

GW 101: The Bible—The Rule of Faith and Life

Lesson 2.1 (Blog article: “History: How We Got the Bible in Six Minutes or Less”)

1. Who was the first human being to write down the words of God and where did that take place?

The first report we have of God calling a human being to write was on Mount Sinai, when God commanded Moses to write what he heard.

2. What materials did the Old Testament writers use to record the words of God?

They wrote on stone, on leather, on papyrus, in Hebrew and in Aramaic.

3. What was the name of the group who developed careful rules for copying of scrolls in the centuries following the life of Jesus—counting every letter of the Old Testament and including special markings to preserve the right readings of every text?

Masoretes

4. How do we know the Masoretes faithfully copied the text of the Old Testament?

When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the twentieth century, scholars suddenly had access to Old Testament manuscripts that were hundreds of years older than the oldest text that the Masoretes had preserved. When these older texts were compared with the Masoretic Text, it became clear that—even though there were differences among these manuscripts—the process used by the Masoretes was a trustworthy process that reliably preserved the text of the Old Testament.

5. How long did the “silence” last—the time period from the last prophet to the arrival of Christ Jesus?

The “silence”, known as the “Intertestamental Period”, lasted 400 years.

6. How did Jesus view the reliability and authority of the Old Testament?

Jesus never criticized or corrected the Jewish Scriptures. Instead, he fulfilled them and treated them as the true and trustworthy words of his heavenly Father.

7. The articles states that, “Around twenty books of the New Testament were recognized as authoritative from the very beginnings of the Christian faith.” In the end, why were each of the 27 books of the New Testament recognized to be authoritative in the church?

In the end, each of the 27 books of the New Testament was reliably connected back to an eyewitness of the risen Lord or a close associate of an eyewitness of Jesus.