



## First online graduation

On January 15, TIBI also celebrated another first—our first group of graduates who did all of their courses online. Blanca Catalán, Juan Valdéz Bedoya, and Guillermo Palestina Sánchez received their Bachelor of Biblical Studies degree, recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Though some students have taken some courses online and others live in order to graduate, these are the first students to take every single course online, in an asynchronous format.

Because online students are not required to meet the same fixed live schedules which our Zoom students have, online studies require a high degree of initiative, discipline, and perseverance. Many people start one course and quit, or finish several courses, then quit. These three students persevered for between 3–10 years and completed their degree—an admirable accomplishment!

With this graduation, TIBI has celebrated three graduations in seven months—our regular graduation in July 2021, the RIB graduation (above), and this one. We are blessed!



*Guillermo (top left); Blanca (top right); Juan (bottom left)*

## Dead Sea Scrolls Seminar

On January 29, TIBI invited the world-renowned curator of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Dr. Adolfo Roitman, to present a three-hour seminar regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls, the technology used to interpret them, and their impact on our understanding of the ministry of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the early church.

We were very pleased by the seminar itself, and by the response from attendants. We had 87 sites connected by Zoom, and another 25 people watching the simultaneous streaming on our YouTube channel. We estimate at least 120 people were present, representing more than 85 congregations in 18 countries. The video has received more than 1270 views. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Dr. Roitman.

### Rollo del Templo




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*Part of the Temple Scroll, from the Dead Sea Scrolls collection*

## Cuba Update

This year, TIBI marks the 10-year anniversary of our work in Cuba. Thanks to the marvelous leadership of Liudmila Bencosme, and the complementary work of her husband Tony in his ministry, TIBI launched like a rocket and has grown explosively for 10 years.



The COVID pandemic, of course, drastically affected everyone's lives worldwide, and our ministry in Cuba. Many people would have given up and just waited for the pandemic to end. Instead, Liudmila invented a new way to offer our courses through the social media app Whatsapp. Daniel Urdaneta sent her the audios of our courses and the power points as well. Liudmila distributed these to groups of students, anywhere between 5-80 in size.

Liudmila set up a schedule for each course and group, so they would listen to the audios while following the power points. The professor of the course would meet live with the students on a set schedule every two weeks by Whatsapp. Then Liudmila would set times for tests and assignments and grade them.

Around 280 students have taken a total of 14 courses in this way! 62 of the students have finished more than 10 courses. Amazing!

Liudmila reports that in our 10 years in Cuba, we have had a total of 16,139 students take one course or more! I asked her once, if she sent out a DVD, how many people might typically see it? She said that perhaps 2-10 people might actually watch it. So it's possible TIBI could have impacted as many as 160,000 people in Cuba!

I am entirely grateful and always totally amazed by Liudmila and Tony—their dedication, relentless drive, perseverance, love for the Lord, and fantastic creativity. We are blessed beyond measure by our association with them and look forward to continuing our partnership with them in the coming years.

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