans.

I want to take a minor detour to chapter eight under the topic of “Were there women at Qumran?” In my honest opinion if there were no women at Qumran then I

believe they were fully pure. Because we all know when we read Genesis the women caused the man to eat the forbidden fruit causing the fall of righteousness. So the Qumran community being purist I think women were not in Qumran. The only way they survived for so long as they did, was because people predestined kept showing up at their doorstep. (THIS PARAGRAPH WAS A JOKE HOPE IT MADE THE READERS' DAY HAPPY).

The final I chose to talk about is chapter six under the topic of "The Animal Bone Deposits at Qumran: Evidence of Sacrificial Cult?" It did come to my attention and I wonder if those in the Qumran community had sacrificial offerings. But as I read further in, they found many animals in different locations but one piece of evidence was missing to be fully connected to a sacrificial offering which is the altar. On page 151 under the topic of "An Altar at Qumran?" In the beginning it starts off as written "One obstacle to identifying the animal bone deposits from Qumran as sacrificial remains is the absence of an altar." Honestly the Qumran community were probably very good hunters and very hungry people and they ate a lot every night having parties. The topic over this is very interesting because the evidence is there of the animals bones but where was the altar, well that being if there was even one. I think they were altar but they got destroy because if the community follow the torah or in our case the old testament and the group being purists there has to be an altar because they have their reasons in needing to sacrifice animals the probable type of offering they were giving was the "holocaust offering" due to the "disposal of ashes".

The honest thought of my mind on this book is a lot more information than I expected. It's like Jodi Magness was writing and writing and if a new question came to mind that she could answer she would write about it.