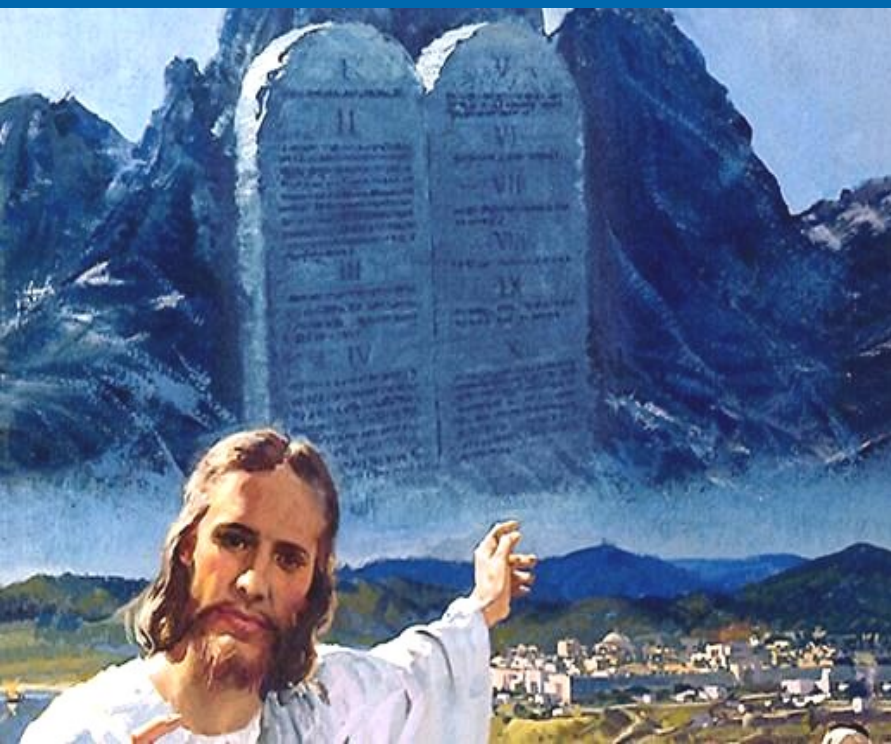
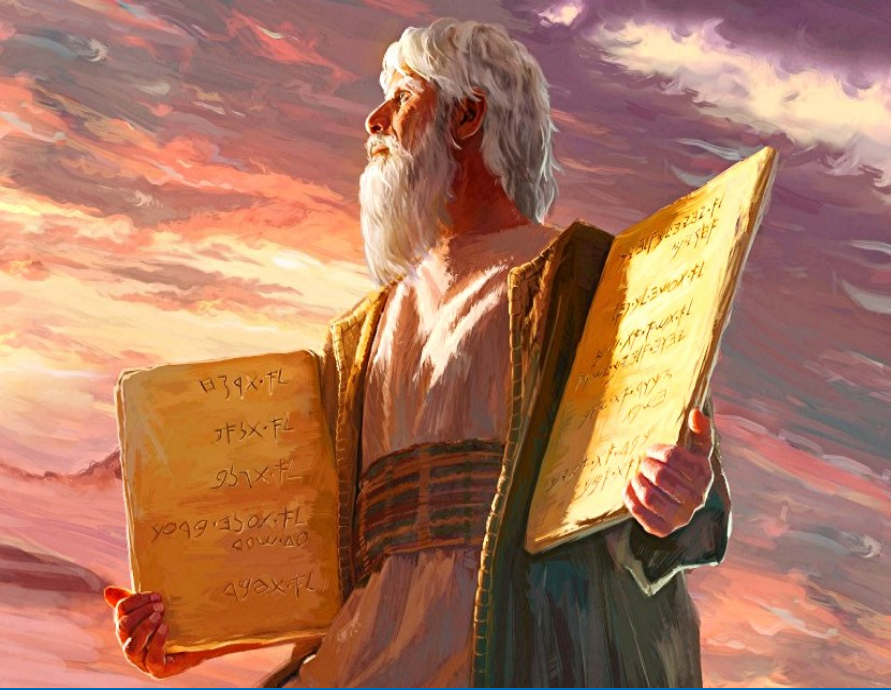


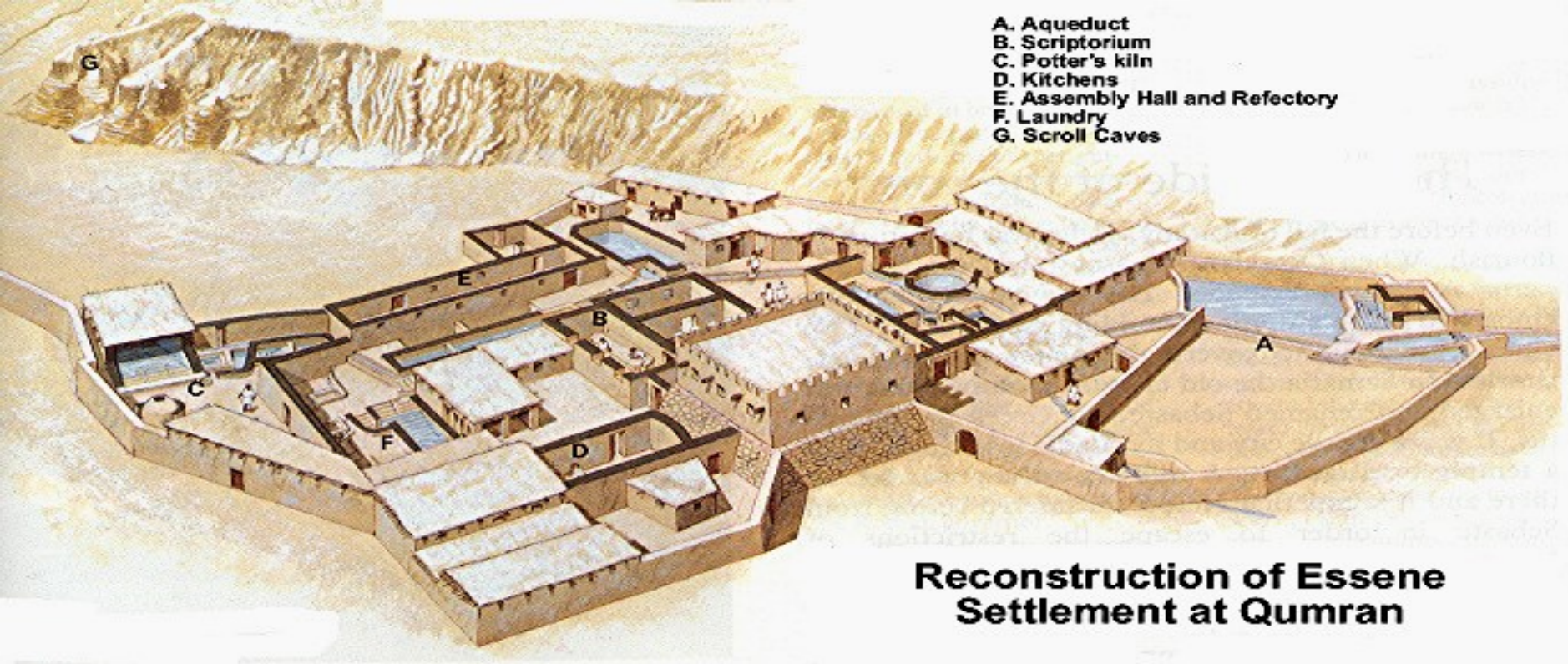
- Each Gospel writer had his own unique mindset and perspective on Yeshua's story
- Mark: No interest in Christ's youth
- Luke: Trying to please his patron Theophilus who needs help understanding Jewish Traditions
- Matthew: A Jew speaking to Jewish readers
- John: Expected his readers to know Jewish Traditions
- Concept of "The Word" (Memra) familiar to Jews
- Memra had a spiritual connotation among the Jews; logos did not among the gentiles



YESHUA AS “THE PROPHET LIKE ME”

- Matthew expected his readers to know Hebrew history and customs
- Backdrop for the Book of Matthew is that Yeshua is a second Moses
- Matthew makes several legitimate connections that a Jew would recognize but a gentile probably wouldn't





- John the Baptist's ministry begins in the desert of Judea
- Several religious communities lived in that region, trying to be separate from the Romans and Temple authorities
- John likely spent a significant amount of time with the Essenes as he uses terms very similar to those found in the Dead Sea Scrolls Community Documents
- Not likely that John became an Essene

“Prepare the way for the Lord...”

- John the Baptist’s two-fold message:
- 1) Turn from sins and return to God
- 2) The Kingdom of God is near
- Isaiah 40:3
- Jews and Christians agree this is prophetic of a Messiah
- Original context is about Jews returning from Babylon
- Isa. 39:5–40:11

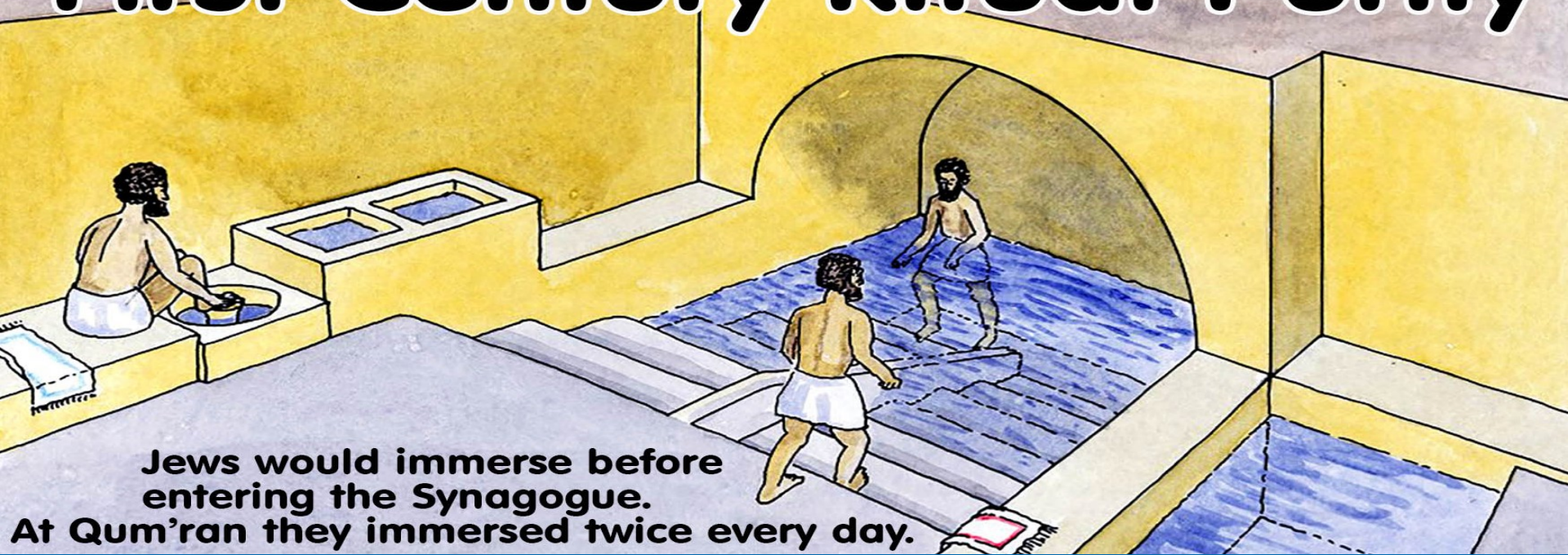


JOHN, THE 2ND ELIJAH?

- The *remez* speaks of a Messiah
- The *p'shat* speaks of a return from Babylon
- Jews believed that Elijah would return, and it is he who shall prepare the way
- Matt. 11:14
- Malachi 3:23 (or 4:5 or 4:6)
- John not the “Baptist” to Jews, but rather the “Immerser”



First Century Ritual Purity



Jews would immerse before entering the Synagogue.

At Qum'ran they immersed twice every day.

- Immersion in a Mikveh was in obedience to the Law
- Method of immersion less important than what the immersion signifies
- Ritual impurity usually easily solved by a wash & wait
- Impurity was remedied by water; sin remedied by blood
- John did NOT say that “baptizing” atoned for sin

BAPTISM

- Many Pharisees and Scribes would say the water has a physical effect on the human body
- Sprinkling instead of immersing likely a means to not do what the Jews do
- Jewish immersion was self-immersion
- Baptizing infants or small children has no spiritual value



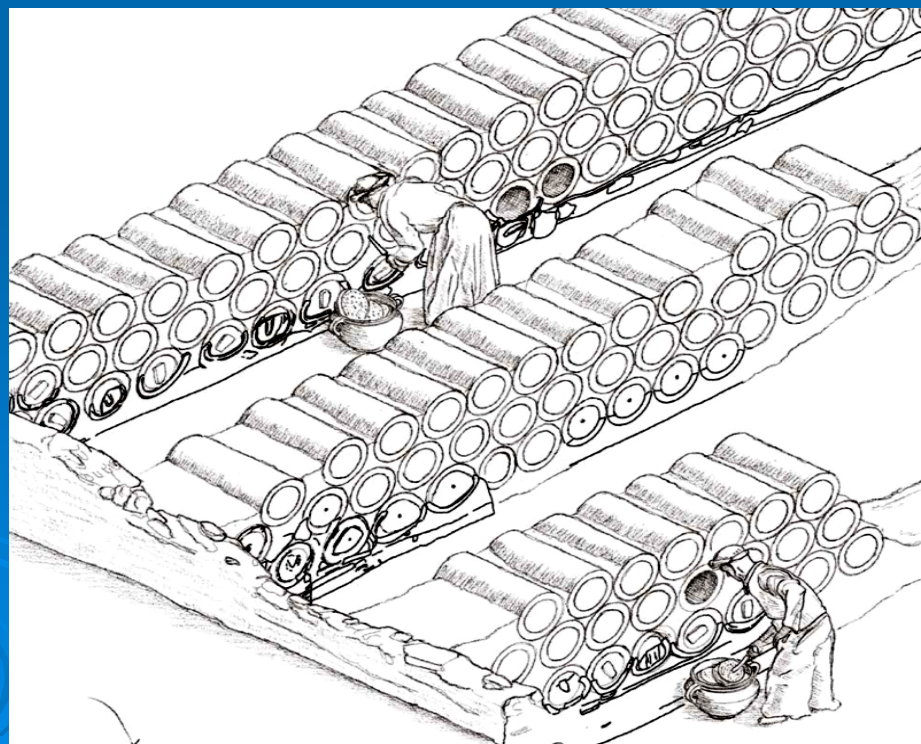
WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?



“...the
Kingdom of
God is within
you...
Luke 17:20 -21

- Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God are interchangeable terms
- Matthew almost entirely uses “Kingdom of Heaven” because he is a strict Jew
- Other 3 Gospels use mostly “Kingdom of God”
- **Entos** = within, inside
- The Kingdom of Heaven is a state of being
- Will only be a partial state until the new heavens and new earth
- Only in Believers does the Kingdom of Heaven exist on earth

- John's garment: hairy with a leather belt
- Just like Elijah wore: 2nd Kings 1:8
- Lev. 11 allows eating of certain kinds of Locusts
- Wild honey is likely to be uncultivated honey
- New discoveries prove that Hebrews cultivated honey as early as 900 B.C.
- John lived a life outside normal Jewish society





- Why would so many people come to John? They probably thought he was Elijah
- Since Malachi said Elijah would come in the End Times, it fit with what the Jews were expecting
- Each of the Gospels varies on exactly what the immersion of John was meant to deal with

JOHN'S ADVERSARIES

- Pharisees were the synagogue authority
- Sadducees were the Temple authority
- People came to John likely because they feared the End Times and God's wrath
- At the true End of Days, scared people will try to purchase any fast way to attempt to receive God's favor, no matter how insincere they are

Neither their
silver nor their
gold will be able
to deliver them
on the day of



Zephaniah
1:18

God's Wrath



PROOF OF FAITH

- Matt. 3:8 says that the fruit of good works is needed to prove the sincerity of our faith
- James 2:15–18 is about proving that we have a living faith
- Obedience to God begins the process of producing good fruit
- This is less about judging others' faith and more about measuring our own
- Matt. 7:19–23

