

## **Bibliology: How we got the Bible**

*ATCO Wednesdays Teaching Series 8/20/25*

### **Lesson Two**

#### **I. Invention of the Alphabet**

- Evolved from the contributions of various civilizations over centuries
- 1800-1700 BC – Egyptians (Hieroglyphic Pictures)
- 1200 BC – Late Bronze Age
- 1200-980 BC – Early Iron Age
- Simpler alphabet was called “Early Canaanite” or “Phoenician” Alphabet
- One recent archeological dig shows that the invention of the alphabet may have been earlier than we think (2300 BC)<sup>1</sup>
- Moses and other OT writers had access to an alphabet, we just don’t know which one they used

#### **II. Invention of Writing**

- King Enmerkar invented writing on clay tablets (2000-1700 BC)
- From ancient Mesopotamia
- Some believe he is “Nimrod” (Gen. 10:8-12) from the Biblical account of the “Tower of Babel”

#### **III. Ancient Writing Materials:**

- Stone – wet clay, pottery using chisels
- Papyrus – from a plant using ink or pen
- Parchment – from the skins of sheep, goats, or calves using ink or pen

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<sup>1</sup> Glenn M. Schwartz, “Non-Cuneiform Writing at Third-Millennium Umm el-Marra, Syria: Evidence of an Early Alphabetic Tradition?,” *Pasiphae* XV (2021): 255–66.

#### IV. Early Bible composition:

- Scrolls – long, one-sided scrolls of papyrus
- Codex – A bound volume made from sheets folded or sewn together, sometimes with a cover
- Printing Press – After 1455

#### V. OT Scribes

- Scribe – Trained to read, write, and copy ancient documents
- Priests
  - Most important and most well-known is Ezra (**Ezra 7:5-6; 7:10**)
  - Ezra was a priest and a scribe who first compiled the OT Bible
  - Priests organized sacred and national documents in the temple
  - The temple served as the first national library
- Royal Scribes
  - Solomon (Deut. 17:18) – Each king of Israel was instructed to write a copy of God's Law for himself in front of witnesses
  - Seraiah – a scribe in David's administration (2 Sam. 8:17)
  - 1 Kings 4:3 mentions "apprentice scribes"
  - Prov. 25:1 – The men of King Hezekiah transcribed some of Solomon's sayings (Prov. 25-29)
- Soldier Scribes (Josh. 18:4, 6, 8)

**The forgotten heroes of the Bible are the scribes.**

#### Bibliography

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