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Great Isaiah Scroll on Full Display in Jerusalem for First Time Since 1968

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"A Voice From the Desert"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

The Great Isaiah Scroll, the oldest complete copy of any book of the Bible, is on full display in Jerusalem for the first time since 1968. The 2,100-year-old manuscript, holding all 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah, is the centrepiece of a new exhibit called "A Voice From the Desert" at the Shrine of the Book in the Israel Museum.

Picture it. A scroll more than seven metres long, unrolled in full under soft museum light, with column after column of Hebrew script flowing across 17 sheets of stitched parchment. The words were copied by hand around 125 B.C., More than a century before Jesus was born, and they read almost exactly like the Isaiah in your Bible today.

That is why this display matters so much. For most of the last six decades, visitors saw only part of the scroll at a time, with the rest kept in the dark to protect it. Now, for a short window, the whole thing is out in the open, all 66 chapters, from the opening call to hear the word of the Lord right through to the final vision of new heavens and a new earth.

The scroll measures seven metres and 17 centimetres, about 23.5 Feet, and it is the best-preserved of all the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was found in 1947 in a cave near Qumran, in the Judaean Desert, by Bedouin shepherds who stumbled on clay jars holding ancient manuscripts. The timing still stops people in their tracks: the scrolls surfaced in 1947, one year before the modern state of Israel was established in 1948.

Great Isaiah Scroll: All 66 Chapters On Display For The First Time Since 1968

The exhibit marks the 60th anniversary of the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book, and the scroll is its crown jewel. Curator Hagit Maoz told CBN News it was a great opportunity to celebrate the anniversary, calling the scroll "the jewel of the crown of the collection of the museum." She explained that the manuscript dates back to the end of the second century B.C., Around 120 to 125 B.C., And that it holds all 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah we have today at home.

What makes the scroll so moving for believers is how familiar it is. The text a visitor reads through the glass is, word for word in almost every line, the same Isaiah that Christians and Jews have read for two thousand years. The famous passage about a child being born and a son being given is there. So is the suffering servant of chapter 53, the passage the early church read as a picture of Christ. To stand in front of it is to stand in front of the Bible's own family tree.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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