

How God Delivered His Word and Preserved It for Us

Part Two (Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

V. PRESERVING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. 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 2nd century BC and later
- B. Sources and Editing/Glosses
 - 1. 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
 - 2. Editing: organization of material - Examples of editing: prophetic books - collections of oracles compiled by some editor, the prophet himself or someone later; historical books
 - 3. Glossing: addition of material for understanding - Example of glossing: Deuteronomy 2 - additional comments about various groups mentioned, written from a post-conquest perspective
 - 4. 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
- C. Texts: 1500-530 BC
 - 1. Most original OT texts written then
 - 2. Earlier (1500-900): Pentateuch
 - 3. United Kingdom (1000-900): Joshua-Judges, many Psalms, Proverbs, Solomon, Ecclesiastes
 - 4. Early Divided Kingdom (900-700): 1-2Samuel
 - 5. Late Divided Kingdom/Exile (700-530): 1Kings-2Chron, prophetic books
- D. First Copy of Biblical Text: Ketef Hinnom "Silver Scroll" - 600 BC
 - 1. Contains the "Priestly Blessing" - Num. 6:24-26
- E. Texts: 530-450 BC - Last texts written
 - 1. Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi
- F. Texts: 450-200 BC
 - 1. Shift from writing texts to interpreting texts
 - 2. Neh. 8:5-8 - Ezra's interpretation

VI. COMPILING THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. From Adam's day until near the end of Moses' life, it was oral only
 - 1. Forthtelling prophets were the "Bible" of the early centuries
 - 2. Memorization and repetition was the chief means of teaching God's will
 - 3. Deut. 6:4-9, 32:46; Psalm 78:5-6; Heb. 8:11
- B. From Moses until the 7th century BC; Oral and written, mostly oral
 - 1. Ex 34:1; Deut. 27:1-4, Deut. 31:19; Joshua 1:8; 1Kings 4:32
- C. From the 7th to the 4th century BC; Written and oral, mostly written
 - 1. 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
 - 2. 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.

3. Example: compiling the book of Proverbs
 - a. The Proverbs of Solomon, Book One (Prov. 1-9)
 - b. The Proverbs of Solomon, Book Two (Prov. 10:1 - 22:16)
 - c. Sayings of "the wise" (Prov. 22:17 - 24:34)
 - d. The Proverbs of Solomon copied by the men of Hezekiah (Prov. 25-29)
 - e. Sayings of Agur (Prov. 30)
 - f. Sayings of King Lemuel (Prov. 31)
4. The work of the inspired "writing prophets"
 - a. 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
 - b. Compiling - by inspiration, combining the inspired songs, poems, laws, letters, histories, etc. into a single book
 - c. Editing - by inspiration, removing unnecessary or uninspired material to create the book God wanted handed down through the years
 - d. Glossing - by inspiration, adding details and transitional information to ensure that the account included all that God wanted preserved through the years.

D. From the 4th - 2nd Century BC; Written only - inspiration ceased

1. The canon of Old Testament scripture had been established.
2. The work of the copyists and translators began
3. 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.
4. 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 by the OT prophets 3600 years ago.
5. Masoretic copyists numbered every letter when they copied the text
6. 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.

D. 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)

1. The Book of Jasher - Joshua 10:13; 2Sam. 1:18
2. The Book of the Wars of the Lord - Num. 21:14
3. The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Chronicles of the Kings of Judah - 1Kings 14:19, 14:29
4. The Book of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the Seer - 2Chron. 9:29, 12:15, 13:22

5. The Manners of the King - 1Sam. 10:25
 6. The Acts of Solomon - 1Kings 11:41
 7. The Annals of King David - 1Chron. 27:24
 8. 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
 9. The Acts of Uziah - 2Chron. 26:22
 10. Prayers of Manasseh and the Sayings of Hozai - 2Chron. 33:18-19
- E. New Testament Proof of the Old Testament
1. Matt. 4:4-10; Mark 7:6; Luke 24:44-46
 - a. Jesus treated the authenticity and the authority of the OT written scriptures as true and binding as His Own
 2. Acts 15:14-17; Rom. 15:3-4; 2Tim. 3:15-17
 - a. 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
- F. Biblical Manuscripts: Dead Sea Scrolls
1. Ca. 250 BC - 68 AD
 2. Found in 1947 in Judean desert
 3. Remnants of texts from Qumran community
 4. Many Biblical texts preserved
 5. Vast majority of texts agree with our MT
 6. Some variants conform to LXX readings
- G. Textual Transmission: 70-1450 AD
1. Destruction of Jerusalem leads to discussions between rabbis at Jamneh (Jamnia); essential canon agreed upon
 2. Transmission of Hebrew texts placed in hands of special group of scribes in the Middle Ages, Masoretes - Masoretic Text ca. 500-700 AD
 5. Text extremely stable-- Masoretes took great care of text, numbering letters and lines, adding textual notes (called the Masorah), leading to a text that changed little for over a millennium
 6. With printing press in 1450 AD, text transmission no longer necessary
- H. Extant Manuscripts: 10th, 11th century codices
1. Aleppo Codex-- 925 AD - Three-quarters of Biblical text recognized as model codex
 2. Leningrad Codex-- 1009 AD - Most complete text in its tradition; basis of most critical editions of the Hebrew text

VII. 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)

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)
Chavaqquq (Habbakkuk)
Tzefanyah (Zephaniah)
Chaggai (Haggai)
Zekharyah (Zechariah)
Malakhi (Malachi)

KETHUVIM (The Writings):

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

VIII. BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF OLD TESTAMENT AUTHORS

1. Moses: Wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy around 1440 BC. Raised in the Egyptian court to be a powerful leader, Moses instead was called to lead God's people. He spent 40 years in the wilderness. God chose him to lead his people out of slavery by miraculous means, and favored Moses as he had no one before or since, by talking to him directly and giving him the first 10 commandments on Sinai. His writings cover the beginning of the history of the world, give the account of the flood, and describe in detail Israel leaving Egypt, and the laws and worship ceremonies to guide the new nation, focusing on the tabernacle. Moses died before entering the Promised Land, but appeared with Christ at the Transfiguration. (Deut. 31:9; John 5:46)

2. Joshua wrote the Book of Joshua around 1400 BC. One of only two people to live from the Exodus to the Promised Land, Joshua was the faithful successor of Moses

in leading the Israelites. He is best known as being the warrior-leader in driving out the Canaanites and delivering the Promised Land to the children of Israel.

3. Samuel very likely wrote Judges, perhaps Ruth, and most of 1 & 2 Samuel around 1000 BC. Born as an answer to prayer, Samuel was dedicated to the service of the temple as a child. His faithfulness even as a child to hear and follow the Lord's voice was in contrast to the apostasy all around him. His writings span the period from the last of the Judges, to the second of the kings of Israel. As the last of the judges of Israel, Samuel anointed the first king, Saul, and the most famous king, David, as a young man.

4. Jeremiah perhaps wrote 1 & 2 Kings, and wrote Jeremiah and Lamentations around 600 BC. Known best for his cries and lamentations to God over Judah's sin, Jeremiah reveals more of the personal inner turmoil of being a prophet than any other Bible writer. He called repeatedly for sincere repentance, but the smooth words of the false prophets gained the ears of the kings. He is considered one of the major prophets.

5. Ezra perhaps compiled 1 & 2 Chronicles, wrote Ezra and possibly co-wrote Nehemiah around 420 BC. As leader of a group of returning exiles from Babylon, Ezra led the people to be faithful to all the commands of God, and in being diligent about the work of rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. He is a prototype of the true leaders of God's remnant as they come out of spiritual Babylon in the last days.

6. David wrote 74 of the Psalms around 1000 BC, but this book is a collection spanning 1000 years. The greatest of all Israel's kings, David was "a man after God's own heart." Starting out as a simple shepherd boy, slaying Goliath as a lad, winning the people's hearts, fleeing for his life from an enraged king, conquering many foes, becoming incredibly wealthy, he still kept close to God except for his sins regarding Bathsheba. His heartfelt repentance, his praise to God for his mercies, his longing for God to punish sinners and protect the righteous make his work memorable of often quoted in the New Testament.

7. Solomon wrote most of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon around 950 BC. Solomon was a man of superlatives, building the grandest structure of all time in Israel (The Temple), was the richest king of Israel ever, and the wisest man of all time are just a few of the things Solomon is known for. His having 700 wives is perhaps also a record. Unfortunately, they led him away from God.

8. Isaiah wrote Isaiah around 730 BC. After Moses, Isaiah is often considered the greatest of prophets. His writings imploring Israel and Judah to turn from their wicked ways and come back to God or face strong punishment, and God's punishment of the surrounding wicked nations take up most of the book, but he also prophesies of God's mercies and saving a remnant. The prophecy of Jesus' birth: "the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" is well known.

9. Ezekiel wrote the Book of Ezekiel near the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The son of a priest, Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon. Similar to Isaiah and Jeremiah, this Major Prophet warned Israel of their sins, and called them to repentance or face God's punishment, and also prophesied of the surrounding nations' judgment. His apocalyptic visions are amazing, and resemble John's Revelation. Similar to the others, he also prophesied of the restoration of Israel, focusing on the restored temple.

10. Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel around 530 BC. He was probably born to a royal family, was taken away to Babylon to serve king Nebuchadnezzar. His strict diet and being thrown into the lion's den are good examples and interesting accounts, but

Daniel is most famous for his interpretations and visions. He interpreted the king's dreams showing that kingdoms would arise and fall, and that God would one day set up an everlasting kingdom.

11. Hosea wrote his book around 750 BC. Told by the Lord to do humiliating things such as marrying a prostitute, Hosea's life was an example of God's relationship with Israel. His relationship with his wife vividly describes God's pleading with an adulterous Israel. He called for repentance, and warned of God's judgments.

12. Joel wrote his book around 830, or 600 BC. Joel prophesied of "the day of the Lord." God's judgments are severe, but He shows great mercy to those who come to him. Joel's prophecy of God pouring out his Spirit is mentioned by Peter on the Day of Pentecost.

13. Amos wrote his book around 755 BC. As a sheep breeder and sycamore fruit grower, Amos was unlike most Bible writers, as he probably had no higher schooling, was not a priest, and never became a leader in Israel. He came from his work to give the prophecies of judgment against Israel and the surrounding nations, and the eventual future restoration of a remnant, emphasizing God's justice.

14. Obadiah wrote his book perhaps around 585 BC. Obadiah means "Burden of the Lord." His prophecy concerns the judgment on Edom, the descendants of Esau, for their treachery in turning on the Israelites when Babylon conquered them. Israel will be victorious in the end.

15. Jonah wrote his book around 770 BC. Jonah's account captures the imagination. The word of God came to him, and he refused to carry it out at first, but God arranged a big fish to fulfill his purposes anyway. His name means "Dove" which is usually associated with peace. The Ninevites repented upon hearing Jonah, showing God's great mercy to those not of Israel too. Jesus himself used the prophet Jonah's example to refer to His own experience.

16. Micah wrote his book around 720 BC. Probably of a lower classes and younger than Isaiah and Hosea who were contemporaries, Micah wrote on why God was going to punish Israel, and how He would spare a remnant. His prophecy of Israel's king coming from Bethlehem is a sign showing that Jesus is God's ruler. His most famous phrase describes the new kingdom: "neither shall they learn war anymore".

17. Nahum wrote his book around 620 BC. Nahum means "comforted." Assyria was a cruel kingdom that God used to punish other nations, but they became arrogant, and considered the God of the Israelites in the same manner as the other nations' gods that they conquered. Nahum warns them strongly of their impending doom. This time, they did not repent as they did under Jonah's preaching.

18. Habakkuk wrote his book around 610 BC. Having the official title of Prophet, one can deduce that Habakkuk was involved in the temple service, perhaps as a musician. He also prophesied of judgment and restoration, but his questioning of God's ways is unusual. Wicked people seem to have everything go their way in this life, but they will eventually be judged by the mighty God when he comes.

19. Zephaniah wrote his book around 620 BC. Meaning "God hides," Zephaniah was four generations removed from king Hezekiah. He and Jeremiah were contemporaries. His description of the "day of the Lord" is terrifying, but he also prophesies of a faithful remnant who the Lord will rejoice over with singing.

20. Haggai wrote his book in 520 BC. A contemporary of Zechariah, Haggai (meaning "Festival") was probably an older man who saw both the temple of Solomon in its glory, and the beginnings of the new temple after the Babylonian captivity. He called on the people to stop thinking so much about their physical needs, and concentrate on God's house. The new temple, while looking puny, would be blessed by more glory than the former in a prophecy of Jesus gracing its premises in the flesh.

21. Zechariah wrote his book around 520 BC. Zechariah was a member of the tribe of Levi, and probably served as a priest. His name means "God remembers." He prophesies extensively of the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. These prophecies are the most quoted in the Gospels showing the Jesus is the promised Messiah. The day of the Lord will come, nations will be judged, and a remnant saved.

22. Malachi wrote his book perhaps around 420 BC. "My Messenger" in Hebrew is written as "Mal'aki" (from malakk meaning angel), so it is not certain if this is the prophet's name, or a title, but the book prophesies of a messenger referring to John the Baptist. The Israelites were apathetic toward God, going thru the motions of serving him, but their hearts weren't in it. Malachi calls them back to a true hearted worship. This book ends with the day of the Lord. After this book, there would be no more writings for the Bible for over 450 years.

23. 1Chron. 29:29 - Gad was a seer or prophet in the Old Testament. He was one of the personal prophets of King David of Israel and some of his writings are believed to be included in the Books of Samuel. He is first mentioned in 1Samuel 22:5 telling David to return to the land of Judah. The most important Biblical reference to Gad is 2Samuel 24:11-13, where after David confesses his sin of taking a census of the people of Israel and Judah, God sends Gad to David to offer him his choice of three forms of punishment. Gad is mentioned a last time in 2Samuel 24:18, coming to David and telling him to build an altar to God after He stops the plague that David chose.

24. Nathan the Prophet (1000 BC) is described in the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles (especially 2Sam. 7:2-17, 12:1-25). According to 2Samuel, he was a court prophet contemporary with King David. He announced to David the covenant God was making with him (2Sam. 7), and he came to David to reprimand him over his committing adultery with Bathsheba while she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite whose death the King had also arranged to hide his previous transgression (2Sam. 11-12). Nathan wrote histories of the reigns of both David and of Solomon (1Chron. 29:29; 2Chron. 9:29), and was involved in the music of the temple (2Chron. 29:25). In 1Kings 1:8-45 it is Nathan who tells the dying David of the plot of Adonijah to become king, resulting in Solomon being proclaimed king instead. King David named one of his sons Nathan, possibly after the prophet. He was one of four sons born to David and Bathsheba. Nathan the prophet is believed to be one of the unnamed co-authors of some of the OT books of history.

25. Ethan (Hebrew for "Firm") the Ezrahite is mentioned in the Old Testament. It is believed that Ethan was a cymbal player in King David's court. He authored Psalm 89. It is likely that this was the same person as Jeduthun (1Chron. 16:42). Ethan means strong and optimistic, solid and enduring, permanent. The name Ethan appears eight times in the Bible. He was a standard of wisdom to whom Solomon is compared favorably (1Kings 4:31).

26. Heman the Ezrahite is the author of Psalm 88 in the the Old Testament, according to the Psalm's title. Heman is a Hebrew name meaning Faithful. It is found sixteen times in the Bible. Heman the Ezrahite may be one of the three Levites assigned by King David to be overseers of music. Heman was a grandson of Samuel the prophet who went on to become King David's seer and to have fourteen sons and three daughters. Psalm 88 seems to have been written in despair and grief.

27. Asaph the son of Berechiah was the ancestor of the Asaphites. The Asaphites are said to be one of the guilds of musicians in the Jerusalem temple. This is addressed often in the books of 1 & 2Chronicles. In the Chronicles, it is said that Asaph was a descendant of Gershon the son of Levi therefore he is a member of the Levitical tribe. He is also known as one of the three Levites commissioned by David to be in charge of singing in the house of God. In 1Chronicles 6:39, David appoints a man named Heman as the main musician or singer and Asaph as Heman's assistant and the Merarites at his left hand. Asaph is also credited with performing at the dedication of Solomon's temple in 2Chronicles 5:12, at which point he is considered the chief cantor in Israel. Together with Heman, the grandson of the Israelite prophet Samuel (1Chron. 6:39), he and his male descendants were set aside by King David to worship God in song and music (1Chron. 15:16-17). He authored Psalms 50, 73 - 83.

28. Korahites descended from Korah. They were an important branch of the singers of the Kohathite division of the Levite helpers (2Chron. 20:19). There are eleven psalms (Psalms 42 - 49, 84, 85, 87, 88) dedicated from the sons of Korah. Some of the sons of Korah also were "porters" of the temple (1Chron. 9:17); one of them was over "things that were made in the pans" (1Chron. 9:31), the baking in pans for the meat-offering (Lev. 2:5).

29. Agur ben Jakeh was the compiler of a collection of proverbs found in Proverbs 30, which is sometimes known as the Book of Agur or Sayings of Agur. He was a Massaite, a Gentile nomad.

30. Lemuel is the name of a Biblical king mentioned in Proverbs 31:1, 4, but otherwise unknown. Name means: "belonging to God."

31. "Officials of King Hezekiah" were the writing prophets in the court of the king.

32. Baruch ben Neriah (Hebrew: "Blessed, son of My Light is God" - 6th century BC) was the scribe, disciple, secretary, devoted friend, and blood relative (through Rahab) of the prophet Jeremiah. According to Josephus, he was a Jewish aristocrat, a son of Neriah and brother of Seraiah ben Neriah, chamberlain of King Zedekiah of Judah. Baruch wrote down the first and second copies of Jeremiah's prophecies as they were dictated to him by the prophet (Jer. 36:4-32, 45:1). Baruch remained true to the teachings of the prophet, although like his master he was at times almost overwhelmed with despondency. While Jeremiah was in hiding to avoid the wrath of King Jehoaikim, he commanded Baruch to read his prophecies of warning to the people gathered in the Temple in Jerusalem on a day of fasting. The task was both difficult and dangerous, but Baruch performed it without flinching. God dedicated Jeremiah 45 to Baruch for his faithfulness.

33. "The wise" and "the prophets." Prov. 22:17 - 24:22 - "The sayings of the wise" Prov. 24:23-34 - "These also are sayings of the wise." We can be very certain that 32 of the authors of the books of the Bible are known. In addition the Bible mentions several groups of unnamed prophets (100 prophets saved from slaughter by Obadiah [1Kings

18:1-4], more than 50 sons of the prophets at Jericho [2Kings 2:7], 100 sons of the prophets at Gilgal [2Kings 4:38-44], 288 “sons” (descendants) of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun [1Chron. 25:7]) as well as nine other groups of unnamed and unnumbered prophets mentioned in scriptures. The scriptures do not specifically name or number them, but mentions their work in revealing and teaching the word of God. As it is not revealed, it is not possible to know precisely how many of them were involved in the writing or assisted in the writing of the Old Testament books.

34. The often unnamed writing prophets who preserved and compiled the books of the Old Testament during and after the exile until the age of inspiration and revelation ended.

35. The authorship of some books of the Old Testament is unknown (Job and Esther, for example).