

2,600-Year-Old Silver Scrolls Reveal One of the Oldest Bible Verses Ever Found

An ancient discovery in Jerusalem offers a remarkable glimpse into how far back the words of Scripture can be traced.

In a TBN special exploring biblical archaeology, host Erick Stakelbeck examined the Silver Scrolls, two tiny artifacts dating back roughly 2,600 years that contain words still spoken by believers today: the priestly blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26.

The discovery dates back to 1979, when renowned archaeologist Gabriel Barkay was excavating ancient burial caves near Jerusalem. According to the TBN program, a 13-year-old boy participating in the excavation was sent into one of the caves to clear it out. What happened next became the discovery of a lifetime.

The boy emerged with ancient pottery and other artifacts. Inside the cave, archaeologists would also uncover jewelry, coins, and two tiny pieces of silver rolled tightly together.

Researchers quickly realized opening them would be no simple task. The delicate objects were thousands of years old, and attempting to unroll them could destroy them. It reportedly took about three years for researchers to develop a method to safely open them.

What they discovered inside was extraordinary.

Inscribed on the silver were words from the priestly blessing in Numbers 6—the biblical passage beginning, “The Lord bless you and keep you.”

The scrolls date to approximately the seventh century B.C., around the time of the prophet Jeremiah and the First Temple period. That makes them roughly 600 years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls, according to the TBN segment.



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Even more striking is that these are not merely ancient words relegated to an archaeological display. The blessing continues to be recited in Jewish synagogues today.

Stakelbeck shared that the passage also holds personal significance for him.

"I pray over them the priestly blessing," he said of his daughters. "May the Lord bless you and keep you. I say it frequently over both of them."

The Silver Scrolls were not the only archaeological evidence highlighted in the program.

Stakelbeck and archaeologist Danny "the Digger" Herman also examined the Tel Dan inscription, which contains an ancient reference to the "house of David." Herman described it as one of Israel's most significant archaeological discoveries because it provides an Iron Age reference to the Davidic dynasty.

The program also explored Hezekiah's Tunnel and a small royal seal bearing the name of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah—another tangible connection to a figure recorded in Scripture.

But perhaps the most powerful part of these discoveries is their ability to connect the modern world with the ancient biblical past.

More than two and a half millennia ago, someone carefully etched the words of Numbers onto silver. Kingdoms have risen and fallen since then. Empires have disappeared. Generations have come and gone.

Yet the blessing remains.

The same words inscribed in silver 2,600 years ago are still being read, spoken and prayed today—a striking reminder that while civilizations change, the Word of God endures.

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