

The Bible: Why? How?

- I. The invisible God and Creator has revealed Himself by three means.
 - A. General revelation in nature. **ROM 1:20 c/w PSA 19:1; ACT 14:17.**
 1. Nature only reveals His existence and power (creative and destructive).
 2. Nature does not reveal His purpose or will, nor does it reveal specifics about sin, forgiveness, reconciliation, the afterlife, etc.
 3. Nature's message is subject to ambiguous interpretation, as is evident by the variety of superstitions derived from natural phenomena.
 4. Nature is a broken book under the "...bondage of corruption..." (**ROM 8:20-22**) and is therefore not an infallible revelation of God's person, will, and purpose for man.
 5. Those who look to nature for ultimate answers end up worshipping the creation, not the Creator, and rationalizing their way to destructive conclusions. **ROM 1:23-28.**
 - B. Special revelation.
 1. God once granted *external* revelation through theophanies (veiled personal appearances) and voices in which He spoke to men. **GEN 3:8-19; 12:7; EXO 3:2.**
 2. God once granted *internal* revelation to chosen individuals through visions and dreams. **GEN 15:1; NUM 12:6; ACT 2:17; 16:9-10.**
 3. God gave *inspired* revelation to the prophets and apostles for declaration and recording. **2PE 1:21; 2TI 3:16.**
 - C. Jesus Christ. **JOH 1:18; MAT 11:27; 1JO 5:20.**
 1. Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God. **HEB 1:1-3; 1TI 3:16.**
 2. It is by His knowledge of God that sinners are justified. **ISA 53:11; JOH 10:15.**
 3. Jesus Christ taught men of God and sent His Spirit to amplify His knowledge of God, God's will, purpose, plans, etc. **JOH 14:25-26; 16:13-15.**
 4. If one would more perfectly know God, he must grow in grace and in the knowledge of God as expressed in and by Jesus Christ. **2PE 3:18.**
- II. What men may truly know of God, they must know through Jesus Christ. **JOH 14:1, 6-7.**
 - A. Jesus Christ not being present to our senses, we must rely on the information provided to us by those to whose senses He was abundantly manifested. **1JO 1:1-3.**
 - B. Men are accountable to the *record* that God provided through *them*. **1JO 5:9-10; 4:6.**
 1. record: The fact or attribute of being, or of having been, committed to writing as authentic evidence of a matter having legal importance, *spec.* as evidence of the proceedings or verdict of a court of justice; evidence which is thus preserved, and may be appealed to in case of dispute. 2. The fact or condition of being preserved as knowledge, esp. by being put into writing; knowledge or information preserved or handed down in this way.
 2. Hence, the need for *recorders* (One who records or sets down in writing). **ISA 8:1-2; 1KI 4:3; JOH 21:24; ACT 15:23; 1CO 2:11-13; 5:9-11; EPH 3:3.**
 - C. The apostles of Jesus Christ not only left a written record of their knowledge and experience of Him, they also authenticated the previously written record. **ROM 15:4.**
 1. The O.T. scriptures testified of Christ. **JOH 5:39.**
 2. They were Israel's chief advantage. **ROM 3:1-2.**
 3. All scripture declares Jesus Christ by Whom God may only be truly known.
 - D. God has therefore decreed that He may only be truly known to the post-apostolic world by inspired scriptures which declare Jesus Christ *prophetically* (O.T.) and *historically* (N.T.).
 1. It is the inspired *written record* by which God may be known and that record was completed by the time of the last apostle's death. **DAN 9:24-27.**

- a. The apostles would be guided into all truth. **JOH 16:13.**
 - b. The apostles would stand as God's judges. **MAT 19:28; 1JO 4:6.**
 - c. As the inspired prophets *spoke* (**2PE 1:21**), then *wrote* (**ACT 13:27**) for our learning (**ROM 15:4**), so the inspired apostles *spoke and wrote* for our superior knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. **2PE 1:19.**
2. The written record of scripture is the supreme revelation of God available to us.
- a. It tells us how the external revelation of God in nature came into being, why it is in its present state of entropy, and its inability to adequately inform us about God. **HEB 11:3; ROM 5:12; ECC 8:17.**
 - b. In the absence of the Person of Jesus Christ (by Whom God is known), it stands as His record available to us to perfect us in the knowledge of Himself, and therefore in the knowledge of the Father. **EPH 3:4-5; 2TI 3:15-17.**
 - c. Even angels by which the word of God came (**ACT 7:53**) defer to scripture. **DAN 10:21; REV 19:10.**
 - d. The best record of purchase is a subscribed (signed) written one. **JER 32:10-12 c/w REV 1:1, 19; 22:16.**

III. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. **REV 19:10.**

- A. testimony: Personal or documentary evidence or attestation in support of a fact or statement; hence, any form of evidence or proof.
- B. Jesus has perfect knowledge of God since He is God and therefore His testimony is true. **JOH 3:11, 31-33.**
- C. The full scope of the knowledge of God is beyond us. **ROM 11:33-34.**
- D. The Holy Spirit limited even the knowledge we have of Jesus Christ's public life to what the apostles *wrote*. **JOH 20:30-31; 21:24-25.**
- E. The apostles *wrote* what is *sufficient* to provide *certainty* of knowledge. **LUK 1:1-4; 2TI 3:15-17.**
 1. certainty: That which is certain.
 2. certain: Determined, fixed, settled; not variable or fluctuating; unfailing.
 3. One may be certain of what truth God would have him know if he reads and believes the writings of Scripture.
 4. The Holy Spirit warns about venturing into uncharted "knowledge." **COL 2:8, 18.**
- F. The written word carries the same weight as if God were personally speaking to men as He did with Moses. **GEN 12:3 c/w GAL 3:8; EXO 9:16 c/w ROM 9:17.**
 1. The scriptures were the oracles of God. **ROM 3:2.**
 2. oracle: In *Gr.* and *Rom. Antiq.* The instrumentality, agency, or medium, by which a god was supposed to speak or make known his will; the mouthpiece of the deity...
 4. Divine revelation; a declaration or message expressed or delivered by divine inspiration; also, *pl.* the sacred scriptures (from Rom. iii. 2).
 3. Thus, in lieu of a personal audience with God, believers can, by heeding the written Scriptures, live by *every word that proceeds from His mouth* (**MAT 4:3-4**). Mind that Jesus never appealed to oral tradition to fight Satan here. **MAT 4:5-11.**

IV. Some reasonings.

- A. Is inspired Scripture sufficient to perfect the man of God? Yes. **2TI 3:16-17.**
- B. If oral tradition is identical to Scripture, what is tradition's value?
- C. If oral tradition is also inspired revelation but conflicts with Scripture, which is correct?

- D. If Scripture is correct, then oral tradition cannot displace it.
 - E. If oral tradition is correct, then Scripture is a lie/error and should be discarded.
 - F. If Scripture was divinely given but not preserved inviolate, then all that is left is tradition.
 - G. If all that is left is tradition, then Scripture has no place.
 - H. Therefore, inspired Scripture must also be preserved and the only thing that oral tradition could ever possibly do is rival and oppose Scripture.
 - I. Inspired revelation must have been given, recorded/written and preserved.
- V. The first recorded example of such inspired writing is **EXO 17:14**.
- A. Subsequent commands to write were given. **EXO 24:4; 34:27**.
 - B. Moses wrote much more. **NUM 33:1-2; DEU 31:9, 24-26**.
 - C. Joshua wrote more to add to this “book.” **JOS 24:26**.
 - D. Later, Samuel “...told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD” (**1SAM 10:25**).
 - E. The book(s) could then be called forth for benchmark purposes, etc. **DEU 17:18; JOS 1:8; 1KI 2:3; NEH 8:1**.
- VI. The foregoing verses show that there was an emphasis on the book(s) being conserved in the proximity of God’s presence on earth.
- A. The Mosaic Tabernacle gave way to the Temple and it is possible that Moses’ original writings were still there in King Josiah’s day. **2KI 22:8**.
 - B. The ark of the covenant which was housed in the holiest place in the Tabernacle and the later Temple was deemed the throne of God. **EXO 25:22; PSA 80:1**.
 - C. The placement of the writings by the ark suggested their divine authority.
 - D. Their placement by the ark is also significant since this implies they were separated from common books.
 - 1. Non-inspired writings would have had the taint of corruption since they were carnal, of the flesh. God does not condone corruption in His presence. **HAB 1:13; REV 22:15**.
 - 2. Being thus separated from other writings, these books were manifestly declared to be *holy* (kept or regarded as inviolate from ordinary use...consecrated...sacred).
 - 3. The inspired writings are properly revered as “...the holy scriptures...” (**ROM 1:2; 2TI 3:15**), given by the Holy Ghost, conserved in the holy of holies where the Holy God dwelt.
 - 4. It is interesting that the closest thing to the throne of God was the Scriptures, and whereas Israel’s high priest only drew nigh once each year (**HEB 9:7**), the Scriptures were always there between man and God’s throne.
 - 5. The ark had a mercyseat whereon sacrificial blood was sprinkled. **EXO 25:21**.
 - a. The mercyseat was itself a cover for the *tables of the covenant* housed in the ark (**1KI 8:21; HEB 9:4**), the Law which condemned men. **GAL 3:10**.
 - b. The Scriptures were therefore a constant witness to the need for blood atonement in mercy covering the curse. **LUK 24:46-47**.
 - 6. Over the ark were the wings of the cherubim. **EXO 25:18-20**.
 - a. These were images of angels which “...excel in strength...” (**PSA 103:20**).
 - b. This implies that the Scriptures are divinely safeguarded and preserved by forces that sinners cannot compete with. c/w **2KI 19:35**.
 - c. Angels have vested interest in the Scriptures. **GAL 1:8; 1PE 1:12**.
 - d. Angels shall imperil the natural creation (**REV 8-10**) but not the Scriptures. **MAT 24:35**.

- VII. From Moses' five books onward, God continued to inspire men, revealing His secret unto His prophets. **AMO 3:7.**
- A. God has *spoken* by the prophets since the beginning of the world (**LUK 1:70**), the first being Abel. **LUK 11:50-51.**
 - B. Many prophets *wrote* but only some of their works were preserved as Scripture, as witness the unknown works of men like Shemiah, Iddo and Elijah which are not part of the O.T. canon of Scripture. **2CH 12:15; 21:12.**
 - C. The standard for reference is the inspired prophetic writings that were called Scripture. **JOH 5:39; ROM 15:4; 2TI 3:15-17.**
 1. Angels defer to Scripture. **DAN 10:21.**
 2. Christ argued from Scripture. **MAT 21:42; 22:29.**
 3. Christ declared that Scripture cannot be broken. **JOH 10:35.**
 4. Christ died and rose again for our sins according to Scripture. **1CO 15:3-4.**
 5. Converted Paul reasoned from and deferred to Scripture. **ACT 17:2; ROM 4:3.**
 6. The Spirit commends Scripture for knowledge of salvation. **2TI 3:15.**
 7. The Spirit commends as noble those who measured by Scripture. **ACT 17:11.**
 8. Whatever might have been spoken or written by prophets, only that which was preserved as Scripture was the "gold standard."
 9. It was by writing prophecy in a book that God's revelation of truth would be preserved. **ISA 30:8.**
 10. Faithful teachers "...had the book...with them..." (**2CH 17:9**). c/w **NEH 8:3.**
 - D. Eventually, there was a collection of books called, "...the book of the LORD..." (**ISA 34:16**) which men should read. The word "Bible" comes from Gr. *biblia* (the books).
 1. This book by the time of Christ consisted of "...the law of Moses...the prophets...the psalms..." (**LUK 24:44**).
 2. The Jews designated these divisions:
 - a. Torah (the Law), consisting of five books of Moses.
 - b. Nebhiim (the Prophets), consisting of four books of *former prophets* (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and four books of *latter prophets* (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve).
 - c. Kethubhim (the Writings), categorized as:
 - (1) Poetical books (Psalms, Proverbs, Job).
 - (2) The Scrolls (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther).
 - (3) Prophetic-Historical books (Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles).
 3. The Hebrew canon of Scripture never included the books of the Apocrypha.
 4. The Hebrew canon is the same body of knowledge as we have in our English O.T.
 5. The Book of Job deserves special attention.
 - a. Though they did not believe it was penned by a Hebrew, the Hebrews always considered it as part of the sacred canon of Scripture.
 - b. Ezekiel names Job with Noah and Daniel. **EZE 14:14.**
 - c. James by inspiration mentions him. **JAM 5:11.**
 - d. Paul by inspiration quotes it, using the proclamation usually used for Scripture, "...it is written..." (**1CO 3:19 c/w JOB 5:13**). See also **HEB 12:5 c/w JOB 5:17.**
 - e. It is very old, probably written after the Flood of Noah (**JOB 22:15-17**) but before (or near) the time of Abraham since Job lived for 140 years after all his troubles (**JOB 42:16**) yet lifespans were less by the time of Abraham

and Sarah. **GEN 23:1; 25:7.**

- f. God's name, JEHOVAH, was not known to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob (**EXO 6:3**) but it appears in the first two and the last three chapters of Job, and in **JOB 12:9**. Yet the Book of Job curiously does not reference any of the five books of Moses, nor the patriarchs, nor Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Some hold that Moses lent a hand on this book.
- g. Appeals in it are commonly made to divine knowledge conveyed by tradition, not writing (**JOB 5:1; 8:8; 15:18; 21:29**), indicating that the penning of this book was a watershed moment in the way that the knowledge of God was preserved and disseminated.

VIII. The importance of copies.

- A. The first mention of copying concerned the Ten Commandments.
 - 1. The original autograph was smashed. **EXO 32:19.**
 - 2. God simply replaced it and commanded it to be placed in the ark. **DEU 10:1-5.**
 - a. What He wrote was "...according to the first writing..." (**v. 4**). It was a duplicate or copy that was not to vary from the original.
 - b. Thus, the rule was laid down for future perpetuation of God's words. c/w **JOS 8:32-35; JER 36:27-28.**
- B. A copy of the Law was to be in the hands of Israel's king. **DEU 17:18 c/w 2CH 23:11.**
 - 1. From the copy, he was to "...keep ALL the words of this law and these statutes..." (**DEU 17:19**). c/w **1KI 2:3.**
 - 2. Moses' original was entrusted to the priests (**v. 18; DEU 31:9**) who were to "...put it in the side of the ark of the covenant..." (**DEU 31:26**).
 - 3. Mind that Moses' original writing would have included the words of the Ten Commandments which were ensconced within the ark. His inspired original autograph would have consisted (in part) of an inspired copy of what was written in the stone tablets by God.
 - 4. The king, therefore, when writing his copy (which was equivalent to the original), would have been perpetuating an inspired copy of an inspired copy.
- C. Judges in diverse parts of the realm would have needed access to the various laws of Moses in order to perform their offices (**2CH 19:5, 10**) and the bonafide copies of the Law would have made this possible and effective.
- D. Likewise, the priests which taught throughout Judah "...had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah..." (**2CH 17:9**).
- E. "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul..." (**PSA 19:7**). Are we to believe that only the originals had conversion power when the priests taught throughout the land, or that the originals were shared by the apostles as they evangelized the world?
- F. Believers in general had access to bonafide scriptures. **PSA 1:2; ACT 8:32; 17:11; 2TI 3:15.**

IX. Enter: the scribes.

- A. scribe: A writer; one whose business is writing. In various specific or limited applications. *Jewish Hist.* A member of the class of professional interpreters of the Law after the return from the Captivity; in the Gospels often coupled with the Pharisees as upholders of ceremonial tradition.
- B. Note **JER 8:8-9.**
- C. The scribes had attained a notoriety by the time of Christ. **MAT 23:13; MAR 12:38.**
- D. However, there had been some faithful scribes. **JER 36:26-27; EZR 7:6.**

1. The autograph was to be under the care and supervision of the priests/Levites. **DEU 31:9, 26.**
 2. Originally, the king himself was to make an apograph (exact copy) of the law “...in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life...” (**DEU 17:18-19**).
 - a. This copy was what “...is written in the law of Moses” (**1KI 2:3**), showing the transmission of original authority to the copy.
 - b. The king would have been therefore enjoined to regularly read the law of Moses as rendered in the copy without having to return to the priests.
 - c. This official copy (bearing original authority) would have of itself served as “the word of God” if the original writings stored in the side of the ark of the covenant were to disappear.
 - d. Even though each new king may well have had an authentic copy (or copies) handed down to him as part of his royal inheritance, he would have also been expected to fulfil **DEU 17:18**. Thus, over time, numerous royal authentic copies of the word of God could have accumulated.
 3. We later read of a scribe’s chamber in the king’s house (**JER 36:12**), indicating that the work of writing and perpetuating the scriptures was entrusted to a royal “steno pool.”
 4. Legitimate copies of original autographs must have made it to Babylon since Daniel “...understood by books...” (**DAN 9:2**) what was to come and where Israel had gone wrong and incurred “...the oath that is written in the law of Moses...” (**DAN 9:11-13**). c/w **JER 30:2; 36:2**.
 5. Whereas the Davidic throne and the temple did not survive the Babylonian conquest, the law of the Lord did, and a “ready scribe” of “the **words** of the commandments of the LORD” proclaimed it from a written book. **EZR 7:6, 10-11; NEH 8:1, 5, 8.**
 6. Ezra seems to have assumed presidency of a body of learned and wise men. **NEH 8:4, 7, 13** c/w **EZR 7:21**.
 - a. A scribe took a place of great prominence in the subsequent history of Israel and the scriptures.
 - b. Revival was directly related to the preservation and promotion of what was deemed “...the words of the commandments of the LORD...” (**EZR 7:11**).
- E. Even though the professional class of scribes had corrupted themselves and imposed their glosses on the teachings of the scriptures, yet there were still valid scriptures available by the time of Christ. **LUK 10:26; JOH 5:39; MAT 5:17-18; 12:3-5.**
1. Christ obviously deemed the extant copies as the very word of God.
 2. Even though He corrected Pharisaical interpretations and glosses, He never once called into question the integrity of the Hebrew text.
 3. The apostles likewise deemed the writings to be inspired scriptures. **ACT 1:16; 2:16-17; 18:28; ROM 4:3; 11:2; 1PE 2:6.**
 4. Godly scribes played a valuable role in the perpetuation of the scriptures.
- F. Jesus even promised to send scribes. **MAT 23:34.**
1. These promised “scribes” may be the apostles and those whom they ordained to minister the apostolic doctrine. c/w **LUK 11:49; 2TI 1:13; 2:2.**
 2. However, writing scribes were also put to good use.
 - a. The apostles themselves wrote inspired scriptures. **2PE 3:15-16; GAL 6:11; 1JO 1:4.**
 - b. Sometimes the writing was by secretaries. **ROM 16:22; 1PE 5:12.**

- c. Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should do in the N.T. times as He had done in the O.T., and engage faithful scribes to pen or copy the apostolic autographs?
- G. The copyists would have transcribed apostolic autographs with great care.
1. The apostles' writings were deemed to be of divine authority. **1CO 14:37; 1JO 4:6.**
 2. New Testament books were invested with the same sanctity as the Old Testament Scripture.
 - a. **1TI 5:18** cites **LUK 10:7** along with **DEU 25:4** as *scripture*.
 - b. **2PE 3:16** puts Paul's writings in the same category as *other scriptures*.
 - c. In all likelihood, since the spread of Christianity depended upon Jewish apostles and saints who came from a background of full conviction of the inspiration and preservation of Scripture, faithful Jewish copyists/scribes with great reverence for God's written word would have played a key role.
 3. Therefore, the same scrupulous care in accurate copying that defined the preservation of the Law of Moses by the rule "...according to the first writing..." (**DEU 10:4**) would be in force.
 4. This would have been necessary to perpetuate the Holy Ghost's inspired apostolic standard (**JOH 16:13**) which was of a higher order than the O.T. prophecy. **2PE 1:19.**
 5. This would have been necessary to avoid the solemn judgments declared against those who altered God's words. **DEU 4:2-3; REV 22:18-19.**
 6. This would have been necessary to combat the corruption of the word of God that was already taking place in the days of the apostles. **2CO 2:17; 2TH 2:2.**
 7. This would have been necessary to vet and expose false ambassadors. **MAT 24:24, 34-35; 1JO 4:1; REV 2:2.**
 8. Knowing the apostles were still alive, the early copyists would have been extra careful to produce faithful manuscripts. **ACT 15:1-2, 24; 2CO 10:10.**
 9. Before long, collections of apostolic writings would have accumulated and circulated among churches after the order of **1TH 5:27; COL 4:16.**
 10. A disciple of the Apostle John, Polycarp, quoted extensively from the Gospels and the Epistles when he wrote the Philippians. He expressed confidence that they were "well versed in the Sacred Scriptures." (The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Polycarp, *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians*, chap. 12, 1:35)
 11. The superintending hand of God in preserving the sacred text should not be overlooked since He designed that men should gain understanding of His will by reading His words (**MAT 24:15; EPH 3:3-4; 2TI 3:15-17**), be held accountable to the written words (**HOS 8:12; 2TH 3:14**) and measure their teachers by them. **ISA 8:20; ACT 17:11.**
- X. The language and translation factor.
- A. Remember that the Lord Jesus affirmed a preserved letter-perfect law. **MAT 5:18.**
 1. Jots and tittles are part of the written Hebrew language.
 2. This does not support the conjecture of a Greek O.T. that Jesus supposedly used.
 - B. The O.T. Scripture at large was written in Hebrew and some Chaldee (portions of Daniel).
 1. When Jesus spoke of men *reading to understand* in Daniel (**MAT 24:15**), He was obviously affirming that Daniel's words in Chaldee were inspired, authoritative, and Scripture which spoke of Himself. **JOH 5:39.**
 2. Therefore, language differences are not contrary to preserving Scripture.

- C. The inspired text must also be preserved in translations, a detail which is commonly denied on the assumption that only the original autograph can be inspired Scripture.
1. Moses's words in the Hebrew Scripture would have been what he spoke to Pharaoh in Egyptian.
 2. The O.T. is often quoted in the N.T. which was written in Greek.
 3. Scholars would say here that Christ and the apostles often quoted from the Septuagint, a supposed Greek translation of the O.T. made before the first advent of Christ. But, if Christ, when quoting O.T. Scripture, was doing so from a Greek translation of the Hebrew, and the only thing properly called Scripture is supposedly the original autograph, then:
 - a. the Greek Septuagint translation must be the original autograph, which is a logical absurdity, or
 - b. the Greek Septuagint was a valid facsimile of the original Hebrew, which means inspired translation, or
 - c. Christ quoted from something less than a perfect, inspired Scripture, which is ridiculous. Christ used a letter-perfect O.T. which He deemed inspired. **MAT 5:17-18; JOH 10:34-35; LUK 24:27, 44.**
- D. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the word of God was no longer the peculiar property and blessing of the Jews, per **PSA 147:19-20**.
1. The gospel would be preached to all nations, which would necessitate copious translation. **MAT 24:14.**
 2. The Holy Spirit and polyglots were needed.
 - a. The Holy Spirit by the gift of tongues miraculously translated "original" language. **MAR 16:17 c/w ACT 2:4-11; 1CO 12:10.**
 - b. The Spirit also built into the church ordinary gifts like "helps" (**1CO 12:28**), and it would be a great help to the advance of the gospel if there were polyglots in the churches who might aid in translation efforts after the era of miracles ended.
 - c. Paul was a polyglot. He obviously could speak Hebrew and Greek, whether by special enablement or by learning.
 3. Paul made his defence in Hebrew, yet this is recorded in the Greek N.T. **ACT 21:40.**
 4. There are many places where the N.T. translates for us. **MAT 1:23; MAR 5:41; 15:22, 34; JOH 1:38, 41; JOH 19:13, 17-20; ACT 4:36.**
- E. There is simply no serious objection to the fact that God is well able by both special or ordinary means to get His inspired words into diverse languages. The latter may be in accord with texts like **JOB 32:8**.

- XI. God has ever ordained specific repositories for the preservation and transmission of Scripture.
- A. As noted earlier, the O.T. Scripture was given to and committed into the hands of the nation of Israel, the O.T. church. **PSA 147:19-20; ROM 3:1-2.**
 1. The law was *sealed up among His disciples* (**ISA 8:16**), especially the priestly tribe of Levi, and kept in the ark of the covenant. **DEU 17:18; 31:24-26.**
 2. Of them, the priesthood were especially designated teachers in the O.T. **LEV 10:11; DEU 24:8; 2CH 15:3; MAL 2:7.**
 - B. Mind that disciples *continue in the word of God* (**JOH 8:31**) which would be impossible to do if it were not preserved and transmissible.
 - C. In the N.T. times, the Scripture was given and entrusted to the N.T. church. **1TI 3:15; REV 12:17.**

1. Church members are disciples. **ACT 11:26.**
 2. Church members are priests. **1PE 2:5, 9.**
 3. Church members are teachers, professionally and ordinarily. **2TI 2:2; HEB 5:12.**
- D. Let not the importance of **ACT 11:26** go unnoticed.
1. This church was in Syria.
 2. Hundreds of years earlier, God had called Israel (Jacob) a *Syrian*. **DEU 26:5.**
 3. Jesus Christ made a submissive, uncircumcised, immersed Syrian a reproof to Israelites. **LUK 4:27 c/w 2KI 5:14-15.**
 4. God had prophesied to Israel that He would one day *call His servants by a different name*. **ISA 65:15.**
 - a. **ISA 65** certainly had in view N.T. times, **ISA 65:1-2 c/w ROM 10:20-21.**
 - b. It was in Antioch where *disciples* were *first called Christians*. Israel and Levi were fading into the sunset.
 5. From that church began the ordained ministry of the Apostle Paul (**ACT 13:1-4**) whose preaching and epistles turned the world upside down. **ACT 17:6.**
 6. That church at Antioch in Syria was originally a Jewish church (**ACT 11:19**) but soon incorporated Grecians (**ACT 11:20**) and Gentiles. **GAL 2:11-12.**
 7. Here was a N.T. church of multinational make-up that was the foundation and springboard for a unifying multinational gospel advanced primarily by the works of the Apostle Paul who was called by God for the task.
 8. Paul's Holy Spirit-directed mission work went north and west where he planted churches of disciples and then later sent back epistles for their perfection in the knowledge and ways of Christ. This therefore would be the expected region and route for the transmission of God's words as especially given to Paul.
 9. Keep in mind that Paul (and the other Jewish apostles) were well aware of the importance and necessity of *copies* of inspired original works (**DEU 17:18**). Paul stated that Timothy had had the *holy Scriptures* from childhood (though not the original autographs) and that he obviously considered the copies inspired. **2TI 3:15-16.**
 10. If ever there was a city-church (other than Jerusalem) that could be called the "mother church" of N.T. Christianity, it was Antioch, not Rome.
 11. A reasonable investigator looking for the line of true texts (and associated manuscripts) would be compelled to look for them via this pattern and region. One would expect that the greatest likelihood of textual preservation would be from the Antioch-generated churches of Asia Minor, etc., bearing a Syrian (later, Byzantine) text-type.
- E. A direct correlation between the true, preserved Scripture and the true, preserved church of Jesus Christ should be expected.
1. History bears out this testimony from Scripture. The efforts of the forces of darkness have throughout the centuries been levelled against the oppressed churches of Christ who would not yield to what they considered a false baptism, false gospel, false rule or false scripture.
 2. True churches would especially be persecuted churches by the divine order (**JOH 15:20**) and mind that the "they" in this verse were people who were convinced that they were the true followers of God.
 3. True churches would not marry the State. **MAT 22:21.**
 4. True churches would reject pagan religion's methods. **2CO 6:16; 1TH 1:9.**
 5. The *law sealed up among the disciples* (**ISA 8:16**) would most likely be found in the line of persecuted churches which treasured God's words and took pains to copy

- them, translate them, share them and even hide them from their enemies' designs.
- F. Invariably there would arise problems in the preservation of Scripture. Observe some problems in preservation and God's solution:
1. What if Scripture were lost? *Ans.* They may be lost to men, but God knows where they are. Sometimes, the perfect, preserved Scripture is right underneath men's noses but they don't know it, neither will God open their eyes to see it until their hearts have been humbled. **2KI 22:8-11.**
 2. What if men refuse the authenticity of Scripture? *Ans.* God may confirm it from outside sources (**EZR 4:1 - 6:15**). Texts which have been questioned by modern higher criticism have been proven valid by:
 - a. Lectionaries (Books containing lessons or portions of Scripture appointed for reading in church services). There exist about 2300 of these of early date which have a remarkable agreement, indicating a dedicated effort to preserve a recognized lectionary text.
 - b. Writings of church fathers. A good example of this is how **MAR 16:9-20** was quoted and used as Scripture by men like Irenaus and Tertullian in the 2nd Century.
 - c. Greek texts of secular affairs written in the same flavor as the *Koine* (common) Greek of the 1st century, the language of the Textus Receptus (Received Texts) which are the basis of the AV 1611.
 - d. Latin Vulgate readings that confirm the true text. For example, **1JO 5:7** was not in the first edition of Erasmus's Greek N.T. (1516 A.D.), but was later added when evidence proved that the Latin Vulgate (which did have it) was right.
 3. What if Scripture is abused or destroyed? *Ans.* God could simply deliver it again. **EXO 32:19; 34:1; JER 36:20-32.**
 - a. Note the difference in the inspired texts (**JER 36:32**). Both were obviously the inspired word of God. This shows that God reserves the right to make variations in His text without impugning its merit.
 - b. This explains why there are sometimes variations between N.T. quotations of the O.T. text and the O.T. text itself. Examples: **ISA 53:4 c/w MAT 8:17; ISA 61:1 c/w LUK 4:18.**
 - c. Inspiration is thus seen to incorporate variation.
 - (1) There is no need to assume (as modern critics do) that some of the gospel writers must have been quoting from a Septuagint (a supposed pre-Christ Greek translation of the O.T.) while others did not.
 - (2) Antiquities experts understand this principle. One genuine Stradivarius violin may vary slightly from another genuine Stradivarius but neither of them agree with counterfeits.