

II. WHERE GOD KEEPS HIS WORD SAFE TODAY

You may now be wondering what God's plan is for protecting His Word today. After all, the Ark of the Covenant has not been used by God's people for thousands of years. God has a definite plan for protecting His Word today, and He is doing it in similar fashion to how He did it back then. Now, the job has been given to the church! That's right! It is the Christian's job to make sure God's Word is taken care of in exactly the way God wants. You see, God has always used His people for this task. The church is God's place of protection for His Word.

READ: Matthew 16:18a

ASK: Who built the church? (Jesus)

The church is a group of people prepared by God for His service.

READ: Ephesians 5:27

ASK: What does God desire His church to be? (Holy and without blemish)

Wherever God's church meets, it is a holy place where He can meet with them.

READ: Revelation 1:3, 6

ASK: What has God made us? (Kings and priests)

The church is also a safe place for His Word. Just as in the Old Testament, the kings and priests were to guard the Word of God, today, the church has been given the care of God's Word.

CONCLUSION

What an awesome responsibility it was years ago to be charged with the keeping of God's Word! Although no one will ever ask you to carry around the sacred Ark of the Covenant, God has asked His people to take special care of His Word. He wants to make sure that it stays pure, so that everyone may know about Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life so that any who believe on Him may spend eternity with Him in Heaven! God desires us to take care of His Word. He wants us to respect it, love it, read it, and give it to others. How do you treat your Bible? Here are some ways to take care of it. Will you be a caretaker for God?



Do Take It to Church
Do Tell Others About It
Do Respect It
Do Memorize It
Do Read It



Don't Lay It on the Floor
Don't Forget It
Don't Tear It
Don't Throw It Around
Don't Ignore It

PROTECTED THEN AND NOW!

GOD'S WORD	A PREPARED PLACE	A HOLY PLACE	A SAFE PLACE
When first written	Exodus 25:10-16	Exodus 25:21	Numbers 18:1-7
Today	Matthew 16:18a	Ephesians 5:27	Revelation 1:1-6

TEASER FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

But what if someone tries to change what God said in His Word? In our next lesson, we will learn more about the specific people that God has used to preserve His Word so that it is not changed or altered from generation to generation.

LESSON DEFINITIONS

ALTER: To change something around on purpose.

ARK OF THE COVENANT: A chest or box containing the Ten Commandments and other articles; the most sacred object of the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem; a place of protection or security.

CHURCH: Christians assembled for worship in a particular place.

HOLY: Set apart; Dedicated to God for a specific purpose.

HOLY OF HOLIES: The innermost chamber of the Biblical Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

PREPARE: To make something ready for use.

PROTECT: To keep safe from hurt or injury.

SAFE: Not exposed to any dangers.

GOD PROTECTS His WORD!





LESSON TWO

GOD PROTECTS HIS WORD!

KEY VERSES

Deuteronomy 10:1-5

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

God's plan for the care of His Word is in the hands of His people. The students should realize that as Christians, they have a responsibility to care for God's Word.

TEACHER'S GUIDE NOTES

Blueprints are simply detailed plans of action that are drawn out or written on paper. They are used by builders to help them understand exactly what the designer wants built. God's Word is somewhat of a blueprint. It is God's detailed plan of action that He has given to us. It is our responsibility to carry out God's plan. This lesson will help in understanding God's blueprint for preserving His Word for every generation.

God was very specific as to 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 as 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.

The scribes who copied God's Word had to be meticulous. 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. The scribes also scrutinized the spacing so much, the center letter on the copied page had to be the same as the center letter on the original page.

If there had only been one copy of God's Word kept in a known location accessible to the people, such as the temple, then it would have easily been destroyed during the Dark Ages or during other efforts throughout history to destroy the Word of God. Obviously, the more copies there are in existence, and



the more locations that God's 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.

ILLUSTRATION

Safety deposit box - storage of important papers: God gave His written Word to Moses first. God wrote it on stone tables and told Moses to place them in the Ark of the Covenant. Illustrate this by using a fire-safe box. A fire-safe box reminds me of a safe, portable place to keep important and valuable items. This box is not something that we would store outside or even in our living room. This special box has a special place in our home, because it needs to be in a safe place. It also is a box that we do not let everyone open. There are only certain people who have access to the keys that will open the box. The contents of the box are valuable and are protected by special, trustworthy people. God's Word is of great value to Him. He holds its value above His Name. God placed it in a specific place, with a specific people that could be trusted to keep His Word safe and preserved for every generation.

INTRODUCTION

Can you think of something that is so valuable to you that you would do anything to protect it from being hurt, stolen, or changed? Is it something your parents gave you? Is it something you made? Something you found? Perhaps it's not a thing at all, but rather someone. How important is it to you to protect someone who you love? God is supremely important in all of the Universe, and He greatly values His Word! You and I are able to have God's perfect and unchanged Word today because He has protected it for thousands of years!



I. WHERE GOD KEPT HIS WORD SAFE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES

In Old Testament Bible times, God protected His written Word by having it put inside a special box called the Ark of the Covenant. God was so serious about protecting His Word, that if anyone were to touch the Ark of the Covenant, they would be instantly struck dead!

READ: Exodus 25:10-16

ASK: Where did God tell Moses to place the testimony or commandments? (The Ark)

The Ark was prepared by God's people. The Ark was overlaid with pure gold, and it could only be carried by certain people using special poles. (staves).

READ: Exodus 25:21-22, 33:7

ASK: What did God place above the Ark? (The mercy seat)

The mercy seat was in the Holy of Holies, a part of the Tabernacle. So, God's Word was not only kept in a prepared place (inside the Ark), but it was also kept in a holy place where God would meet with and talk to His people!

READ: Numbers 3:31; 18:1-7

ASK: Who was responsible to take care of the Ark? (Aaron and his sons, the priests)

The priests were chosen by God to be the guardians of His precious Word and to keep it in a safe place. Not only were they responsible to preserve the text from mistakes, but also to copy it so it could be passed down to future generations.

TEACHER NOTE: 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, we see a shift in God's plan. He began to use another group of chosen people to be that example to the surrounding world, not 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.