

First Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. As they were moved by the Spirit, they wrote down what the Spirit inspired them to write. But as time progressed the actual written documents would wear out. This is where the scribe came into the picture.



The scribes job was to recopy Holy writ. He would spend countless hours making sure that what he copied was accurate. This included counting every jot and tittle or the dotting of the i's and the crossing of the t's. If one mistake was made, the scribe would tear up his copy and start over.

As the Hebrews were carried away to other lands in captivity, they began to lose their understanding of the Hebrew language. They learned the languages of the lands in which they were carried. This is one reason the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek somewhere between the time of 285 -165 B.C. This version is called the Septuagint or the LXX {because seventy translators helped translate it.}

The only individuals that could read and understand the Hebrew Bible, during the time of Jesus, were the scribes and priest. The common people knew and used mostly the Greek version. This is why Jesus had to rebuke the Pharisees and Saducees because they had interpolated certain teachings into their understanding that was actually just interpretations of what they believed the Bible to say. Hence when Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said," he was not changing any teaching of the Bible, but was giving a proper interpretation, thus saying, "but I say unto you."

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and was written in all capitol letters. Also there were no vowels in any words, nor were the words separated. All the letters and words were run together. Thus the words "Help Me Lord" might look like this in the Hebrew text, "HLPMLRD." Of course, though Hebrew is written and read from right to left.

In 900-1000 A.D. a group of Jews called the Massorettes took upon themselves to put together an accurate manuscript of the Old Testament Hebrew. They included the vowels and separated the words, thus giving us a manuscript that could be more properly understood. This is the same manuscript used by King James in order to translate the Old Testament into English.

The question is, "Did the Massorettes give us an accurate text?" This has been a constant attack by the skeptics up through the history of the world. Yet in 1947 in some caves in Qumran some ancient manuscripts were discovered. This find has been called "The Dead Sea Scrolls."



These scrolls date back to somewhere between 100-200 B.C. In these scrolls was almost the entire Old Testament in fragmented form, but there was an entire copy of the book of Isaiah and a fragmented piece of the book of Isaiah. When this book of Isaiah 53 was compared to the Massorete manuscript of Isaiah 53 there was only seventeen letters that differed. Ten of these were differences in spelling [such as: honor and honour] and produce no change in meaning at all. Four more are minor differences, such as the adding of a conjunction [and] which are stylistic rather than substantive. The other three letters are the Hebrew word for "light." This word was added to the text by someone after "they shall see" in verse 11. Out of 166 words of this chapter, this one is the only one in question and doesn't really change the meaning of the text at all. Scholars tell us that this is typical of the whole book of Isaiah.



Isaiah scroll from Qumran.

So we can be certain that what we have in the Old Testament is the actual written Word of God which Jesus possessed in his day.