

# Saving the Scriptures

## Preserving and Transmitting the Old Testament Through the Millennia

(By Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Saving the Scriptures, Part One, Receiving the Old Testament
  - 1. The prophetic process: foretelling and forthtelling
  - 2. Writing the Old Testament: The latter prophets
- B. Compiling the Old Testament
  - 1. From Adam's day until near the end of Moses' life, it was oral only
  - 2. From Moses until the 7th century BC, it was oral and written, mostly oral
  - 3. From the 7th to the 4th century BC, it was written and oral, mostly written
  - 4. Then in the 4<sup>th</sup> through 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, it was compiled into a single collection of scrolls constituting the canon of the OT

### I. 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