



HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

FROM GOD'S MOUTH TO OUR HANDS

A 10-PART BIBLE STUDY SERIES



REVELATION



INSPIRATION



WRITING



PRESERVATION



CANON



TRANSLATION



OUR BIBLES



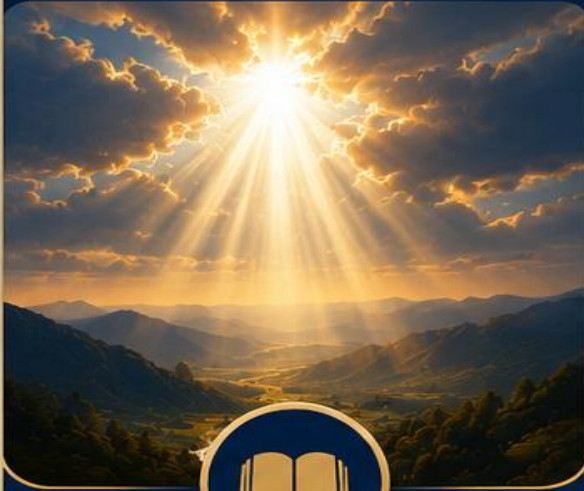
OUR RESPONSE

GOD HAS SPOKEN. HE HAS PRESERVED IT. WE CAN TRUST IT.

◆ PSALM 119:89 ◆

DEFINING FOUR IMPORTANT TERMS

REVELATION



God makes known truth that mankind could not discover on his own.

INSPIRATION



God guided the writers so that they wrote exactly what He intended.

TRANSMISSION



The written text was copied and passed down from one generation to another.

TRANSLATION

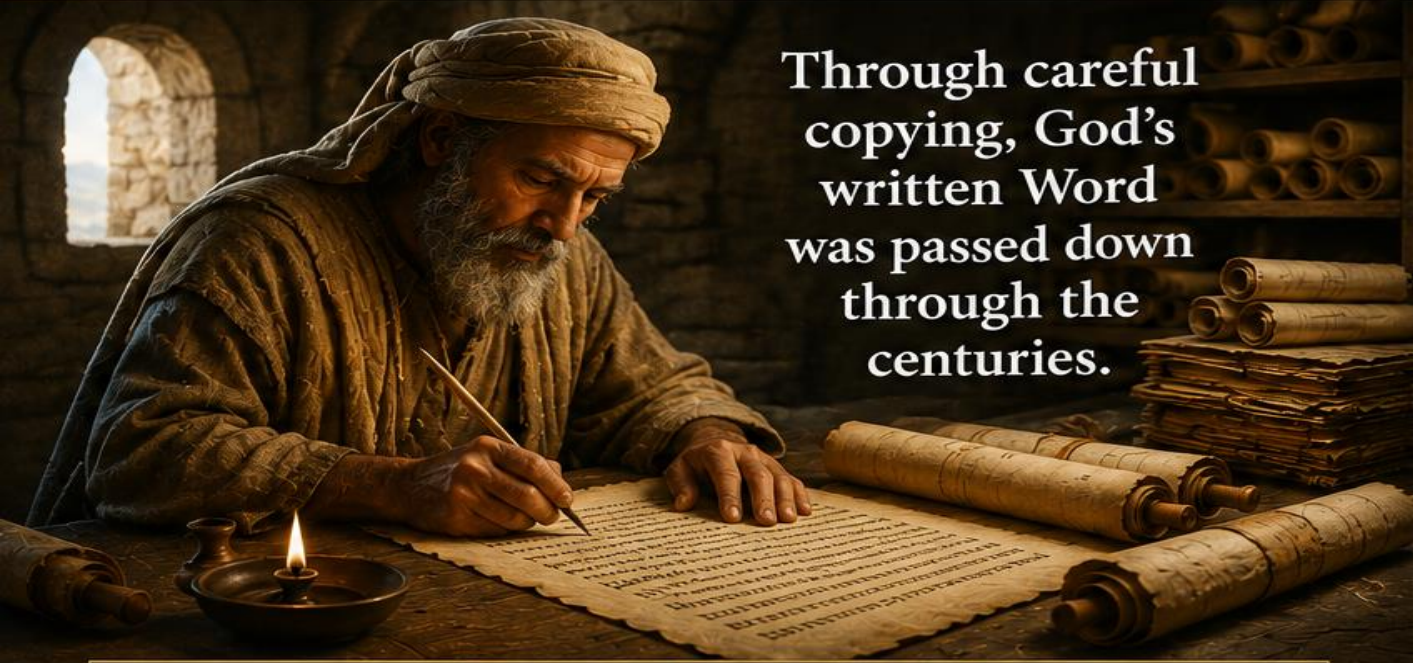


The message was translated into other languages so people can understand.

◆ *Four distinct steps in how God gave us His Word.* ◆

THE DEFINITION OF TRANSMISSION

Transmission is the faithful copying and passing down of God's written Word from one generation to another.



Through careful copying, God's written Word was passed down through the centuries.



TRANSMISSION ANSWERS THE QUESTION:
“How was the written text of Scripture passed down through the centuries?”



Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” – **Matthew 24:35**



1. FAITHFUL COPYING

The original writings (autographs) were copied by scribes.



2. MANY MANUSCRIPTS

Thousands of manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek preserve the biblical text.



3. CAREFUL PRESERVATION

Scribes copied carefully so the text could be read, taught, and passed to future generations.



4. GOD'S WORD ENDURES

Human opposition cannot destroy God's Word (Jeremiah 36:27–32; Matthew 24:35).



5. PASSED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

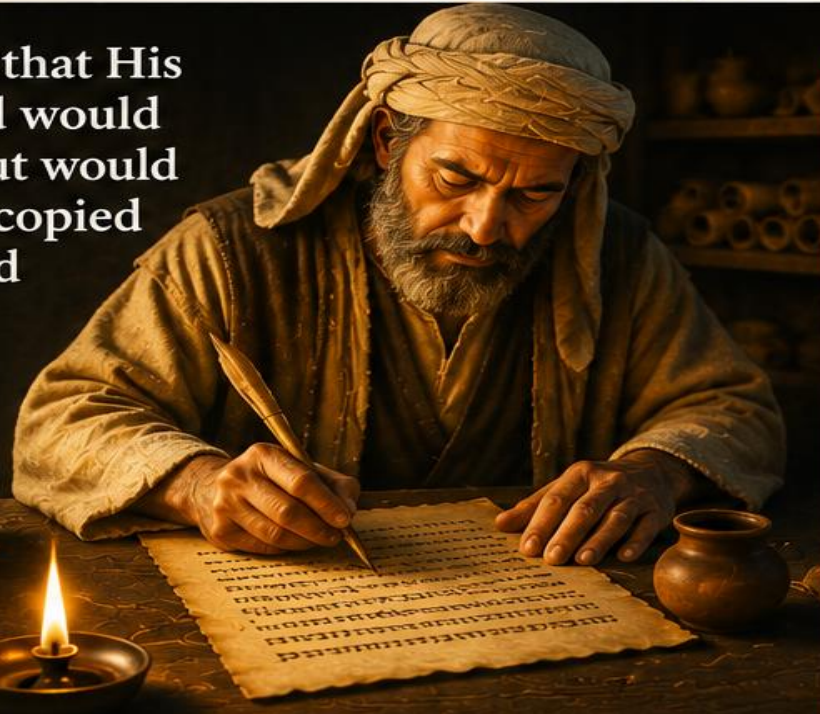
Through faithful transmission, God's Word has reached us today.

DISCUSSION: TRANSMISSION

TRANSMISSION

The written text of Scripture was faithfully copied and passed down from one generation to another.

God ensured that His written Word would not be lost, but would be faithfully copied and preserved through the centuries.



THE GOAL OF TRANSMISSION

To pass down the written text of Scripture accurately so that God's Word remains available for all generations.



His Word endures forever.
Isaiah 40:8

THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S WRITTEN WORD



Written by
inspired authors
(Autographs)



Copied by
faithful scribes
(Manuscripts)



Passed down
through generations
(Transmission)



Available to
us today



1. HOW WAS IT PASSED DOWN?

The original writings were copied by scribes so that the biblical books could be read, taught, and passed to future generations.



2. WHO WAS INVOLVED?

Faithful scribes, teachers, and believers carefully preserved and passed down the written text.



3. WHAT DOES IT INCLUDE?

Every word, letter, and sentence of the inspired autographs was carefully copied.



4. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Without accurate transmission, we would not have the Scriptures we have today.



5. WHAT TIME PERIOD?

Transmission spans from the time of the original writings (about 1600 years) until today.



Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. – Matthew 24:35

*“18 “And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, **he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law,** approved by the Levitical priests. 19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, 20 that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel.”*

Deuteronomy 17:18 – 20 (ESV)

“27 Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words that Baruch wrote at Jeremiah’s dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 28 “Take another scroll and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. 29 And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah you shall say, ‘Thus says the LORD, You have burned this scroll, saying, “Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and will cut off from it man and beast?” 30 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat by day and the frost by night. 31 And I will punish him and his offspring and his servants for their iniquity. I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the people of Judah all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, but they would not hear.’” 32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.”

Jeremiah 36:27 – 32 (ESV)

*“35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but
my words will not pass away.”*

Matthew 24:35 (ESV)

SOME IMPORTANT TERMS TO DEFINE:

1 BIBLE



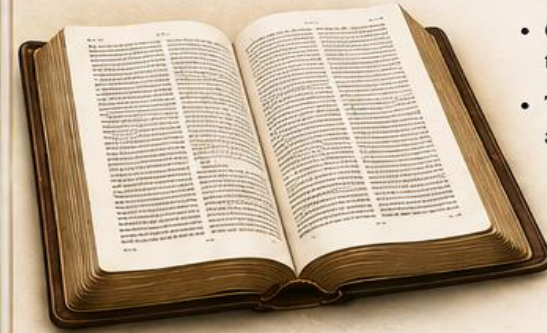
- The term Bible means “book.”
- The English word *Bible* comes from the Greek *biblia*, meaning “books.”
- Although composed of many individual books, together they form one complete revelation from God.

2 SCROLL



- A scroll consists of sheets joined together and rolled around one or two wooden rods.
- Nearly all Old Testament manuscripts were originally copied in scroll form.
- Jews continued using scrolls in synagogue worship long after Christians adopted the codex.

3 CODEX



- It is a series of pages bound together on one side.
- Christians preferred the codex.
- The codex had several advantages:
 - ✓ Greater capacity
 - ✓ Cheaper
 - ✓ More portable
 - ✓ Easier to use
 - ✓ More durable

4 AUTOGRAPHS



- The first handwritten documents produced by the biblical writers are commonly called the original writings or autographs.
- There are no known autographs of any of the books of the Bible.
- The original writings no longer exist because writing materials naturally deteriorated through use and age.

5 SCRIBE



- Because ancient documents could decay, wear out, be damaged, or be destroyed, copies had to be made.
- The original writings (autographs) were copied by scribes.
- Scribes copied the biblical books so that they could be read, taught, and passed to future generations.
- Careful copying allowed God’s Word to be preserved throughout history.

6 MANUSCRIPTS



- A manuscript is any handwritten copy of a document.
- Before the invention of the printing press, every copy of Scripture was produced by hand.
- Thousands of biblical manuscripts have survived to the present day.
- Those manuscript copies provide the textual evidence from which the original wording can be determined.



God’s Word was written by His chosen servants and faithfully copied by devoted scribes so it could be read, taught, and passed on to every generation.



ANCIENT MEDIUMS

USED FOR TRANSMITTING

THE WORD OF GOD

God's Word was written, copied, and preserved on many different materials so that it could be read and passed down from generation to generation.

1 CLAY TABLETS



- The earliest known writing material.
- Used prominently in Assyria and Babylonia (Mesopotamia).

Ezekiel 4:1

2 POTTERY OSTRACA



- Potsherds or pottery pieces used for short notes.
- Common in everyday life for records and messages.

Isaiah 8:1

3 STONE



- Used for laws, decrees, and important inscriptions.
- Durable, but difficult and expensive to produce.
- None of these biblical engravings have survived to the present day.

4 PLASTER



- Smooth plastered surfaces on walls or pottery.
- Inexpensive and widely used for notes.

Acts 23:12 (plastered wall)

5 WAX TABLETS



- Wooden tablets with a wax surface for writing.
- Reusable by simply smoothing the wax.

Exodus 32:15–16

6 METAL PLATES



- Very durable and resistant to wear or decay.
- Rare and expensive to produce.

7 PAPYRUS



- Made from the papyrus plant found in Egypt.
- Light, portable, and widely used for documents and scrolls.
- Old Testament manuscripts were often written on papyrus.

8 PERGAMENT (PARCHMENT)



- Made from animal skins (usually sheep, goat, or calf).
- More durable than papyrus and could be written on both sides.
- By the 4th century A.D., parchment had become the dominant writing material.

9 INKS AND WRITING TOOLS



- Inks were made from soot, plant extracts, or minerals.
- Tools included reed pens, styluses, and brushes.
- Scribes carefully wrote by hand every copy of Scripture.

10 PUBLIC READING



- Many could not read, but Scripture was read publicly.
- Examples: Nehemiah 8, Luke 4, 1 Timothy 4:13.

Through these many mediums and the faithful work of scribes, God's Word was transmitted and made available to His people.



CLAY TABLETS

THE EARLIEST WRITING MATERIAL



Clay tablets are the earliest known writing material.



They were used prominently in Assyria and Babylonia (Mesopotamia).



Writers used a reed stylus to press wedge-shaped signs into the soft clay.



After writing, the tablets were dried in the sun or baked in a kiln to harden them.



Ezekiel 4:1 – “And you, son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and portray on it the city, Jerusalem...”



Clay tablets provide us with some of the oldest written records of human history and God’s dealings with man.



“1 “And you, son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and engrave on it a city, even Jerusalem.”

Ezekiel 4:1 (ESV)

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OSTRACA

SHARDS USED FOR WRITING



Ostraca (singular: *ostrakon*) are broken pieces or shards of pottery used for writing short notes and records.



Common in everyday life throughout the ancient world.



Used for personal letters, business transactions, receipts, and lists.



Thousands have been discovered by archaeologists.



They provide valuable insight into daily life in Bible times.



2 Kings 23:12 (ESV)

“He removed the high places that were east of Jerusalem, on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians,” and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.”



EXAMPLES OF OSTRACA DISCOVERED



EVEN THE SIMPLEST SHARD CAN CARRY AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE.

God's Word was preserved through every method available.

STONE

ENGRAVED AND DURABLE



Stone was used for important inscriptions, laws, decrees, and memorials.



Extremely durable and able to withstand centuries.



Carved by skilled artisans using chisels and mallets.



Used for royal edicts, building inscriptions, boundary markers, and dedicatory texts.



Biblical Example: The Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets. (*Exodus 31:18*)



Stone provided a permanent witness to God's Word, recording His truth for all to see.



STONE INSCRIPTIONS
THROUGHOUT HISTORY
HAVE PRESERVED
IMPORTANT WRITTEN
RECORDS.



Skilled scribes carefully engraved the words so they could be read by many for generations.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

While many ancient stone inscriptions survive today, none of the biblical texts were written on stone, and none of these biblical engravings have survived to the present day.



“18 And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”

Exodus 31:18 (ESV)

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 ΔΔ3.γC33
 9W43.φ7Δ
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0.4W+
 φ7Z.294.
 C4.Y3Z.244.YW 24
 294.φ449.YΔφC44
 234φ.ΔΔ3.732434
 X.Y.CXφ4Y.Z+(3.2
 .W47.2) L&4.9Y
 4. C49WZ.Y (3
 4. Δ4ΔXZ 9.Y
 C.33.φ44.XZ
 3C4.Y444
 149WZ.C0.YC
 10.9WZ

Line 8 - "king of Israel"

Line 9 - "house of David"

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PLASTER

WRITING ON WALLS THAT LASTED



Plaster was a smooth layer of lime or gypsum spread over walls.



Writers used ink and a stylus or brush to write on the wet or dried plaster.



Inexpensive and widely used for notes, announcements, records, and decorative texts.



When plaster walls were protected from moisture and damage, the writing could last for centuries.

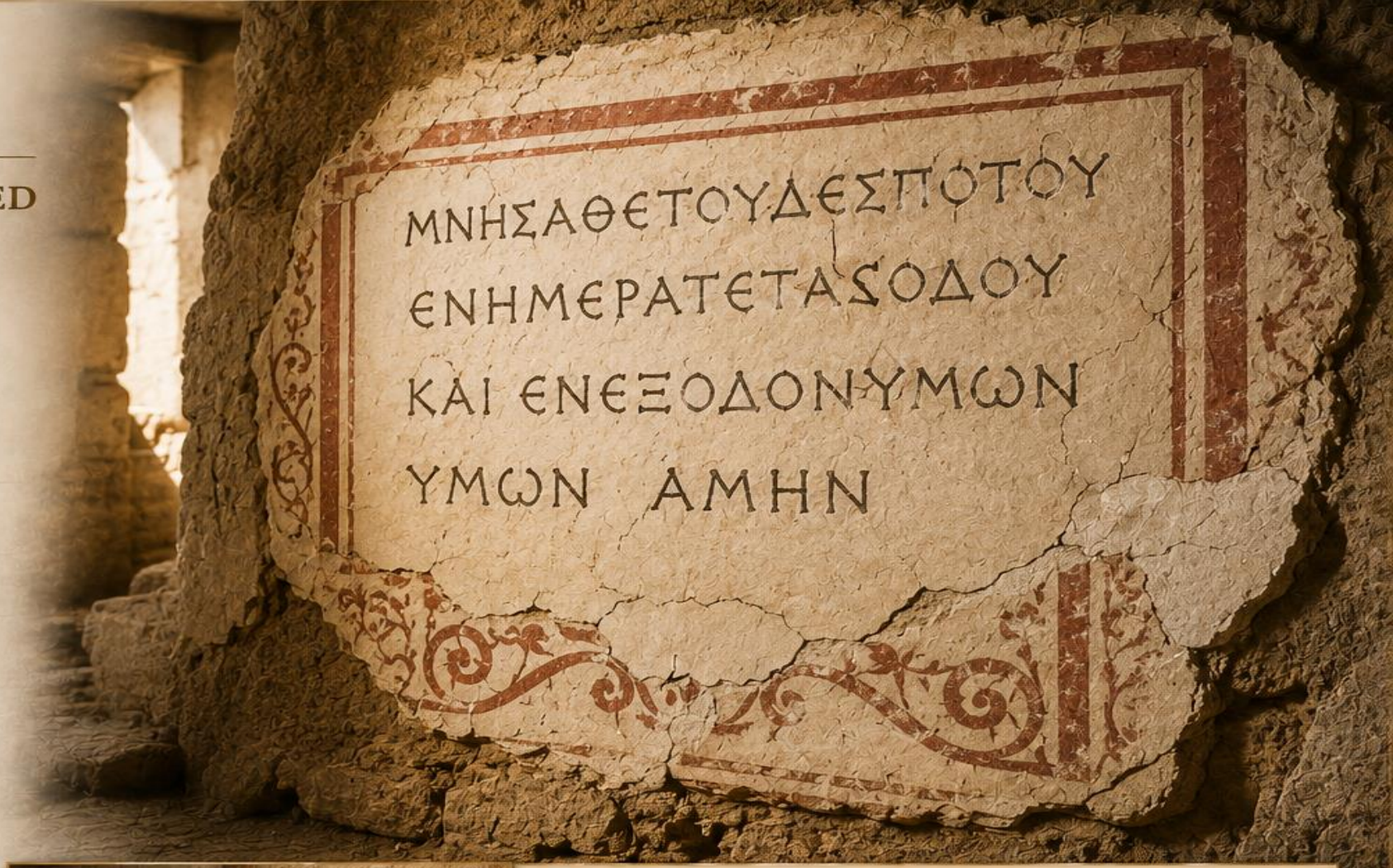


Examples have been found in ancient homes, public buildings, and archaeological sites.



A PRACTICAL MEDIUM

Plaster provided a smooth, inexpensive surface for everyday writing. Many texts written on plaster have survived to give us a glimpse into daily life in Bible times.



BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Acts 23:12 (ESV)

“When it was day, some of the Jews entered into a conspiracy and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.”

This oath was written on plaster.



“2 And on the day you cross over the Jordan to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall set up large stones and plaster them with plaster. 3 And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over to enter the land that the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you.”

Deuteronomy 27:2 – 3 (ESV)

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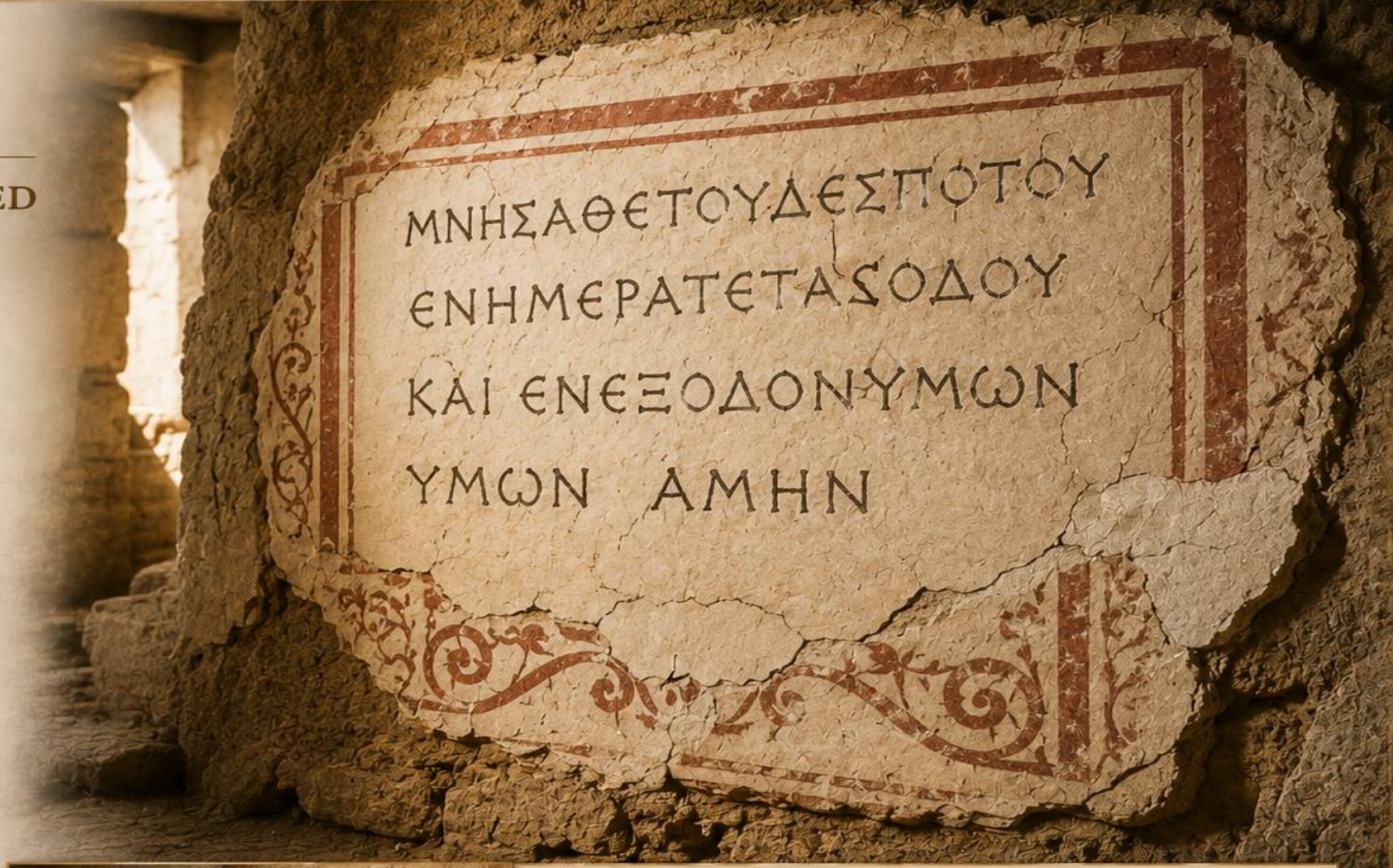


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WAX TABLETS

A REUSABLE ANCIENT WRITING MEDIUM

Wax tablets were a practical and reusable method for writing in the ancient world.



Wooden tablets were filled with a thin layer of wax, creating a smooth surface for writing.



Writers used a stylus (a pointed metal or bone tool) to inscribe letters by pressing into the wax.



The wax could be smoothed over with the flat end of the stylus or with heat, allowing the tablet to be reused again and again.



Wax tablets were commonly used for everyday purposes such as letters, records, accounts, schoolwork, and personal notes.



Because they were portable, durable, and reusable, wax tablets were widely used by people of all ages.



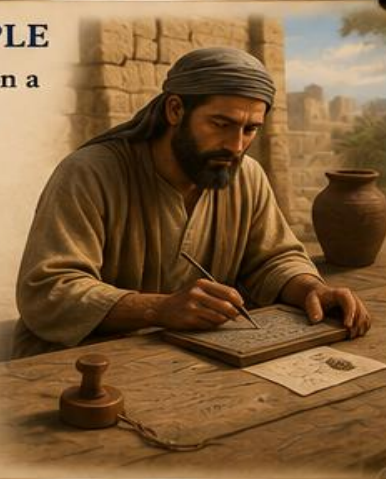
BIBLICAL EXAMPLE



Jeremiah wrote a letter on a wax tablet and sealed it.

Jeremiah 32:11 (ESV)

“ Then Hanamel my uncle’s son came to me in the court of the guard, according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth.’ So I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my uncle’s son and weighed out the money to him: seventeen shekels of silver.”



AN EVERYDAY TOOL FOR COMMUNICATION

Wax tablets provide us with a glimpse into the daily lives of ancient people and how they communicated, studied, kept records, and conducted business.



METAL

DURABLE AND LASTING RECORDS

Metals provided a strong and permanent surface for important writings that were meant to be preserved.



Metals such as bronze, copper, lead, iron, and silver were used for inscriptions in the ancient world.



Writers engraved letters into the metal using chisels, punches, or other sharp tools.



Metal inscriptions were highly durable and could withstand fire, water, and the test of time.



Often used for royal decrees, laws, treaties, military records, dedications, and commemorations.



Many metal inscriptions have been discovered by archaeologists and continue to provide valuable historical and biblical insights.



METAL INSCRIPTIONS WERE OFTEN CREATED FOR IMPORTANT MESSAGES THAT NEEDED TO LAST FOR GENERATIONS.



BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

During the reign of King Ahaz, the LORD gave a sign that was recorded for future generations.

“Then Isaiah said, “Take a large tablet and write on it in plain lettering, “Maher-shalal-hash-baz.””
Isaiah 8:1 (ESV)



“36 “You shall make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, Holy to the LORD.””

Exodus 28:36 (ESV)