



God Preserves His Word

Lesson Overview

God has protected His Word for thousands of years. It will endure forever—through all generations.

Key Passages

Luke 24:13–32; Jeremiah 36:1–4, 36:17–32

What You Will Learn

- How Jesus affirmed the authority of the Old Testament.
- Examples of the miraculous preservation of God's Word.

Memory Verse

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

The Old Testament begins God's Word—the history of the universe. It contains 39 books and tells us about ancient Israel and God's promise of the Messiah. God has been careful to preserve His Word since the beginning of time.

One dramatic biblical example of God preserving His Word begins in 2 Chronicles 34 during King Josiah's reign over Judah near the beginning of the seventh century BC. Josiah began a period of reformation in Judah. The people before him had completely turned away from God. But Josiah did what was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in His ways (2 Chronicles 34:2).

The house of the Lord had been desecrated, and Josiah commanded that it be repaired (2 Chronicles 34:8). It was during this restoration of the temple that Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses (2 Chronicles 34:14). When Josiah heard the Word of the Lord read, he was convicted of the idolatry and sin in the land, and he tore his clothes in repentance (2 Chronicles 34:19). Because of Josiah's tender heart and humble spirit, God's judgment was withheld from Judah for the time being (2 Chronicles 34:27–28).

However, when Josiah's son Jehoiakim became king, the people once again turned their backs on

God and His Word. This is when the Word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:1), and he was instructed by the Lord to write the words of judgment against Israel, Judah, and all the nations (Jeremiah 36:2). Jeremiah dictated God's Word as Baruch wrote the scroll (Jeremiah 36:4). When the scroll was finished and read to King Jehoiakim, he was not afraid, repentant, or humble before the Lord as his father had been (Jeremiah 36:24). Instead, Jehoiakim cast the scroll into the fire piece by piece as it was being read (Jeremiah 36:22–23).

But was King Jehoiakim able to destroy God's Word even with fire? No. God will always preserve His Word and did so then. He called Jeremiah again and instructed that another scroll be written. Jeremiah took the scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe who wrote on it. It contained all the words (and more) of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire (Jeremiah 36:32).

God has always been and will always be faithful to preserve His Word. In the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). And in the words of the psalmist, "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever" (Psalm 119:160).

Historical/Apologetics Background

You may encounter people who don't necessarily believe the Old Testament can be trusted, or they feel that it is insignificant to today's culture. But we know that it is relevant and true. God has taken great strides to preserve it through many tumultuous times and thousands of years.

Not only that, but He has been gracious to leave historical evidence that confirms the authenticity of the Scriptures. We know that the ancient Hebrews relied on Scripture. They recognized the inspiration of certain texts and depended on them for wisdom.

The five books of Moses, beginning with Genesis, were written around 1500 BC and chronicle the history of the earth over the previous 2,500 years. After that, the remaining books were written by prophets and scribes. These holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19–21). The words were recorded on scrolls and carefully transmitted through the generations with painstaking diligence to ensure their accuracy. The final record from the Old Testament prophets came at the hand of Malachi. His prophecy of the coming Messiah (Malachi 3–4) begins a period of 400 years of silence before John the Baptist proclaimed the arrival of Christ.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered at Qumran in 1947, gave rise to additional confirmation of these ancient texts. This finding presented Old Testament manuscripts dated as

early as 150 BC. These manuscripts were written nearly 1,000 years before other manuscripts already discovered, and they proved to be the same as those previously found.

For example, a copy of the book of Isaiah was part of the findings at Qumran dated about 150 BC. Prior to this, the oldest dated manuscript of the book of Isaiah was around AD 980. Yet when these two copies of Isaiah were compared, they were found to be 95 percent accurate to the Hebrew Bible—even though they were written over 1,000 years apart.

This evidence of ancient Old Testament Hebrew texts together with the astounding number—more than 24,000—of partial and complete manuscript copies of the New Testament gives us solid historical background to the reliability of the Bible. Biblical scholars have agreed that the number of manuscripts supporting the Bible provides unparalleled authentication of the original documents. In fact, the Bible has more documentation to verify it than any other book of antiquity that is commonly accepted.

In addition to the historical, physical manuscripts and longevity of the Scriptures, we find more confirmation of the Old Testament truth through Jesus Christ Himself. Our Lord relied on the truth and promises of the Old Testament. Indeed, Jesus placed such a high value on the inspired Word of God that even He—the very Son of God, the Messiah—willingly submitted Himself to its

God's Word in the Real World

1. What new idea or information did you see in the passage discussing the encounter between the risen Jesus and His disciples along the road that gives you a clearer picture of the Old Testament's importance?
2. How has what we talked about today encouraged you? What things can you meditate on or praise God for as you think about these things?
3. As you share your faith, you are likely to encounter people who doubt the truthfulness of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Some will refer to the Bible as a collection of myths written by desert goat herders. If you knew you had only one chance to share the truth with them, would you open the Bible and show them specific passages or tell them about the Dead Sea Scrolls?

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4. What questions has this topic raised in your mind, and how might you go about answering those questions?

Prayer Requests
