How We Got the Bible – Lesson 7 – Transmission of the OT

Ancient Media Types:

1. Clay tablets (oldest) – Exodus 31:18
2. Parchment scrolls (animal skin) – 2 Tim. 4:13
3. Papyrus (strips laid crosswise upon each other) – 2 Tim. 4:13

Ancient Copies of the Old Testament:

1. "Scribes" – professional copyists (1 Chr. 2:55; Matt. 15:1)
    a. From 1450 BC to AD 1450, all copies were hand-written
2. The text to be copied was called the ***"exemplar"***
3. Within Judaism, the Masoretic tradition became extremely important
    a. "Masorah" = scribal tradition (AD 600-1000)
    b. "Masoretes" = people who were copying texts
    c. "Masoretic text" = a copy of the OT from the Masoretes
4. An ancient manuscript in book form is called a ***"codex"***
    a. Important ancient copies of the Old Testament:
    b. Aleppo Codex (AD 930)
    c. Cairo Codex (AD 895)
    d. Leningradensis Codex (AD 916) – Oldest complete Hebrew OT
    e. British Library Codex (AD 850)

The Dead Sea Scrolls:

1. Until 1947, the only known ancient copies of the OT were the Masoretic texts (AD 600-1000).
2. Thousands of written fragments have been discovered in the Dead Sea area. About 40% are copies of Old Testament Scriptures and the other 60% are uninspired documents and OT Apocrypha.
3. The Dead Sea Scrolls date from 200 BC – AD 68.

Secondary Witnesses of Old Testament Texts (non-Hebrew):

1. Septuagint – Ancient Greek translation of OT (c.250 BC)
2. Aramaic Targums ("Targum" = "Translation") – 100-300 AD
3. Latin Vulgate Translation – Jerome, 4th Cent. AD
4. Syriac Peshitta Translation – Translated around the 2nd Cent. AD