

TRANSMISSION - OLD TESTAMENT

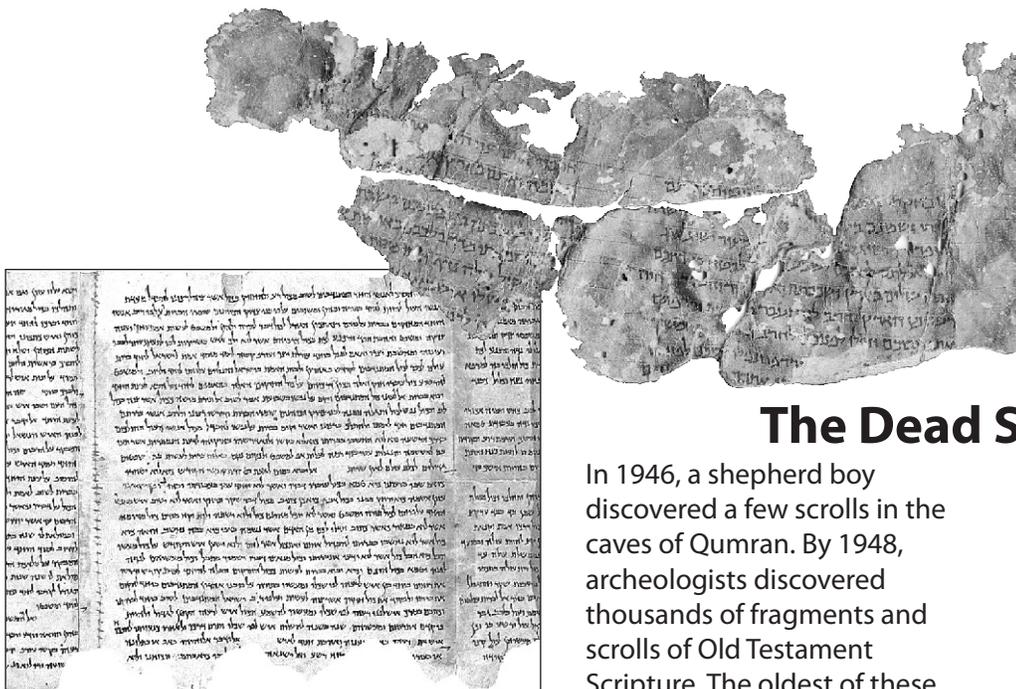
Transmission: The process of copying the ancient Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament manuscripts in order to preserve them and ensure large distribution, making them available for future generations.

The Masoretic Text

The Old Testament that we have today is translated from the Masoretic Text. The Masoretes (or Masorites) were Jewish rabbis who took extreme care in copying the Scriptures. While there are over 6,000 Masoretic manuscripts, only 4-5 are most commonly utilized as the base text for the Bibles translated today. These texts date back to approximately 900-1000 AD.

A Sampling of the Traditional Rules for Masoretic Scribes

- Copies must be written on the skins of clean animals and tied with leather strings from clean animals.
- Each copy must contain an exact number of columns, which must be equal throughout the entire manuscript.
- Column must be between 48 and 60 lines long and exactly 30 letters wide.
- The black ink must be made using a special recipe only for that purpose.
- The original used to make the copy must be determined to be authentic.
- The scribe must say each word aloud as he wrote it.
- No word can ever touch another word.
- No word or letter could ever be written from memory, the scribe must always look first at the original before writing his copy.
- Before copying, the scribe must wash his whole body.
- When he came to the name of God (YHWH), he had to wash his whole body again before he could write it.
- He could not write YHWH with a newly dipped brush or pen on the chance that it might smudge.
- Should a king address the scribe while he was working, the scribe must take no notice of him.
- Every word and every letter was counted. If a letter or word was omitted, the manuscript was rejected.



Examples of The Dead Sea Scrolls
Not all the scrolls have been preserved equally, but the text represented on the scrolls is remarkably similar to the Masoretic Text, even though these are roughly 1,000 years older.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1946, a shepherd boy discovered a few scrolls in the caves of Qumran. By 1948, archeologists discovered thousands of fragments and scrolls of Old Testament Scripture. The oldest of these

scrolls date back to approximately 100 BC. The Dead Sea collection includes partial and complete manuscripts of Old Testament books. Some are in other languages. It also includes some non-Biblical books.