

How God Delivered His Word and Preserved It for Us Part Two



**February 25, 2021 Thursday Indepth Bible Class of the
Trilacoochee church of Christ**

Recording The Old Testament

- We have examined:
 - Revealing the Word of God
 - Receiving the Old Testament
 - Writing the Old Testament (introduction)
- Present class:
 - Writing the Old Testament (conclusion)
 - Recording the Old Testament
 - Preserving the Old Testament
 - Compiling the Old Testament
 - Naming the Old Testament Books
 - Brief Biographies of Old Testament Authors
- Future classes:
 - Revealing, Writing, and Preserving the New Testament
 - Evidences for the Origin and Authenticity of the Bible

Writing The Old Testament

- The OT was not written down in its entirety until the 7th though the 4th century BC, and the OT canon was not established until the 2nd century BC
- As the revelation of the NT went through three stages: 1) Oral only, 2) oral and written, and 3) written only, and the canon was not set until the 4th century AD...
- So the OT went through a similar process, only more prolonged

Writing The Old Testament

- From Adam's day until near the end of Moses' life, it was oral only.
- From Moses until the 7th century BC, it was oral and written, mostly oral.
- From the 7th to the 4th century BC, it was written and oral, mostly written.
- Then in the 2nd century BC, it was compiled into a single collection of scrolls constituting the canon of the OT.

Writing The Old Testament

- In the earliest days it was carved into stone, clay tablets, and wax boxes.
- After the Exodus, they began using papyrus, metal sheets, parchment, and vellum.
- But more often than not, it was memorized and recited or re-revealed in each generation by the prophets

Recording The Old Testament

- We do not know exactly when writing was first invented
- It might seem to us that oral transmission is not very reliable
- Over the next one thousand years the Holy Spirit moved people to write down the history of Israel, the poetry of its musicians, the proverbs of its wise men, and the messages of its prophets.

Recording The Old Testament

- The writing prophets come on the scene immediately after Elijah and Elisha, and continue where their ministries left off.
 - Their responsibility was not simply to write the books that bear their names, but were inspired to compile, synthesize, and structure the older books that were in less cohesive and comprehensive forms.
 - Their work resulted in the canon of Old Testament scripture that has been preserved by the Providence of God until the present.

Recording The Old Testament

- The writing prophets are divided into four groups:
 - Prophets of Israel – Jonah, Amos, and Hosea
 - Prophets of Judah – Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk
 - Exilic Prophets – Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel
 - Post-exilic Prophets – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Recording The Old Testament

- The Meaning of Prophecy: The primary difficulty for most modern readers of the prophets stems from an inaccurate understanding of the words “prophet” and “prophecy.”
- The word prophet refers to one who tells forth (or proclaims), as well as one who foretells. But we often limit the meaning of prophecy to foretelling the future.

Recording The Old Testament

- Historical Distance:
 - Another matter that complicates our understanding the prophets is the problem of historical distance. By the very nature of things, we will have a harder time understanding the words of the prophets than the Israelites who heard those same words in person.
- The Spoken Nature of the Prophets
 - Generally, in the narrative books of the Old Testament, we hear about prophets and very little from prophets. In the prophetic books, however, we hear from the prophets and very little about the prophets themselves.

Recording The Old Testament

- Furthermore, the prophetic books, especially the longer ones, are collections of spoken oracles, not always presented in their original chronological sequence, often without hints as to where one oracle ends and another begins, and often without hints as to their historical setting. In addition, most of the oracles were spoken in poetry.

Recording The Old Testament

- The Old Testament is given to us here in the Christian Dispensation for a purpose. That God would give it to us, puts His stamp of approval on it in the form it has been Providentially transmitted and preserved.
 - Rom. 15:3-4 - “For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

Recording The Old Testament

- Rev. 22:6-7, 18-19 - “Then he said to me, ‘These words are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. 7 Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book...’ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Preserving The Old Testament

- The oldest copies of texts from some portion of the Bible are from the 7th century BC, but the vast majority of texts are from the 2nd century BC and later.
- We also have to account for the fact that Biblical texts have an original source and perhaps were exposed to later inspired editing or glossing.

Preserving The Old Testament

- Editing: organization of material -- Examples of editing: prophetic books -- collections of oracles compiled by some editor, the prophet himself or someone later; historical books
- Glossing: addition of material for understanding -
- Example of glossing: Deuteronomy 2 -- additional comments about various groups mentioned, written from a post-conquest perspective
- The prophets who did this work after the exile were inspired to record the will of God from the distant past, much as Moses did when he wrote of the creation, flood, and patriarchs in Genesis

Preserving The Old Testament

- Texts: 1500-530 BC
 - Most original OT texts written then
 - Earlier (1500-900): Pentateuch
 - United Kingdom (1000-900): Joshua-Judges, many Psalms, Proverbs, Solomon, Ecclesiastes
 - Early Divided Kingdom (900-700): 1-2Samuel
 - Late Divided Kingdom/Exile (700-530): 1Kings-2Chronicles, prophetic books

Preserving The Old Testament

- First Copy of Biblical Text: Ketef Hinnom "Silver Scroll" - 600 BC
 - Contains the "Priestly Blessing" - Num. 6:24-26
- Texts: 530-450 BC - Last texts written
 - Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- Texts: 450-200 BC
 - Shift from writing texts to interpreting texts
 - Neh. 8:5-8 - Ezra's interpretation

Compiling the Old Testament

- From Adam's day until near the end of Moses' life, it was oral only
 - Forthtelling prophets were the "Bible" of the early centuries
 - Memorization and repetition were the chief means of teaching God's will

From Adam to Moses

- Deut. 6:4-9 - “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
- Deut. 32:46 - “Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law.”

From Adam to Moses

- Psalm 78:5-6 - “For He established a testimony in Jacob, And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers, That they should make them known to their children; That the generation to come might know them, The children who would be born, That they may arise and declare them to their children”
- Heb. 8:11 - “None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”

From Moses until the 7th century BC

- Oral and written, mostly oral
 - Ex 34:1 - “And the LORD said to Moses, “Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke.”
 - Deut. 27:1-4 - “Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: Keep all the commandments which I command you today. And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you”
 - Deut. 31:19 - “Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.”

From Moses until the 7th century BC

- Joshua 1:8 - “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”
- 1Kings 4:32 - “He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five.”

From the 7th to the 4th century BC

- Written and oral, mostly written
 - The writing prophets not only wrote inspired books of prophecy, but they are also credited with compiling, editing, and glossing earlier works into coherent and complete books
 - By inspiration, they took the inspired verbal teaching, the memorized and recited teaching, the Books of Law, the few written books of history, the collections of songs, poems, letters, proverbs, sermons, and compiled them into the books of the Old Testament.

From the 7th to the 4th century BC

- Example: compiling the book of Proverbs
 - The Proverbs of Solomon, Book One (Prov. 1-9)
 - The Proverbs of Solomon, Book Two (Prov. 10:1 - 22:16)
 - Sayings of “the wise” (Prov. 22:17 - 24:34)
 - The Proverbs of Solomon copied by the prophets of Hezekiah (Prov. 25-29)
 - Sayings of Agur (Prov. 30)
 - Sayings of King Lemuel (Prov. 31)

From the 7th to the 4th century BC

- The work of the inspired “writing prophets”
 - Schools of prophets (“sons or disciples of the prophets”) consisted of foretelling and forthtelling prophets, writing prophets, memory and recitation prophets, and scribes or penmen
 - Compiling - by inspiration, combining the inspired songs, poems, laws, letters, histories, etc. into a single book
 - Editing - by inspiration, removing unnecessary or uninspired material to create the book God wanted handed down through the years
 - Glossing - by inspiration, adding details and transitional information to ensure that the account included all that God wanted preserved through the years.

From the 4th - 2nd Century BC

- Written only - inspiration ceased
 - The canon of Old Testament scripture had been established.
 - The work of the copyists and translators began
 - Septuagint version (LXX or “The Seventy”) was the Greek translation of the Old Testament scriptures used by Jesus and the New Testament writers, all of whom added their inspired endorsement of the God-given and trustworthy quality of the OT.

From the 2nd Century BC to Today

- The OT has been carefully copied and meticulously preserved to the present, to the extent that we can have every confidence that what we have is precisely what God spoke through the OT prophets 3600 years ago.
 - Masoretic copyists numbered every letter when they copied the text
 - Comparing manuscripts, fragments of parchment, papyri, Qumran scrolls, metal rolls, pottery, stone inscriptions, inclusions in other writings, ossuary, etc., it is estimated that variances in the text amounts to between two to five percent, and never on any text that impacts important doctrine or NT usage.

From the 2nd Century BC to Today

- Books that did not make the canon of the OT (either uninspired, or combined into other books, or God simply did not wish it so)
 - The Book of Jasher - Joshua 10:13; 2Sam. 1:18
 - The Book of the Wars of the Lord - Num. 21:14
 - The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Chronicles of the Kings of Judah - 1Kings 14:19, 14:29
 - The Book of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the Seer - 2Chron. 9:29, 12:15, 13:22
 - The Manners of the King - 1Sam. 10:25
 - The Acts of Solomon - 1Kings 11:41
 - The Annals of King David - 1Chron. 27:24
 - The History of Nathan the Prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the Book of Gad the Seer - 1Chron. 29:29; 2Chron. 9:29
 - The Acts of Uziah - 2Chron. 26:22
 - The Prayers of Manasseh and the Sayings of Hozai - 2Chron. 33:18-19

New Testament Proof of the Old Testament

- Matt. 4:4-10 - “It is written”
- Mark 7:6 - “He answered and said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.'”
- Luke 24:44-46 - “Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day”
- Jesus treated the authenticity and the authority of the OT written scriptures as true and binding as His Own

New Testament Proof of the Old Testament

- Acts 15:14-17 - “Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 ‘After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.’”

New Testament Proof of the Old Testament

- Rom. 15:3-4 - “For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me. 4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
- 2Tim. 3:15-17 - “And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- The apostles and NT writers treated the authenticity and the authority of the OT written scriptures as true and binding as what they themselves received by inspiration

Preservation

- Biblical Manuscripts: Dead Sea Scrolls
- Textual Transmission: 70-1450 AD
- Extant Manuscripts: 10th, 11th century codices



Naming The Old Testament Books

- TORAH (The Law):
 - Bereishith (In the beginning...) (Genesis)
 - Shemoth (The names...) (Exodus)
 - Vayiqra (And He called...) (Leviticus)
 - Bamidbar (In the wilderness...) (Numbers)
 - Devarim (The words...) (Deuteronomy)

Naming The Old Testament Books

- NEVI'IM (The Prophets):
 - Yehoshua (Joshua)
 - Shoftim (Judges)
 - Shmuel (I & II Samuel)
 - Melakhim (I & II Kings)
 - Yeshayah (Isaiah)
 - Yirmyah (Jeremiah)
 - Yechezqel (Ezekiel)
- THE TWELVE (treated as one book):
 - Hoshea (Hosea)
 - Yoel (Joel)
 - Amos
 - Ovadyah (Obadiah)
 - Yonah (Jonah)
 - Mikhah (Micah)
 - Nachum (Nahum)
 - Chavaquq (Habbakkuk)
 - Tzefanyah (Zephaniah)
 - Chaggai (Haggai)
 - Zekharyah (Zechariah)
 - Malakhi (Malachi)

Naming The Old Testament Books

- KETHUVIM (The Writings):
 - Tehillim (Psalms)
 - Mishlei (Proverbs)
 - Iyov (Job)
 - Shir Ha-Shirim (Song of Songs)
 - Ruth
 - Eikhah (Lamentations)
 - Qoheleth (Preacher - the author's name) (Ecclesiastes)
 - Esther
 - Daniel
 - Ezra & Nechemyah (Nehemiah) (treated as one book)
 - Divrei Ha-Yamim (The words of the days) (Chronicles)

Brief Biographies Of Old Testament Authors

- Moses
- Joshua
- Samuel
- Jeremiah
- Ezra
- David
- Solomon
- Isaiah
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi
- Gad the Seer
- Nathan
- Ethan
- Heman
- Asaph
- Korahites
- Agur
- Lemuel
- Prophets of Hezekiah
- Baruch
- The Wise
- The Unnamed
- The Unknown

