Compass Life Adult Sunday School

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**“The Old Testament Manuscripts”**

**I. Israel’s Exile and New Identity**

The exile of Judah to Babylon in (608-586 BC) caused a fundamental shift in spiritual life and national \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. No longer living as “people of the \_\_\_\_\_\_” the Jews increasingly became “people of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_”. Without a temple, priests could not offer sacrifices or conduct centralized worship. Into that void arose the distributed institution of the synagogue, with it’s ministry focus on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, which in turn required the availability of multiple \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ texts from which to teach. The role of *scribe* (copyist, but also textual expert) and *rabbi* (teacher) supplanted those of the Levitical priesthood. Per God’s instruction (Jer 29:5-7), the Jews would prosper in Babylon. They spoke Aramaic and adopted its “square script” for writing Hebrew. Growing numbers met in various synagogues to learn from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew texts.

Upon the (2nd) return (457-444BC), Ezra (Ezra 7:6) and Nehemiah exemplify this teaching ministry – along with the last of the *Nevi’im* – calling all people to obey God’s law (Ezra 7:25; Neh. 8), with interpretation (maybe in Aramaic) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Traditionally Ezra played a key role in collecting the *Tanach*.

**II. Three Main Text Streams (4th C. BC – 1st C. AD)**

**(1)** Around this time, the Samaritans had built a rival \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Mt. Gerazim. In support of their version of worship to the LORD, they adopted a text of only the Pentateuch, maintained in old Hebrew script, with “adaptations” to cover their rejection of Jerusalem. The text diverged early from the mainstream Judean text, so provides a partially independent witness to the original \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (discounting its bias). Copies of this text, known as the *Samaritan Pentateuch* (SP), exist from as early as the early 12th C.

**(2)** At the request of Egyptian ruler *Ptolemy II Philadelphus* (r. 285-246BC), a translation of the Hebrew Torah into \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was done around 250BC, and the rest of the Hebrew OT in the next century or so. This version is called the Septuagint (LXX), because of its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ translation by \_\_\_\_ independent scholars with miraculous results. It became very widely used by Greek-speaking Jews, and then by the early Church (as much as \_\_\_\_\_ of NT quotes match better to the LXX than other versions). The *Vorlage* of the LXX (the Hebrew text used as its basis) represents a different witness to the original Hebrew (allowing for the uninspired process of translation). The LXX also came to contain some additional books written after the time of Malachi (c. 400BC), mostly written originally in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The majority of these are what we Protestants call the *Apocrypha*, and are included in the OT of the Vulgate (with Jerome’s qualification), by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and others. Some very early manuscripts (4th C.) contain both the LXX and the NT.

**(3**) In addition to the LXX and the SP, a mainstream Hebrew text was in use from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and in Judea, that we can call the Proto-MT, more because it *became*, the accepted Masoretic Text than that it was handed down as such. The earliest MT manuscripts we now have are 9th C*. [For much earlier texts, come back next week!]*

Other translations such as the Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta, and Targums also provide indirect testimony to the Hebrew. Modern versions reference these various textual traditions in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ apparatus alongside the text.

**III. Rise and Role of the *Masoretic Text* (1st C. – 10th C.)**

Early in the 2nd C., especially after the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135, Jewish leaders increasingly felt the need for a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ text of the OT. They wanted to standardize in particular on the Hebrew text, and those books available in Hebrew (vs. the Greek and “extra” books of the LXX). They also felt the LXX was too “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_” (for example, Gk “*parthenos*”, Isa 7:14). The main Hebrew version then used by the Pharisaic/rabbinic movement became the base for the Masoretic tradition. The name ‘*Masorete*’ come from Hebrew *masar* (“\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”), and the *Masoretes* were highly skilled scribes and annotators who took on the solemn role of accurately relaying not only the text as written, but the way it was pronounced (which could affect meaning), and even the way it was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in services. Scribes had already begun using a few consonants (w, y, h) as “*matres lectiones*” to indicate vowel sounds. The *Masoretes* over time designed full-fledged vowel “pointing” systems (to allow vowels to be added to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ consonants), and various accents and intonation marks. In the margins (*Masorah Parva*), they noted things like ketiv/qere readings (word written pronounced as more correct or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ word), counts of words and phrases throughout the whole text (to aid in proper transcription), and other scribal aids. More details were included at the top or bottom of the page (*Masorah Magna*) to elaborate on things like references to other occurrences of a term, and a *final Masorah* (at the end of book or section) with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of words, letters, etc.

**IV. Key Masoretic Manuscripts**

Different Masoretic traditions developed in Babylon and Palestine. But from the 7th C. on the center of the best work was in Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee, particularly from the families of Ben Naphtali and Ben Asher. Earliest Hebrew manuscripts we now have date from the 9th-11th C.

***Codex Cairensis*** – contains the former and latter *nevi’im*. Colophon indicates it was written and *pointed* by Moses Ben Asher in Tiberias in 895. It was given as a present to the *Karaite* (who followed “*Tanach* alone” over rabbinic tradition) community in Jerusalem, and taken as booty by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1099, but ransomed by the *Karaite* community in Cairo, where it remained until brought to Jerusalem in 1983.

***The Aleppo Codex* (*ha keter*, “*the* *Crown”*)** – Written by *Solomon ben Buya’a* with vowel pointing, accents and *Masorah* added by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, c. 930. In about 1050 it was likewise given to the Karaites in Jerusalem, also plundered by the Crusaders, and also redeemed by Jews near Cairo. Around 1170 the great Jewish philosopher, physician, and theologian Moses Maimonides (1138-1204) fled from his home in Cordoba, Spain, to Cairo. Here he worked on his 14-volume *Mishneh Torah* on applied Jewish laws and used the Crown as his Bible. In the late 14th C. a distant descendant brought it to a synagogue in Aleppo, Syria, where it remained for 600 years – and grew into an object of veneration and superstition. If removed, the community would perish. Scholars were not allowed to use or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ it. On Nov 29, 1947, the UN voted to charter the new Jewish state of Israel. The next day, rioters sacked and burned the synagogue, and the Crown was feared destroyed. But it had been (mostly) saved by the caretaker, and later smuggled out of Syria to Israel (Jan 58) and the Ben-Zvi Institute. 40% of it’s pages are missing, either torn out and lost in the riot, or somehow expropriated after it came to Israel. For some time locked up, the Aleppo Codex now can be viewed online.

***Codex Lenigradensus*** – acquired by Karaite businessman Abraham Firkovich and sold to the St. Petersburg library in 1862. Colophon claims copied by Samuel Ben Jacob from manuscripts corrected by Aaron ben Asher, 1008AD. The manuscript is second to Aleppo (mostly in the Masorah), but still very good. Most importantly, it contains the complete Old Testament text, thus is the basis for most modern MT versions.

**V. Advancing Modern Versions**

***Complutensian Polyglot*** (1517) – sponsored by Archbishop of Toledo, with MT, LXX with interlinear Latin, Vulgate, and *Targum Onqelos* (Aramaic Pentateuch, with Latin translation)

***London Polyglot*** (1657) – edited by Bishop Brian Walton, contains 9 texts, including Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and Persian, along with Latin translations.

***Rabbinic Bibles*** (*Miqra’ot Gedolot*, the “*Great Scriptures*”) – printed by Christian publisher Daniel Bomberg. The first (1517) was edited by converted Rabbi Felix Pratensis (1517), the second (1525) by Jacob ben Hayyim with much more extensive Masorah. This version was used into the 20th C., and for the first two BH editions.

***Biblia Hebraica Kittel (BHK1,2)*** – edited by Rudolf Kittel in Leipzig. These two versions (1906, 1913) follow the text of the Second Rabbinic Bible, without the Masoretic notes, but adding a critical *apparatus*

***BHK3*** – Kittel, with help from Paul Kahle, by Wurttemburg Bible Society (1929-37). Kahle tried to get access to photograph the Aleppo Codex but was denied. He was allowed to borrow *Lenigradensus*, and BHK3 represents a *diplomatic* version of that text (as BHS4,BHQ5), including *Masorah* (unexplained), and expanded apparatus.

***Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS4)*** – (1967-77) Better typesetting and cataloging of Masorah, and again improved apparatus (to some extent referencing DSS).

***Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ5)*** – (2004—, about ½ fascicles done). All available pre-Tiberian witnesses for each textual case in apparatus, as well as all DSS/Judean Desert. At least two other Tiberian codices are collated for each book (Aleppo wherever available). Apparatus in English rather than Latin.

***Hebrew Bible Critical Edition*** (SBL, 2015—, only Proverbs complete). A truly *eclectic* version, favoring Aleppo, but using preferred variant from whatever source(s) in the actual text rather than just in the apparatus. Includes extensive English notes regarding textual issues and decisions.

**1/13 “The Dead Sea Scrolls”**