

# SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

## LESSON 3



### HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT CAME TO US

*Scripture Text: Psalm 145:1-13*

God began to give His Word to man by speaking to him. He spoke to man in all ages, giving personal commands. When ready to give a system of law for guidance over a length of time, He first spoke it (**Exodus 20:1-19**), then He wrote part of it with His own finger (**Exodus 31:18**), then commanded Moses to **write thou these words** (**Exodus 24:4; 34:27**), and Moses obeyed. All Old Testament Books were written as God led the writers to write (**Jeremiah 30:2; Habakkuk 2:2; 2 Peter 1:21**). With few exceptions, they were written in Hebrew on parchment and rolled into scrolls to make a book. These were copied by hand by scribes, an expensive and laborious task.

The Old Testament is God's Word, was written to stand forever, and is to be spread to all people.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isaiah 40:5*

#### DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**2 Kings 22** Hilkiah finds a Bible.

Tue.—**2 Kings 23:1-25** Josiah obeys the Bible.

Wed.—**Isaiah 40:1-11** God's Word and promise will stand.

Thu.—**Isaiah 45:17-23** Message of salvation for all people.

Fri.—**Psalm 119:17-32** Prayer for the blessing of God's Word.

**Devotional Reading: Isaiah 62** Whole world to know of salvation.

#### Praise Passed Along

**Psalm 145:1-9** In this song of praise and adoration of the Lord, David expresses the desire of his heart that all people should know God and join in praising Him. This is God's will. (Read **Numbers 14:21**.) **One generation shall praise thy works to another**—each generation has a responsibility to pass the good news on and on to others. **Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts . . . they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.** How will they know these? Because the record—God's Word—has been passed on to them. (Read **Isaiah 40:1-8**.) David had only the part of the Old Testament which was written to that date.

#### How Will They Know?

**Psalm 145:10-12** Thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak . . . and talk. The saints can never keep the mighty works of the Lord to themselves, **for of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh** (**Luke 6:45**). Of what shall they speak? **The glory of thy kingdom . . . thy power.** Why? **To make known to the sons of men**—other people—**his mighty acts**—God's acts of power, of love and mercy. And **the glorious majesty of his kingdom**—salvation, His work in the hearts of men, His spiritual rule in the earth, the glory of His divine organism, the church, which unites men and God. The saints are to speak, to proclaim this to the world. To do this, they must have and pass on the Bible.

#### God's Will

**Psalm 145:13** We see from this Psalm that God's will is that His Word, His message, be given to all men of every generation. His is **an everlasting kingdom**. See **Isaiah 9:6-7**. Therefore, His Word by which He rules

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must reach to all generations. He has provided for its preservation. It has come to us because God willed it so, and certain people did His will.

God directed scribes to write by hand the Books of the Law. Some were Ezra, Baruch, and others (**Ezra 7:6; Jeremiah 36:4**). The **book of the law** was to be kept in **the ark of the covenant of the Lord (Deuteronomy 31:26)**. The Books were to be read to the people (**Joshua 8:34-35; Deuteronomy 31:9-13**). This custom continued through the time of Christ and of Paul, reading weekly in the synagogue (**Luke 4:16-17; Acts 13:14-15**). God's Word was to be taught to the children (**Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Deuteronomy 6:20-25**). Kings were to have God's Book and to live and rule by it (**Deuteronomy 17:18-20**). Israel neglected and lost the Books at times (**2 Chronicles 34:14-21**), but God preserved them even through neglect, war, and exile.

The original Books were directly inspired by God and thus were perfect. A few errors occurred in copying. In Hebrew, differences between numbers were sometimes shown by only the addition of a dot or two or a slight variation in a line. A copyist could easily mistake one for the other, especially on worn scrolls. When comparing Hebrew copies, the Targums in Aramaic and the Septuagint in Greek, no disagreement in essentials is found. Most convincing proof that our present Old Testament is a trustworthy copy of the inspired original is the fact that Jesus used, quoted, and approved of it (**Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44**). God has ordained that His Word **shall not pass away**.

### Translations

About three hundred years before Christ, some Jews settled in Alexandria, Egypt. As their children learned Greek, they needed a Bible in that language. About 285 B.C. the Septuagint Version (means *seventy*) was translated from Hebrew into Greek. This is the Bible that Jesus used.

When the Jews were captives in Babylon, they gradually learned to speak Aramaic. When the Hebrew Bible was read, the meaning would be given orally in Aramaic (or Chaldee). Later these translations were written and called Targums (meaning *translations*).

In the first six hundred years after Christ, some Jews spent their lives in copying the Old Testament Books to get the most perfect complete Old Testament possible. These men were called Masoretes (meaning *to hand down*). They took great pains to have every letter perfect.

Translations were made by different people from different manuscripts into many languages, including the **Gospel of John** in English. In A.D.1380 in England, John Wycliffe finished translating the whole Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English. This is the Wycliffe Version. All was done by hand. For opening the Bible to the people, Roman priests had him arrested.

In A.D.1456 printing was developed in Germany. Now copying the Bible was less difficult. But translating and distributing it was opposed by the Roman Catholic powers. In 1527 William Tyndale began to translate the Old Testament. Before he could finish, he was imprisoned, strangled, and burned at the stake. Soon after came the Coverdale Bible, edited by Myles Coverdale. Matthew's Bible was made by John Rogers. He combined Tyndale's translation and Coverdale's. For his work, he was burned alive in 1555 in the persecution under the Catholic "Bloody Queen Mary."

In 1604 King James I approved the making of a new version to silence discord over current versions. Much of the influence and beauty of Tyndale's and Coverdale's work is seen in it. It was published in 1611 as the King James Version. This remains the best and most-used English version.

### JUST A THOUGHT

**"Great souls have fed on great spiritual food."**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.  
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