

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY
INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
LESSON 3

"How do we know that the Old Testament is inspired by God?" This question has been asked many times. It has been asked by those who do not believe the Bible. How would you answer this question? This lesson will help you answer it.

1. WHAT "INSPIRATION" MEANS

Inspiration means "God breathed," (2 Timothy 3:16). It is what God told men to write. This is why the men who wrote the Bible wrote the Truth.

2. WHAT THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS LIKE IN THE BEGINNING

A. What God wrote on.

What did God write on when He gave Moses the Law and the Commandments (Exodus 24:12; 32:16)?

B. What man wrote on.

- 1) **Clay, stone.**

The first people who lived used clay, stone, metal and other materials to write on.

- 2) **Papyrus.**

People also wrote on papyrus. Papyrus is a rough paper made from grass which grows along the Nile River. They would make this paper in long sheets and fasten sticks at each end. They would wind the paper up on the sticks. These were called scrolls.

- 3) **Parchment (skins).**

Later on the people used animal skins to write on. These were also made into scrolls. They would last longer than the papyrus scrolls.

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When the Old Testament was first written, the writings were kept in scrolls.

C. What languages the Old Testament was written in.

- **Hebrew.**

Most of the Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language. This language was then spoken by the people of Israel. The people of Israel speak the Hebrew language today.

- **Aramaic.**

Parts of Daniel, Ezekiel and Jeremiah were written in the Aramaic language. The Aramaic language was used by the people who lived near the end of the Old Testament time. It was also used during the New Testament time. Some of these writings have been kept till now. No one talks in the Aramaic language today. But people can still read the language today.

3. HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT CAME TO US

A. Copying

There were no printing presses in earlier years. The people had to copy everything by hand. When they did this, they counted each word and each letter in the word. That is why they made no mistakes. This copying was done on papyrus or parchment (skins). These copies were kept in scrolls.

B. Translation

When a person changes a book from one language to another, he translates it. An example is changing English to Cree. When this is done the exact thought must be taken from one language to the other. It cannot be changed. Those who translated the Bible knew they were translating God's Word. They were very careful. These men asked God to help them translate.

C. Greek translations

- **Old Testament translated into Greek.**

The country of Greece ruled the world from 334 BC to 197 BC. Therefore most of the people spoke the Greek language. Later the Romans ruled the world, but Greek stayed the world language. All the Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic into the Greek language. This was done about 100 years before Christ was born.

- **Later Greek translation.**

300 years after Christ (AD.) the whole Bible was translated into the Greek language (Both Old Testament and New Testament).

- **Latin translation.**

400 years after Christ (AD.) the whole Bible was translated into Latin (the Vulgate). This translation was used by the Roman Catholic Church until the English Douay version was done in 1568.

- **English translations.**

- **John Wycliffe.**

In 1380 John Wycliffe translated the New Testament into English. After his death his friends finished translating the Old Testament.

- **William Tyndale.**

William Tyndale also translated into the English language in the 1500's. He finished translating the New Testament in 1525 and the Pentateuch in 1530. He was killed before he finished the Old Testament.

- **King James version.**

There were several other translations made in the next 200 years. In 1611 the King James version was done. (The word "version" means the same as "translation.") King James I of England asked 47 men to do this translation. This is where this translation gets its name. The King James version is the most used English Bible today.

F. Translations in Indian languages.

- **Cree.**

James Evans invented the syllabic system of writing. Henry B Steinhauer, Sarah Mason and John Sinclair translated the Bible into the Cree Indian Language during the 1800's.

- **Navajoes.**

The Navajoes have received the New Testament in their language in 1956.

- **Slavey Indians.**

The Slavey Indians received the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Mark in their language in 1973.

- **Inuit.**

The Inuit received the four Gospels and Acts in their language in 1973.

- **Other groups**

There are some other Indian groups who have the Scriptures in their language.

G. New translations.

The book stores are full of many different translations. Some of these translations are good and some are not so good. It would be wise to ask a missionary or minister about a translation

before you buy one.

H. The Bible has been preserved.

- **God kept the Bible.**

We do not have the first complete Bible. But we have many thousand manuscripts of the Bible which were written very long ago. A manuscript is a paper or book written by hand. Some of these were written thousands of years ago. When we look at these early writings and then at ours, we find that there is very little difference. We can see that God kept the Bible over thousands of years.

- **Dead Sea scrolls.**

In 1947 some children were playing near the Dead Sea, Palestine. They found a crack in a big rock. When they finally got into it, there was a cave. In the cave were large clay jars. In the jars were scrolls. The children went and told some men. When the men looked at the scrolls, they found they were very old. They found that they had been written about 200 years before Christ (BC). These scrolls had a large part of the Old Testament copied on them. The men who studied them found that our Bible agrees with them. There are other scrolls that had been written about 250-200 years before Christ (BC). These also are the same as our Bible today.

- **Reasons for translations.**

- Why do you think the Bible is being translated into so many languages?

- Why do you think we are getting so many English translations today?

4. HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE CHOSEN

A. What was needed for books to be accepted in the Old Testament.

Each Bible book was tested to see if it belonged in the Old Testament. The books had to have what was needed to belong in the Old Testament. They had to:

- be inspired by God.
- agree with everything the other books in the Old Testament said.
- give the rules of faith to live by.
- be accepted by all the Christian groups.

B. How the Old Testament was put together.

It is believed that Ezra put the Old Testament books together into one book. This was around

400 years before Christ (BC). It was not until about 150 years after Christ (AD) that the whole Bible was put together into one book. It was divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament.

5. WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT SAYS ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT

- What does 2 Timothy 3:14-17 say about the Scriptures (Old Testament)?
- What does 2 Peter 1:19-21 say about the Scriptures (Old Testament)?
- What did Jesus say in Luke 24:44,45 about the Scriptures (Old Testament)?
- What did Jesus say in John 5:39 about the Scriptures (Old Testament)?

6. HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES PROVE THE SCRIPTURES ARE INSPIRED.

Many of the Old Testament prophecies have come true already. This is one of the greatest proofs that the Old Testament is inspired. Things happened the way the Old Testament said they would happen.

A. Prophecies about Christ.

- **Birth of Christ.** READ MATTHEW CHAPTERS 1 and 2. How many prophecies about the birth of Christ came true?
- **Death of Christ.** What came true in the following prophecies?
 - Psalm 22:18 - John 19:24
 - Exodus 12:46 - John 19:36
 - Zechariah 12:10 - John 19:37
- **Resurrection of Christ.** What does Psalm 16:10 say about Christ living again (John 20)?

B. Prophecies about today.

Some of the prophecies that are coming true today are found in Ezekiel. READ EZEKIEL 36:33-36.

- Ezekiel 37:13,14. The people of Israel are going back to their own land in large groups.
- In Ezekiel 38:14-16 it speaks of a king named Gog coming from the north to fight against Israel. He is a prince of Rosh (New American Standard Bible).

7. IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

We can know that the Old Testament is the inspired Word of God because:

- A. The New Testament says that the Old Testament is inspired and is true (2 Timothy 3:16,17).
- B. The message has stayed the same even though it has been copied many times. The message has stayed the same even though it has been translated into many languages.
- C. All the books in the Old Testament have been used and accepted by different Christian groups. The groups found that the books agreed with each other. The groups found that the books taught the same rules of faith and living.
- D. Many of the Old Testament prophecies came true. Many of the prophecies are coming true today.

8. ASSIGNMENT

- A. What two languages was the Old Testament written in?
- B. Who were the first two men who translated the Bible into the English language?

Who translated the Bible into your language?

- C. Write out in your own words why you believe the Old Testament is inspired.

WORDS TO LEARN

1. AD - in the year of the Lord - time after the birth of Christ.

2. BC - time before the birth of Christ.
3. manuscripts - papers or books written by hand.
4. papyrus - a rough paper made from grass which grows along the Nile River.
5. parchment - skin used like paper for writing on.
6. prophesy - to tell what God said would happen in time to come.
7. scroll - a book written on parchment or papyrus and rolled up on sticks.
8. translation - when some writing from one language is put into another language.
9. version - same as translation.

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