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BURIED 2,000 YEARS:
The Dead Sea Scrolls

ASSIGNMENT:
Junkie's Alley

THIRTY DAYS TO RECONSIDER

Produced on CBS Television by Talent Associates
SCENES FROM THE TV STORIES IN THIS BOOK

Khalial the Arab shows the precious scrolls to Professor Sukenik in BURIED 2,000 YEARS: THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS.

Another couple, their marriage on the rocks, is offered the services of the Court of Conciliation in Los Angeles. How their story ended is told in THIRTY DAYS TO RECONSIDER.

A tense moment for Police-woman Anne Rosen in ASSIGNMENT: JUNKIE'S ALLEY.

THE CITADEL PRESS
222 Fourth Avenue
New York 3, N. Y.
Original television play by IRVE TUNICK.
Produced by Robert Costello and directed by
William Corrigan.

Buried 2,000 Years:
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

This is a story about The Book, root of Judaism and Christ-
ianity. Written over a span of 1,400 years, from 1300 B.C. to
A.D. 100, the Holy Bible has been the spiritual bulwark of
untold millions.

This is the story of the Land—the Land of the Book, the
Land of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Land rinsed by the
River Jordan.

For centuries scholars and scientists have probed every
corner of this land searching for clues to that time 2,000 years
ago when so much of modern religious, historical and social
significance had its beginnings. Yet it was not until a few
years ago that the land yielded one of its most priceless
secrets, brittle with age, ripped into fragments, a treasure
trove of knowledge unmatched in history. Here was a treasure
that could challenge the very basis of man's faith—the Dead
Sea Scrolls—unearthed from the caves where they had lain
undiscovered for 2,000 years in the cliffs high above the
waters of the Dead Sea.

November of 1947 found Palestine, as so often in the past, a
land slashed with conflict. Tension between Arabs and Jews
broke out into violence as inflamed nationals, after 29 years
under British Mandate, awaited their ultimate fate, which was soon to be decided by the United Nations. Yet even against this angry background of the present, archaeologists searched for clues to the past. One of these archaeologists, Eleaizer Sukenik, a professor at the Hebrew University, studied a recent find in his home on Rambam Road in the Jewish section of Jerusalem.

As the Professor held a magnifying glass over an object, his telephone rang. Sukenik, absorbed in his activity, was oblivious to the ring. Finally his wife entered the room to answer it.

"It's for you, Eleaizer," she said, handing the phone to her husband.

"Sukenik here," said the Professor, still looking at the object he now held in his hand.

"This is Babajian, Professor Sukenik," said the voice on the phone.

"Who?"

"Babajian, the antiquities dealer whose shop is behind the barbed wire fence in Zone B."

"Oh, yes, Babajian. How are you?"

"As well as could be expected, Professor; considering these trying circumstances. It's a terrible situation. The way the city is divided into zones, crossing the street is like passing an international border."

"Yes," agreed Sukenik dismally, "it certainly is."

"Well, that isn't why I called," said the dealer, coming to himself. "You will remember, Professor, that I've shown you some unusual items in the past."

"So you have."

"Well, I have something at the moment that I am particularly anxious to show you. I think you will find it very interesting indeed."

"I'd like to see it, but I'm afraid it would be a little difficult for me to get into the Arab Zone. Can you tell me what it is?"

"Not on the telephone. Meet me at the barricade to Zone B. I'll show it to you there."

"I really don't think..." began Sukenik.

"Please, Professor Sukenik," interrupted Babajian, "accept my word that what I have to show you is worth the trouble. Have I ever misled you before? I beg you not to lose this opportunity."

Sukenik did not know what to say. It was true that Babajian had frequently provided him with very valuable material.

Matti, the Professor's twenty-year-old son, entered the room. "May I turn on the radio?" he asked. Mrs. Sukenik, who was anxiously eavesdropping on her husband's conversation, motioned him to be quiet.

"When should I meet you?" asked Sukenik.

"This afternoon. Three o'clock," answered Babajian. "It will be a pleasure to see you again, Professor Sukenik."

"All right," said Sukenik, "this afternoon, three o'clock—I'll see you then." He hung up the phone and returned to his desk, his magnifying glass again trained on the artifact. "You're going out this afternoon?" asked Matti. His father nodded. "But I thought you said you weren't going to do anything today but listen to the broadcast of the UN debate," protested Matti.

"I'll be back before the first speaker gets his second wind," his father assured him.

Mrs. Sukenik could no longer contain her anxiety. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going out," he replied vaguely.

"Out is where?"

"That was an antiquities dealer I know. He has something to show me." His tone indicated that the subject was closed.
“Show you where?” insisted his wife.
“It’s not important!” he exploded. Why must she always interfere?
“Walking out the door these days is important,” said Mrs. Sukenik ominously. “It could mean your life.”

The Professor had no rebuttal to this.
Now Matti confronted his father. “She’s right, you know,” he said.

Sukenik put down his magnifying glass and began to pack his pipe with tobacco. “Did I ask your opinion?” he inquired tersely. “Look,” he said, addressing both wife and son, “I am meeting him at the entrance to Zone B, he is going to show me something, and that’s all there is to it!” Glancing at his watch, he hurriedly began to put away his equipment.

“It could be a trap,” Matti warned.

“Why should anyone want to trap me?” Sukenik shrugged. “Because of Yigael.”

“And what does Yigael have to do with this?”

“It’s pretty generally known by now that Yigael is the chief of staff of the Haganah underground,” put in Mrs. Sukenik.

“And don’t you think that getting their hands on Yigael’s father hasn’t occurred to them?” added Matti.

Sukenik threw up his hands in disgust. “For heaven’s sake,” he said, “what could they want with me?”

Matti sat down beside his father. “Make you talk,” he said. “Hold you as a hostage.”

Sukenik paced the floor at this. Then: “Oh, don’t be ridiculous,” he scoffed. “Barbajian is an old friend.” He walked over to the coat rack and took his coat from the hanger.

His wife looked even more worried now. “Barbajian is on the other side of the barbed wire!” she cried.

“That doesn’t make him my enemy,” the Professor countered, putting on his coat.

“No, but it makes you his,” replied Mrs. Sukenik.

Sukenik was exasperated. “Aren’t things bad enough without you reading hidden meanings into everything that happens?” he demanded. “He has something he thinks will interest me. Maybe it will, maybe it won’t. Things are found all the time. There’s nothing unusual about it. But I’m going to go and see for myself.”

“Yigael wouldn’t want you to take the risk,” Matti pointed out.

“In my place. Yigael would go,” retorted Sukenik.

“Before he was a soldier, he was a scholar. He would go and so would I.” Before his audience could muster further arguments, he was out the door.

Mrs. Sukenik shook her head in despair.

“Well,” said Matti, “we’d better turn on the radio before we miss the whole debate.”

“Debate on Palestine,” came the voice of the announcer. “The General Assembly has postponed decision on the partition of Palestine in an effort to find a conciliatory proposal. The atmosphere at Flushing Meadows is charged with expectancy. A tense and demonstrative crowd awaits the final vote on Palestine’s Partition into separate Jewish and Arab States. A special police force is stationed in the Assembly Hall and . . .”

The City of Palestine was divided into two parts by barbed-wire barricades. The entrance and exit were guarded by heavily-armed British Tommies. Passes were required from those who wished to go through.

Professor Sukenik had met Barbajian on the Arab side of the barricades. In a dark alley between two buildings their heads were together over Barbajian’s wallet from which he
 extracted an ancient fragment.

Barbajian didn't hand it over to the Professor immediately. "Let me be very honest with you," he said. "I have always been honest, haven't I?"

"Yes, yes," answered Sukenik impatiently.

"I have no idea if this is of great or small value, or, for that matter, if it has any value at all. But I think you'll agree it looks interesting." He handed the fragment to the Professor. "Notice the writing on it. It's not Syriac."

Sukenik examined the fragment carefully. "No," he said, profoundly interested. "It's Hebrew!"

"Ah, that's what I thought!"

"Of course it's hard to tell from this small sample."

"That's understandable. But this is only a fragment taken from one of the scrolls."

Sukenik regarded his friend with growing curiosity. "Scrolls?" he repeated.

"Three of them. In the possession of our mutual friend, Khalial. You know—the Arab antiquities dealer in Bethlehem."

"Oh, yes—Khalial."

"He asked me to show you this fragment in the hope that you might find it genuine and want to buy all three scrolls for the Museum of Jewish Antiquities at the Hebrew University."

Sukenik felt a surge of excitement. "How did he come by these scrolls?" he asked, trying to conceal his enthusiasm. "Some Bedouins found them near the Dead Sea. That's all I know. Are you interested?"

"I'd like to study this more closely first. When must you let him know?"

"Soon."

"And the price?"

"If you care to buy, the price will be fair."

Suddenly the pair was confronted at the neck of the alley by a British Tommy holding his gun ready. "What's going on here?" he demanded.

"Why, nothing, sir," said Barbajian nervously. "We were just . . . ."

"Break it up," said the soldier roughly. "On your way."

"Couldn't we . . . ." began Barbajian.

"Walk it!"

"Another minute?" requested Sukenik.

"Take a walk—hop it now."

"Just one minute," Sukenik implored.

By this time Barbajian was being pushed along the dark street. "Keep it," he called to Sukenik. "Study it and let me know!"

In the Sukenik home the table had been set for dinner. Three places were laid, but Matti and Mrs. Sukenik sat alone half-heartedly sipping their soup. A worried frown creased the brow of Mrs. Sukenik.

"Now, Mother," Matti said finally, "Don't worry. Father isn't very late. He'll be home soon."

"These days a little late can mean never."

"Some day all this worrying will be over."

"Shall I tell you when this worrying will be over, Matti? I'm older than you and maybe I know a little more than you, so should I tell you when this will be over? When the meddlers stop meddling—not before!" Angrily she slammed her soup spoon down on the table.

"Now Mother," soothed Matti, "it's not our fault."

"I didn't say it was our fault," she snapped. "All I know is that I came to Palestine over thirty years ago. I set up the first kindergarten in the country. I taught Jewish children. I taught Arab children. They had the same running noses,
the same wet pants, the same wonderful smiles. We had no trouble. We should have been left alone, not meddled with. Fault! There is so much ‘fault’ we can all take some of the blame.” She dabbed her eyes with her napkin and listlessly continued eating.

Just then there was a sound at the door and both of them rose in hopeful expectation.

“Shalom,” greeted Sukenik.

“Where were you?” demanded Mrs. Sukenik.

“Matti,” he said, ignoring his wife, “I want you to go right over to Dr. Shulman’s and tell him I want to see him at once.”

“Sure.”

“Matti is eating,” Mrs. Sukenik pointed out, annoyed that her question had been slighted.

“Quickly now,” Sukenik told Matti. He looked uncertainly from his mother to his father and headed for the door. Sukenik hurried toward his study.

“Aren’t you going to eat?” his wife asked him.

“Eat?” he repeated vaguely. He slammed the door of his study and turned on his desk lamp. Tenderly he extracted the fragment Barbajian had given him from his wallet. Broken Hebrew letters stood out clearly as he examined it closely with a magnifying glass. Mrs. Sukenik entered the room and the Professor, as if seeing her for the first time since he got home, looked up at her and smiled. “Chassia,” he said exultantly, “look what I have here. Do you know what this is?”

She looked at the fragment. To her it looked like something that had been needlessly rescued from the rubbish. “What is it?” she asked.

“A parchment fragment,” he explained. “Very old, very very old!” He strode over to the table on the other side of the room and began to rummage through his papers. “If only Yigael were here,” he said. “He could help me decide whether it’s authentic or the work of some clever forger. No one is Yigael’s equal in this field.”

“Yes,” she sighed. “Yigael was a good scholar. When scholars go to war, Eleaer, where do the young go to learn?”

At that moment Matti and Dr. Shulman burst into the study. Shulman—a short, stocky, scholarly-looking man—hurried over to Sukenik. “What is it?” he asked breathlessly. “Has something happened?”

“Shulman! You must see what I have!” He took his colleague by the arm and ushered him over to his desk. He pointed dramatically to the piece of parchment lying there.

Shulman picked up the fragment and examined it carefully under the magnifying glass.

Mrs. Sukenik shook her head indulgently, and led Matti out of the study. She and Matti could only be regarded as interlopers now, and it was obvious that Eleaer would be deaf to her entreaties about dinner for some time to come.

“Where did you get it?” asked Shulman.

“I’ll tell you later. What do you think? Does it look authentic?”

Shulman tore off a tiny piece of the edge, depositing it in the ashtray, and asked Sukenik for a match. He applied flame to the piece of leather and lifted the ashtray to his nose. “Parchment!” he exclaimed.

“Just as I thought! Let me show you something,” Sukenik took the magnifying glass from his friend and, studying the fragment, began to draw a Hebrew letter on a pad of paper. “Look! The Hebrew letter ‘M.’ Have you ever seen this archaic form before?”

Shulman picked up the pad and studied it, his excitement rising also. “No,” he admitted.
“I have,” said Sukenik, adding significantly, “in only one place.” Using the folder he had been poring over at the table as a model, he again traced the Hebrew letter “M.” “You see,” he said, “they match almost perfectly.” “Where is the second from?” asked Shulman. “From the lettering on some small coffins in a number of ancient tombs excavated a few years ago. They dated back 2,000 years to the period just before the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans.” “The year 68!” marveled Shulman. He picked up the fragment again and examined it closely. “I’ve never seen this form of lettering with a pen on leather,” said Sukenik. “But they’re the same. You can see that.” “Wait a minute,” interposed Shulman. “It’s from the Old Testament: ‘At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah, the son of Amoz . . .’ The Book of Isaiah!” “That’s right—Isaiah!” “But it’s impossible!” “Why?” “Why?” repeated Shulman. “You know why. We have no Hebrew Bibles 2,000 years old. The Septuagint, oldest copy of the Old Testament known, dates from the Third Century. And that’s a Greek translation of the Hebrew.” He got up and paced the floor. “Why, the oldest copy of the Hebrew version we have is the Ben Asher Codex dated 895 A.D. You’re saying that because of the similarity of lettering to the coffin inscriptions that this fragment is from a parchment written 1,000 years earlier. It’s simply impossible!” “Why do you keep saying ‘impossible’?” Sukenik exploded. “Men wrote then. The Bible was in existence then. Why is it impossible?” “No parchment written that early could possibly survive,” answered Shulman. “Our climate wouldn’t permit it. Too humid. It would have turned the parchment to dust hundreds of years ago.” “But on the shores of the Dead Sea,” insisted Sukenik, “the Dead Sea, Shulman—the one place where it is dry and hot and where it might lie undisturbed for two thousand years. That might be possible.” Shulman shook his head skeptically. “Possible perhaps, but not probable,” he said. “Anyway what can one tell from a fragment?” “From a fragment, little,” admitted Sukenik, his excitement mounting, “but from a whole scroll? The whole book?” “I just don’t believe it.” “All right, I’ll prove it to you!” Sukenik picked up the phone on his desk. “What do you think you’re doing?” asked Shulman in exasperation. “Five—nine—four—seven,” said Sukenik into the mouthpiece. Then to Shulman: “Think of it! The Book of Isaiah transcribed in Hebrew over 2,000 years ago—less than 600 years after Isaiah walked these very hills, breathed this very air, and prophesied that the exiles of Israel shall return!” By this time Barbajian had answered the telephone. “Barbajian,” said Sukenik, trying to hide his excitement, “this is Sukenik. I’ve examined the fragment. I think it’s old. I’m interested. I’d like to buy the scrolls.” “Oh, that’s splendid,” said Barbajian. “Khalial will be most pleased.” “When can you get the scrolls from him?” “Get the scrolls?” “Naturally I want to examine them. When can you get them?” “But Professor Sukenik, that’s not possible. Khalial would
never agree to that. If you want to purchase the scrolls, you'll have to see him personally."

"In Bethlehem? But that's in Arab territory. They'd skin me alive. Why can't you get them for me?"

"Professor Sukenik," said Barbajian with exaggerated patience, "you know that in spite of everything—flood, famine or war—you can't do business with an Arab like that. They never do business over the phone. It takes all the pleasure, all the savor out of a transaction. No, Khalil is sure to want to conduct the sale according to custom. You must understand that."

"I suppose," answered Sukenik helplessly. "I'll be glad to go with you," offered Barbajian.

"When?" he asked weakly.

"Tomorrow?"

"I'll have to think it over. I'll let you know. Goodbye." Sukenik sat staring at the phone.

"You don't dare to go to Bethlehem," Shulman told him. "If I don't go, if I pass this by and if war comes, what will happen to the scrolls?"

Just then the outside door opened and Sukenik heard his wife calling, "Yigael! Yigael!"

The two men hurried into the living room where Matti and his mother were greeting Yigael. Everyone spoke at once. "How long will you stay?" asked Mrs. Sukenik finally, wiping her eyes. "At least until tomorrow, won't you?"

"Mother, I—" began Yigael.

"Yigael," interrupted his father, "you've come at such a time! Wait till you see what I have!" He began now to see some vague hope that he could get to Bethlehem.

"Eleazer, not now," admonished Mrs. Sukenik.

"This can't wait!" he cried. "I'm not exaggerating, Yigael. This could be the greatest archaeological find of the century!"

He put his arm around his son and led him to the desk in his study. "Look at this," he said picking up the fragment. Yigael took the fragment to the window and examined it against the light. "It does look very old," he agreed.

"Two thousand years!"

"Hmmm. It might be."

"The Book of Isaiah, a traditional text 1,000 years older than the Ben Asher Codex!"

"This is only a fragment," Yigael pointed out.

"But there is a whole scroll, Yigael! Perhaps others. And I know where they are!" He spoke with increasing excitement. "It's as if these manuscripts have been waiting in caves 2,000 years, ever since the destruction of Israel by the Romans, since the beginning of the dispersal, waiting, waiting until our people are home again and freedom is regained. Then they come back into the light!"

"Where are the scrolls?" asked Yigael, catching his father's excitement.

"I can get them."

"The scrolls are in Bethlehem," Shulman broke in. "Bethlehem! You're not going to Bethlehem!"

"How can I pass up this chance?"

"Yigael, don't let him go!" pleaded Mrs. Sukenik.

"What do you mean—don't let me go? Shall I turn my back on the scrolls, lose them because there's a little political trouble?"

"Look," reasoned Yigael, "can't you get them some other way? There's still some mail coming across from the Arab Zone."

"No, no," retorted Sukenik impatiently. "I've got to go personally and speak to the Arab merchant who has them now. That's the only way."

"Get in touch with someone from a neutral country,"
Yigael argued. "An American, a Frenchman. Maybe they can make the arrangements."

Sukenik walked over to the window and looked out moodily for a long moment. "It would never work out," he said finally.

"Now, look" said Yigael, becoming impatient, "I know how important this is, but you're not going to Bethlehem. It's suicide. You'd never come back."

"That's only what you think," replied his father stubbornly. "It's what I know. And I'm in a position to know."

"Please don't try to stop me, Yigael."

"I must."

Mrs. Sukenik went to her husband and touched his shoulder lightly. He brushed her aside. "Eleazer," she implored. "Listen to Yigael."

"Why should I?" he asked sullenly.

"Because I'm ordering you not to go," Yigael said firmly, "not asking you. And I have the authority to order you. Promise me you won't try to get those scrolls."

"For two thousand years they've waited," protested his father.

"Then they can wait a little longer. I want you to promise."

Sukenik sat down again at his desk, covering his face with his hands. Finally he said, "All right, Yigael. I promise."

Yigael touched his father gently on the shoulder and led his mother, his brother and Shulman out of the room.

Alone, Sukenik picked up the fragment once again and looked at it with longing, affection and despair. The real treasure was beyond the barricades. The guns and barbed wire could only be defied at the risk of death. And what had been lost for 2,000 years might be lost forever in the turbulence of war.

Hours later, Professor Sukenik was still in his study. Back and forth he paced; again and again he paused at his desk, opened the drawer and took out the fragment.

Suddenly his restlessness was over. He drew the blinds, turned on his desk lamp and picked up the telephone. He was determined to get the scrolls at any cost.

"Five—nine—four—seven," he said, examining the fragment as he waited for the connection to be made.

"Barbajian here."

"Barbajian, this is Sukenik. I'm sorry if I got you up, but—"

"That's all right, Professor. What is it?"

"Meet me at the sentry gate at 5:30. We'll go to Bethlehem today."

Sukenik placed the receiver on its hook. He walked over to his cabinet and removed three books. He placed the fragment back into the desk drawer and turned out the lights.

The British soldier waved an Arab through the barricades and turned to the man next in line. Carrying three books under his arm, the man stepped forward and presented his pass.

"This pass is a week old," the Tommy pointed out.

"Yes," admitted Sukenik. "It was issued when I went to the YMCA library to get these books. If a pass is good to get books, it must be good to return them."

"You're a Jew," observed the Tommy, "and you want to go over into the Arab quarter?"

Sukenik nodded.

"To return library books?"

Sukenik nodded again. "You wouldn't want me to keep them, would you?" he added.

"And have it on my conscience? Heaven forbid!" remarked the Tommy ruefully. "All right," he said, "it's your neck." And he opened the barrier.

Sukenik slipped through and moved quickly up the street.
Barbajian, standing in the shadow of a door, beckoned to him. He handed the Professor an Arab headdress from under his coat and watched while Sukenik hastily put it on. Both now dressed as Arabs, they set out on the next leg of their journey—destination: Bethlehem.

In the living room of the Sukenik home, the Professor's wife was seated at the table drinking her coffee and reading the newspaper. Matti entered and greeted her with a kiss on the cheek. Then he noticed that there was no place set for his father. "Has Father had breakfast already?" he inquired.

"Your father is not here," said Mrs. Sukenik grimly. "He was up before dawn. I heard him. He's gone to Bethlehem."

"To Bethlehem!" exclaimed Matti. "But he promised Yigael he wouldn't go!"

"He has gone to Bethlehem," she repeated.

"I've got to find Yigael and tell him," he said rising.

"What can Yigael do?"

"He'll get himself killed! Yigael must be told."

"Yigael is busy worrying about an army," reasoned his mother. "What can he do? Send the army to Bethlehem to rescue his father?"

"But we have to do something," insisted Matti.

"We'll do something," she said quietly.

"What?"

"Worry," she said, staring out of the window.

Sukenik and Barbajian each took a cup of coffee from the tray offered them. Barbajian put his cup down. Now that they were comfortably settled, he was eager to get down to business. "Khalial," he urged, "I'm sure the Professor is anxious to hear the story of the scrolls."

"Ah, the scrolls," smiled Khalial. "As with every story, it has a beginning and an end and many versions. I will tell you what has been told me."

"Please," said Sukenik, leaning forward.

"The Taamirah tribe of Bedouins found themselves in the region of the Wadi Qumran a few months ago," began Khalial. "You know the place?"

"The northwestern corner of the Dead Sea?" queried Sukenik.

"Yes," replied Khalial. "They were seeking pasture for their goats—that's one story. Another is that they were bringing goods across the Jordan by such a route as not to disturb the customs inspectors. But, for whatever reason, they were there. A fifteen-year-old boy—Muhammed Adh-Dhib, 'The Wolf'—was chasing a stray goat. It disappeared into a hole in the side of the hill. 'The Wolf' threw a stone after it. Out of the depth of the cave came the sound of breaking pottery. Being yet a child, with a full share of childish curiosity, he lowered himself into the hole. You can guess the rest. He found the scrolls."

"A very charming story," approved Sukenik.

"The Bedouins wandered for a time with them—then brought them here to me in Bethlehem," continued Khalial.

"May I see them?" asked Sukenik.

"I have them here," said Khalial, walking over to a box on the other side of the room and motioning for his guests to follow him. He took the cover off the box, revealing three jars with scrolls in them.

"Are these three all that were found?" asked Sukenik.

"There may be more."

"How many?"

"A few. Would you care to examine them more closely?"

"I certainly would," replied Sukenik eagerly, leaning over
and taking out one of the scrolls. Carefully, he worked the linen off and unrolled a bit.

"You would say they are old?"

"They appear to be quite old, yes," Sukenik answered as he studied the writing.

"Will you read me the writing?"

"The text is unknown to me."

"But you can translate it?"

Sukenik studied the scroll a little longer and then read:

"These things I know from thy understanding, for thou hast uncovered my ear for marvelous mysteries. The language is beautiful," he told Khalial. "I wish I could do it justice."

"As it is written: God obligeth no man to more than he hath given him the ability to perform," replied Khalial with a smile.

Sukenik returned to the scroll and continued: "But I am a thing formed of clay..."

Suddenly there was a loud slam of a door and a man with a curved dagger burst into the room.

"In my father's house I will not kill you. But I will be waiting outside, Jew," he snarled.

"Ibrahim!" shouted Khalial.

"He was recognized. The whole town will be waiting," snapped Ibrahim.

"Ibrahim! He is my guest!" reproved Khalial. "In this house we do not parade naked daggers and threaten who is under our roof! Put that away!"

"Father, he..."

"Put it away!" ordered Khalial.

Reluctantly, Ibrahim sheathed his dagger.

"What has the world come to when a son will draw a dagger against a guest in his father's house? Is this the new world you boast of building?" Khalial turned to Sukenik.

"A million pardons," he apologized.

"These are tense times, Khalial. Don't blame your son."

"I blame all who tear down decency under the banner of patriotism. It is a false banner. A false God!" He turned to his son. "The hospitality I have extended goes beyond this room," he told him. "You will protect him, guard him, see that his way home is safe and uninterrupted. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

"Now leave us!"

Ibrahim hesitated for a moment, but then bowed to his father and left.

"I am of the old ways," said Khalial sadly. "There are not many of us left."

Matti sat in his father's study listening to a news broadcast.

"It seems certain now," said the voice of the announcer, "that voting on the Joint Resolution calling for the partition of Palestine will start some time this evening. Even at this late hour it is impossible to predict the outcome. The bell summoning delegates to the Assembly Hall rang on empty corridors, for everybody had returned early to the Assembly Hall. Excitement is now reaching an even higher pitch as the crucial moment of voting draws near..."

Matti snapped off the radio as his mother entered the room with the mail. "You can keep it on, Matti," she said.

"Oh, well, there's nothing important going on right now."

He glanced at his watch. "It's almost ten o'clock. The last bus from Bethlehem comes in at eight."

"Since when do buses run on time?"

"I think I ought to call Yigael."

His mother shook her head. "I don't want him worried," she said.
Matti waked over to the window and looked out without seeing. "It was such a stupid, foolish thing to do," he blurted. "Why did he have to go?"

"Because he is a brave man," replied his mother simply.

The distant sound of a gun shot alerted the sentry. His flashlight caught the figure of Sukenik rushing toward the barricades. He was loaded down with three grocery bags.

"Oh, it's you," said the Tommy.

"Can you reach my pass? It's in my side pocket," said Sukenik breathlessly. The sound of gun shots was nearer now.

The Tommy opened the barrier and spoke impatiently. "What are you waiting for? On your way!"

Sukenik hurried through the barrier and the Tommy flattened himself against the sandbags, prepared for trouble.

In the Sukenik living room, Mrs. Sukenik stood at the window anxiously. Matti was listening to the radio in the study. "Mother," he called, "I think they're going to start to vote."

"I—I'll come. In a minute."

Just then there was the sound of someone at the door. Immediately, Matti was there, and in came Sukenik with his grocery bags.

"Shalom," he said with a smile,

"Father! We've been going crazy with worry . . . ."

"Do what I ask you right away," interrupted Sukenik.

"Run over and tell Dr. Shulman I want to see him."

"He's not going to come."

"Why not?"

"Don't you know what's going on? The UN vote is due to start any minute. Everybody in the country will be hovering over the radio all night."

"Tell him to come here and hang the radio! It's a celebration, tell him. But tell him he must come."

Matti turned to his mother, "What am I to do?" he asked. "Like you always do. What your father says."

Sukenik had hurried into his study and removed the contents of the grocery bags. Three jars stood side by side on his desk. He turned to acknowledge his wife, who had just entered the room. "What shall I say?" he said sheepishly. "I had to go, you know. I had to get the scrolls."

"Of course," she said. "There was never any real question about it in my mind. May I see them?" Sukenik removed a scroll from one of the jars. "Why they look so old that one touch would turn them to dust!" she exclaimed.

"It's a miracle they've survived as they have. Unrolling them will be a job, but we can do it."

"They are real, aren't they? They're not forgeries?"

"Absolutely not! The writing—the parchment—the jars they were found in—everything shouts that they are legitimate portions of the Bible, in Hebrew, written here in the Holy Land at least 2,000 years ago. No one ever dreamed that it would be possible to make such a find."

"Eleazer, when Yigael was here you said something . . . . You told him that it was as if they had been waiting 2,000 years, since the destruction of Israel, until our people returned to their home and reclaimed their country. It sounds as if you believe that it was preordained they were to be returned on this night. Do you believe that?"

"I'm afraid that the line between preordained and coincidence will have to be drawn by a wiser man than myself," replied Sukenik thoughtfully. "But I do believe in God, and I believe in what I see!"
“Eleazer,” called Mrs. Sukenik from the living room, “the voting has started. Do you want to hear?”

There was no answer from the study where Sukenik and Shulman were feverishly engrossed. With a smile at her son, who was seated near the radio, she got up and went to the door of the study and stood watching her husband bent over his drawing board.

“Eleazer,” she said finally, “what can those old scrolls say that is so important you can’t stop long enough to listen to the UN voting?”

Sukenik looked up from his drawing board. “What is so important, Chassia? I will tell you what is so important . . .” And warming to his subject, he got up and spoke to Shulman and his wife as if he were addressing a classroom. “It’s a quick judgment, and maybe I shouldn’t make it, but I will. Because I believe it.

“We all approach the Bible with a little suspicion. Why? Because we know that the Bible we possess, the Old Testament for both the Jewish and Christian faiths, is not an exact version but a copy of a copy, bearing all the changes that are bound to occur when a book is copied and translated from one language to another. How extensive are these changes? How could we know? Changes in ideas, interpretations, meanings—how could we know? So when I sat down here, when I began to study these first few passages of Isaiah, with the realization that I was working on a text which pre-dated by a thousand years the oldest Hebrew text known, my hands shook—my whole body trembled. Suppose it should turn out that our Bible was a twisted, tortured version of the Holy Book? Imagine what the impact would be on the millions in the world who look to the Scriptures as the Word inspired?

“In the beginning, I almost turned away from it in fear.

Do you blame me? But as I studied, I saw a miracle taking place before my eyes. Despite the age of the scrolls, despite the fact that they were written 2,000 years ago at least, despite everything, the difference between the wording of our Bible and the wording of the scrolls is so small as to be nearly meaningless. They are almost identical. Spelling varies; there are some word-substitutions; but in essence, in meaning, in content—the same!

Now Matti was at the door. “Aren’t you coming?” he asked impatiently.

“Yes, yes, we’re coming,” said his mother, and turning to her husband, she urged, “Will you?”

Sukenik looked at Shulman inquiringly. Then he nodded to his wife, and the three filed into the living room.

“The past has told us its story,” she observed. “Now let’s see about the present.”

The voice on the radio was calling the roll of countries as their delegates seated themselves. Then a knock came at the door. It was Yigael with two friends. They had come to hear the broadcast. Sukenik waited for the introductions and other amenities before he drew his son aside. He had to show show him what he had in his study.

“Yigael,” began his father closing the door to muffle the sound of the radio, “when you were younger, you were an average kind of boy . . .”

“Averager?”

“Well, you were no angel.”

“I guess not!” laughed Yigael.

“But you must admit I was always tolerant,” his father went on. “When you did something a little wrong—when you didn’t do exactly what you were told to do, I was . . . lenient. Wasn’t I?”

“All right, now you must be tolerant and lenient.”
“Huh?” Yigael was becoming increasingly baffled. “You see, I was a little disobedient...”

Comprehension dawned on Yigael’s face. “The scrolls!” he exclaimed. “You went to Bethlehem!”

“Once three wise men went to Bethlehem carrying gifts,” continued Sukenik. “This time one old fool went and he came back with a treasure.”

Just then Matti burst into the room. “They’ve finished voting!” he announced excitedly. “The result will be announced any second! Come on!”

Sukenik and Yigael joined the others in the living room. The atmosphere was charged with excitement. “Here is the result of the voting on the Unicop Resolution for Palestine,” said the voice from the radio. “Of the fifty-seven nations represented—thirty-three votes for the Resolution, thirteen votes against, ten abstentions, one absent. Two-thirds majority having voted for the Resolution, it is passed!”

For a long moment everyone in the room simply stared ahead or looked at one another without speaking. Matti was the first to be heard from. He leaped to his feet with a cry of joy.

“It’s passed! It’s passed!” he shouted. “The mandate is over—we’re free! We’re a country—free!” And he began to sing the first bars of “Hatikvah.” Soon the others were on their feet, joining in.

Sukenik shared the enthusiasm of his family and friends, but he was impatient to show his son the scrolls. He motioned to Yigael and the two again slipped into the study as the singing continued.

“I wonder who hid them 2,000 years ago?” he said, half to himself and half to Yigael as he led him to the drawing board. “I wonder if they knew how great would be the day they were returned...”

... But they had not all been returned.

The months following the UN vote on the partition of Palestine were a time of turmoil and bloodshed throughout Palestine. There was much rioting and street fighting in Jerusalem. Great Britain announced her decision to terminate her mandate, thus creating a vacuum into which flowed the bitter currents of terrorism.

Against this background, almost oblivious to it, Professor Sukenik and his colleague worked feverishly over the scrolls, never realizing that what they had in their hands was only a fraction of an even greater find.

One day as Sukenik and Dr. Shulman were busily at work tracing lettering from one of the scrolls, they had a visitor—Dr. Berger from the University Library. Dr. Berger was an old friend, and the two scholars were delighted to see him and show off their scrolls. The librarian informed them that he had only just heard of the discovery.

“We still don’t know exactly what we have, Berger,” said Sukenik. “We’re working day and night transcribing.”

“The work is slow,” added Shulman. “The task of unfolding the scrolls is most delicate.”

“We know we have three different manuscripts—portions of the Book of Isaiah, a scroll which tells of a battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, and another of Hebrew verse which reads like the Psalms,” continued Sukenik.

“And there’s no question of their antiquity?” asked Berger.

“Absolutely none. Positively genuine. Over 2,000 years old,” said Shulman.

“I’ll tell you why I have come,” said Berger, turning to Sukenik. “A few months ago—it was during the time you were on your visit to the United States, Sukenik—I received a letter from Dr. Magnes, the University President. He wrote
me that he had learned there were some old manuscripts in
the possession of the Syrian Monastery of St. Mark in the
Old City. The head of the Monastery, Metropolitan Mar
Althanasis, wanted to know if they were old and had
any value. Dr. Magnes asked that I have a look.

"And did you see them?" asked Sukenik.

"Yes. I visited the Monastery and saw them," replied Dr.
Berger. "They looked just about like that one," he added,
pointing to the scroll on the table.

"What did you do?" questioned Sukenik eagerly.

"I'm a librarian—not a Biblical scholar. To me the text
looked Samaritan. But I wasn't sure. I suggested to the
Metropolitan that I send a specialist over to examine them.

Then I left."

"You left!"

"I had a lot to do that day. I remember I..."

"Did you go back? Did you send for the specialist?"
interrupted Shulman impatiently.

"No. A week or so later I called the Metropolitan and
asked if he still wanted an opinion, but he was away. So
that's the way it was left. It wasn't until I learned of the
excitement over your scrolls that the thought occurred to
me that the ones I saw might be valuable, too."

"Is it possible that there are more scrolls?" marveled
Shulman. "From the same find?"

"Why not? Why shouldn't it be possible? Khalial hinted
there might be others, but I didn't press the point. I thought
he was just trying to impress me." Sukenik turned to Berger.

"How many scrolls did you see?"

"Three or four."

"The condition?" probed Shulman.

"When we're that old, we should be in that condition."

"We've got to get them," exploded Sukenik, beginning
to pace back and forth. "If they are part of the same find,
we've got to have them all together. Otherwise, they might
get scattered to the four winds. Who knows what could
happen?"

"It's too late to do anything about it now. The Arab
sector is sealed off," said Shulman gloomily. But Sukenik
was already at the telephone. "You couldn't get to the Syrian
Monastery if you tried," he told Sukenik.

"I can't, but Barbajian can."

"Who?" asked Berger.

Barbajian greeted Sukenik expansively. "My good friend,
it is so pleasant to hear from you again. I trust you have been
in good health."

"Listen, Barbajian," put in Sukenik impatiently, "for once
let's forget all the fiddle-faddle preliminaries. Let me ask
you a straight question."

"Please do," urged Barbajian pleasantly.

"Do you know of additional scrolls like the ones I bought
from Khalial? Do you know of some in the possession of the
Syrian Monastery of St. Mark?"

"It is possible that I know of them—yes."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Khalial said that he had other people interested."

"Well, why didn't he tell me?"

"You would have to ask him that."

"Look, Barbajian—have they been sold? Do you know
that?"

"I don't believe they have been sold... not yet," said
Barbajian slowly.

"Can you arrange for me to see them so that I can at
least make an offer?"

"That might be difficult."

"But I must see them!"
"Then you must allow me to handle the entire matter—
made all the arrangements."

"Do it by all means. And call me as soon as you can."

Sukenik sighed as he hung up the phone. "Well, if it can
be done," he told his friends, "Barbajian will find a way to
do it." He turned to Berger. "And now let me show you
what we've been . . . ."

"Professor, a thought occurs to me," interrupted Shulman.
"Where are you going to get the money to pay for these
scrolls?"

"That's a good question," agreed Sukenik wryly. "I got the
money from Dr. Magnes for the first ones, but it was
a small sum."

"I believe I know enough about buying antiquities," offened Berger, "to point out that when one is offered it
can be had cheap. But when you go seeking, the price is
steep. Forgive the rhyme."

"The question is: how steep?" asked Shulman.

Berger looked at the two men steadily. "Maybe 2,000
pounds," he said.

Matti stood proudly before his parents whose eyes were
fixed on the silver wings pinned to his new uniform.

"So now we've got a flyer in the family," said his father.
"Well, son, I wish you good luck."

"It's hard to get used to," said Mrs. Sukenik sadly. "Our
home was always a place of quiet and study. Now I have
a husband who dodges bullets running back and forth in
no-man's land. I have one son who commands an army. I
have another who's a flyer."

"And what about our son Joseph?"

"Joseph? At least an actor in Tel-Aviv is safe."

The phone rang in the study. As he went to answer it,

Sukenik remarked over his shoulder, "From what I saw of
his last performance, he's the one you should be worrying
about."

The call was from Barbajian. "I have been able to make
the necessary arrangements we discussed," he told Sukenik.
"You will have to find some way of getting into the Arab
quarter. When you get here, come directly to the library of
the YMCA. A man will be waiting for you. He will be there
from eleven o'clock to noon. He won't be able to stay a
moment longer . . . ."

Recognizing the figure of Sukenik approaching the barri-
cade, the Tommy gave a low whistle. "Well, I'll be . . . . I"
he exclaimed softly.

"I have to get to the YMCA—it's very important," said
Sukenik.

"It is, is it?"

"Very important."

"What is it this time—are you taking books or returning
them?"

"Neither. I'm discovering them."

"You know, with the blarney you hand out, you should
have been born an Irishman," the soldier commented, but
he lifted the barrier with the admonition: "Go on—and
good luck!"

In the Arab sector, Sukenik made a bee-line for the library.
Father Demetrius was waiting for him there, an unobtrusive
straw bag by his side. When Sukenik entered the room
his eyes slid over the people seated at reading tables and
fell on the priest with the straw bag. The two men took
stock of one another. Father Demetrius got up. "Sukenik,
is it?" he asked.

"Yes."
"I'm Father Demetrius. Did you have any trouble getting here?"

"When I came to the building there must have been fifty Arabs sitting on the terrace. When they saw me, a Jew, they woke up, I was in the building," Sukenik chuckled. "Let's hope you can return with the same ease," said Father Demetrius.


"I think it would be best, however, if we made this meeting short as possible," added the priest.

"Absolutely," agreed Sukenik, watching eagerly as Father Demetrius took the scrolls out of his straw bag.

"The Metropolitan is eager to get your opinion as to the authenticity of these scrolls. Are they very old?" inquired Father Demetrius.

"They're old," Sukenik told him, examining one of the scrolls closely.

"That being so, he would like to know if you are interested in purchasing them for the Hebrew University."

"It's possible," said Sukenik cautiously. "But I'd like to take them home for further examination. Could I do that?"

"I think it will be all right, providing we can have your decision in three days. I'm afraid that's all the time we can allow."

"All right," agreed Sukenik.

"If I do not hear from you before that time, I'll meet you at the gate to Zone B—let us say Thursday at four o'clock."

"You have my word. Thursday at four o'clock."

Father Demetrius put the scrolls back into the bag and handed it to Sukenik.

In Sukenik's study, Shulman and Berger cautiously began to unroll one of the three new scrolls. They worked without the Professor, who had set off promptly that morning to seek the funds necessary to purchase them.

"You are sure these are from the same source as Sukenik's original scrolls?" asked Berger.


"To think that before these scrolls were found we only possessed fragments from the era when Christianity was being born," remarked Berger. "And now, who knows? Some day there could be a whole library of the literature of that time."

"A fine dream, but it will stay just that if we can't raise the necessary money," Shulman commented wryly.

But they worked through the day, not even stopping while they ate the lunch Mrs. Sukenik brought in to them on a tray. They were still poring over the scrolls when Sukenik returned at dusk.

"No luck," he told them, sitting down wearily, "absolutely none. Where, oh where, are we going to get the money!"

"Did you speak to Dr. Magnes?" asked Shulman.

"The University has no funds at all."

"I was afraid of that," said Berger. "What about . . ."

"I tried everything," interrupted Sukenik. "I even tried to mortgage the house. But the way the real estate situation is in Jerusalem right now, you couldn't raise twenty pounds on the Dome of the Rock. The bankers said 'no' in the pleasantest kind of way."

"But our work has just started," put in Berger despairingly.

"We must have time to study them. Find out what they can tell us, what message they have for us," added Shulman.
“There’s one last chance,” said Sukenik tentatively. “One of us could go to Tel-Aviv. Talk to Ben-Curion.”

“But would he listen?” wondered Berger.

“Once he knew what we have, how important they are, I believe he’d give us the money,” said Sukenik.

“It’s worth trying,” commented Shulman. “I’ll go.”

“It’s a terrible risk,” Sukenik pointed out. “The road is under fire all the way.”

“If you can go to Bethlehem, I can go to Tel-Aviv,” retorted Shulman. “After all, Professor, your skin is no more bullet-proof than mine.”

The rioting and bloodshed in Jerusalem reached a frenzied peak in the days following, with snipers on every rooftop. The road between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv was a death-trap. But Sukenik kept doggedly at work as he awaited news of his friend, and the hour when the scrolls must be returned grew closer.

It was late afternoon. Yigael had just stolen into his father’s study.

Sukenik was so preoccupied that he didn’t realize he was not alone until Yigael spoke. “Any news of Shulman?” he asked softly.

“Oh, Yigael,” his father acknowledged, looking up from his work. “I don’t even know if Shulman got to Ben-Curion,” he sighed. “The man is so busy now. I don’t know if he could take time to worry about scrolls.”

“You have no doubts about them?” asked Yigael, peering over his father’s shoulder at the scroll spread out on the desk.

“None at all,” Sukenik said firmly. “These new scrolls are as important, probably more important, to the world than the ones we now have. They shed amazing light on the text of the Bible. But just as exciting is what they tell us of the religious sect that buried them, because it’s wholly possible that this sect—perhaps the Essenes...” Sukenik paused. “But whoever they were,” he went on, “their philosophy and ideals are deeply involved in the foundation of Christianity and especially the influence of Judaism on the Christian faith.”

“A lot of work will have to be done on them,” added Yigael thoughtfully, “a tremendous amount of study. But it seems clear that they throw a mighty bright light on one of the most important moments of history.”

“But before the light goes on, it goes off,” said Sukenik gloomily.

“Look, Father, you’ve got to keep those scrolls,” Yigael said with sudden fierceness.

“How? Today is the last day.” Sukenik looked at his watch. “As a matter of fact, I have less than an hour to keep them.” He got up from his desk and set about the business of packing the scrolls.

“I just want to make one point,” said Yigael. “No matter what others may call it, we’re fighting a war. There is such a thing as war booty.”

“I gave my word,” retorted Sukenik, shocked.

Rifle shots could be heard in the distance as Sukenik and Father Demetrius conversed over the barbed wire.

“Can we have more time,” pleaded Sukenik. “Just a little more time?”

“I’m sorry,” the priest told him. “We have someone else interested. I’ll have to take them back.”

“A day?”

“I’m sorry.”

Slowly Sukenik lifted the bag containing the scrolls and
handed it over the barricade. "Be careful of them," he urged.


Father Demetrius turned and hurried off down the street as Sukenik watched after him. Just as he disappeared around a corner, a familiar voice was heard shouting: "Professor Sukenik! Professor Sukenik!"

Suddenly Shulman was at his side, speaking in short gasps: "I missed you at the house by minutes. Ben-Gurion says 'yes.' Whatever they cost . . . get them!"

"Bring them back!" Sukenik yelled across the barricade.

"Bring them back! We want them!" The rifle shots continued as Sukenik tried to make himself heard: "Bring them back! Please . . . we'll buy them . . . bring back our scrolls!"

"Get down! They're shooting! You'll be killed!" hissed Shulman.

"Bring them back!" Sukenik continued to shout from where he stood at the barricade.

But this extraordinary story of Professor Sukenik and the scrolls did not end at that barbed-wire barricade in 1947.

When Professor Sukenik died in 1953, he knew nothing of the fate of the four scrolls he so narrowly missed keeping. In May, 1954, Yigael, while on a lecture tour of the United States, came across an advertisement in the Wall Street Journal. It was a small item offering for sale "The Four Dead Sea Scrolls." These turned out to be the exact scrolls Professor Sukenik had handed back over the barbed-wire barricade.

With the help of an American philanthropist, Samuel Gottesman, the scrolls were purchased on June 11th, 1954. Today all seven scrolls are again together. Ever since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, there has been much talk about the importance of these extraordinary documents.

Dr. Frank M. Cross of Harvard University has interpreted what they add to our present knowledge in this most vital field. His interpretation follows:

"Ten years have passed since Professor Sukenik's eyes fell upon the first of the Dead Sea Scrolls. There are sequels to this drama, stories of like scholarly devotion on the part of other principals in the recovery of the ancient library from the wilderness of the Dead Sea. There is the story of the independent discovery of four scrolls by American scholars. There is the story of the French and British scholars who gathered in new finds from the desert in 1951, in 1952, in 1955, and most recently in 1956. Ten new caves have yielded leather and papyrus treasure, and today in the museums of Jordan there are more than five hundred Dead Sea Scrolls, some complete, most fragmentary, all invaluable.

"These archaic documents will enable us to enter into the exotic biblical world with a new boldness and understanding. We are now provided with a great library to supplement the meager literature contemporary with the birth of Christianity. The scrolls already are proving nothing short of revolutionary for our knowledge of the development of first century Judaism and primitive Christianity. This new light shed on the Judaean-Christian tradition is to be welcomed, for the scrolls can only enrich the understanding of our common faith."