2. Format to maintain uniformity in the copy (found in The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament by Davidson)
   (a) Each column had to be a minimum of 48 lines and not to exceed 80 lines.
   (b) Each column had to consist of 30 letters.
   (c) No word or letter was to be written from memory.
   (d) The space of a hair or thread must be between every consonant.
   (e) Between every book, there had to appear three lines.
   (f) The copyist had to sit in full Jewish dress, and wash his whole body.
   (g) It was to be copied each letter by each letter, not word for word or just sentence by sentence.

B. Accessibility
   1. Manuscripts were limited according to how long the originals lasted from being handled.
   2. Manuscripts were limited according to the length of time it took for them to be copied.
   3. Manuscripts were limited according to the cost it took to produce them. Jewish history reveals that with such meticulous care to detail and accuracy of duplication, the newly copied manuscript was just as accurate and powerful as the one from which it was copied. Opinions, additions, or deletions would never pass through the proofing stage of these writings. This process was followed for centuries, but it became less of a necessity with the invention of technology to mass produce the Scriptures. The Gutenberg Press was invented in 1456 to make the Word of God potentially accessible to every person on earth. Even the common man could potentially have his own copy of the Word of God, not just the priests or the rich.

IV. The Process of Preserving His Word Through the Printing Press

A. Translated from the original manuscripts into the language to be printed
B. EDITING (proofing) - looking for mistakes
C. Printing what had been initially edited for a small group to ensure the readability and accuracy of the translation
D. REVISION to print ("purified seven times" Psalm 12:6) - correcting the mistakes discovered by this small group
E. Mass PRODUCTION - printing of larger quantities to be distributed
F. Distribution ("seed yet in the barn" Haggai 2:19)

Today, even after 500 years, the statement is still the same. The Scriptures could potentially be available for every person on earth. We have not obtained this purpose yet. There is much work still to be done. We can all have a part in achieving this goal.

LESSON TWO DEFINITIONS

Ark of the Covenant: a chest or box containing the Ten Commandments; the most sacred object of the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem; a place of protection or security

Holy of Holies: the innermost chamber of the Biblical Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept

Levites: the descendants of Levi that were dedicated to the office of the priesthood

Priesthood: the office of a priest; priests collectively

Abomination: intense aversion or loathing; detestation; something that God hates with the most intense hatred.

Manuscripts: the original text; any text not printed

Revision: to alter something already written or printed, in order to make corrections, improve, or update

NATIONAL BIBLE PUBLISHING MONTH

ADULT TEACHER GUIDE 2

GOD'S PLACE

FOR PROVIDING HIS WORD TO EVERY GENERATION

TEACHER GUIDE NOTES

God was very specific with how the written Word was to be handled. For it to be preserved, it had to be taken care of in a very certain way. It could not be handled and treated like any ordinary household item. How long would an item last if it were handled on a regular basis, and not kept in a secure location? Not very long. Definitely not from generation to generation. Our heirlooms that we value and pass down from one generation to the next are usually not handled and used daily. We put them in locked areas or safe boxes and put them where they will not be damaged. God's Word had to be handled in a specific manner that God outlined for them, as we will discuss in this lesson.

Every completed page that was copied had to have the same amount of words as the original. Every page had to have the same amount of total lines as the original. Every page had to have the same amount of letters as the original. They would also scrutinize the spacing so much, that the center letter on the copied page had to be the same as the center letter on the original page.

If there were only one copy of God's Word kept in a known location that was accessible to the people, such as the temple, then it would've easily been destroyed during the Dark Ages or other efforts throughout history to destroy the Word of God. Obviously, the more copies there are in existence, and the more locations that His Word is in geographically, the harder it is for men to find and destroy every one of them. So, statistically, printing multiple copies of God's Word and distributing them all around the world is a very real method of God using man as a tool to preserve His Word from generation to generation.

LESSON **TWO**

God's Place For Providing His Word to Every Generation

This lesson looks at two key areas of preservation–the place and the process. Much care was put into both to insure an accurate translation for every generation.

I. The Place of Preserving Then (Deuteronomy 10:1-5)

A. The Scriptures were kept in a PREPARED place.
— Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-16)

B. The Scriptures were kept in a HOLY place.
— Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:21-22; 33:7; Deuteronomy 31:9)

C. The Scriptures were kept in a SAFE place.
— Priests (Numbers 3:31; 4:4; 18:1-7; Deuteronomy 10:5) They were chosen by God to be the guardians of His precious Word. Not only were they responsible to preserve the text from error, but also to copy it so it could be passed down to future generations.

II. The Place of Preserving Now

That was the process that remained in place throughout the Old Testament. Then a miraculous event occurred that changed everything. The Word became flesh (John 1:1, 14). Jesus began to personify what a life with perfect application of the Old Testament looks like in real time. He added to what had been given in writing by speaking and teaching in person. He then gave the command for that to be taken to the world, not just the Jews (Mt. 28:19-20). Everyone who would believe the message of the Gospel that was brought to them and place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ for their salvation would become a part of a much larger group than the Jews alone. God places them into a group that Jesus loves and gave His life for, the church (Eph. 5:25).

Although God began to use a different group of people as the revealer of Himself to the world, His plan of revealing Himself to the world has not changed. Holy men of God were inspired to pen down everything God wanted mankind to know to reveal Himself to us (II Peter 1:19-21). These writings were to be cared for in a very particular place. Throughout the Old Testament, God gave the responsibility of caring for the writings to the Levitical priesthood, namely the Kohathites. His plan has always been for a very specific group of His people to handle and produce that which is holy. Ezekiel 44 records God's view of what happens when this plan is not followed. When they gave their responsibility to those outside of their family, God said it was an abomination. This will be looked at further in Lesson 3. After Christ came, this responsibility was then passed on to the church with the same requirements as before His coming.

A. The church is a PREPARED place (Matthew 16:18a; Acts 2:47).
B. The church is a HOLY place (Ephesians 5:27).
C. The church is a SAFE place (Matthew 16:18b).
1. It is the place from which God's power is manifested (Matthew 16:18b).
2. It is the place where God's people are being motivated (Acts 13:1-2; Hebrews 10:25).

In the Old Testament days, God worked through the nation of Israel. He proved His power, protection, and provision to the surrounding world by working on behalf of the Israelites. His Word became their source of direction and guidance. As they were obedient to His Word, God blessed. When they rejected it or disobeyed it, they were chastised. In the New Testament days, He began to use another group of chosen people to be that example to the surrounding world, not just the Israelites any longer. This group of people is the church. The source of the supply of God's Word has always been in the care of His people. The act of involving outside entities in this plan was classified by God as an abomination. Even as His Word was given to the first chosen group to protect, preserve, and publish, this second group of chosen people have been given this same responsibility as will be discussed throughout these lessons.

III. The Process of Preserving His Word Through the Pen

Anytime man gets involved with anything, there is a great potential for error. With something as important and holy as God's Word, much care was taken to ensure that there was not human error in the product of what was being preserved and passed on. History and the study of scribes reveal to us some of the steps taken to provide the very Bible you have today.

A. Accuracy
1. Rules were followed to make sure nothing was added to or taken from the original text.
(a) Word count per page
(b) Line duplication
(c) Total page letter count
(d) Middle letter test