

READ: Deuteronomy 17:18-20

ASK: What did God command the king to do? (Write a copy of the law--the Scriptures.)

ASK: What was the king supposed to do with the copy that he made? (Read it all the days of his life.)

ASK: What would reading the copy keep him from doing? (Turning aside from doing right.)

The kings were commanded to make a copy of God's Word for themselves when they became king. By reading God's Word daily, they would be kept from sin.

III. CHRISTIANS--THE CHURCH

But whose job is it today? Who does God use to protect His Word now?

READ: Revelation 1:5-6

ASK: What has Jesus made Christians to be? (Kings and priests unto God.)

Just as God entrusted the copying of His Word to the kings and priests of Israel in the Old Testament, The task now belongs to those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Saviour! True Christians are God's people, and it is God's people who have always been given this very special job. In Ezekiel chapter 44, we find out that God became very angry when His chosen people (then, the priests) gave their responsibilities to other people. Today, it is no different. God's people in God's church are to be the ones who are protecting, printing, and passing out God's Word!

CONCLUSION

In olden times, the tools used to copy God's Word were ink wells, writing sticks, and animal skins. Today, we have printing presses that are very fast and perfectly accurate. For example, some of God's people at Bearing Precious Seed, under the authority of First Baptist Church in Milford, Ohio, use one of those presses to print God's Word. To date, over 100 million Scriptures have been printed in many different languages in order for people all over the world to know God's Word!

God has a plan for your life. Would you start praying now that God would prepare you for whatever He wants you to do? Who knows, perhaps God would want you to be a printer or even a translator of His Word. Are you willing to do what God wants for your life, no matter what it may be?

TEASER FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

There are over 6,000 languages spoken on Earth today, and God wants everyone to know His Word. But how does the Bible get translated from its original languages into the thousands of languages on Earth today? This is a huge task that is still nowhere near completion! Bible translators must know the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, in which the Word of God was first written. They also must know the language and understand the culture of the people for whom they are translating it. Please pray for Bible translators! In our next lesson, we will discover what we are now supposed to do with God's provided, protected, and preserved Word!

LESSON DEFINITIONS

ACCURATE: Correct in every detail.

LANGUAGE: A spoken or written system of communication.

PAINSTAKING: Done with great care and thorough effort.

PRESERVE: To keep something in its original state.

PRIEST: Jewish religious official or holy representative.

SANCTIFIED: Set apart for service to God.

SPECIFIC: Relating to a particular thing.

SERVING: Yielding obedience to; worshipping; performing duties.

ANSWER TO THE CIPHER ON LESSON THREE

"Most of the Old Testament was first written in Hebrew."

GOD PRESERVES His WORD!





LESSON THREE

GOD PRESERVES HIS WORD!

KEY VERSES

Revelation 1:5-6

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

The Bible is a precious book. God took great care in making certain mankind has a copy today. The students should understand that they can be a part of others having this Precious Book.

TEACHER'S GUIDE NOTES

A resumé is a document used by a person applying for a job. It usually contains information such as name, date of birth, address, educational background, and job history. A resumé helps an employer place the right people in the right job. God desires every believer to serve Him, but there are some jobs God only wants certain people to do. In this lesson, we will see that if God's Word was going to be cared for properly, then there was a specific group of people to be involved in the process, in order to maintain its purity.

It is amazing how God has used mankind to be vessels to impact the world. He uses us to preach His glorious Gospel. He uses us to impact the lives of others. He gives us so many opportunities to serve Him; He promises to bless us if we are obedient, and He then rewards us for simply obeying what He said to do. This approach by God is not something new. It did not just start this century. God has included certain men to be involved with His heavenly work on earth for thousands of years. The handling of His Word is no exception. God was very specific about who was to be involved with the heavenly work on earth of handling and caring for the Word of God. These groups are going to be discussed in this lesson.

ILLUSTRATION

Copy God's Word in Your language

God commanded two groups of people to copy His Word — the priests and the kings. The priests and kings were given the task of copying the Holy Word of God and they were careful in doing so. This can be illustrated by making crowns for each student and letting them wear them during this illustration.

Make sure the students understand copying Scripture was an important and serious event. Each student must wash his hands before starting (hand sanitizer will work). Each student is then given a Bible verse (pre-written on a small piece of paper), a clean, white piece of paper, and a new pen or pencil. Their task is to copy the verse on the new sheet of paper, exactly the way it is written on the pre-written paper. The student must understand that you will inspect their work for mistakes, smudges, and tears. If any errors are found, the newly copied verse is not to be torn up and thrown away, but it is to be buried in a place where no one can use it (pick a place in the classroom that would illustrate the idea).

INTRODUCTION

In our first lesson, we learned how God has provided His Word through His own speaking and writing, as well as through His chosen men. Next, we learned about the places that God has used to protect His Word (The Ark of the Covenant and the Church). Now, let us discover how it is possible for God's Word to survive for thousands of years without the message ever being changed. Imagine how frustrated you would be if a friend wrote you a letter, and someone else took it, changed some of it, and then handed it to you. Wouldn't you want to read your friend's words exactly as they had been written to you? That's how God wants His Word treated as well. God has planned for and commanded that His Word be preserved exactly as it was given.

THE INSTRUMENTS GOD USED TO PRESERVE HIS WORD

I. PRIESTS

TEACHER NOTE: Priests were only to come through Levi and his descendants. This is where we get what is called the Levitical priesthood. He had three sons: Gershon, Merari, and Kohath. Gershon and his descendants were given the responsibility of caring for the many coverings and their heavy structures that were part of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:25-26). Merari and his descendants were given the responsibility and care for the hardware items used in the tabernacle (boards, bars, pillars, sockets, all vessels, etc... Numbers 3:33-37). Kohath and his descendants were the priests to whom we refer to in this lesson. They were given care of the holy things (ark and its contents and all that God viewed as holy - Numbers 3:30-31). Around 600 years ago (1456), the first printing press was invented that could mass produce copies of the Bible, but what did people do before printing presses and copy machines? For several thousand years, God's Word had to be painstakingly copied by hand! However, not just anyone was allowed to copy God's Word.



READ: Numbers 4:4; 3:29, 31

ASK: Who was responsible to take care of the most holy things, including the ark and its contents? (The sons of Kohath)

Special members within God's chosen people, called priests, were assigned the task of copying God's Word. This way, God knew that the task would be done correctly. The priests copied God's Word by hand, letter by letter, space by space, one line at a time until it was completed. Then, their work was checked and tested before it was approved. The priests were so serious about the work they did in handling of God's Word that they made sure to be totally right and clean in God's eyes before they ever even picked up a pen (they even took a bath first)! These men of God were responsible to never make even a single error throughout hundreds of copies and thousands of years!

READ: Numbers 18:6-7

ASK: What would happen to the person who touched the holy things of the Tabernacle, if they weren't a Levite (a "stranger")? (They would be put to death.)

God always used His people to protect His Word!

II. KINGS

TEACHER NOTE: Desiring a king was a result of Israel looking at the world around them and wanting to function as much like them as possible. They wanted to look as much like the world as they could and still have God bless them. After murmuring to God about it, He gave them their wish. His desire was always for them to look to Him for direction, protection, counsel, and provision. They desired to have a man they could see to sit in that position. God said "yes" to Israel's request, but said He would set the job requirements and qualifications for that role. Later, God also entrusted another group of people with the copying of His Word as well.