

Sunday, January 31, 2010—Final Authority: Locating God’s Word in English—The Place of Preservation Part One

The Viewpoint of Faith

- Over the first four weeks of this study I have been challenging you to consider the viewpoint of faith regarding the word of God. As believers we need to believe what the Bible teaches about itself.
- Point 1: What is Inspiration?
 - II Timothy 3:16—the Bible’s claim for itself is that every word of scripture was given by inspiration of God.
 - God’s design in Inspiration was to make the living and the written word equal.
- Point 2: What is Preservation?
 - Psalm 12:6-7—the doctrine of preservation teaches that the very words God inspired are the same words he is going to preserve. The doctrines of inspiration and preservation go hand in hand; you can’t have one without the other.
 - It is always to be remembered that the Bible is a spiritual book which God exerted supernatural force to conceive, and it is reasonable to assume that he could exert that same supernatural force to preserve.
- Point 3: Why is Preservation Necessary?
 - Genesis 3 outlines Satan’s policy of evil against the word of God.
 - It is Satan’s policy of evil to destroy the final authority of the Word of God. He does so by creating a competing authority to the truth of God. Thus forcing you to decide and become your own authority.
- Point 4: The Process of Preservation
 - The originals no longer exist and are not the issue with God.
 - God’s design is to preserve his word through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that carry as much weight and authority as the originals.
- Point 5: The People of Preservation
 - God always oversaw the copying process of the word of God. He did so by establishing a group of men whose job it was to guard the word of God.
 - Romans 3:1-2—one of the reasons God created the nation of Israel is so that they could watch over God’s word.
 - Time Past-Tribe of Levi
 - Dispensation of Grace—New Testament Prophet
- Now that we have outlined the five key points in the viewpoint of faith we are now ready to take what we have learned and apply it to the historical and textual witness and in an attempt to try and locate God’s Word.

What is Textual Criticism?

- At this point our study gets more complicated and technical because we are forced to leave the confines of the Bible itself, and enter into the realm textual criticism.
- I am going to make every effort to give you enough information to understand the issues involved but at the same time not overwhelm you with unnecessary facts.
- Definition of Textual Criticism: this activity involves the study of manuscripts of the Bible, those written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, as well as ancient translations into other languages like Latin or Coptic. Its goal is to reconstruct the original text of the Bible from this vast wealth of information.

The Preserved Text

- As we try to locate God's preserved word what should we be looking for? A multiplicity of accurate reliable copies.
- The Majority Text represents the vast majority (90+%) of all Greek MSS (5,000).
- Overtime this majority of manuscripts along with readings from early translations and Patristic Lectionaries came to be known as the Textus Receptus. This is a Latin term which simply means the text that is commonly received among the people.
- The TR is the text that Martin Luther used to make his translation into German in 1522. It was this text, along with the stress of the Reformers of believers possessing the Bible in their own language that drove the Protestant Revolution.
- Seven early translations were made into English. The first was John Wycliffe's translation into English in 1382. While Wycliffe pioneered the notion of translating the Bible into the vernacular language, Wycliffe based his work on the Latin Vulgate.
- See PowerPoint Slide—*The Preserved Text*

The Critical Text

- Virtually every English Translation that has been made since 1881 has followed the textual theories of Westcott and Hort.
- In 1844, archeologist Constantin von Tischendorf, retrieved a 4th century uncial manuscript from a trash can at Saint Catherine's Monastery near Mount Sinai. The discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, promoted textual critics to begin a critical evaluation of the Received Text.
- In 1881, a panel of scholars led by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort sought to revise the standard English text of the King James Bible. In doing so they replaced the TR with a new and improved Greek text based upon their own critical theory of textual criticism.

- Summary of the Westcott and Hort theory:
 - Natural Approach: the New Testament should be treated like any other ancient document.
 - Textual Families: to get around the majority readings of the TR, the family tree method was adopted.
 - Alexandrian text-type: found in early papyri, and the great uncial codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
 - Western text-type: found in Greek MSS and in translations into other languages, especially Latin.
 - Byzantine text-type: found in the vast majority of later uncial and minuscule MSS.
 - Older MSS are better because they are closer to the original.
 - Read footnote on Mark 16 and explain what it is saying
 - Shorter MSS are better because over time the readings were embellished and added to.
- See PowerPoint Slide—*Critical Text Line*

Scriptural Evaluation of the Critical Approach

- Answer to Natural Approach: the viewpoint of faith will not allow a believer to view the Bible like any other book. The Bible is God's book. God inspired every word of scripture and promised to preserve for eternity that which he inspired.
- Answer to Textual Families Approach: textual families are a humanistic method of skirting the real issue and obscuring the clear testimony of scripture. The Bible teaches the preservation was going to occur through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies.
- Answer to the Older MSS are Better Claim: as a trained historian possessing a Master Degree in history this approach makes sense for every other book from antiquity except the Bible.
 - II Corinthians 2:17—just because a reading is old proves nothing about its reliability. People were already trying to corrupt the New Testament before it was even finished.
 - II Thessalonians 2:1-2—“letters as from us”
- Answer to Shorter MSS are Better Claim: in light of the Satanic policy of evil against the word of God in Genesis 3 this claim does not hold any water. It is just as easy to subtract words you don't like as it is add words to the text.
 - In Genesis 3 the word is questioned, subtracted from, added to, watered down, and in the end denied
 - Three times God warns about people corrupting the word of God.

- Deuteronomy 4:1-2
 - Proverbs 30:5-6
 - Revelation 22:18-19—God wouldn't warn believers about people who were going to corrupt the word of God if it weren't possible. This is why preservation is necessary.
- PowerPoint slide comparing the number of Greek MSS.
 - Read quotations from White's book. Page 152, 154.

Really Only Two Kinds of Bibles

- This investigation leads to the following conclusion. There are fundamentally only two different kinds of Bibles. Bibles that follow the TR and the majority of the readings and Bibles that follow the humanistic approach advocated by the supporters of the critical text.
- PowerPoint slide.
- Common Misconception most people believe that modern version are simply an updating of the archaic words in the King James Bible. This is not the case, the real issue in version debate is not how to translate individual Greek words into English but rather which set of Greek texts are you going to use to make your translation.
- The reason the King James and Modern Versions are different is because they are translated from an entirely different set of Greek MSS.

Basic Textual Differences

- This following list illustrates what was done when the text used by Christianity for 1800 years was replaced with a text assembled by Westcott and Hort in the nineteenth century and used as the basis for the English Revised Version, which nearly all modern translations closely follow.
- **Not all modern versions are the same.** Sometimes the NASB will include a word the NIV doesn't, or the NRSV might omit a phrase the NIV and NASB both retain, etc... but for the most part, the examples below represent nearly all of the popular modern versions.
- **The modern critical text that forms the basis for nearly all modern versions omits the equivalent of the entire books of 1st and 2nd Peter.**
- Matthew 1:25—"first born" is missing
- Matthew 6:13—Roman Catholic Reading of the Lord's Prayer
- Matthew 17:21—missing
- Matthew 18:11—missing

- Matthew 19:9—“and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery”
- Matthew 23:14—missing
- Matthew 24:36—“nor the son” is added to the text.
- Mark 9:44—missing
- Mark 9:46—missing
- Mark 13:14—“spoken by Daniel the prophet”
- Mark 15:28—missing
- Mark 16:9-20—New American Standard adds a verse to the end of the passage.
- Luke 17:36—missing
- Luke 23:17—missing
- Luke 24:40—missing
- John 5:3-4
- Acts 8:37—missing
- Acts 28:29—missing
- Romans 16:24—missing
- Galatians 3:1—“that ye should not obey the truth”
- Colossians 1:14—“through his blood”
- Revelation 1:8—“the beginning and the ending”
- Revelation 5:14—“him that liveth for ever and ever”

Conclusion

- This week I have tried to demonstrate the difference between the providentially preserved text and the critical text.
- Next week in our final study we will tackle the modern claim that all versions are the word of God and that none of them change any of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.