



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



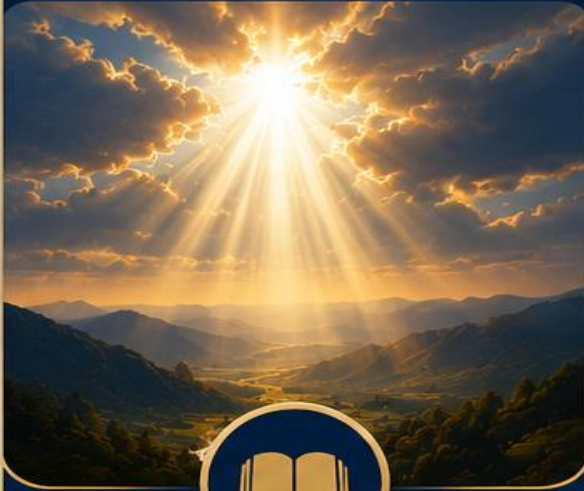
OUR RESPONSE

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

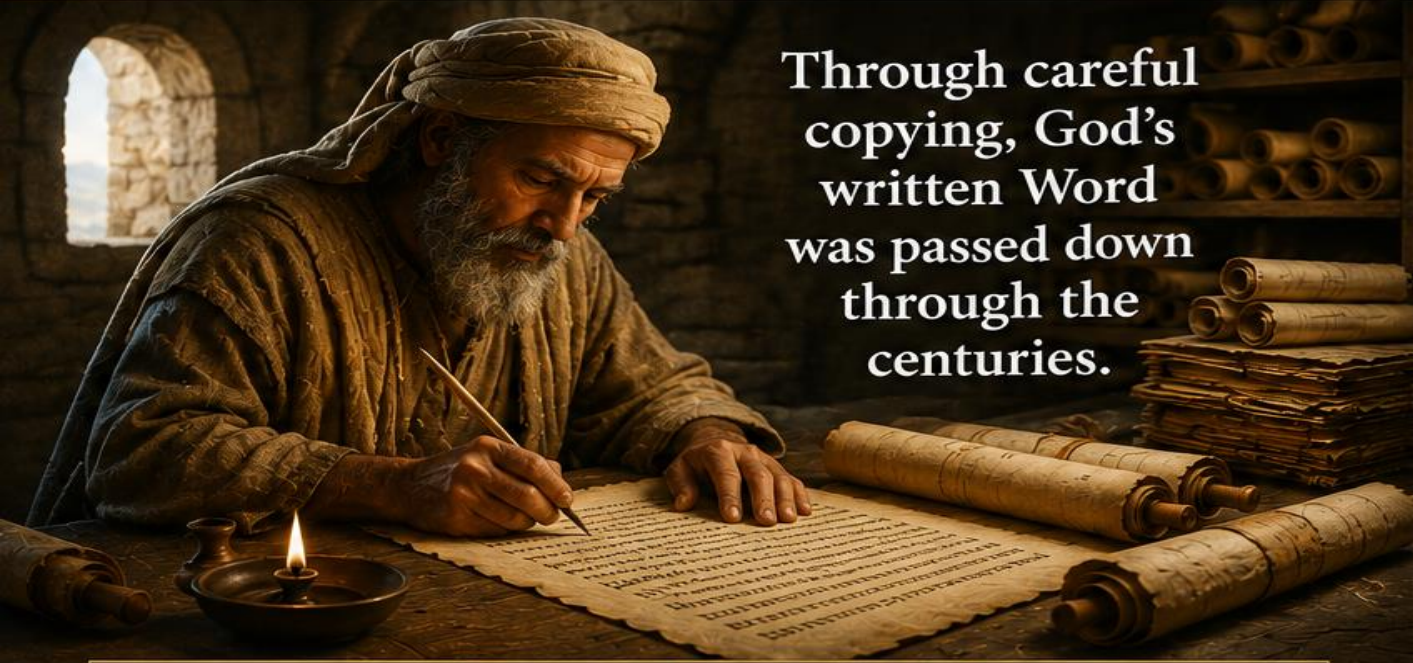


The message was translated into other languages so people can understand.

◆ *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

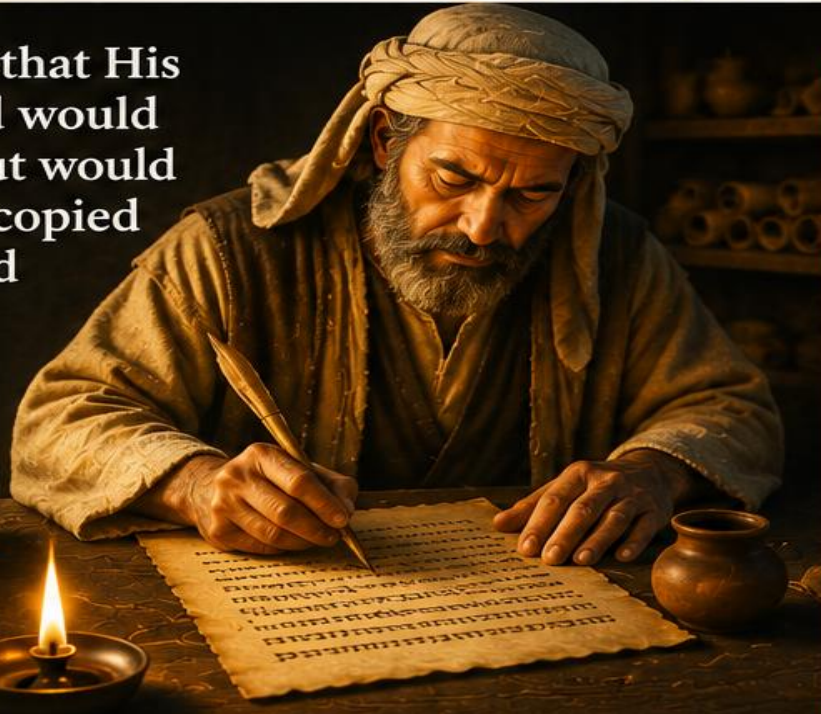
Through faithful transmission, God's Word has reached us today.

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



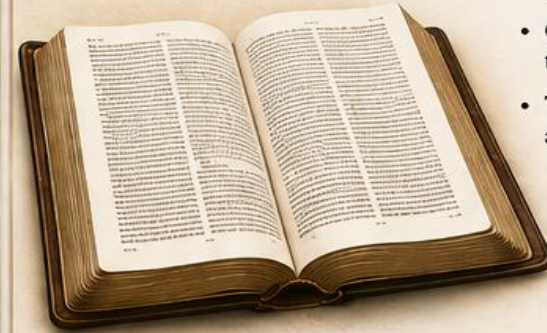
- The term Bible means “book.”
- The English word *Bible* comes from the Greek *biblia*, meaning “books.”
- Although composed of many individual books, together they form one complete revelation from God.

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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 234Φ.ΔΔ7.732434
 X.Y.CXΦ4Y.Z+(3.2
 .W47.2) L&4.9Y
 4. C49WZ.Y (3
 4. Δ4ΔXZ 9.Y
 C. 33.Φ44.XZ
 3CY.3444
 149WZ.60.YC
 60.9WZ

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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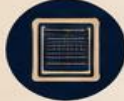
This oath was written on plaster.



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.



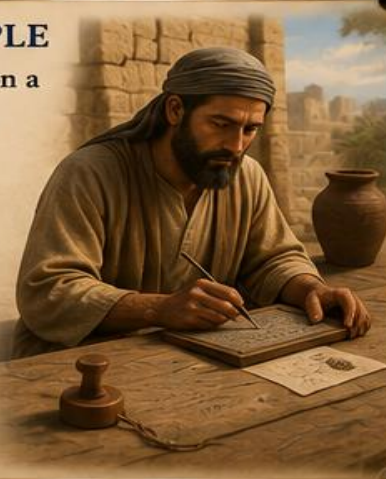
BIBLICAL EXAMPLE



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)

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PAPYRUS

THE PAPER OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Papyrus was a widely used writing material in the ancient world, especially in Egypt and the Near East.



Made from the papyrus plant that grew along the Nile River.



The plant stalk was sliced into thin strips, laid crosswise in layers, pressed, and dried to form sheets.



Writers used ink and a reed pen to write on the smooth surface.



Papyrus scrolls were rolled up for storage and transport.



Lightweight and portable, papyrus was the primary writing material for books, letters, records, and documents for hundreds of years.



Many ancient manuscripts of the Bible, including portions of the New Testament, were written on papyrus.



The papyrus plant



Strips laid and pressed in layers



Ink and reed pen



BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Papyrus was commonly used in Bible times for copies of Scriptures, important letters, and records.

"All the days of Ezra the scribe, as he prepared the book of the law of the LORD, and all the days of Nehemiah..."

Nehemiah 8:18 (ESV)



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

While papyrus was widely used, it is more fragile than other materials and does not last as long. Few original papyrus manuscripts survive today, but many copies were made.

ANIMAL SKIN (PARCHMENT)

A DURABLE MEDIUM FOR PRESERVING
THE WORD OF GOD



Parchment is made from the skins of animals, such as sheep, goat, or calf.



The skin is cleaned, scraped, stretched, and dried to create a smooth writing surface.



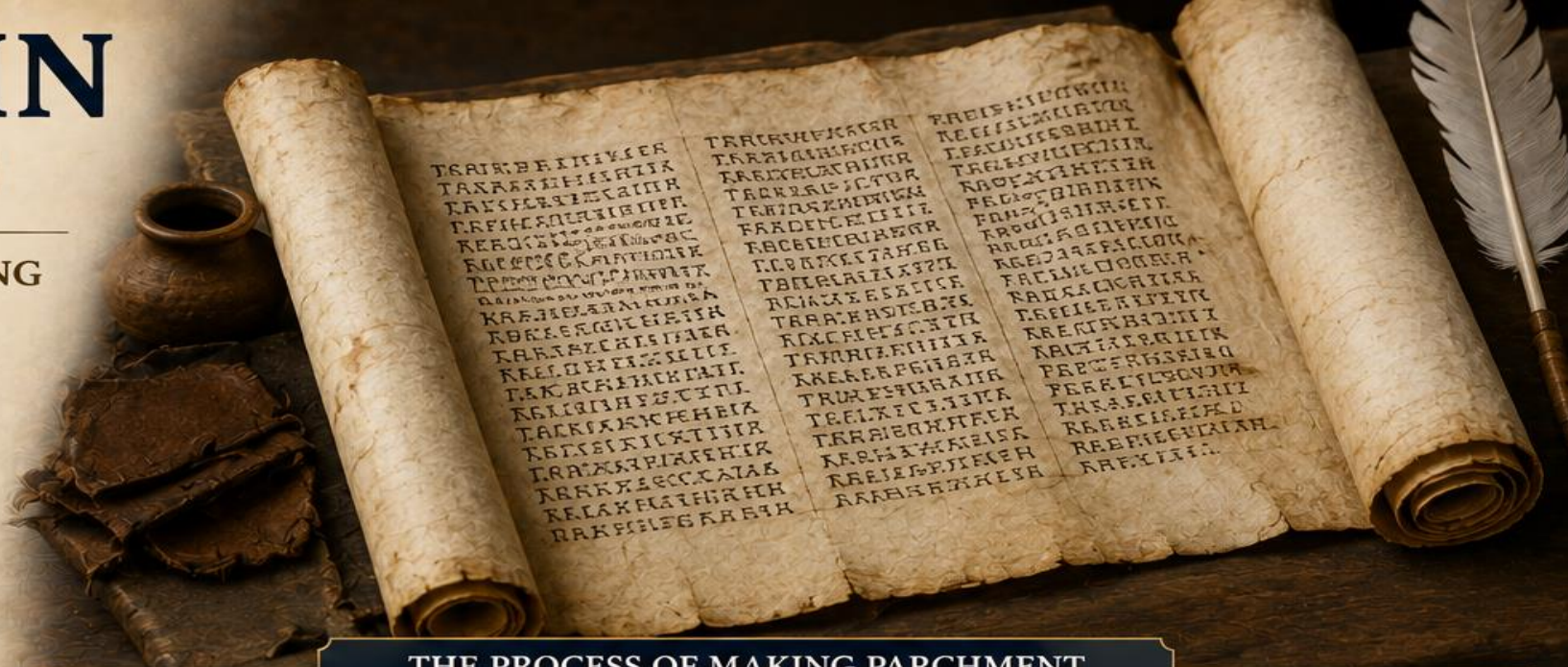
Writers used ink and a quill or stylus to write on parchment.



Parchment is very durable and can last for hundreds—even thousands—of years when properly cared for.



Because of its strength and flexibility, parchment became the most common material for important manuscripts of the Bible and other ancient works.



THE PROCESS OF MAKING PARCHMENT



BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

Many of the Old and New Testament manuscripts were written on parchment.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness..."

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Parchment was more expensive than papyrus, but it was stronger, easier to preserve, and could be written on both sides. It played a vital role in preserving God's Word for future generations.



“13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments.”

2 Timothy 4:13 (ESV)

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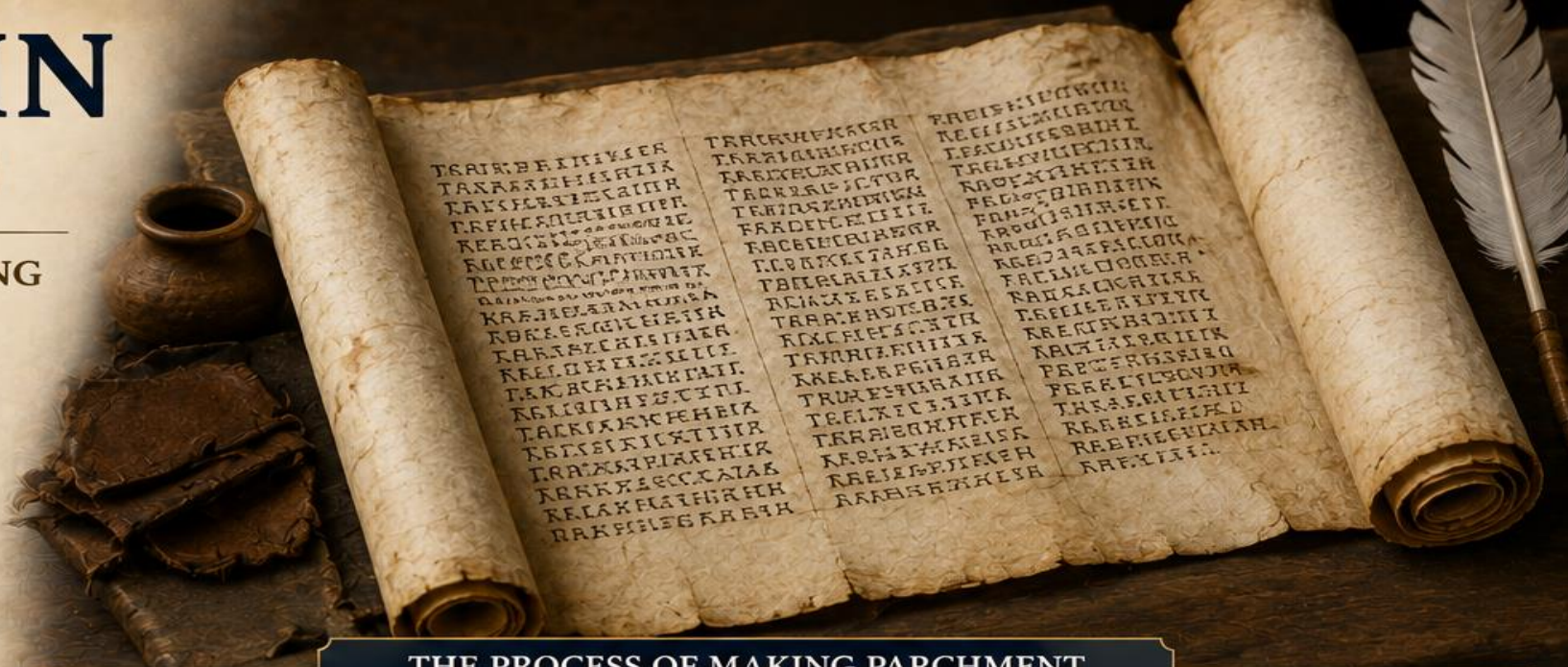
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THE PRODUCTION AND COST OF BOOKS



In ancient times, books were carefully produced by hand.
They were valuable, time-consuming, and costly.



HOW BOOKS WERE MADE

1 PREPARING THE MATERIAL



Animal skins were cleaned, stretched, and dried to make parchment. Papyrus was harvested and pressed into sheets.

2 PREPARING THE SURFACE



The surface was scraped, sanded, and smoothed to create a clean, durable writing surface.

3 WRITING THE TEXT BY HAND



Scribes carefully copied each word by hand using ink and a reed pen or quill. Mistakes were costly.

4 DRYING THE INK



Ink was allowed to dry completely to prevent smudging and ensure clarity.

5 PREPARING THE PAGES



Sheets were cut and folded or rolled, then gathered into sections.

6 BINDING THE BOOK



Sections were sewn together and bound with leather or cloth to form a book.

7 ADDING TITLES AND DECORATIONS



Titles, headings, and decorations were added carefully by skilled artists.

8 A FINISHED BOOK



The finished book was a treasure—durable, beautiful, and very valuable.



Every book represented many hours—sometimes months—of skilled labor.
Because of this, books were rare and highly valued.

THE COST OF BOOKS



A single copy of a book could take several months or even years to produce.



Because of the time, materials, and skill involved, books were extremely expensive.

A BOOK WAS OFTEN WORTH AS MUCH AS:

A DAY'S WAGE FOR A LABORER



A laborer might earn only 1 denarius per day.



A WEEK OR MORE OF INCOME



A book could cost the equivalent of several days or weeks of pay.

A VALUABLE POSSESSION



Many books were kept in temples, monasteries, and private collections.



WHY IT MATTERS

The high cost of books shows why the Bible was so precious to God's people and why they carefully preserved and copied His Word.

*"The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever."*

Isaiah 40:8 (ESV)



“1 And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.”

Nehemiah 8:1 – 3 (ESV)

“16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.”

Luke 4:16 – 20 (ESV)

“13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.”

1 Timothy 4:13 (ESV)

THE JOURNEY OF GOD'S WORD

From God's Revelation to the Bible in Your Hands

1

GOD REVEALS



God reveals His truth
to men in various ways.
Hebrews 1:1

2

**PROPHET WRITES
(AUTOGRAPH)**



God's message is
written by prophets
and apostles.
2 Peter 1:21

3

SCRIBES COPY



Faithful scribes carefully
copy the original
writings.
Exodus 17:24

4

**SCRIBES COPIED
AGAIN**



Each generation makes
new copies and passes
them on.
2 Timothy 2:2

5

**THOUSANDS OF
MANUSCRIPTS**



Thousands of handwritten
manuscripts are preserved
through the centuries.

6

**MODERN PRINTED
GREEK/HEBREW TEXT**



Scholars compare the
manuscripts to restore
the original text.

7

**ENGLISH BIBLE
IN YOUR HANDS**



The Bible is translated
so the world can read
God's Word today.
Acts 17:11



God's Word was carefully written, faithfully copied, and preserved
so that we could have it today—pure, accurate, and powerful.

