

From This Generation For Ever: A Study of God's Promise to Preserve His Word



The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Pslam 12:6-7 KJB

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The following notes were taught to the saints of [Grace Life Bible Church](#) in Grand Rapids, MI between September 2015 and May 2017. The purpose of this project has been to set forth our belief that the King James Bible is God's Word for English speaking people. Our goal has been to enunciate a position on the final authority of the King James Bible that is scriptural, reasonable, factual, and historically accurate. The notes presented herein are the edited course notes that were distributed to participants when the lessons were originally taught. Due to the ongoing nature of this course, these notes will be updated and expanded at the end of each Term. Term 3 on Canonicity and the Transmission of the Biblical text is set to commence on Sunday, September 9, 2018. This document will be updated at the end of Term 3 sometime next year. In the meantime, interested parties are encouraged to follow Term 3 by accessing the course website at the following link bit.do/preservationproject or by visiting the [School of Theology](#) page on the Grace Life Bible Church website. These websites will be updated weekly once the course resumes in September.

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Sunday, September 13, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*—
Lesson 1 Course Introduction

Introduction

- Welcome to our new Grace Life School of Theology class *From This Generation For Ever*. As we begin our study this morning of all things related to the King James Bible, I would like to cover the following three points:
 - Why this class?
 - Personal history
 - List of topics to be covered

Why This Class?

- Since the inception of Grace Life Bible Church (GLBC) in the fall of 2007, I have spoken numerous times on the subject of the King James Bible (KJB). In January and February of 2010, I taught a six part study titled [*Final Authority: Locating God's Word in English*](#) (Scroll down to access the audio recordings of these studies.). 2010 also saw the publication of my first booklet on the Bible issue [*The Argument for Inerrancy and the King James Bible*](#), that effort was followed by [*The Apocrypha and the King James Bible*](#) in the spring of 2013. In 2011, as part of the festivities commemorating the 400th anniversary of the KJB, I spoke at both the Great Lakes Grace Bible Conference (Ohio) and the Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference (Chicago) on issues related to the KJB. In the Grace History Project (GHP), I taught a two part study on the history of the doctrine of inerrancy (see Lessons [63](#) & [64](#)). More recently, I spoke this past April (2015) at the GSB Pastor's Conference (also in Chicago) on the subject of [*The Paulicians and the Preserved Text*](#). A month later, at the Great Lakes Grace Bible Conference I delivered a message titled [*The Textual History of the English Bible*](#).
- So, having already taught on the KJB in a variety of formats and settings I would like to take some time and explain why I chose to do this class.
- First and foremost, the impetus for this class was questions that I have received over the years from you, the saints of Grace Life Bible Church (GLBC). In particular, Mike Erspamer has asked many important questions regarding on a host of topics related to the KJB. Many of Mike's questions were involved, complex, and required further study in order to answer. In addition, there was never a good time to address them when we were going through the GHP material.
- Second, the board of GLBC has made the training of faithful men within the assembly a top priority. Our most recent 30-part study of Right Division 101 was done with the goal of creating a basic class for dispensational instruction for those interested in being trained to labor in word and doctrine within the assembly. In addition, properly understanding GLBC's stance on the

Bible issue is also a must for those seeking to serve in a teaching capacity. This class will be geared to helping to meet that important need.

- Article I. The Bible

“We believe that the entire Bible is verbally inspired of God and is of plenary authority (2Timothy 3:16, 2Peter 1:20-21) and that God has providentially preserved His completed Word for us today (Psalms 12:6-7, Colossians 1:25, Isaiah 40:8). We believe that the Word of God exists in its preserved form in what is commonly called the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text) and that the King James Version (KJV) is the best English translation of the Received Text available today. We believe the KJV to be without error and disapprove of all attempts to “correct” the text of the KJV with manuscript evidence or supposed understanding of original languages.

We are unashamedly literalist in our method of study and adhere to the principle God has set forth in the scriptures to rightly divide the Bible dispensationally (2Timothy 2:15). The literal, dispensational approach is the only way to understand the differences in God’s various programs and dealings with mankind since the beginning of time and plays a vital role in establishing the believer and maintaining a distinct, clear gospel message (Romans 16:25-27). While we believe every word of the Bible is inspired and infallible, we recognize that Paul’s writings alone (Romans – Philemon) contain the revelation of the mystery that is God’s purpose during this dispensation of grace.” ([GLBC Statement of Faith](#))

- Third, I have come to believe (especially since the 2011 Bible Conferences on the 400th anniversary of the KJB) that a new class on the KJB was in order. For the record, I am not seeking to replace or cast dispersion upon what Brother Richard Jordan taught in the Manuscript Evidence class in Grace School of the Bible (GSB). Brother Jordan’s work has grounded many, including myself, with a clear understanding of the need for a final authority in our own language. That being said, the GSB is now more than thirty years old. During the intermittent thirty years, the study of the historical and textual history of the KJB has progressed.

- When Pastor Jordan began teaching Manuscript Evidence in the fall of 1983 the following resources would have been available for the writing of the curriculum.
Note: This list does not claim to be an exhaustive listing of precisely the resources utilized by Brother Jordan. Rather this list seeks to identify the major works on the subject that would have been available for him to draw from prior to the fall of 1983 when the class began.

- L. Gaussen
 - *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (1841)
- Alexander McClure
 - *The Translators Revived* (1858)

- John William Burgon
 - *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* (1871)
 - *The Revision Revised* (1883)
 - *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (1896)
 - *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (1896)

- Philip Mauro
 - *Which Version? Authorized or Revised* (1924)

- Benjamin G. Wilkinson
 - *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (1930)

- Jasper James Ray
 - *God Only Wrote One Bible* (1955)

- Edward F. Hills
 - *The King James Bible Defended* (1956)
 - *Believing Bible Study* (1967)

- Peter S. Ruckman
 - *The Bible “Babble”* (1964)
 - *Christian Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* (1970)
 - *The Monarch of the Books!* (1973)
 - *Problem Texts* (1980)
 - *The Differences in the King James Version Editions* (1983)

- Ward S. Allen
 - *Translating for King James* (1969)

- David Otis Fuller
 - *Which Bible?* (1970)
 - *True or False?* (1973)
 - *Counterfeit or Genuine?* (1975)

- William Pickering
 - *The Identify of the New Testament Text* (1977)

- D.A. Carson
 - *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (1979)

- Zane C. Hodges & Arthur L. Farstad

- *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* (1982)
- Brother Jordan taught Manuscript Evidence before any of the significant works by the following King James advocates had been written: Samuel Gipp, D.A. Waite, William P. Grady, Gail Riplinger, Jack A Moorman, Lawrence M. Vance, David W. Cloud, Joey Faust, R.B. Ouellette, Thomas Holland, Jack McElrory, and many others. In addition, the first edition of James R. White's book *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations* did not appear in print until 1995.
- New discoveries were made in the 1960s and 1970s at libraries in Great Britain. Notable discoveries include MS 98, the notes of John Bois, and Bod 1602 a bound copy of a 1602 edition of the Bishops Bible with hand written notes by the translators in the margin. These discoveries were studied throughout the 1970s with books explaining their significance first appearing in the late 70s and mid-90s. Published works explaining the significance of these findings were not well known outside academic circles in the early 1980s.
 - Ward S. Allen
 - *Translating the New Testament Epistles 1604-1611* (1977)
 - *The Coming of the King James Gospels: A Collation of the Translators Work-in-Progress* (1995)
- The first half of the last decade (00 decade) saw the publication of two important works on the making of the KJB as well as its linguistic and cultural impact upon the English-speaking world. These titles include:
 - Alister McGrath
 - *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (2001)
 - Adam Nicholson
 - *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (2003)
- In 2004, Professor David Norton's ground-breaking book *A Textual History of the King James Bible* was published by Cambridge University Press. Moreover, Professor Norton's equally important *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today* was published in 2011 in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the KJB. Both works by Norton are indispensable to a complete understanding of the history of the King James text. Moreover, Professor Norton has also written extensively on the subject of the Bible as literature in the following series of books:
 - *A History of the Bible as Literature 2Vol.* (1993)
 - *A History of the English Bible as Literature* (2000)

- In addition, 2011 saw a flurry of scholarly works published in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. There is much in these books that needs to be taken into account when considering this subject matter. A sampling of titles includes:
 - Donald L Brake
 - *A Visual History of the King James Bible* (2011)
 - David Crystal
 - *Begat: The King James Bible & the English Language*
 - Leland Ryken
 - *The Legacy of the King James Bible*
 - Jon M. Sweeney
 - *Verily, Verily: The KJV—400 Years of Influence and Beauty*
 - David Teems
 - *Majestie: The King Behind the King James Bible*
- Earlier this year (2015), Lawrence M. Vance published the results of his collation comparing the text of the Bishops Bible New Testament with the King James New Testament in *The Making of the King James New Testament*.
- In short, a class on the KJB that takes into account the latest research on the subject is long overdue.
- Fourth, I have concluded that historically (since the late 1950s) the articulation of the King James position has been dominated by Acts 2 Baptists who not only disapprove of our dispensational position (mid-Acts) but in some cases believe things about the KJB that are detrimental to the position. Consequently, I have come to believe that it is incumbent upon Pauline Dispensationalists to forge and advance our own position on the KJB that is inline and consistent with both the historical and textual facts as well as our dispensational beliefs regarding God's working in time.
 - I am a King James Bible believer. I believe that the King James Bible is God's word for English speaking people. It has been translated from the preserved and proper text (*Textus Receptus* or *TR*) using the proper method (literal equivalency).
 - I am also a mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalist who believes some very specific things regarding God's working in time during the dispensation of grace. God is at work in the world today in the lives His of saints through His written word. God is not physically intervening like He was in time past with Israel.

- I further maintain, that what I believe about one (the Bible) ought not to conflict with what I believe about the other (God's working in time during the dispensation of grace). Doctrinal consistency is very important and should be sought after diligently.
- Herein lies a unique problem for all those who are King James Bible believers and mid-Acts Pauline dispensationalists. Historically, the King James position has been championed most visibly and vocally by Acts 2 Baptists who vehemently oppose our dispensational position. Consequently, much has been said in pro-King James literature that is not only inconsistent with our dispensational position specifically; but is also detrimental to an accurate enunciation of the King James position in general.
- If asked, I would be hard pressed to think of even one book on the King James position that I could recommend to someone without reservation or equivocation. The available literature on the matter is full of doctrinal problems of a dispensational nature, documentation problems, plagiarism, ad hominem attacks, or tabloid style sensationalism.
- It is my prayer that the time we spend together studying these issues will be productive to these ends i.e., the forging of a position that is doctrinally and historically accurate but also dispensationally correct.

Personal History

- I grew up reading and using the KJB. As child, all the verses I memorized in AWANA were from the KJB (At the time all AWANA books used the KJB.).
- Very early after his salvation, my father (Steve Ross) came to understand and appreciate that there were more differences between the KJB and modern versions than just an updating of wording. For a time in the 1970s, my father contemplated attending Peter Ruckman's Pensacola Bible Institute in Pensacola, FL. After traveling to the school and meeting Dr. Ruckman he decided against attending there on account of the vicious/radical spirit he saw in Ruckman's followers.
- In the mid-1980s my father attended GSB where he took Brother Jordan's Manuscript Evidence class. This class served to buttress his long-held preference and affinity for the KJB thereby turning it into a personal conviction.
- While I grew up using the KJB throughout my formative years in the 1990s, I had no real understating of the reasons why my father advocated for its exclusive use. I knew that the NIV and other modern versions took out the "blood" in Colossians 1:14 (I know that I had been exposed to more teaching on the subject but either didn't pay attention, didn't understand, or didn't retain it.) and saw Gail Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions* on his bookshelf but beyond that I never questioned anything.

- It was not until I arrived at Grace Bible College (GBC) in the fall of 1996 that I really began to have questions regarding the KJB versus modern versions debate. In the summer of 1997, I picked up a copy of Gail Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions* at the GSB Summer Family Bible Conference and read it before going back to school for my sophomore year. In the summer of 1997, I also enrolled in GSB while at the same time being a student at GBC. During my second year of college I also picked up a few other titles, *The King James Bible Defended* by Dr. Edward F. Hills and *Which Bible?* by David Otis Fuller.
- That fall (1997), I began receiving videos from GSB and watching them in the basement of GBC's library. It was then that I began inhaling the Manuscript Evidence and Fundamentals of Dispensationalism classes. At the same time, in my second-year theology class we were learning about Westcott and Hort's theory of textual criticism and the alleged superiority of the Critical Text and its resultant modern versions over the Traditional Text of the *Textus Receptus* (TR) and the King James. At was a very exciting time for me to be able to study both theories at virtually the same time.
- By the end of my sophomore year (spring 1998), after a lengthy study of the issues I became convinced that the KJB was God's Word for English speaking people. My acceptance and advocacy of the King James position was not popular at school and caused many problems throughout the duration of my stay at GBC. While I was never threatened with expulsion over the issue I was called before the President of the college on more than one occasion to answer various false allegations that had been made against me by members of the student body.
- Since embracing the King James position I have taught and preached from it exclusively and promoted its superiority over all modern versions. Over the years, further study of the position has revealed that tweaking of my thinking on the matter was in order (Most notably the inerrancy issue that I address in 2011 at the GSB Summer Family Conference in Chicago.).
- More recently, my commitment to the KJB has been called into question by some because of I dared to consider the underlying Greek in addressing the joint-heir controversy of Romans 8:17. Some have accused me of having an indecent agenda of seeking to infect GSB with the Greek games and modern version leaven of GBC. Not only are ad hominem attacks such as these ignorant of the facts of my personal history, they also highlight a growing trend in some Grace circles of calling into question one's commitment to the KJB in the face of doctrinal disagreement (many are labeled "Bible Greekers").

List of Topics to be Covered

- Given my experience with the GHP, I hesitate to even publish any type of course outline. I know that what I think the class will be now at the outset will change as we move through the material.
- Topics I plan on covering include:
 - Inspiration

- Preservation
 - Canonicity
 - Transmission
 - Formation of the *Textus Receptus*
 - Pre-1611 English translations as rough drafts of the King James
 - Political climate leading up to the decision to translate
 - State of the English language at the time of the translation
 - Translation process
 - Textual history of the King James
 - Reception and political implications of the translation
 - Cultural and linguistic impact
 - Westcott & Hort and the formation of the Critical Text
 - The Critical Text and modern versions
 - Dean Burgon's objection to the Critical Text
 - The formation of the doctrine of inerrancy
 - History and historiography of the King James only movement
- Logistically, things have changed for me somewhat at work. I have taken on some new responsibilities. Consequently, I am giving myself the freedom to take a week off from class here or there as the demands of my schedule dictate.
 - I have also created a website that will serve as an online extension the class. As I did with the GHP, I plan on uploading all the video, audio, PDF notes, and PowerPoints files to the From This Generation For Ever website. The website can be found at:
 - fromthisgenerationforever.blogspot.com

Sunday, September 20, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 2: The “Yea, Hath God Said” Society

Introduction

- II Timothy 3:16—at the outset it is important to note what the Bible claims for itself. The Bible claims to have a divine origin. This claim is not something that men have placed upon the Bible; rather it is the Bible’s claim for itself.
- In the weeks and months leading up to the start of class I gave a lot of thought to how I should begin and the best order for covering the material. While I knew I was going to start with the issue of inspiration, originally, I thought I would cover the evidentiary proofs of inspiration first.
- As I pondered my options further I decided that beginning with an evidentialist approach might send the wrong message. I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God because that is the Bible’s claim for itself. This does not mean that there are no evidentiary proofs that speak to the Bible’s inspiration it just means that we need to base our study on the proper set of assumptions.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified his word above his own name. (Psalm 138:2)
 - God’s word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)
 - God through the process of inspiration has communicated his word to mankind. (I Tim. 3:16 & II Peter 1:21)
 - God’s words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which he inspired. (Psalm 12:6-7)
- So, for the purposes of this class we are going to initially adopt a presuppositional approach that assumes the Bible to be the inspired word of God at the outset. This assumption is made on account of the FACT that the Bible claims to be inspired by God. After we have learned what the Bible says about itself we will consider the many evidential proofs that the Bible is in fact of divine origin.
- I am aware of the division that exists within Christian Apologetics between the presuppositional and evidential approaches. It is my view that both are valid and have a seat at the table. Consequently, throughout the course of this study we will be looking at both. There is ample internal and external evidence that the Bible was given by inspiration and God and this therefore of divine origin.

- Our studies together are going to be an in-depth study into the origin and the transmission of the written word of God. In other words, where did it come from? What is its origin? And, how did it get from the original autographs, when it was originally written, into our hands today?
- I want you to be able to accurately and confidently identify and defend the word of God. I want you to be able to know where it is and what it is.

Satan: The First Destructive Critic

- Genesis 3:1-6—the original standards of the original Textual Critic are preserved for you by God, and you can see the tactics, and the methods, and the approach, and the policy of evil that Satan has against God’s word.
- Now, you need to get an understanding of this. How does Satan come at God’s word? Before Eve ever took of that tree, there is a long discussion (5 verses) between her and Satan. In that whole discussion, the tactics and the policy of Satan’s design against the word of God are laid out for you. And, it is just as true today as it was then. In fact, today, we are in the advanced stages of that campaign.
- Genesis 3:1—the very first thing that Satan does is question the word of God. He questions the scripture, Yea, hath God said . . .? Did God really say that? Are you sure God said that? He raises the question; Satan seeks to create doubt about what God actually said. This is his first tactic.
- Notice that he does it with a positive approach. You want to remember that. He says, “Yea, (yes), hath God said” The root source of all questioning and doubt of the bible comes from the Adversary.
- Genesis 3:2—is that what God told them?
 - Genesis 2:16
- Do you see what Eve did in Gen. 3:2? She left a very important word out. She subtracted a word from the text. She subtracted the word “freely” from the text. The first mistake Eve made, outside of engaging the Adversary in a conversation, was subtracting from the text.
- Tactic 1 is the question the word whereas Tactic 2 is to subtract from the word.
- Genesis 3:3—reveals the adversaries 3rd and 4th tactics, ADD to the word of God and water it down.
 - Genesis 2:16-17—does the phrase “neither shall ye touch it” appear in these verses. Satan adds the phrase to the verse when he quotes it to Eve in Genesis 3:3.
- Genesis 3:3—notice the ending of the verse “lest ye die.”
 - Genesis 2:16-17—the test states “thou shalt surely die.”

- Notice how Genesis 3:3 waters the severity of the situation down, “thou shalt surely die” becomes “well, you might die.”
- Genesis 3:4—Satan’s attack on the word of God culminates with his outright denial of what God said. The verse reads “Ye shall **not** surely die.”
 - Genesis 2:17—clearly states “thou shalt **surely** die”
- Notice what Satan denies. He did not deny the words “*you shall not possibly die*”. He denied the original version. He denied “Ye shall not surely die.”
- Genesis 3:5—The basis of Satan’s denial of the word of God is a desire that he perceives in Eve for an independent viewpoint –for her own viewpoint, for her own knowledge. Here we see the origin of what Paul is talking about in I Cor. 1. Ultimately Satan wants to replace God’s word and his wisdom with human viewpoint and the wisdom of men, i.e., the wisdom of this world.
- In summation the Adversary’s attack on the final authority of God’s word is rooted in the following 5 tactics:
 - Tactic 1—Question God’s word (Gen. 3:1)
 - Tactic 2—Subtract from God’s word (Gen. 3:2)
 - Tactic 3—Add to God’s word (Gen. 3:3)
 - Tactic 4—Waterdown God’s word (Gen. 3:3)
 - Tactic 5—Deny God’s (Gen. 3:4)
- Sin, on this planet earth, begins with an attack on God’s word in Genesis 3. There is a satanic policy of evil against the word of God clearly laid out in the scripture, and the design is simply to destroy the final authority of your Bible. Satan wants to take that word of God and make it less than the final authority.
- Now, how is he going to do that? Well, if you have an authority and it speaks with authority, the tactic is to bring up another authority alongside of it and give that second authority equal weight with the first. Well, then how do you decide which is right? If you have two competing authorities, who decides what is right? A third authority decides – you do, or somebody does.
 - “For example: you have two baseball teams playing against each other. There is a close play at first base. Well, you know what they are all going to say, right? The guy in the field is going to say that he was out, and the guy running is going to say that he is safe. Now, what do you have in the game to take care of that? You have a final authority; you have an umpire. If that umpire says that someone is out, you can kick dirt on him all day long, but it does not change anything unless you can go convince the league commissioner that he was wrong. But, when that happens, nobody ever knows if they can be sure or not.” (Jordan, MSS 101)
- So, Satan’s attempt is to get rid of that final authority by putting up a competing authority. And the policy, and the design, is to destroy that final authority in God’s word.

- Hegelian Dialectic—“usually presented in a threefold manner, was stated by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus as comprising three dialectical stages of development: a thesis, giving rise to its reaction, an antithesis, which contradicts or negates the thesis, and the tension between the two being resolved by means of a synthesis. Although this model is often named after Hegel, he himself never used that specific formulation. Hegel ascribed that terminology to Kant. Carrying on Kant's work, Fichte greatly elaborated on the synthesis model, and popularized it.” ([Wikipedia Entry](#))
- Hegelian Dialectic certainly applies to the realm of human viewpoint or the wisdom of this world. It does not hold, however, when dealing with the word of God. God gave his word to be an anchor, no matter what your thesis is, if the old book stands up here and the old book is different from human viewpoint, that is the final authority. And it will look at your thesis and say that it is wrong. It may look at that guy's opinion and say that it is right. It stands. It is the authority.
- Satan wants to get rid of that authority. He does not want you to have the capacity, in your hands, to have what God Almighty says. You need to know where God's word is because Satan is interested, and he has a positive program in place to corrupt that book.
 - II Corinthians 2:17
- Amos 8:11-12—now, notice that it says “words”. That's the words on the page, not just the message but the words. There is going to be a famine, an inability to find God's word. Now, if you study the book of Amos, you will find that this passage is prophetic, not just of the captivity of Israel; but it is also prophetic of the tribulation period. In the tribulation period there will be two big issues.
 - Issue One—“Where is the promise of his coming?” (II Peter 3:4)
 - Issue Two—Where are the words of God? (Amos 8:11-12)
- Amos 8:13-14—we see the results of not being able to find the words of God. They will be totally consumed by a religious system – no book, no light, no revelation. They will have their doctrinal statements – “Thy god, O Dan, liveth.” They conform to the fundamentals of a creed. They are orthodox, but they do not have a book, and they do not have light; and God's judgment is on them. They are all swept off in judgment.
 - *“If you do not have an absolute final authority, don't you preach to anybody. If you cannot find out what God's word is, and know what it is, and have it in your hand, and know you are preaching it, then you hang up your track shoes and you go fishing, but don't you preach. If you preach, all you are going to do is what that verse in Amos says. You are just going to build a bunch a people into a religious system that God Almighty is going to judge and condemn. . .*
 - Now, the world is hungry today for authority. They are hungry for leadership; they are hungry for purity; they are hungry for an honest message that has some power in it. And there is not any power, anywhere, except in that book. You know that, and that's the reason you are here. But, I want you to understand that that's a fact. And that is why this issue is important.

- Folks, if you want power to get a drunkard saved, or you want power to get a proud boastful spirit in line, or you want power to overcome the sins of life in your life and the lives of those you will minister to, that power must come out of a book; and that book is God's book. You will need some authority. And that is what the world is after, and that is what the religious system does not have." (Jordan, MSS 101)
- Romans 10:17—In the final analysis, the word of God, (your bible), is the only ultimate proof that you have for your faith. The ultimate proof for your faith is in that book.
 - "Folks, if you use that book right, it is enough to overwhelmingly convince any honest and sincere listener. And that is the answer. Ultimately, you know you are right because of the bible. Do you see why it is important to be able to know what that book is and where it is? If Satan can take that book away from you, he has destroyed the basis of your ministry." (Jordan, MSS 101)

Conclusion

- Given the adversaries tactics against the word of God we need think about God's word accordingly. Three times the word of God warns against adding or subtracting from the scriptures.
 - Deuteronomy 4:1-2
 - Proverbs 30:5-6
 - Revelation 22:18-19
- II Corinthians 11:3—the Adversary is willing to use whatever means necessary to undermine the final authority that God has placed in his word.
- In *Which Bible Would Jesus Use?* author Jack McElroy points out that "it's not politically correct to believe that one Bible is the final authority for Christians." (McElroy, 287) McElroy goes on to point out that no one who uses or promotes modern versions claims that any of them "all the words of God without error."
 - "That's why you don't see any influential Christian leaders who profess to be NIV Onlyists, ESV Onlyists, or NASB Onlyists or any other version Onlyiest, and you never will. They all believe that their Bibles have errors in the text and translation and they're not ashamed to admit it. This is why they make the "While Bible?" issue one of preference and not of conviction.

Since they still aren't completely sure which words are original and which are imposters, the only thing that's really important to them is the message and not the words." (McElroy, 288)
- II Corinthians 13:14
 - Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) **does not contain** it.

- New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV) **do contain** it.
- Matthew 12:47
 - ESV **does not contain** it.
 - HSCB and the NASB **do contain** it.
- James 1:7
 - New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) **does not contain** it.
 - HSCB, NASB, and ESV **do contain** it.
- Matthew 21:44, Luke 24:12, and Luke 24:40
 - Revised Standard Version (RSV) **does not contain** these verses.
 - HSCB, NASB, ESV **do contain** them.
- “Almost all modern versions are nothing more than personal versions of “The Original Bible” the experts are still searching for. They are “personal versions” because they reflect the editor’s choices as to which variant readings are authentic and which are not. Plus, they provide plenty of footnotes and encourage you to choose how “the Bible” should read.” (McElroy, 290)
- According to Kurt and Barbara Aland’s (the go-to folks in New Testament textual criticism) *The Text of the New Testament* there are at least 31 possibly as many as 39 complete verses that shouldn’t be in the Bible. (see pages 306-311) The fact that the editors and committees that produce and publish modern versions cannot agree with each other about what verses should and should not be in the Bible highlights an important point, according to Jack McElroy.
 - “The experts are all in competition with each other. They all claim that it’s their mandate to update the “Word of God” or “The Bible” into a language you can understand, and yet they can’t even agree on which verses they should translate, let alone how they should be translated.” (McElroy, 291)
- The Adversaries attack and tactics have been successful. Scores of competing and contradictory Bibles have flooded the market place. Anything goes in Christian academia expect the belief that there is one final absolute authority.

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Sunday, October 4, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 3: The “Yea, Hath God Said” Society, Part 2

Introduction/Review

- In our last lesson (2 weeks ago) we discussed the difference between Presuppositional and Evidential Apologetics and how every worldview operates on a set of assumptions.
- II Timothy 3:16—at the outset it is important to note what the Bible claims for itself. The Bible claims to have a divine origin. This claim is not something that men have placed upon the Bible; rather it is the Bible’s claim for itself.
- I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God because that is the Bible’s claim for itself. This does not mean that there are no evidentiary proofs that speak to the Bible’s inspiration it just means that we need to base our study on the proper set of assumptions.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified his word above his own name. (Psalm 138:2)
 - God’s word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)
 - God through the process of inspiration has communicated his word to mankind. (I Tim. 3:16 & II Peter 1:21)
 - God’s words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which he inspired. (Psalm 12:6-7)
- Genesis 3:1-6—the original standards of the original Textual Critic are preserved for you by God, and you can see the tactics, and the methods, and the approach, and the policy of evil that Satan has against God’s word. In summation the Adversary’s attack on the final authority of God’s word is rooted in the following 5 tactics:
 - Tactic 1—Question God’s word (Gen. 3:1)
 - Tactic 2—Subtract from God’s word (Gen. 3:2)
 - Tactic 3—Add to God’s word (Gen. 3:3)
 - Tactic 4—Waterdown God’s word (Gen. 3:3)
 - Tactic 5—Deny God’s (Gen. 3:4)

Satan: The First Destructive Critic (Continued)

- Amos 8:11-12—now notice that it says “words”. That’s the words on the page, not just the message but the words. There is going to be a famine, an inability to find God’s word. Now, if you study the book of Amos, you will find that this passage is prophetic, not just of the captivity of Israel; but it is also prophetic of the tribulation period. In the tribulation period there will be two big issues.
 - Issue 1—Where is the promise of His coming? (II Peter 3:4)
 - Issue 2—Where are the words of God? (Amos 8:11-12)
- Amos 8:13-14—we see the results of not being able to find the words of God. They will be totally consumed by a religious system – no book, no light, no revelation. They will have their doctrinal statements – “Thy god, O Dan, liveth.” They conform to the fundamentals of a creed. They are orthodox, but they do not have a book, and they do not have light; and God’s judgment is on them. They are all swept off in judgment.
 - *“If you do not have an absolute final authority, don’t you preach to anybody. If you cannot find out what God’s word is and know what it is and have it in your hand and know you are preaching it, then you hang up your track shoes and you go fishing, but don’t you preach. If you preach, all you are going to do is what that verse in Amos says. You are just going to build a bunch a people into a religious system that God Almighty is going to judge and condemn. . .*
 - Now, the world is hungry today for authority. They are hungry for leadership; they are hungry for purity; they are hungry for an honest message that has some power in it. And there is not any power, anywhere, except in that book. You know that, and that is the reason you are here. But, I want you to understand, that that is a fact. And that is why this issue is important.
 - Folks, if you want power to get a drunkard saved, or you want power to get a proud boastful spirit in line, or you want power to overcome the sins of life in your life and the lives of those you will minister to—that power must come out of a book; and that book is God’s book. You will need some authority. And that is what the world is after, and that is what the religious system does not have.” (Jordan, MSS 101)
- Romans 10:17—In the final analysis, the word of God (your bible) is the only ultimate proof that you have for your faith. The ultimate proof for your faith is in that book.
 - “Folks, if you use that book right, it is enough to overwhelmingly convince any honest and sincere listener and that is the answer. Ultimately, you know you are right because of the Bible. Do you see why it is important to be able to know what that book is and where it is? If Satan can take that book away from you, he has destroyed the basis of your ministry.” (Jordan, MSS 101)

The Society's Modern Chapter

- Given the adversaries tactics against the word of God we need to think about God's word accordingly. Three times the word of God warns against adding or subtracting from the scriptures.
 - Deuteronomy 4:1-2
 - Proverbs 30:5-6
 - Revelation 22:18-19
- II Corinthians 11:3—the Adversary is willing to use whatever means necessary to undermine the final authority that God has placed in His word.
- In *Which Bible Would Jesus Use?* author Jack McElroy points out that “it’s not politically correct to believe that one Bible is the final authority for Christians.” (McElroy, 287) McElroy goes on to point out that no one who uses or promotes modern versions claims that any of them has “all the words of God without error.”
 - “That’s why you do not see any influential Christian leaders who profess to be NIV Onlyists, ESV Onlyists, or NASB Onlyists, or any other version Onlyists, and you never will. They all believe that their Bibles have errors in the text and translation and they are not ashamed to admit it. This is why they make the “Whole Bible?” issue one of preference and not of conviction.

Since they still are not completely sure which words are original and which are imposters, the only thing that is really important to them is the message and not the words.” (McElroy, 288)

- All the modern versions do not say the same thing. Take for example what the tabernacle (mentioned 297 times) was made out of.
 - KJB—And he made a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and a cover of **badgers’ skins** above that.
 - NIV (1984)—Then they made for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of **hides of sea cow**.
 - NASB (1995)—He made a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red, and a covering of **porpoise skins** above.
 - ESV (2001)—And he made for the tent a covering of tanned rams’ skins and **goatskins**.
 - NIV (2011)—Then they made for the tent a cover of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of the other **durable leather**.
- All of these cannot be correct. This a case where the same Hebrew word is translated 5 different ways.

- This is not just an issue of the KJB verses modern versions. The modern versions themselves can't even agree about how verses should read.
 - Ecclesiastes 8:10
 - NASB (1995)—Then I saw the wicked buried. They . . . **were praised** in the city. . .
 - ESV (2001)—So then, I have seen the wicked buried . . . they **are soon forgotten** in the city. . .
 - Matthew 18:22
 - NIV (1984)—Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but **seventy-seven** (77) times.”
 - ESV (2011)—Jesus said to him, I do not say to you seven times, but **seventy times seven** (490).”
 - II Samuel 15:7
 - NASB (1995)—Now it came about at the end of **forty years** that Absalom said to the king, . . .
 - ESV (2011)—And at the end of **four years** Absalom said to the king, . . .
 - Dr. Albert Mohler Jr. president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said the following regarding the NASB and the ESV despite the clear contradiction in II Samuel 15:7.
 - NASB (40 Years)—“The New American Standard Bible has set the standard for faithful Bible translations for a generation. It is the favorite of so many who love the Bible and look for accuracy and clarity in translation. The New American Standard Bible should be close at hand for any serious student of the Bible. I thank God for this faithful translation.” (Lockwood Foundation, “[NASB Endorsements](#)”)
 - ESV (4 Years)—“The ESV represents a new level of excellence in Bible translations—combining unquestionable accuracy in translation with a beautiful style of expression. It is faithful to the text, easy to understand, and a pleasure to read. This is a translation you can trust.” (Crossway, “[MacArthur Study Bible: ESV](#)”)
 - Luke 10:1
 - NASB (1995)—Now after this the Lord appointed **seventy** others. . .
 - ESV (2001)—After this the Lord appointed **seventy-two** others. . .
 - Matthew 12:47

- NASB (1995)—Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to you.”
- ESV (2011)—Omitted
- Dr. Paige Patterson is the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Dr. Patterson stated the following regarding the NASB and ESV.
 - NASB (Contains Matt. 12:47)—“The New American Standard Bible . . . is still the most accurate translation of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures available. . .” (Lockwood Foundation, “[NASB Endorsements](#)”)
 - ESV (Omits Matthew 12:47)—“For our churches and pulpits, as well as for our students, it is critically important to have a Bible translation that does not compromise orthodox theology or gender issues, and that is both faithful to the language of the text and eminently readable. The ESV unequally fulfills that prescription.” (Crossway, [ESV Endorsements](#))
- Acts 8:37
 - NASB (1995)—includes verse 37 in brackets with the following footnote attached. “Early mss do not contain this verse.”
 - ESV (2011)—Omitted
 - NIV (2011)—Omitted
- II Corinthians 13:14
 - Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) **does not contain** it.
 - New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV) **do contain** it.
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- Matthew 21:44, Luke 24:12, and Luke 24:40
 - Revised Standard Version (RSV) **does not contain** these verses.
 - HSCB, NASB, ESV **do contain** them.
- “Almost all modern versions are nothing more than personal versions of “The Original Bible” the experts are still searching for. They are “personal versions” because they reflect the editor’s choices as to which variant readings are authentic and which are not. Plus, they provide plenty of footnotes and encourage you to choose how “the Bible” should read.” (McElroy, 290)
- According to Kurt and Barbara Aland’s (the go-to folks in New Testament textual criticism) *The Text of the New Testament*, there are at least 31, possibly as many as 39, complete verses that should not be in the Bible. (see pages 306-311)
 - Matthew—5:44, 6:13, 16:2b-3, 17:21, 18:11, 20:16, 20:22-23, 23:14, 25:13, 27:35-44
 - Mark—7:16, 9:44, 9:46, 11:26, 15:28
 - Luke—4:4, 9:54-56, 17:36, 23:17, 24:24
 - John 5:3b-4
 - Acts 8:37, 15:34, 24:6b-8, 28:16, 28:29
- The editors and committees responsible for the production of modern versions are in agreement about some of these but not all. The following is a list of verses that are placed in the text in bracket thereby showing their doubtful authenticity. So they are (by modern textual criticism standards) probably impure forgeries yet they are still placed within the text.
 - Mark—10:7, 10:21, 10:24, 14:68
 - Luke —8:43, 22:43-44
- The fact that the editors and committees that produce and publish modern versions cannot agree with each other about what verses should and should not be in the Bible highlights an important point, according to Jack McElroy.
 - “The experts are all in competition with each other. They all claim that it’s their mandate to update the “Word of God” or “The Bible” into a language you can understand, and yet they can’t even agree on which verses they should translate, let alone how they should be translated.” (McElroy, 291)
- The real question is who gets to pick which readings out of the pile are authentic. Even the editors of the Greek New Testament behind virtually all modern versions self-graded their choices regarding what the readings should be. According to the preface of the latest edition of the Greek text published by the United Bible Society (*USB4*) the grading system works as follows:

- A—Indicates the text is certain;
 - B—Indicates the text is almost certain;
 - C—Indicates the text is difficult to determine;
 - D—Indicates the text is very difficult to determine. ([Ballard](#))
- If you pay close attention you will run across instances of extreme candor on the part of the men doing the textual work to reconstruct the “original Bible.” One such instance is provided by Eldon J. Epp, Professor of Biblical Literature at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. In addition to serving as the president for the Society of Biblical Literature from 2003 to 2004, Professor Epp also coauthored *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (1993) with Gordon D. Fee. As an expert and recognized authority in the field of New Testament textual criticism Professor Epp states the following:
 - “. . . we no longer think so simplistically or so confidently about recovering “the New Testament in the Original Greek.” . . . We remain largely in the dark as to how we might reconstruct the textual history that has left in its wake—in the form of MSS and fragments—numerous pieces that we seem incapable of fitting together. . . we seem to have no such theories and no plausible sketches of the early history of the text that are widely accepted. What progress, then, have we made? Are we more advanced than our predecessor he, after showing their theories to unacceptable, we offer no such theories at all to vindicate our accepted text?” (Epp and Fee, 114-115)
 - In the end, the only thing textual critics/experts are certain of is that the King James Bible is not the word of God for English speaking people. There is not a book in existence today that can rightly be called word of God, according to the prevailing thoughts of Christian academia.
 - The Adversaries attack and tactics have been successful. Scores of competing and contradictory Bibles have flooded the market place. Anything goes in Christian academia except the belief that there is one final absolute authority.

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Sunday, October 11, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 4—Originals Onlyism: A Position of No Practical Consequence

Introduction

- I would like to begin this morning by just making a general statement about our progression through the content contained in this class. I am trying to present the information in what I believe to be the most logical progression possible. That being said, with a topic this large it is not possible to say everything one might like at the outset. If I were to address certain topics prematurely before having given you the background or prerequisite information first, you would not understand my reasoning. In other words, I am going to ask your patience that as the course develops all your questions will be answered in due time.
- That being said, this morning we are going to address an issue that I originally planned on tackling a bit later in the class. However, it has come up a couple different times already and is related to the topic of inspiration, so I decided to cover it, at least in part, in this lesson.
- The topic relates to what I am calling “Originals Onlyism” or the belief that only the original autographs of the Biblical writings are inspired and inerrant.
- Last week we learned that the “Bible Issue” is not just a King James versus modern version debate but that not all modern versions say the same thing. Neither is this just a question of translation philosophy and methodology, i.e., dynamic versus formal equivalence. There are substantive differences in meaning between modern versions. Textual scholars cannot even agree among themselves on what verses should be in the text much less how each verse should read.

Originals Onlyism

- For the last 130 years or so, Fundamental and Evangelical leaders have taught that “the real Bible” is not a book anyone today can hold in their hands. Much ink has been spilt defending the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible while “the Bible” they are defending never actually existed in one place at one time in world history.
- The Bible they are defending is one whose text is made up of an unavailable collection of original writings that comprise a book they call “The Original Bible.”
- Dr. Randall Price, Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Judaic Studies at Liberty University summarized the “Original Bible” concept in his book [*Searching for the Original Bible*](#). Dr. Price states,
 - “*Autograph* is the accepted term for the original edition of a particular work, written or dictated by the author. It is the *earliest* copy, from which the *apographs* (all later copies) are ultimately descended. . . **Although neither the Hebrew nor the Greek original manuscripts ever existed in a form resembling our present Bible, and in some cases**

they were edited by other before assuming the form we know today, their collective existence as original manuscripts constitutes the *autographa*, or the “Original Bible.” (Price, 33-34)

- Despite Price’s own admission that no such document ever existed, virtually all Fundamental and Evangelical leaders claim that this unavailable collection of writings ought to be the final authority for Christian belief and practice. Christian scholars boldly utter proclamations such as “I believe the Bible is the inspired and inerrant word of God!” and “The book is our only authority.” Yet they are admittedly speaking about a Bible that they are still searching for. They teach that the only “scripture” that was inspired and without error is this “Original Bible.” They say that the words we have today are inspired and inerrant only so far as they match the wording of the “Original Bible.” Yet they remain unsure as to the exact wording of the “Original Bible.” (McElroy, 4)
- Moreover, these scholars teach that no book in existence today contains all of God’s words and only God’s words. Worse yet, they believe all Bibles today contain errors and/or have readings that may not be “original.” Yet as we saw last week, they can’t even agree on what verses and or readings are authentic and representative of the “Original Bible.”
- Who is making these claims? For starters the following Christian leaders and theologians recommend Dr. Randall Price’s book *Searching for the Original Bible* (quoted from above):
 - Kenneth L Barker, ThM, PhD—General Editor of the NIV Study Bible
 - Dr. Wayne House—Distinguished Research Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Faith Evangelical Seminar in Tacoma, WA
 - Walter C. Kaiser Jr.—President Emeritus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, MA
 - Colman M. Mockler—Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, MA
 - Dr. Charles C. Ryrie—former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and author of the *Ryrie Study Bible*.
- Dr. Ryrie is also the author of the introductory systematic theology book *Basic Theology*. In the section on the Bible, Ryrie takes up a discussion of how the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy apply to the original autographs alone. Notice how Ryrie struggles to defend these important doctrines when they are applied to the “originals” only.
 - “The second excuse for diluting the importance of inerrancy is that since we do not possess any original manuscripts of the Bible, and since inerrancy is related to those originals only, the doctrine of inerrancy is only a theoretical one and therefore

nonessential. **We do not possess any of the original manuscripts of the bible, and the doctrine of inerrancy, like inspiration is predicated only on the original manuscripts, not on any of the copies.** The two premises in the statement above are correct, but those particular premises do not prove at all that inerrancy is a nonessential doctrine.

Obviously, **inerrancy can be asserted only in relation to the original manuscripts because only they came directly from God under inspiration.** The very first copy of a letter of Paul, for instance, was in reality only a copy, and not the original that Paul himself wrote or dictated. **Both inspiration and inerrancy are predicated only on the originals.”** (Ryrie, 80)

- In Volume One of his *Systematic Theology*, Dr. Norman Geisler follows suite by stating:
 - “The inspiration of Scripture is the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit who, through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors, **invested the very words of the original books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very Word of God without error in all that they teach** (including history and science) and is thereby the infallible rule and final authority for the faith and practice of all believers.” (Geisler, 498)
- In *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Paul Enns offers the following definition of inerrancy:
 - “Inerrancy means that **when all the facts are known, the Scripture in their original autographs and properly interpreted** will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines or knowledge.” (Enns, 167)
- Lastly, the popular *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* edited by Walter A. Elwell records the following definition for inerrancy (the entry is written by Paul D. Feinberg):
 - “Inerrancy is the view that **when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs** and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrine or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences.

A number of points in this definition deserve discussion. **Inerrancy is not presently demonstratable.** Human knowledge is limited in two ways. First, because of our finitude and sinfulness human beings misinterpret the data that exists. For instance, wrong conclusions can be drawn from inscriptions or texts. Second, we do not possess all the data that comes to bear on the Bible. Some of that data may be lost forever, or they may be awaiting discovery by archeologists. By claiming inerrancy will be shown to be true after all the facts are known, one recognizes this. The defender of inerrancy argues only that there will be no conflict in the end.

Further, inerrancy applies equally to all parts of the Bible as originally written. This means that no present manuscript or copy of scripture, no matter how accurate, can be called inerrant.” (Elwell, 156-157)

- This entry by Paul D. Feinberg is truly puzzling. According to this definition it is totally pointless to affirmatively argue for inerrancy since all of the information is not known. This so-called definition proves nothing. All Mr. Feinberg has done is leave the doors open for modern textual critics such as Bart D. Ehrman, author of *Misquoting Jesus*, and his troop to attack the veracity of God’s written word.
- In October 1978 a group of 300 scholars, pastors, and laymen came together in Chicago, IL for [The International Conference on Biblical Inerrancy](#) (ICBI). Here is sampling of what their document said regarding the doctrines inspiration and inerrancy.
 - Article VI—*WE AFFIRM* that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very **words of the original**, were given by divine inspiration.
 - Article X—*WE AFFIRM* that **inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture**, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. **We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.**
 - Article X—*WE DENY* that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected **by the absence of the autographs**. We further deny that **this absence** renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant. (Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 494-502)
- There you have it. According to leading Evangelical scholars including James Boice, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Carl F. H. Henry, Kenneth Kantzer, Harold Lindsell, John Warwick Montgomery, Roger Nicole, J. I. Packer, Robert Preus, Earl Radmacher, Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul, and John Wenham:
 - 1) inspiration applies only to the autographic text of Scripture,
 - 2) copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent they faithfully represent the original, and
 - 3) they admit that that the autographs are “absent.”
- So how do they really know what they claim to know when their standard for judging, by their own admission, is a document that doesn’t exist? This is a doctrine of no practical consequence.

Inspiration Without Preservation Is Meaningless

- In 1980, Normal Geisler edited a book called *Inerrancy*. This book contained 14 scholarly essays that had been edited from the transcripts of lectures presented at the ICBI in 1978. One of the essays, written by Greg L. Bahsen is titled “The Inerrancy of the Autographa.” We will have more to say about Bahsen’s articles at a future date when we discuss the doctrine of inerrancy in greater depth. For the now, please note that all of these quotations come from the same essay.
 - *No Originals No Scripture*—“We can believe our copies of Scripture and be saved without having the autographic codex, for the Bible itself indicates that copies can faithfully reflect the original text and therefore function authoritatively. Second, **the paramount features and qualities of Scripture—such as inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy—are uniformly identified with God’s own original word as found in the autographic text, which alone can be identified and esteemed as God’s own word to man.**” (Geisler, 169-170)
 - *The Logical Implication*—“There is circulating at present a rather serious misunderstanding of the evangelical restriction of inerrancy (or inspiration, infallibility) to the autographic text and the implications of that restriction. DeKoster claims that there are only two options: **either the Bible on our pulpits is the inspired Word of God, or it is the uninspired words of man. Because inspiration and inerrancy are restricted to the autographa (which are lost, and therefore not found in pulpits), then our Bibles, it is argued, must be the uninspired words of man and not the vitally needed word of God.** Others have misconstrued an epistemological argument for biblical inerrancy as hold that, if the Bible contains even one mistake, it cannot be believed true at any point; we cannot then rely on any part of it, and God cannot use it to communicate authoritatively to us. **From this mistaken point critics go on to say that the evangelical restriction of inerrancy to the autographs means that, because of errors in all present versions, our Bible today cannot be trusted at all, cannot communicate God’s word to us, and cannot be the inspired word of God. If our present Bibles, with their errors, are not inspired, then we are left with nothing (since the autographa are lost).**” (Geisler, 172)
 - *Mistaken Bibles Are Still the Word of God*—“It needs to be reiterated quite unambiguously that evangelical restriction of inerrancy to the autographa 1) is a restriction to the autographic text, thereby guarding the uniqueness of God’s verbal message and 2) **does not imply that present Bibles because they are not fully inerrant, fail to be the Word of God. . . So also my American Standard Version of the Bible contains mistaken or disputed words with respect to the autographic text of Scripture** (how would he actually know this), **but it is still the very Word of God, inspired and inerrant—to the degree that it reflects the original work of God (because of the objective, universally accepted, and outstanding degree of correlation in the light of textual criticism) is a qualification that is very seldom in need of being stated.**” (Geisler, 173)

- *No Promise of Preservation*—“God has not promised in His Word that the Scriptures would receive perfect transmission, and thus we have no ground to claim it a priori. Moreover, the inspired Word of God in the Scriptures has a uniqueness that must be guarded from distortion. Consequently, we cannot be theologically blind to the significance of transmissional errors, nor can we theologically assume the absence of such errors. We are therefore theologically required to restrict inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy to the autographa. . . Scripture nowhere give us ground to maintain that its transmission and translation would be kept without effort by God. **There is no scriptural warrant for holding that God will perform the perpetual miracle of preserving His written Word from all errors in its being transcribed from one copy to another.** Since the Bible does not claim that every copier translator, typesetter, and printer will shall the infallibility of the original document, Christians should not make such a claim either. The doctrine is not supported by Scripture, and Protestants are committed to the methodical principle of sola Scriptura.” (Geisler, 175-176)
- *Theological Doubt-Talk: Providential Bible Copying*—“. . . the preservation of the text of Scripture is part of the transmission of the knowledge of God, it is reasonable to expect that God will provide for it lest the aims of His revealing Himself to man be frustrated. The providence of God superintended matters so that copies of Scripture do not become so corrupt as to become unintelligible for God’s original purposes in giving it or so corrupt as to create a major falsification of His message’s text. . . Faith in the consistency of God—His faithfulness to His own intention to make men wise unto salvation—guarantees the inference that He never permits Scripture to become so corrupted that it can no longer fulfill that end adequately. We can conclude theologically that , for all practice purposes, the text of Scripture is always sufficiently accurate not to lead us astray. If we presuppose a sovereign God, observes Van Til, it is no longer a matter of great worry that the transmission of Scripture is not all altogether accurate; God’s providence provides for the essential accuracy of the Bible’s copying. . .our copies virtually supply us with the autographic text. All the ridicule that is heaped on evangelicals about the “lost autographa” is simply vain, for we do not regard their text as lost at all! . . . The doctrine of original inerrancy, then, does not deprive believer today of the Word of God in an adequate form for all the purpose of God’s revelation to His people. Presupposing the providence of God in the preservation of the biblical text and noting the outstanding result of the textual criticism of Scriptures, we can have full assurance that we possess the Word of God necessary for our salvation and Christian walk. As a criticism of this evangelical doctrine, suggestions that the autographic text has been forever lost are groundless and futile. The Bibles in our hands are trustworthy rendition of God’s original message, adequate for all intents and purposes as copies and conveyors of God’s autoreactive word.” (Geisler, 185-189)
- To say there is confusion in Bahsen’s essay quoted above would be an understatement to say the least.

- Perhaps sensing the inconsistency of Christian academia's position, Geisler hedges as to the reliability of the available copies. In Volume One of his Systematic Theology, Dr. Geisler seeks to debunk ten of the most common objections to the doctrine of Inerrancy. In the section, "The Objection That Inerrancy Is Based on Non-Existent Originals," Geisler offers the following counterpoint:

- "Some object to inerrancy because it affirms that only the original text is inerrant (there being admitted errors in the copies), and the originals are not extant. Hence, all the doctrine of inerrancy provides is a non-existent authority; supposedly, this isn't any different than having no Bible at all.

This allegation is unfounded. First of all, it is not true that we do not possess the original text. We do possess it in **well preserved copies**; it is the original manuscripts we do not have. We do have an accurate copy of the original text represented in these manuscripts; the nearly 5,700 New Testament manuscripts we possess contain all or nearly all of the original text, and we can reconstruct the original text with over 99 percent accuracy. . .

In brief, the Bible in our hands is the infallible and inerrant Word of God insofar as it has been copied accurately. And it has been copied so accurately as to assure us that nothing in the essential message has been lost." (Geisler, 503)

- Geisler's double-speak is compounded in the next section where he tackles "The Objection That Inerrancy is Unnecessary"
- "The answers to the previous objections lead to another: If errant copies of the original text are sufficient, then why did God have to inspire errorless originals? If a scratched record can convey the music of its master, then an errant Bible can convey to us the truth of the Master.

The response is simple. The reason the original text cannot err is that it was breathed out by God, and God cannot err. The copies, while demonstrated to have been **providentially preserved from substantial error**, are not breathed out by God. Hence there can be errors in the copies." (Geisler, 503-504)

- Notice that Geisler mentions the issue of providential preservation, yet he does not define it or elaborate upon it in any way. Is Dr. Geisler really saying that God is incapable of accurately preserving that which he inspired?
- All the confusion we observed in our last lesson regarding to the reconstruction of the Biblical text stems from an improper understanding of the twin doctrines of inspiration and preservation.
- Systematic Theology books are filled with information about inspiration and inerrancy but none of them contain any exposition of the doctrine of Preservation. In preparation for these studies I searched the Systematic Theology books by the following Christian authors looking for information on the doctrine of preservation.

- Norman L. Geisler—*Systematic Theology, Volume I*
 - Lewis Sherry Chaffer—*Systematic Theology*
 - Charles C. Ryrie—*Basic Theology*
 - Paul Enns—*Moody Handbook of Theology*
 - Wayne Grudem—*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*
 - Millard J. Erickson—*Christian Theology*
 - Alister McGrath—*Christian Theology: An Introduction*
 - Charles F. Baker—*A Dispensational Theology*
- Why did former evangelical Bart D. Ehrman (graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Wheaton College) become an agnostic? It was largely due to his lingering doubts over the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. In *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*, Ehrman gives his reasons for opposing the historicity of both the original text and the transmission of the text.
 - “. . . the reality is that we don’t have the originals—so saying they were inspired doesn’t help much, unless I can reconstruct the originals. Moreover, the vast majority of Christians for the entire history of the church have not had access to the originals, making their inspiration a moot point. . . I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place. If he wanted this people to have his words, surely he would have given them to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they would understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). The fact that we don’t have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn’t perform that miracle, there seems to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.” (Ehrman, 10-11)
 - Ehrman’s honesty regarding the implications of his evangelical training led him to agnosticism.
 - By limiting inerrancy to the originals and failing to acknowledge the doctrine of preservation Evangelical scholars neglect to protect the doctrine of inspiration. Dr. Samuel C. Gipp, discusses how inspiration without preservation renders inspiration incomplete. Dr. Gipp demonstrates this reality by asking and answering a couple of questions. “Why did God inspire His word perfectly? Obviously, the answer comes back, so that man could have every word of God, pure, complete, trustworthy, and without error.” (Gipp, 18)

- If God went to the trouble to perfectly inspire his word only to allow errors and mistakes to creep into the text it would be inconstant with His nature and character. Gipp demonstrates the foolishness of limiting inspiration and inerrancy only to the originals when he asks:
 - “Could God who overcame time (about 1,700 years transpired from the writing of the oldest Old Testament book and closing of the New Testament in 90 A.D.) and man’s human nature to write the Bible perfectly in the first place, do the same thing to preserve it?” (Gipp, 18)
- The obvious answer to this question is yes since God can do one he is perfectly capable of doing the other. In fact, just as the Bible internally claims to have been given by inspiration of God it also says that God intends to preserve the very words that God breathed. However, one does not learn about preservation in the evangelical systematic theology books because the topic has been totally overlooked.
- Just as the Bible claims to be inspired it also records God’s promise to preserve that which he inspired.
 - Psalm 12:6-7—The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times. 7) Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, **thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.**
 - Psalm 33:11—The counsel of the Lord **standeth for ever**, the thoughts of his **heart to all generations.**
 - Psalm 119:152—Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou **hast founded them for ever.**
 - Psalm 119: 89—**Forever**, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.
 - Isaiah 30:8—Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, **that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.**
 - Matthew 5:18—For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, **till all be fulfilled.**
- Believers are thus forced into an interesting predicament. One can either believe these verses or not. As we have already established, none of the original autographs remain, yet God promises that his words will remain throughout all eternity. Therefore, God did not use the original manuscripts as the vehicle through which preservation would take place.
- So then, where does this eternal preservation take place if not in the original autographs? The believing Bible student will let the Word of God answer this question as well. Consider II Timothy 3:15:

- And that from a child thou hast known the **holy scriptures** which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- Paul, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit, tells Timothy that from the time of his childhood he knew the Holy Scriptures. Did Timothy's family possess the original manuscripts for every book of the Bible written at that time? No, they had copies. Notice that Paul calls the copies Timothy's family possessed Scripture. In other words, the copies in their possession were just as authoritative as the original manuscripts.
- It is God's design to preserve His word through a multiplicity of accurate, reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the original. During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ expressed the same attitude as Paul in regard to the copies that were available to Him. Please consider Matthew 22:29-31:
 - Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31) But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying. . .
- Christ rebukes the Sadducees because they did not know the Scriptures. Does this mean they did not possess the original manuscripts? Certainly not, it means, as verse 31 states, they did not know the Scriptures because they had not read the copies they had in their possession.
- If God has not preserved His words as He said that He would (Psalms 12:6-7), then He has done two things He has never done before. First, he has wasted His own time in perfectly inspiring them in the first place. Second, God did not do that which He promised he would which would make him a liar. Dr. Gipp summarizes the believing viewpoint regarding the connection between inspiration, inerrancy, and preservation when he writes,
 - "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." (Gipp, 22)

Conclusion

- Eloquent arguments aside, the prevailing wisdom within Christendom regarding the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scripture is meaningless because leading theologians only apply these doctrines to the originals which no longer exist. The Bible teaches that God has promised to preserve the inerrant words of his inspiration through a multiplicity to accurate copies that are just as authoritative as the originals.

- A side by side examination of modern versions with the King James text reveals startling differences that impact the major doctrines of the faith. These differences cannot be attributed to differences in how words are translated out of Greek and Hebrew into English. Rather the underlying manuscripts used by the translators are different thereby resulting in different readings.
- As we saw last week, the same problem exists for modern version proponents when dealing with what verses should and should not be included. Logic dictates that when two things are different they cannot be the same thus making it impossible for divergent translations containing substantive differences in meaning to both be the Word of God.
- God did not go through all the trouble to perfectly inspire his word only to have it disappear with the originals.

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Sunday, October 18, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 5: Overcoming the Problem of “Exact Sameness”

Introduction

- At this point it seems prudent to take stock of what we have studied so far. Thus far, the course introduction notwithstanding, we have had three lessons that have ranged over a host of introductory topics. In summation, these topics have included the following:
 - Basic presuppositions regarding God and the Bible (Lesson 1).
 - Satan’s five-part strategy against the word of God: question it, subtract from it, add to it, water it down, and deny it (Lesson 1).
 - Lack of textual agreement among modern Evangelical scholars regarding which readings are authentic and which ones are not. This is not just a KJB verses modern version issue. But a problem that exists within the scholarship that is critical of the KJB and promotes the merits of modern versions (Lesson 2).
 - The prevailing position within Christian academia (for the last 130 years or so) is that only the original autographs are inspired and inerrant. This assertion is made despite admittance by these same scholars that the original autographs are “absent.” This topic also included a discussion of the overlooked nature of the doctrine of perseveration by leading Fundamental and Evangelical scholars (Lesson 3).
- I am aware that these lessons have generated much discussion. As I said, in the introduction to last week’s notes, I request your patience over the coming weeks/months as the class unfolds. I have been praying for myself and all of you students that we can have these hard discussions in a manner that is productive, honoring to the Lord as well as to one another. My prayer is that these lessons will produce light and not heat.

The Continuum of Positions

- For purposes of illustration, please consider the following continuum of views regarding the Bible issue. On one side, let’s place the “Originals Only” position we discussed in the previous lesson. This side says little if anything meaningful about the doctrine of preservation and admittedly relies upon the discipline of textual criticism to reconstruct the “Original Text.” This side generally maintains that the KJB is based upon old or outdated textual theories and therefore advocates for the use of modern versions and their underlying Greek text on account of the fact that they are more accurate.
- On the other side of the continuum we find the King James extreme view that God supernaturally inspired the King James translators in the same manner that the original writers of Scripture were inspired. This group basically believes in the notion of “Double Inspiration” or the idea that God “re-inspired” His word in English in the early 17th century.

- In between these two views there are other less extreme options that have been articulated. Some examples include the following:
 - *I Prefer the KJB or I Like the KJB Best Position*—folks in this group view the KJB as the single best English translation available today. This belief is generally held for any of the following reason: rhythmic beauty, historical importance, or its cultural and literary impact upon the English-speaking world.
 - *Majority Text Position*—is characterized by the common belief that the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts used by the King James translators are superior to those utilized by modern textual scholarship. Those holding this position point to the numerical superiority of the manuscripts found in the Byzantine Text type as a more faithful guide for reconstructing the text. Supporters of this position do not necessarily view the KJB as inerrant but that it more accurately reflects the original writings. Zane C. Hodges stands out as the leading proponent of this position.
 - *Textus Receptus or Received Text Only Position*—this position maintains that the *Textus Receptus* (TR) Greek text preserved the words of the originals in their inerrant condition. This position would not necessarily insist that the KJB is an inerrant translation of these texts, thereby leaving open the possibility for a better translation of the TR. The TR position acknowledges the importance of the *Majority Text* but takes into the account the testimony of other witnesses such as early translations, patristic quotations, and early church lectionaries in seeking to establish the authenticity of a reading. Dean John William Burgon stands out as a leading proponent of this position. Burgon objected to the replacing of the Traditional Greek Text or TR with the new and improved Critical Text of Wescott and Hort.
- I believe that the “Originals Only” position was forged by Warfield and Hodge in the late 19th century in response to a growing chorus of voices that were critical and seeking to undermine the Bible. I further believe that the “Inspired King James” view was a reaction against the “Originals Only” position and its reliance upon textual criticism as well as its promotion of modern versions.

The Problem of “Exact Sameness”

- In reality, both of these views, the “Originals Only” and “King James Inspired” positions are seeking to address the problem of “Exact Sameness.” It is a known fact that there are textual variations in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts supporting the English Bible. One side seeks to deal with the problem by appealing to the nonexistent “Originals” while the other side sees the KJB as a divine act on par with the inspiration of the originals in the first place.
- The “Originals Only” position, as we saw last week, largely ignores the doctrine of preservation. Meanwhile, many King James defenders want to argue that preservation assures the “Exact Sameness” of every word as originally written under inspiration. Unfortunately, this type of “Exact Sameness” or verbatim wording understanding of preservation cannot be sustained by a consideration of the historical and textual facts. Even among the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type and utilized by both the Majority Text and the TR positions, there is not “Exact Sameness” or verbatim wording across all the manuscripts witnesses.
- The manuscripts in the Byzantine Text Type, while not possessing “Exact Sameness” or verbatim wording across the board, demonstrate an “agreeance” as to how passages should read.

- This is important because it recognizes the difference between 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning. Even within the King James Bible one is forced to acknowledge the existence of different ways of saying the same thing. Consider the following example:

Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
<p>“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me;</p> <p>because the <u>LORD</u> hath anointed me to preach <u>good tidings</u> unto the <u>meek</u>;</p> <p>he hath sent me <u>to bind up</u> the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to <u>proclaim liberty</u> to the captives,</p> <p>and the <u>opening of the prison</u> to them that are <u>bound</u>;</p> <p>To <u>proclaim</u> the acceptable year of the LORD,</p>	<p>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,</p> <p>because <u>he</u> hath anointed me to preach <u>the gospel</u> to the <u>poor</u>;</p> <p>he hath sent me <u>to heal</u> the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to <u>preach deliverance</u> to the captives,</p> <p>(and recovering of sight to the blind),</p> <p>to <u>set at liberty</u> them that are <u>bruised</u>,</p> <p>To <u>preach</u> the acceptable year of the Lord.</p>

- These passages from within the KJB do not exhibit “Exact Sameness” yet the Lord Jesus Christ called the copy He was reading from in Nazareth ‘Scripture’.
- Problems are compounded from the standpoint of modern scholarship when one considers there are two so-called oldest and best manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Ⲙ). After completing a complete collation of these manuscripts against that TR and each other, Dean Burgon concluded the following:
 - “. . . all four are discovered on careful scrutiny to differ essentially not only from ninety-nine out of a hundred of the whole body of extant MSS besides, even from one another... they stand asunder in every page; as well as differ widely from the commonly received Text, with which they have been carefully collated. On being referred to this standard, in the Gospels alone, B is found to omit at least 2,877 words; to add 536: to substitute 935: to transpose 2098: to modify 1132 (in all 7,578):--the corresponding figures for Ⲙ being 3455, 839, 1114, 2299, 1265 (in all 8,972). **And be it remembered that the omissions, additions, substitutions, transpositions, and modifications, are by no means the same in both. It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS differ one from the other, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree.**” (Burgon, 11-12)
- In the previous lesson we considered an essay titled “The Inerrancy of the Autographa” by Greg L. Bahsen found in Norman L. Geisler’s book *Inerrancy*. As part of that consideration we looked at the following quotes:

- *No Promise of Preservation*—“God has not promised in His Word that the Scriptures would receive perfect transmission, and thus we have no ground to claim it a priori. Moreover, the inspired Word of God in the Scriptures has a uniqueness that must be guarded from distortion. Consequently, we cannot be theologically blind to the significance of transmissional errors, nor can we theologically assume the absence of such errors. We are therefore theologically required to restrict inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy to the autographa . . . Scripture nowhere gives us ground to maintain that its transmission and translation would be kept without effort by God. **There is no scriptural warrant for holding that God will perform the perpetual miracle of preserving His written Word from all errors in its being transcribed from one copy to another.** Since the Bible does not claim that every copier, translator, typesetter, and printer will share the infallibility of the original document, Christians should not make such a claim either. The doctrine is not supported by Scripture, and Protestants are committed to the methodical principle of sola Scriptura.” (Geisler, 175-176)

- *Theological Double-Talk: Providential Bible Copying*—“. . . the preservation of the text of Scripture is part of the transmission of the knowledge of God, it is reasonable to expect that God will provide for it lest the aims of His revealing Himself to man be frustrated. The providence of God superintended matters so that copies of Scripture do not become so corrupt as to become unintelligible for God’s original purposes in giving it or so corrupt as to create a major falsification of His message’s text. . . Faith in the consistency of God—His faithfulness to His own intention to make men wise unto salvation—guarantees the inference that He never permits Scripture to become so corrupted that it can no longer fulfill that end adequately. We can conclude theologically that, for all practical purposes, the text of Scripture is always sufficiently accurate not to lead us astray. If we presuppose a sovereign God, observes Van Til, it is no longer a matter of great worry that the transmission of Scripture is not all altogether accurate; God’s providence provides for the essential accuracy of the Bible’s copying . . . our copies virtually supply us with the autographic text. All the ridicule that is heaped on evangelicals about the “lost autographa” is simply vain, for we do not regard their text as lost at all! . . . The doctrine of original inerrancy, then, does not deprive believers today of the Word of God in an adequate form for all the purposes of God’s revelation to His people. Presupposing the providence of God in the preservation of the biblical text, and noting the outstanding result of the textual criticism of Scriptures, we can have full assurance that we possess the Word of God necessary for our salvation and Christian walk. As a criticism of this evangelical doctrine, suggestions that the autographic text has been forever lost are groundless and futile. The Bibles in our hands are a trustworthy rendition of God’s original message, adequate for all intents and purposes as copies and conveyors of God’s autoreactive word.” (Geisler, 185-189)

- Bahsen is partly right and partly wrong. He is right in the sense that God did not supernaturally overtake the pen of every scribe, translator, and typesetter to ensure the preservation of “Exact Sameness” or verbatim wording. To think otherwise is to stand in opposition to the plain historical and textual facts. Yet, the doctrine of preservation necessitates that we have more than just a shell of the “Original Bible.” In other words, the truth lies in the middle between the two extreme positions identified above.

- One position leaves believers without a Bible they can hold in their hands today while the other goes beyond the confines of the textual facts and creates the opposite problem.
- Overcoming the problem of “Exact Sameness” is the key to forging an accurate meaningful position that does not over or understate the case and is in line with the historical and textual facts. After all, I stated the following in the Course Introduction:
 - “I have come to believe that it is incumbent upon Pauline Dispensationalists to forge and advance our own position on the KJB that is in line and consistent with both the historical and textual facts as well as our dispensational beliefs regarding God’s working in time.”
- The goal of this class is to attempt such an articulation. To this objective we will now turn our attention.

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Sunday, November 1, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 6: Understanding Basic Terminology: Revelation

Review/Clarification

- In our last lesson we addressed “The Problem of Exact Sameness” by outlining a continuum of positions with respect to the Bible issue. On one side, we had the Originals Only Position (the view that only the Original Autographs are inspired and inerrant) and on the other side, the King James Inspired position (the view that the KJB was a second divine act of inspiration). In the middle we noted a variety of positions including the following: 1) I Prefer the KJB, 2) Majority Text Only, and 3) *Textus Receptus* or *TR* Only.
- In doing so, we observed that both positions on either side of the continuum are seeking to address the problem of “Exact Sameness” or the fact that there is variance in all manuscript traditions. The Originals Only position was forged by Warfield and Hodge in the late 19th century in response to contemporary attacks on the word of God. Meanwhile the King James Inspired position is a response against the Originals Only view and its advocacy for the Critical Greek Text and its support of modern versions.
- While I stopped short of articulating a position of my own, I did say that truth lies in the middle. The Originals Only crowd is correct in that God did not overtake the pen of every scribe who ever copied God’s word to ensure “Exact Sameness” or verbatim wording. Yet the doctrine of preservation ensures that we possess more than a shell of the “Original Bible” that the scholars are still searching for.
- One of the primary objectives of this class from here on out will be to accurately articulate a position that is both in line with the relevant Biblical doctrines as well as both the textual and historical facts. It is here that I beg your patience as we will begin our study of the Biblical doctrine in this lesson. In short, we cannot put the cart before the horse.
- Furthermore, during our last study, I was asked a question regarding the feasibility of a new translation of the *Textus Receptus* (*TR*) into English. I said that such a translation was “theoretically possible.” I would like to take a few moments to clarify those statements.
- While I hypothetically acknowledge that a new translation of the *TR* into English is possible I am not calling for one. Furthermore, I would be highly skeptical of any such call for the following reasons.
 - The KJB is a literary masterpiece. The extended verb ending “eth” enhances the rhyme and meter of the text.
 - The KJB has a proven track record of being considered the word of God in English for the better part of 400 plus years.
 - The KJB, while possessing some archaic language, facilitates study in a way that modern English versions do not.
 - The KJB’s archaic wording is more precise in conveying the truths of Scripture. For example, the word “ye” is plural whereas the word “you” is singular.

- The KJB clearly maintains the integrity of the dispensational approach to Bible study.
- The KJB's translators were the most scholarly and linguistically gifted group of men ever assembled to complete the task of translating the Bible into English.
- The KJB was produced using the best methodology i.e., the company approach where each company checked the work of the others and culminated in an audible reading of the text.
- The questionable existence of such a company of scholastic men today who would faithfully follow the *TR* when doing the work of translating.

Introduction: Textual Criticism and Christian Faith

- Many encounter problems studying manuscript evidence because they approach the subject from the vantage point of human viewpoint. In other words, the subject is broached with a lack of thorough understanding of the fundamental underlying doctrines.
- “The Christian Church has long confessed that the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, are divine Scriptures, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. . . Since the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament has in all ages stimulated the copying of these sacred books, it is evident that this doctrine is important for the history of the New Testament text, no matter whether it be a true doctrine or only a belief of the Christian Church.” But what if it be true? What if the original New Testament manuscripts actually were inspired of God? If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament is a true doctrine, then New Testament textual criticism is different from the textual criticism of ordinary books.” (Hills, 1-2)
- “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism, the *consistently Christian* method and the *naturalistic method*. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The *consistently Christian* method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The *naturalistic method* interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- Consequently, before proceeding any further with this course we need to thoroughly study the following basic terminology: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation. In this lesson we will focus on revelation. In Lesson 7 we will focus on inspiration and illumination.

- Grounding ourselves in these basic concepts will help us wade through the manuscript and textual issues later on. Possessing the ability to judge the textual and historical information from the vantage point of what the Bible teaches about itself is the only source of clarity on these difficult issues. In short, if our doctrine is correct it ought to commend itself to us in both history and our experience.

Revelation

- Hebrews 1:1—the term “revelation” is talking about God’s disclosure of Himself. Without God taking the initiative and revealing things about Himself, you would never know anything about Him.
- Romans 16:25—*apokalupsis* is the Greek word translated “revelation” and it literally means “to unveil a thing.”
 - I Corinthians 2:7
 - Galatians 1:12
 - Ephesians 3:3
- According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*, the English word “revelation” carries the following meanings:
 - The act of disclosing or discovering to others what was before unknown to them; appropriately, the disclosure or communication of truth to men by God himself, or by His authorized agents, the prophets and apostles. How that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in few words. Ephesians 3.
 - That which is revealed; appropriately, the sacred truths which God has communicated to man for his instruction and direction. The revelations of God are contained in the Old and New Testament.
 - The Apocalypse; the last book of the sacred canon, containing the prophecies of St. John.
- Essentially, revelation is *the content of God’s communication to man*. Revelation is God’s disclosure of Himself to mankind. Mankind cannot know anything about God apart from God choosing to reveal Himself to mankind.
- In order for revelation to occur, the following three prerequisites or preconditions must exist:
 - A being capable of giving revelation—God is an eternal being (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-4)
 - A being capable of receiving revelation—Man is a rational and moral being made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27)
 - A medium through which revelation can be given—reason and language (Isaiah 1:18, Genesis 2:16-17, 3:8-10) (Geisler, 49)

- Brother Jordan teaches in Grace School of the Bible that there are three types of revelation: natural, special, and written.
- *Natural Revelation*—is the revelation that God has provided of Himself in creation. All men have access to the revelation that God has placed in creation.
 - Romans 1:18-20
 - Psalm 19:1
 - Romans 1:19—God has given natural revelation *in creation* and also *in man*.
 - Romans 2:14-15—there is natural revelation. All men have it. They have it from creation; they have it within themselves from conscience.
- *Special Revelation*—this is what Hebrews 1:1 is referring to.
 - Genesis 18—God appeared to Abraham and conversed with him in his tent.
 - Genesis 32—God wrestled with Jacob.
 - Exodus 3—God appeared to and spoke with Moses in the burning bush.
 - Matthew 16:17—God the Father gave a special revelation to Peter as to the person of Christ.
 - Galatians 2:2—Paul got some information from God that told him to go up to Jerusalem.
- *Written Revelation*—is not just something that God has placed innately in man, or in nature, as a testimony. It is not just a special time when God communicated with somebody, but it is what God caused to be written down.
 - John 20:30-31—God has those things written down for a purpose.
- The main point of revelation is the fact that God communicates, unveils, and reveals himself to mankind. Without revelation man would be incapable of knowing anything about God.
- Other Bible teachers break things down slightly differently. For example, in his *Systematic Theology* Norman Geisler distinguishes between God's General and Special Revelation.

General Revelation	Special Revelation
In Physical Nature	Bible Alone is Infallible and Inerrant
In Human Nature	Bible Alone Reveals God as Redeemer
In Human History	Bible Alone Has the Message of Salvation
In Human Arts	Bible Alone Contains the Written Norm for Believers
In Human Music	

- Geisler summarizes the relationship between General and Special Revelation as follows.

General Revelation	Special Revelation
God as Creator Norm for Society Means of Condemnation In Nature	God as Redeemer Norm for the Church Means of Salvation In Scripture

(Geisler, 53)

- Dr. Geisler sees the doctrine of revelation as a prerequisite or precondition to Christian Theology. Therefore, he includes a chapter on Revelation in the Prolegomena or Introduction section of his *Systematic Theology*. Other Preconditions identified by Dr. Geisler include the: Metaphysical, Supernatural, Rational, Semantical, Epistemological, Oppositional (Exclusivism), Linguistic, Hermeneutical, Historical, and Methodological.

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Sunday, November 8, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 7: Understanding Basic Terminology: Inspiration and Illumination

Introduction

- Last week, in Lesson 6, we summarized two different approaches to New Testament textual criticism identified by Dr. Edward F. Hills; the *naturalistic* and *consistently Christian* methods. According to Dr. Hills, “These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently.” (Hills, 3)
 - *Consistently Christian Method*—“. . . interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures.”
 - *Naturalistic Method*—“. . . interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- Also, in Lesson 6, we began our study of some basic theological terminology as it related to God’s Word. I stated in part:
 - “. . . before proceeding any further with this course we need to thoroughly study the following basic terminology: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation. . . Grounding ourselves in these basic concepts will help us wade through the manuscript and textual issues later on. Possessing the ability to judge the textual and historical information from the vantage point of what the Bible teaches about itself is the only source of clarity on these difficult issues. In short, if our doctrine is correct it ought to commend itself to us in both history and our experience.” (Lesson 6, 2-3)
- Revelation was the only term of the four identified above that we had time to consider in Lesson 6. Essentially, we defined revelation as, “*the content of God’s communication to man*. Revelation is God’s disclosure of Himself to mankind. Mankind cannot know anything about God apart from God choosing to reveal Himself to mankind.” (Lesson 6, 3)
- In addition to identifying the prerequisites or preconditions that make God’s disclosure of himself possible, we also considered the following three types of revelation:
 - *Natural Revelation*—is the revelation that God has provided of Himself in creation as well as in man. All men have access to the revelation that God has placed in creation.
 - *Special Revelation*—this is what Hebrews 1:1 is referring to; God making Himself known to particular people in specific ways throughout Scripture (Genesis 18, Matthew 16:17, Galatians 2:2)
 - *Written Revelation*—is not something that God has placed innately in man, or in nature, as a testimony. It is not a special time when God communicated with somebody, but it is what God caused to be written down.
- In this lesson we will touch upon the mechanism that makes written revelation possible i.e., inspiration. If we have time, we will also discuss illumination.

Inspiration

- With revelation the information comes from God to man; in inspiration the information moves from man to paper. Man writes that which God wants written down.
- II Timothy 3:16—the Greek word for scripture is *graphē*, and it means “that which is written down.” Inspiration has to do with what is written down. Inspiration is not God just giving the information to man. That is revelation. But inspiration is man putting the thing on paper, and the issue is what is written down on that paper.
- The phrase “is given by inspiration of God” is a translation of the Greek word *theopneustos*. This is the only time the Greek word *theopneustos* occurs in the New Testament.
- *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* offers the following relevant meanings for the English word inspiration:
 - 1) The act of drawing air into the lungs; the inhaling of air; a branch of respiration and opposed to expiration.
 - 2) The act of breathing into anything.
 - 3) The infusion of ideas into the mind by the Holy Spirit; the conveying into the minds of men, ideas, notices or monitions by extraordinary or supernatural influence; or the communication of the divine will to the understanding by suggestions or impressions on the mind, which leave no room to doubt the reality of their supernatural origin.
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. 2 Timothy 3:16.
- Please note that in 1828, the definition of the English word inspiration had nothing to do with the original writings. Rather it was referring to the supernatural process whereby God the Holy Spirit infused into the minds of men the ideas of almighty God.
- Then the dictionary gives II Timothy 3:16 as the verse to illustrate the concept. In other words, inspiration is the supernatural process whereby God the Holy Spirit moved upon human authors to have them record in writing those aspects of God’s revelation (written revelation) that He wanted mankind to possess forever (Isaiah 30:8).
- II Peter 1:21—it was the supernatural force of God the Holy Spirit that caused the prophets of old to speak.
- Job 32:8—the giving of the Scripture is not the only thing God did by inspiration. *Nēshamah* is the Hebrew word translated inspiration in Job 32:8 and it occurs 24 times in 24 verses in the Hebrew text supporting the KJB. It is variously rendered as ‘breath’ seventeen times, ‘blast’ three times, ‘spirit’ two times, ‘inspiration’ one time and ‘souls’ one time.
- Given the fact that Job was the first book of the Bible written, it is not possible that Elihu is using the word inspiration here in reference to the giving of the Scriptures as in II Timothy 3:16. Rather, Elihu is referring to the fact that there is something unique about man; via inspiration, God has given mankind the capacity for understanding.
- Job 33:4—mankind was created by “the breath of the Almighty.”

- Genesis 2:7—Adam and, by extension, all of humanity owes their very existence to the breath of God.
 - Genesis 1:27-28—this helps explain how God created man in his own image.
- Please recall the second definition of the English word inspiration presented above, “the act of breathing into anything.” Life was brought to Adam through an act of inspiration on the part of God.
- Psalm 33:6—God used the same process to create the heavens and all the hosts thereof.
 - Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29
- The testimony of Scripture is that God inspired at least three things:
 - The creation of heaven and earth.
 - The creation of man.
 - The giving of the Scriptures.
- II Timothy 3:16—God exercised the same supernatural force to inspire His word that He utilized when He created heaven, earth, and mankind.
- Inspiration is the supernatural process whereby God recorded in writing (*graphē*) those aspects of His revelation that He wanted mankind to possess forever (Isaiah 30:8).
- Hebrews 4:12-13—this understanding of inspiration helps one understand how the word of God can be “quick and powerful.” God literally breathed His own life into His word just as He did into mankind and all of creation.
- Does anyone doubt that inspiration sets the Bible apart from any other book of antiquity? Therefore, taking a neutral or naturalist approach to textual criticism is out of step with God’s word for a Bible believer.

Illumination

- Illumination is a theological word that does not appear in the Bible, like Trinity or Rapture. Illumination is a term used by theologians to describe the process whereby the truth of Scripture gets off the page and into the soul of the believer.
- I Corinthians 2:9-16—Paul is talking about the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (Illumination) whereby He takes the words on the page and communicates them to your understanding, and then stores them in your soul, i.e., your inner man.
- I Corinthians 2:14—“Scripture is very plain that the natural mind of man does not receive and cannot know the things of the Spirit of God.” (Baker, 45)

- I Corinthians 2:12—“This same passage teaches that God has given us His Spirit, so that we might know the things which are freely given us of God. This work of the Spirit of God in making known to the individual the things which God has prepared for them that love Him is called Illumination.” (Baker, 45)
- “Revelation has been given to only a select few through whom God chose to give His Word. Illumination is available to every believer. Revelation has been completed . . . Illumination is a continuing process. Revelation has to do with the impartation of truth. Illumination has to do with the understanding of truth.” (Baker, 45)
- Ephesians 1:17-18—indicates that Paul recognized the need of all saints for illumination.
- Luke 24:45-46—Christ opened their understanding, thereby causing them to understand the Scriptures.
- John 16:7-15—even in time past in Israel’s program, one of the functions of God the Holy Spirit was to teach, instruct, and guide the kingdom saints.
 - I John 2:20, 27
- Lewis Sperry Chafer views these passages from John as the “seed-plot” for the doctrine of illumination that is later developed by Paul in I Corinthians 2:9-3:4. Regarding these verses Chafer states in part:
 - “It is not difficult to believe that the Third Person of the Godhead is in possession of all truth; the marvel is that this Third Person indwells the least Christian, and thus places that Christian in a position to receive and understand that transcendent truth which the Spirit knows. Within his own capacity, the child of God can know no more than “the things of a man,” which are within the range of “the spirit of man which is in him.” Amazing, indeed, is the disclosure that “the Spirit which is of God” has been received, and for the express purpose in view that the child of God “might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (Chafer, 111-112)
- Dr. R.B. Ouellette, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bridgeport, MI and author of *A More Sure Word: Which Bible Can You Trust?* summarizes illumination as follows:
 - “Illumination is when God “turns the light on” for us on a certain passage. This process is a work that is done by the Holy Spirit, the writer and interpreter of Scripture. This is a present-tense work accomplished by the Spirit. Whereas inspiration was completed in the past, preservation began in the past and carries through today; illumination is for us today in the present.” (Ouellette, 34)
- II Peter 1:21—God the Holy Spirit was the active agent in the process of revelation and inspiration.
- I Thessalonians 5:23—as humans we possess a spirit.
- Romans 8:9-11—the same Spirit of God that moved upon the Biblical writers thereby causing them to record God’s words dwells within the believer.

- I Corinthians 3:16
- II Timothy 1:14
- Essence communicates with essence. Illumination is the spiritual process that occurs in the inner man of the believer as God the Holy Spirit takes the written word of God that the Spirit wrote and communicates it to the believer's inner man. This is how spiritual growth and learning take place and how sound doctrine is stored up in the believer's soul.

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Sunday, November 15, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 8: Understanding Basic Terminology: Preservation

Introduction/Review

- Last week, in Lesson 7, we continued our consideration of Basic Terminology by looking at the terms inspiration and illumination.
- Essentially, we defined inspiration as “the supernatural process whereby God the Holy Spirit moved upon human authors to have them record in writing those aspects of God’s revelation (written revelation) that He wanted mankind to possess forever (Isaiah 30:8).” (Lesson 7)
- Furthermore, we studied the occurrence of the word “inspiration” in Job 32:8 and learned that inspiration was the supernatural process whereby God: 1) created the heavens and the earth (Psalms 33:6), 2) brought life to the first man Adam (Genesis 2:7), and 3) recorded in writing (*graphē*) those aspects of His revelation that He wanted mankind to possess forever (II Timothy 3:16, Isaiah 30:8).
- This understanding of inspiration helps one understand how the word of God can be “quick and powerful” (Hebrews 4:12-13). God literally breathed His own life into His word just as He did into mankind and all of creation. Inspiration sets the Bible apart from any other book of antiquity.
- Second, we discussed illumination as a term used by theologians to describe the process whereby the truth of Scripture gets off the page and into the soul of the believer. Illumination is the spiritual process that occurs in the inner man of the believer as God the Holy Spirit takes the written word of God that the Spirit wrote and communicates it to the believer’s inner man. This is how spiritual growth and learning take place and how sound doctrine is stored up in the believer’s soul.
- I Corinthians 2:9-16 is the Pauline passage that sets forth the normative ministry of God the Holy Spirit in terms of illumination for the body of Christ during the dispensation of grace. Other passages such as John 16:7-15 and I John 2:20-27 describe illumination in terms God’s dealings with the nation of Israel in time past and in the ages to come.
- In this lesson we want to conclude our discussion of Basic Terminology by looking at some information regarding preservation as well as consider the terminological relationships of all four of our basic terms: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation.

Preservation

- Preservation deals with **the process** whereby the words of Scripture, given by inspiration, are passed on from generation to generation.
- *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* defines the English word “preservation” as follows:
 - The act of preserving or keeping safe; the act of keeping from injury, destruction or decay; as the preservation of life or health; the preservation of buildings from fire or decay; the preservation of grain from insects; the preservation of fruit or plants. When a

thing is kept entirely from decay, or nearly in its original state, we say it is in a high state of preservation.

- Last week we observed from Dr. R.B. Ouellette's book *A More Sure Word: Which Bible Can You Trust?* that "... inspiration was completed in the past, preservation began in the past and carries through today . . ." (Ouellette, 34)
- There are a host of verses that could be used to establish this doctrine.
 - Psalms 33:11—The **counsel** of the Lord **standeth for ever**, the thoughts of his **heart to all generations**.
 - Psalms 105:5—He hath remembered his covenant **for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations**.
 - Psalms 119:89—**For ever**, O LORD, thy **word** is settled in heaven.
 - Psalms 119:111—**Thy testimonies** have I taken as an heritage **for ever**: for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
 - Psalms 119:152—Concerning **thy testimonies**, I have known of old that thou **hast founded them for ever**.
 - Psalms 119:160—**Thy word** *is* true *from* the beginning: and **every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever**.
 - Isaiah 30:8—Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, **that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever**.
 - Isaiah 40:8—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God shall stand for ever**.
 - Matthew 24:35—Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away**.
 - I Peter 1:23-25— Being born again, not of corruptible seed, **but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever**. 24) For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: 25) **But the word of the Lord endureth for ever**. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.
 - Regarding this passage Ouellette points that "this is a quotation of Isaiah 40," (see above) and thereby serves as "an indirect 'proof' that this Scripture had already been preserved for over seven hundred years." (Ouellette, 33)
- One will notice that I did not include Psalms 12:6-7 in the preceding list. This was done on purpose to make a point. Psalms 12:6-7 is shrouded in some controversy as to whether or not God is preserving his "words" or his "people." For the sake of clarity, I am not abandoning this

passage to the opposition. We will deal with it in great detail and specificity when we study preservation. For now, what I am saying is that one does not need Psalms 12:6-7 to understand and establish the doctrine of preservation. The verses outlined above establish the doctrine quite clearly without needing to appeal to the passage in question.

- According to R.B. Ouellette, the verses quoted above are sufficient for establishing the doctrine of preservation irrespective of Psalms 12:6-7.
 - “There are seminaries that exist today that seem to ‘explain away’ every verse that teaches preservation. I have a problem with some who feel that verses or doctrine must be ‘explained away.’ I prefer to read the Bible and understand it literally. When God says His word will last forever, that it will last for a thousand generations, I believe that means God will preserve His word forever.

In the Bible, the writers had no problem quoting Scripture that had been preserved up to that time. Peter quotes Isaiah 40 (I Peter 1:23-25); Paul quotes extensively from the Old Testament in Romans 9-11. Each time a New Testament writer quotes from the Old Testament, he is demonstrating that God has been able to preserve His word.

Preservation is highly debated today because ultimately, the preservation issue will decide the translation issue—and preservation is completely a matter of faith in God’s power.” (Ouellette, 33)

- Elsewhere Ouellette states the following regarding Matthew 24:35, Psalms 119:60, and Psalms 119:89 (see list of verses above):
 - “It sounds to me as though God is teaching us a doctrine of preservation. The Scriptures clearly teach that even if Heaven and Earth were to pass away, the words would not. We are clearly taught that the righteous judgements of God endure forever, and that His Word has been forever settled in Heaven.” (Ouellette, 47)
- We have already seen in Lesson 3 that any discussion of the doctrine of preservation is largely omitted from the Systematic Theology books authored by the following leading Evangelical authors.
 - Norman L. Geisler—*Systematic Theology, Volume I*
 - Lewis Sherry Chaffer—*Systematic Theology*
 - Charles C. Ryrie—*Basic Theology*
 - Paul Enns—*Moody Handbook of Theology*
 - Wayne Grudem—*Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*
 - Millard J. Erickson—*Christian Theology*
 - Alister McGrath—*Christian Theology: An Introduction*
 - Charles F. Baker—*A Dispensational Theology*

- When not outright silent on the doctrine of preservation, Ouellette points out that many within Evangelical academia seek to “explain away the clear teaching of Scripture” with respect to preservation. Ouellette cites the following statements issued by Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (DBTS) and Gordon Fee in his book *The Textual Criticism of the New Testament* as a case in point.
 - “While the Bible teaches the ultimate indestructibility of the verbal revelation of God (Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:25), it does not tell us how and where the written manuscript lineage of that word is preserved. We believe that God has providentially preserved His Word in the many manuscripts, fragments, versions, translations, and copies of the Scripture that are available and that by diligent study, comparison, and correlation, the original text (words) can be ascertained. We therefore hold that the integrity of any text type, translation, version, or copy of the Scriptures is to be judged by the **autographs (original manuscript) only . . .**” (DBTS Statement from 1996 quoted in Ouellette, 47-48)
 - “The doctrine of preservation of Scripture . . . is not a doctrine that is explicitly taught in Scripture, nor is it the belief that God has perfectly and miraculously preserved every word of the original autographs in one manuscript or text-type. It is the belief that God has providently preserved His Word in and through all the extant manuscripts, versions, and other copies of Scripture. . . God has wonderfully and providently preserved His Word in a multiplicity of extant manuscripts. No passage of Scripture promises this, but the evidence of history leaves no doubt that such is the case.” (Fee, 420 quoted in Ouellette, 50)
- In response to these two statements quoted above, Dr. Ouellette states:
 - “Based on this view, how can the Christian be sure that he has the right words—which ones did God preserve and which ones did over-zealous scribes add? Apparently, he must diligently compare, correlate, and study the manuscripts, fragments, versions, translations, and copies of scripture that are available. The statement made above sounds academic, theological, and spiritual, but it has no practical value to a searching Christian. The end of the logic, if you hold to that statement, is that, due to our endless comparisons and discovery, we cannot ever believe that we have the authoritative Word of God in English. . .

There are serious problems with the logic that is used to come to such conclusions and with the obvious denial of a basic Bible promise. For example, we read that “no passage of Scripture promises” preservation. This is simply a false statement. All would agree that the originals were given by inspiration of God—there is no room for question or debate concerning inspiration. Again, we have no inspired originals today. Therefore, when someone states that we are to determine the accuracy of the copies we have based upon their correlation to the original autographs, we find ourselves in an indefinable position. The Bible can no longer be our final authority. Rather, we must look to God’s working in history and to the expert opinions of scholars to validate our translations.

Those who would hold to the Critical Text position believe we can know by studying history that God has preserved His Word. Yet, how can one know by looking at history, when, to begin with, no one knows what it looked like? There is no way that historical observation can give documented proof that nothing has been changed. This is against

the laws of scientific observation. Our position on preservation must be a “faith-based” approach. Certainly, this is a watershed issue, but we must let the Bible speak for itself.

... issues related to the biblical text are matters of faith—regardless of which side of the issue one takes. Textual scholarship should not operate solely upon scientific principles as though there was nothing divine about the origin of our Bible. **The Bible does have something to say about its own preservation, thus necessitating a doctrine of preservation.**

Bible-believing Christians, whether ministers or laymen, must go about the process of identifying the correct biblical text within the context of the biblical doctrine of preservation. The question that must be answered is: For what will you trust the scholars, and which scholars will you trust?

... While there is more to what the Bible says about its own preservation, enough has been given to demonstrate that those who take the Critical Text approach to the textual issue have to “explain away”—under the guise of scholarship—what the Bible clearly teaches.

For now, it is important to remember that not only is the doctrine of preservation diluted or deleted, but that there is also a subtle attack on doctrinal purity as well. (Ouellette, 48-52)

- In a later chapter Ouellette summarizes his thoughts regarding preservation with the following statement, “Those who advocate the Westcott and Hort position (i.e., the Critical Text) always have trouble with the preservation issue because it negates their practice. In the question of Bible translations, one either has a “preserved” Bible or a “restored, reconstructed” Bible.” (Ouellette, 83)
 - The central question is: Do we have a preserved word or a restored, reconstructed word?
- Majority Text proponent Wilbur Pickering contributed an essay titled “John William Burgon and the New Testament” to David Otis Fuller’s 1973 publication *True or False?* In addition to proving that Burgon believed in inspiration, preservation, and inerrancy, Pickering states the following about the need for preservation.
 - “. . . if the Scriptures have not been preserved then the doctrine of Inspiration is a purely academic matter with no relevance for us today. If we do not have the inspired words or do not know precisely which they be, then the doctrine of Inspiration is inapplicable.” (Fuller, 269)
- While it is necessary to acknowledge the Bible’s own teaching regarding preservation, it is equally important not to demand more from the doctrine than can be historically and/or textually proven. Regarding the doctrine of preservation Dr. Edward F. Hills states the following in *The King James Version Defended*:
 - “If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scripture is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the providential preservation of the Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to

God's people in every age. God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of His will, then it is obvious that **He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.**

Although this doctrine of the providential preservation of the Old and New Testament Scriptures has sometimes been misused, nevertheless, it also has been held, either implicitly or explicitly, by all branches of the Christian Church as a necessary consequent of the divine inspiration of these Scriptures. (Hills, 2)

- Please note that even Dr. Hills acknowledges what preservation does and does not assure. Preservation does not assure the “exact sameness” or “verbatim wording” across every manuscript copy ever made. Rather preservation secures that God will not allow his “revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.” (Hills, 2)
- Elsewhere in *The King James Bible Defended*, when discussing the minor differences that exist in the various editions of the *TR*, Dr. Hills recognizes a difference between what he calls providential and miraculous preservation.
 - “The texts of the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's special providence. Hence the differences between them were kept to a minimum. But these disagreements were not eliminated altogether, for this would require not merely providential guidance but a miracle. In short, God chose to preserve the New Testament text providentially rather than miraculously, and this is why even the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* vary from each other slightly.” (Hills, 222-223)
- In order to accomplish preservation of “exact sameness” God would have had to supernaturally overtake the pen of every scribe, copyist, typesetter, and printer who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind ever entered the text. That God did not choose to accomplish preservation in this manner is apparent because there are slight differences even in the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type not to mention the various editions of the *TR*.
- This is where we must recognize the difference between: 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning. The manuscripts of the Byzantine Text Type as well as the various editions of the *TR* contain **an agreement as to the doctrinal content of the readings**. Conversely, when the *TR* is compared with the Critical Text there **are substantive differences in meaning as to the doctrinal content of the readings**.
- Psalms 12:6-7—what the doctrine of preservation assures is exactly what verse six states, namely the preservation of a **Pure Text i.e., a text that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE**. In short, God's promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “fundamental character” despite not being preserved in a state of “exact sameness.”
- If “exact sameness” were the issue with God in preservation, then why did He not just preserve the originals and remove all doubt? The main reason is that God, at every turn, is testing the believer to see if he or she is going to walk by faith in what God said.

- I Corinthians 1:27-29, 2:5
- Hebrews 11:6
- I believe that God preserved his word for the same reason I believe that God inspired it. Preservation is the Bible's claim for itself. **The doctrine of preservation impacts how one ought to look at the textual and translational issues and ensures that we have more than just a shell of the "original Bible" as the Originals Only position maintains.**

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Sunday, November 22, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 9: Understanding Basic Terminology: Preservation, Part 2

Statement Regarding Future Questions—when considering a subject as complex and vast as the one we are endeavoring to study, questions are bound to come up. That is fine and a natural part of the process. In fact, if our studies together were not raising questions in your thinking, it would make me wonder whether or not you were paying attention.

That being said, as with any other course of study there is a particular order in which material should be covered so as to assure understating of the content. For example, addition and subtraction are foundational skills for multiplication and division which are, in turn, elemental for algebra and geometry. So, it is with our current study. Some of your questions, while insightful and natural, are going beyond our current ability to fully address at this point on account of the fact that we are lacking a sufficient grounding in basic concepts.

Consequently, moving forward, with my knowledge of where we are now and where we are going in the study; I reserve the right to forebear answering until the appropriate time. I am not doing this to deflect, obfuscate, or avoid answering hard questions or challenges to my position. Rather, I am endeavoring to ensure that the course unfolds in an orderly systematic manner so as to accommodate even the most basic student among us. Consequently, if I refrain from answering a given question at present, it should not be assumed that I do not have an answer or am avoiding the question. Rather it should be understood that the particular question will be covered in a future lesson.

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 8 we considered the doctrine of preservation as the fourth and final of our four basic terms: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation.
- In doing so I gave the following definition of preservation, “**the process** whereby the words of Scripture, given by inspiration, are passed on from generation to generation.” (Lesson 8) In addition, we noted from the pen of Dr. R.B. Ouellette that whereas “inspiration was completed in the past, preservation began in the past and carries through today.” (Ouellette, 34)
- After looking at ten passages that clearly establish the doctrine of preservation we noted that preservation in our day is either ignored outright or explained away by many leading voices within Christian academia.
- Last week’s lesson proved Dr. Ouellette’s point regarding the hotly debated nature of preservation in our day.
 - **Preservation is highly debated today because ultimately, the preservation issue will decide the translation issue—and preservation is completely a matter of faith in God’s power.”** (Ouellette, 33)
- After quoting Wilbur Pickering and Dr. Edward F. Hills regarding preservation, I stated the following in Lesson 8.
 - “Preservation does not assure the “exact sameness” or “verbatim wording” across every manuscript copy ever made. Rather preservation secures that God will not allow his “revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.” (Hills, 2)

... In order to accomplish preservation of “exact sameness” God would have had to supernaturally overtake the pen of every scribe, copyist, typesetter, and printer who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind ever entered the text. That God

did not choose to accomplish preservation in this manner is apparent because there are slight differences even in the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type not to mention the various editions of the *TR*.

This is where we must recognize the difference between: 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning. The manuscripts of the Byzantine Text Type as well as the various editions of the *TR* contain **an agreement as to the doctrinal content of the readings**. Conversely, when the *TR* is compared with the Critical Text there **are substantive differences in meaning as to the doctrinal content of the readings**.

Psalms 12:6-7—what the doctrine of preservation assures is exactly what verse six states, namely the preservation of a **Pure Text i.e., a text that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “fundamental character” despite not being preserved in a state of “exact sameness.”**

If “exact sameness” were the issue with God in preservation, then why did He not just preserve the originals and remove all doubt? The main reason is that God, at every turn, is testing the believer to see if he or she is going to walk by faith in what God said (I Cor. 1:27-29, 2:5; Heb. 11:6).

I believe that God preserved his word for the same reason I believe that God inspired it. Preservation is the Bible’s claim for itself. **The doctrine of preservation impacts how one ought to look at the textual and translational issues and ensures that we have more than just a shell of the “original Bible” as the Originals Only position maintains.**” (Lesson 8)

- In this lesson, I would like to take some time to clarify my thinking on some of the issues raised in Lesson 8.

Clarifications

- In Section I would like to clarify my thinking with respect to the following three points:
 - The importance of understanding the issue of “exact sameness”
 - Use of the terminology “providential preservation”
 - The difference between the Dynamic View of inspiration and the Dynamic philosophy of translation.

“Exact Sameness”

- It is my personal private subjective opinion that the issue of what I am calling “exact sameness” or “verbatim wording” is the key to accurately unraveling the Bible version controversy. These are not ideas that you will encounter in other written works but are my own conclusions after studying the relevant issues.

- Until the summer of 2011, I would have and did demand “exact sameness” as the standard when discussing the preservation and translation of the Bible. On Sunday, February 7, 2010, as part of a six part series of studies titled *Final Authority: Locating God’s Word in English*, I taught the following to the saints of Grace Life Bible Church in a sermon titled “The Place of Preservation, Part 2:”
 - “First principles are the foundation of knowledge. Without them nothing could be known. First principles undeniably apply to reality. The very denial that first principles apply to reality used first principles in the denial.

The Principle of Noncontradiction: Being Is Not Nonbeing. Being cannot be nonbeing, for they are direct opposites. And opposites cannot be the same.

The Principle of Excluded Middle: Either Being or Nonbeing. Since being and nonbeing are opposites (i.e. contradictory), and opposites cannot be the same, nothing can hide in the cracks between being and nonbeing.

Illustration using the shirts. How many differences do these shirts need to have before they are not the same? One.

How many differences do we need to demonstrate in English Bibles before we can conclude that they are not the same? One.

How many mistakes do we need to demonstrate in a so-called Bible before we conclude that it is not inerrant? One. Can we rightly call a Bible with a mistake in it the word of God? No. (Ross, 4)

- At the time, my standard for judging what was or was not God’s word was the standard of “exact sameness” even though I did not explicitly use that terminology. Please note that I **did not** make a distinction between 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning in February 2010. Rather, any difference, of any kind, constituted a situation where one would be forced to choose which Bible was or was not God’s word.
- Up until May 2011, I believed that the only differences between a 1611 and 1769 edition of the King James Bible were updates in punctuation and spelling and I was perfectly content to function with that understanding. It was during a visit to my home in May 2011, that Brother Craig first began to challenge this understanding based upon the findings of David Norton in his 2004 book [*A Textual History of the King James Bible*](#).
- At first, I was not very open or receptive to what Craig had to say, much to his frustration. I did however; agree to read a PDF copy of Norton’s book. It was not long after I began reading Norton’s work that I started to see Craig’s point. The FACTS presented by Norton were contrary to what I had been led to believe. There are more differences between the various editions of the King James than simply the updating of spelling and punctuation.
- In Appendix 8 of his book David Norton spends 155 pages chronicling 952 verses where differences in wording exist between 1611 and 1769 editions of the King James Bible. Does everyone see the problem I was faced with, based upon my teaching from February 2010? If

preservation and inerrancy demand “exact sameness” than one is forced to determine which edition of the King James text is inerrant and which one is not.

- It was then in the summer of 2011 while preparing to teach a seminar for the Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference in Chicago, that I came to understand that the nature of the differences is what matters in seeking to identify God’s word. It was then that I came to realize that there is a difference between 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning.
- Since 2011, I have come to believe that the breakthrough regarding “exact sameness” has many and far reaching implications for the rest of the Bible version debate.
- The reason why Warfield and Hodge limited inspiration and inerrancy to the original autographs in the late 19th century was because they were responding to their critics who were pointing out variant readings in the manuscript witnesses supporting the New Testament. Warfield and Hodge dealt with this lack of “exact sameness” by confining inspiration and inerrancy to the original writings only thereby alleviating the problem pointed out by their critics.
- If you pay close attention to the statements made by modern Evangelical scholars, one can see that it is precisely this lack of “exact sameness” in terms of textual transmission that forces them to limit inspiration and inerrancy to the original autographs only. Please reconsider the following case in point from Greg L. Bahsen’s essay “The Inerrancy of the Autographa” found in Geisler’s book *Inerrancy*:
 - “God has not promised in His Word that the Scriptures would receive perfect transmission, and thus we have no ground to claim it a priori. Moreover, the inspired Word of God in the Scriptures has a uniqueness that must be guarded from distortion. Consequently, we cannot be theologically blind to the significance of transmissional errors, nor can we theologically assume the absence of such errors. We are therefore theologically required to restrict inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy to the autographa.” (Bahsen in Geisler, 175)
- Retreating to the originals only is one way of dealing with the differences that exist within the extant manuscripts. On the other end of the spectrum, the King James Inspired position believes that God reinspired his word between 1604 and 1611 in response to the originals only position on “exact sameness.” Even if they do not say it this way or would not admit it, the extreme King James position is seeking to address the same problem of “exact sameness.” On this view the problem is overcome by arguing that God reinspired (double inspiration) His word in English between 1604 and 1611.
- The brilliance of limiting inspiration, infallibly, and inerrancy to the originals only is that it alleviated the need for scholars to explain the variant readings in the extant manuscripts. They could simply call everything good because what God originally did in inspiring His word was perfect and without error. No one disputes this.
- There are multiple problems with this view. First, it ignores what the Bible teaches about itself with respect to preservation. Second, it is unscientific and unfalsifiable because it judges all the surviving data based upon a standard that not only does not exist but that no one has ever seen. It

proves nothing to argue that the truthfulness of the surviving manuscripts can only be determined by the original autographs which no one, by their own admission, possesses.

- The doctrine of preservation mandates that we have more than just a shell of the nebulous “original Bible.” Preservation is the process whereby God secured the transference of His word from one generation to the next. My point in Lesson 8 was that God did not need to preserve His word in a state of “exact sameness” in order to fulfill His fundamental promise of preservation. This is obvious because there are slight differences even in the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type not to mention the various editions of the *TR*.
- This is where we must recognize the difference between: 1) different ways of saying the same thing and 2) substantive differences in meaning. The manuscripts of the Byzantine Text Type as well as the various editions of the *TR* contain **an agreement as to the doctrinal content of the readings**. Conversely, when the *TR* is compared with the Critical Text there **are substantive differences in meaning as to the doctrinal content of the readings** (more on this below).
- On this point I agree with Dr. R.B. Ouellette, “**Preservation is highly debated today because ultimately, the preservation issue will decide the translation issue—and preservation is completely a matter of faith in God’s power.**” (Ouellette, 33)
- I cannot agree with the originals only position for the following primary reasons.
 - First, from the standpoint of logic, it is both unscientific and unfalsifiable and thereby fails to meet its own standard.
 - Second, and more importantly, God promised to preserve the words that He inspired forever. Either God did this, or He did not. If God did not do what he promised, that would make God out be a liar and we know that God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19, Titus 1:2).
 - Third, that God did not see fit to accomplish preservation by preserving the original autographs is evident or else we would have them today.
- Determining exactly how God accomplished the preservation of His word without preserving the original autographs will be part of the goal of the duration of this course of study.

Providential Preservation

- Second, with respect to the terminology “providential preservation” utilized by Dr. Hills and others, **I am not necessarily ascribing the term “providential” to my view or understanding of preservation.** “Providential” is a loaded term that means different things to different people. For many, there is no difference in their understanding between the terms miraculous and providential. Meanwhile, as Brother Craig pointed out last week, if, by providential, one means to refer to the process that God established to accomplish the preservation of His word via Bible believing members of the body of Christ, that would certainly be an entirely different meaning of the term. Consequently, until further notice, you will always hear me speak of just preservation when seeking to articulate my own position, not “providential preservation.”
- That being said, I need to be able to honestly handle the source material that I am quoting or referencing in class. Therefore, any use of the terminology “providential preservation” by quoted

sources should not automatically be equated with my endorsement of the term providential as an adequate descriptor for how preservation was accomplished.

Dynamic Inspiration & Translation

- Thirdly, since it has come up multiple times already, we need to clarify the difference between the Dynamic or Concept View of inspiration and the Dynamic Philosophy of translation.
- As we will see in our next lesson, the Dynamic or Concept View of inspiration maintains that God inspired the ideas or concepts and left the human authors to express those ideas in their own words. In other words, this is a Dynamic view of the Bible's origin that holds that God did not inspire the very words of Scriptures themselves but merely the concepts.
- In contrast, the Dynamic Philosophy of translation practices the belief that what matters most when translating the Bible out of the donor language (Hebrew and Greek) and into the receptor language (English) is the expression of the thoughts and not the words themselves. Meanwhile, the Literal Philosophy of translation differs from the Dynamic in that it seeks to translate every word found in the donor language into the receptor language (to the best of their ability). The King James Bible is the product of a Literal Philosophy of translation whereas the New International Version (NIV), for example, stands out as a representative of the Dynamic Philosophy of translation.
- Lastly, it is important to note that one can reject the Dynamic View of inspiration in favor of a Verbal View (the words not the thoughts are inspired) yet at the same time accept and utilize a Dynamic Philosophy of translation. These are different things and ought not to be confused.

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Sunday, November 29, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 10: Understanding Basic Terminology: Preservation, Part 3

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 9, I sought to offer some clarifications on a few points raised in Lesson 8. Specifically, I clarified the following three points:
 - The importance of understanding the issue of “exact sameness”
 - Use of the terminology “providential preservation”
 - The difference between the Dynamic View of inspiration and the Dynamic philosophy of translation.
- In this lesson, I would like to respond further to some of the issues/questions raised in Lesson 8. After doing so, we will conclude the lesson by considering the terminological relationships between revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation.

Comments on Issues Raised in Lesson 8

- In this section I will comment on the following sub-points raised in Lesson 8.
 - The Doctrine of Repetition
 - Substantive Differences Affecting the Accuracy of the Text
 - Basic Factual Irregularities
 - Summary of Lessons 8-10

The Doctrine of Repetition

- In Lesson 8 (and twice referenced last week in Lesson 9) I stated, “. . . when the *TR* is compared with the Critical Text, there **are substantive differences in meaning as to the doctrinal content of the readings.**” The notion that the differences between the *TR* and the Critical Text and their representative translations into English contain substantive differences in meaning that affect doctrine was openly questioned.
- This questioning was based in part on something called “the doctrine of repetition” or the idea that if one text seemed to undermine/weaken a particular doctrine in a given passage, the “doctrine of repetition” elsewhere protected that particular doctrine. When pressed for an example, I offered up the exclusion of the word “firstborn” from Matthew 1:25 in the Critical Text and its resultant English translations as an example of the weakening of the doctrine of the virgin birth.
- Since teaching Lesson 8, I have searched the internet and every theology book I own looking for more information on the “doctrine of repetition.” While I could not locate the enunciation of a formal “doctrine of repetition” I was able to locate the concept in James R. White’s book *The King James Only Controversy*. White touches upon the concept in a section of Chapter 3

subtitled "To Err is Human" beginning on page 36. Rather than using the phraseology "doctrine of repetition," White describes the notion by using the terms *harmonization* and *parallel influence*. (White, 37, 156-159) Essentially White reasons as follows:

- "Let's say you were used to the way a particular phrase sounds in a particular passage of Scripture because your pastor uses that verse all the time in church. But let's say that a similar phrase occurs elsewhere in Scripture—similar, but not exactly the same. As you are copying the other passage of Scripture it would be very easy to inadvertently make that passage sound like the one you are accustomed to. You might not even know you had changed anything! But this kind of harmonization is found in many, many places.

... When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he said, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph.1:2, NASB). This phrase early on had a part in the liturgy of the church. It was a Christian greeting, a blessing of sorts. Many people continue to use it in that way to this very day. But, when writing to the Colossians, Paul was not so complete in his wording as when he wrote to the Ephesians. Instead he wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father (Col. 1:2 NASB)." (White, 37)

Eph. 1:2—KJB	Eph. 1:2—NASB	Col. 1:2—KJB	Col. 1:2—NASB
Grace <i>be</i> to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.	Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace <i>be</i> unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ <i>who are</i> at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

- Please note that the Colossian 1:2 passage in the NASB is missing the phrase "and the Lord Jesus Christ." The KJB contains the extended greeting in both Ephesians 1:2 and Colossians 1:2 because its underlying Greek text (*TR*) contains the phrase in both places whereas the Greek text supporting the NASB's reading only contains the phrase in Ephesians 1:2. White reasons that a scribe accustomed to hearing the longer greeting in Ephesians 1:2 inadvertently added the extra phrase to Colossians 1:2 to make it harmonize with Ephesians 1:2. Regarding this White states:
 - "This kind of harmonization is easy to understand, and it explains many of the most commonly cited examples of "corruption" on the part of the KJV Only advocates. . . The fact that all modern translations have "and the Lord Jesus Christ" at Ephesians 1:2 should certainly cause us to question anyone who would ask us to believe that there is some evil conspiracy at work behind the non-inclusion of the same phrase at Colossians 1:2. If someone were tampering with the texts, why not take out the phrase at Ephesians 1:2?" (White, 38)

- Later in the book White deals with Matthew 1:25.

KJB	NASB	ESV	NIV
And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.	but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.	but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.	But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

- In this case the NASB and KJB readings constitute different ways of saying the same thing despite the NASB's reading not possessing the word "firstborn." The NASB still makes it clear that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus which would have made Jesus her "firstborn" son. Meanwhile the ESV (Literal Translation) and NIV (Dynamic Translation) readings leave open the possibility that Jesus was Mary's son sired by a different man other than Joseph. Moreover, the ESV and NIV renderings allow for the possibility that Mary could have had other children fathered by other men before the birth of Jesus. Two of these readings protect the doctrine of the virgin birth and two of them weaken it.
- Regarding the "firstborn" issue in Matthew 1:25, James White states,
 - "... Matthew 1:25 is often cited by critics of modern translations as an attempt to deny the virgin birth of Christ. Yet if a modern translation were to do this, why not remove the parallel occurrence of the term at Luke 2:7 where all modern translations contain the disputed term? In reality, we have here another example of parallel influence that caused a scribe, undoubtedly zealous for orthodox doctrine, to insert the term "firstborn" here so as to protect a sacred truth and bring this passage in line with Luke's account. Modern translations, far from seeking to denigrate such divine truths are simply seeking to give us what was written by the original authors." (White, 159)
- White's explanation only works for the NIV's reading of Matthew 1:25 (ESV did not exist in 1995 when White wrote his book) and fails to address how the NASB secured the doctrine of the virgin birth in Matthew 1:25 without using the word "firstborn." In my opinion, this is yet another example of how the issue of "exact sameness" is lingering in unspoken fashion beneath the surface in all these discussions. White's entire explanation based upon parallel influence and harmonization is set up to explain why the NIV and KJB do not exhibit "verbatim wording." When one breaks with the notion of "exact sameness" they are able to evaluate the doctrinal content of each reading as it stands before them.
- In my opinion, James White's analysis and explanation presented above exhibits the following problems:
 - First, as to the language "Let's say you were . . ." indicates, White is merely postulating this scenario. While it makes sense that someone could or would harmonize different passages he does not and cannot prove that is what occurred in any of the examples he cites of so-called harmonization.
 - Second, without access to the original autographs how does White know what was written by the original authors? In order to make this statement White must presuppose that his textual position is correct. Moreover, he assumes that every variant of this type is

the result of overzealous scribes seeking to harmonize texts based upon parallel influence when a scribe could have just as easily deleted a word or phrase either by accident or because they disagreed with it. Once again, this is an explanation of no practical consequence and an assumption on White's part because, in the absence of the original manuscripts, he cannot prove it.

- Third, how does White know which textual variants are explainable by his harmonization and parallel influence concepts and which are not?
- Fourth, as Pastor Lee pointed out during Lesson 8, if one says that it does not matter whether or not "firstborn" is found in Matthew 1:25 because the virgin birth is elsewhere affirmatively asserted, what does that do to one's stance for Plenary Verbal Inspiration or the idea that every word was inspired by God. It seems to me that this argument avoids the core question of whether or not the word "firstborn" belongs in the text of Matthew 1:25.
- Fifth, what does one do about doctrines that are taught in only one primary passage and are not repeated elsewhere? The whole idea of "rightly dividing the word of truth" in II Timothy 2:15 stands out as a possible prime example. The NASB's "accurately handling," the ESV's "rightly handling," or the NIV's "correctly handles" do not accurately convey the force of the Greek word *orthotomeō* which means to cut straight and divide. Even Dr. Dale DeWitt who has historically objected to the terminology "rightly dividing the word of truth" has recently acknowledged that the KJB's rendering accurately conveys the sense and the force of the word *orthotomeō*. In short, the principles of repetition, harmonization, and parallel influence could not secure the doctrinal content of truth conveyed via singular passages.
- Sixth, White's comments point out a phenomenon among **most** (not all) modern scholars. In the passages where the *TR* and the Critical Text disagree with one another the *TR* is **always wrong**.

Substantive Differences Affecting the Accuracy of the Text

- There is no doubt in my mind that there are substantive differences in meaning that affect the accuracy of the text between the *TR* and the Critical Text and their representative translations into English. Please consider the following examples. For the sake of clarity and consistency we will compare the King James with other literal translations namely, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV).

Mark 1:2-3

KJB	NASB	ESV
2) As it is written in the prophets , Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet : "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3) THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet , "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3) the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

- Mark 1:2-3 contains quotations from Malachi 3:1 (Mark 1:2) and Isaiah 40:3 (Mark 1:3) as the KJB accurately reports with the use of “prophets” plural. Meanwhile the modern versions quoted above both read “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet” singular. This is a flat-out mistake in the NASB and ESV; one can read Isaiah from now till the rapture and not find the contents of Mark 1:2 in the book of Isaiah.
- This is not a TRANSLATION issue. It is a TEXTUAL issue. The issue here is not how to properly translate individual Greek words into English. The reason the English texts differ is because their underlying Greek texts differ. This is an example of a substantive difference in meaning. They both cannot be correct.
- This is a clear-cut case where modern versions and their underlying Greek text are wrong. They present information that is FALSE. The Old Testament quotation found in Mark 1:2 cannot be found in the book of Isaiah.

Matthew 5:22

KJB	NASB	ESV
But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.	"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty <i>enough to go</i> into the fiery hell.	But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

- The phrase “without a cause” is missing from both the NASB and ESV. The reason the phrase is missing from both modern versions is because the underlying Greek text from which they are translated does not contain the phrase.
- The omission of the phrase “without a cause” seems to be a minor oversight in Matthew 5 but, when cross referenced with Mark 3:5, a theological problem is encountered. In Mark 3:5 Jesus gets angry due to the hardness of the heart exhibited by those in the synagogue. Does Jesus have cause to be angry? Yes. The omission of the phrase, “without a cause” in the Critical Text and its corresponding modern translations in Matthew 5 creates a doctrinal problem in Mark 3 when Jesus gets angry. Practically, the omission of the phrase “without a cause” results in Jesus condemning Himself out of His own mouth.

Luke 2:33

KJB	NASB	ESV
And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.	And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.	And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

- Once again why do these versions read differently in English? Because their underlying Greek texts are not the same. The TR and its subsequent translation into English via the KJB maintain

the doctrinal integrity of the virgin birth. Joseph was not the father of Jesus as the modern translations of the Critical Text imply.

- What should one conclude when we find the same doctrine weakened in multiple places in the Critical Text and its corresponding modern versions? Consider Matthew 1:25 in the light of Luke 2:33:
 - KJB—And knew her not till she had brought forth her **firstborn** son: and he called his name JESUS.
 - ESV—but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Colossians 2:18

KJB	NASB	ESV
Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen , vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,	Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on <i>visions</i> he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,	Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

- Here we have a situation where the *TR* and the Critical Text are directly contradictory. This is not just a situation where one text leaves something out that the other one includes. One text, the Critical Text, says that you **have seen** the angels and visions while the other one (the *TR*) says that you **have not**. The reason they contradict in English is because they contradict in Greek.
- Here the principles of *Noncontradiction* and *Excluded Middle* absolutely apply because the two readings are directly contradictory and teach opposites. One reading says you have seen a thing while the other one says that you have not.
- Both of these readings cannot be correct because they possess substantive differences in meaning. One of them has to be right and one of them has to be wrong or they are both wrong. We cannot even entertain the notion that they are both wrong on account of the doctrine of preservation.
- This passage is dealing with the doctrine of *Angelology* during the dispensation of grace. How many believers in our day claim to have guardian angels, seen angels, or heard messages from angels or received visions and revelations based upon their personal experience? Colossians 2:18 is the clearest verse in the Pauline epistles telling you that anyone making such claims does not know what they are talking about and is not to be trusted. More importantly, anyone into such funny business is not holding Christ as the head in the next verse (Colossians 2:19).
- Furthermore, the readings found in the NASB and ESV for Colossians 2:18, create an internal contradiction within the book of Colossians. Colossians 1:16 teaches that the principalities and powers in heavenly places and those beings occupying them are “invisible” i.e., you cannot see them. Now, one chapter later in chapter 2, modern versions have people seeing things that chapter 1 said were invisible.

- I fail to see how this difference does not affect doctrine as it relates to the body of Christ. I have dealt with many Pentecostals who have claimed to have had angelic visitations and have seen into the spirit world based upon the authority of Colossians 2:18 in their modern version.

John 1:18

KJB	NASB
No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son , which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared <i>him</i> .	No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained <i>Him</i> .

- Is Jesus Christ the “only begotten Son” or the “only begotten God” as the NASB states? The wording of the NASB asserts that Jesus Christ is a lesser God created by God Almighty and is not coequal with the Father. Theologically this is very close to what the Jehovah Witnesses believe about Christ i.e., that he was not co-equal with God the Father but is a lesser created being. Once again it seems to me that this reading affects doctrine.

Basic Factual Irregularities

- The examples cited above do not even take into account the scores of omitted verses in the Critical Text or the fundamental lack of agreeance amongst Critical Text translations on even basic textual or historical details. As we studied in Lesson 3, this is not simply a King James versus modern versions problem. Even among modern versions, which subscribe to the same theories of textual criticism, there are substantive differences in meaning and lack of agreement about even basic facts. See the following examples:

II Samuel 15:7

KJB	NASB	ESV
And it came to pass after forty years , that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.	Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.	And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

Ecclesiastes 8:10

KJB	NASB	ESV
And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this <i>is</i> also vanity.	So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility.	Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

Luke 10:1

KJB	NASB	ESV
After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.	Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others , and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.	After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Matthew 12:47

KJB	NASB	ESV
Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.	Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."	Omitted

- Once again, understanding how God accomplished His promise to preserve His word will be one of the main goals throughout the duration of this class. Before we can fully understand preservation though, we need to thoroughly ground ourselves in the doctrine of inspiration.

Summary of Lessons 8-10

- What was originally scheduled to be one basic introductory lesson on preservation in our mini-series on basic terminology has turned into three lessons. Over the course of the last three lessons we have sought to establish the following points:
 - Preservation is the Bible's claim for itself (See the list of ten passages in Lesson 8). God promised to preserve that which he inspired.
 - God did not see fit to accomplish his fundamental promise of preservation by preserving the original autographs. This is evident because, had He chosen to accomplish preservation in this fashion, we would possess the originals today.
 - In order to accomplish the preservation of his word, God did not preserve it in a state of "exact sameness" but in a state of "purity."
 - There are substantive differences in meaning between the *TR* and the Critical Text that impact the accuracy of the text, some of which impact doctrine.
- The goal of Lessons 8 through 10 **was not** to set forth a fully developed doctrine of preservation. That task lies yet in the future after we have fully studied the doctrine of inspiration. One must first fully appreciate the doctrine of inspiration before being able to fully grasp the doctrine of preservation in its fullness. Put another way, if one does not accurately understand inspiration they will struggle to understand what is being preserved and how to scripturally identify the process.

Terminological Relationships: Putting It All Together

- So, you have God revealing himself – communicating to man (*revelation*). Then He has a mechanism whereby man writes the communication down on a piece of paper (*inspiration*). Then He has a mechanism where the words on the piece of paper are stored up in the believer’s soul (*illumination*). And then He has a mechanism where those words that are written down on a piece of paper are preserved from one generation to the next so that you and I can have them today (*preservation*).
- In Grace School of the Bible, Pastor Jordan summarized the relationships between these terms as follows (See the notes from Lessons 6 and 7 for Scripture references on revelation, inspiration, and illumination.):
 - “There is a sense in which *revelation* and *illumination* are associated, just as there is a sense in which *inspiration* and *preservation* are associated. It is important that you understand this issue.

The first two (*revelation* and *inspiration*) are a unit, and the next two (*illumination* and *preservation*) are a unit. If *revelation* and *inspiration* go together then *illumination* and *preservation* go together. The reason that *inspiration* is possible is because of *revelation*, and the reason *preservation* is possible is because of *illumination*. You would not have a revelation if God did not give it. You would not have anything to write down unless God gave you some information – revelation, communication, unveiling of Himself. That is easy to see. There would not be preservation unless the word of God is stored in the soul of the believer. As the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, (*illumination*), identifies to the believer what God’s word is, then consequently the true word of God is preserved through history.

Let’s say that there are five different Bible texts out there. How are you going to know which one is right one hundred years from now? Rather than writing down one manuscript and preserving that one manuscript through all of time, God has a mechanism whereby the church of the living God is the pillar and the ground of truth. And rather than preserving a single manuscript through time and saying, “That is it”, and having everybody fall down and worship it, God has provided a mechanism whereby the Holy Spirit, that is in the believer, will be illuminated to the truth of the word of God and will be able to identify what is God’s word and what is not, as He is instructed. Now we will see that as we go along.

But, *revelation* and *inspiration* go together, and *illumination* and *preservation* go together.

Revelation and *illumination* are similar things. They are a God-to-man kind of communication. *Inspiration* and *preservation* are associated because they have to do with the production and the preservation of the written word of God. *Revelation* and *illumination* are things that go on inside of the heart of a man, (or with revelation it could be an outward thing). But, they are subjective things. *Inspiration* and *preservation* are objective things.

Now, there is one other thing. *Revelation* and *inspiration* are complete. There is no more *revelation*, and there is no more *inspiration*. The second pair, *illumination* and *preservation*, are continuing. They involve a continuous process down through time. But, *revelation* and *inspiration* are finished. Why? The revelation is complete, and there is not any need for the inspiration that writes it down. There is not any need for any more revelation – God-to-man communication directly. . .

Illumination, (understanding, gaining knowledge of the scripture), is continuing. *Preservation* also continues right through time.” (Jordan, Manuscript Evidence 101, Lesson 2)

Works Cited

Jordan, Richard. *Manuscript Evidence 101*. Grace School of the Bible.

White, James R. *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations?*. Bethany House Publishers: Minneapolis, MN: 1995.

Appendix A

Response to Questions Raised During the Teaching of Lesson 10 Regarding Mark 1:2-3

Sunday, December 6, 2015

Introduction

The following appendix was prepared in response to a question raised in Lesson 10 (originally taught on 11/29/15) regarding the manuscript support for the *TR*/King James reading found in Mark 1:2-3. It was argued based upon the findings of “textual criticism” that the reading found in the Critical Text and its resulting translations into English in Mark 1:2-3 **is not a mistake**. For the sake of clarity, we have reproduced the passage in question below.

Mark 1:2-3

KJB	NASB	ESV
2) As it is written in the prophets , Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet : "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3) THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet , "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3) the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

In Lesson 10, I offered the following commentary on the differences exhibited above.

- Mark 1:2-3 contains quotations from Malachi 3:1 (Mark 1:2) and Isaiah 40:3 (Mark 1:3) as the KJB accurately reports with the use of “prophets” plural. Meanwhile the modern versions quoted above both read “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet” singular. This is a flat-out mistake in the NASB and ESV; one can read Isaiah from now till the rapture and not find the contents of Mark 1:2 in the book of Isaiah.
- This is not a TRANSLATION issue. It is a TEXTUAL issue. The issue here is not how to properly translate individual Greek words into English. The reason the English texts differ is because their underlying Greek texts differ. This is an example of a substantive difference in meaning. They both cannot be correct.
- This is a clear-cut case where modern versions and their underlying Greek text are wrong. They present information that is FALSE. The Old Testament quotation found in Mark 1:2 cannot be found in the book of Isaiah. (Lesson 10)

During the teaching of Lesson 10, two primary objections were raised in response to the information quoted above. First, the manuscript support for the reading “Isaiah the prophet” as contained in the Critical Text was cited as evidence that the *TR* reading is incorrect. Second, an objection to the *TR*’s reading was raised based upon 1st century Jewish forms of source citation which gave precedence to the major or more prominent author over a minor or less prominent author when dealing with “conflated” or compound quotations as found in Mark 1:2-3. According to this line of thought, there is nothing wrong

with the Critical Text's reading, even though the content of Mark 1:2 cannot be found in Isaiah, on account of the fact that Isaiah is the major prophet and is therefore given precedence over Malachi in terms of source citation.

The goal of this appendix is to offer a written response to both of these objections. To that end, we will consider the writings of James R. White, a supporter of the Critical Text and Thomas Holland, a supporter of the *TR* or what he calls Traditional Text as representative of the two positions in question. Throughout and in summation, I will offer my own commentary and thoughts on the issues at hand.

James R. White & The Critical Text Position on Mark 1:2-3

For purposes of comparison we will use the comments found in James R. White's book *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Versions* on Mark 1:2-3 as emblematic of the Critical Text position on this matter. White's comments are essentially identical to the objections raised during the public teaching of Lesson 10.

Manuscript Support for the Critical Text Reading

Regarding the manuscript support for the reading "Isaiah the prophet" as found in the Critical Text and modern versions, White offers the following comments in Part Two of his book on page 254.

- "The USB 4th assigns to the reading "Isaiah the prophet" a rating of {A}, and that for good reason. The reading has the support of both the external and internal evidence. Externally the word "Isaiah" is found in various forms in Ⲱ B D L Δ Θ f¹ 33 205 565 700 892 1071 1241 1243 2427 l 253 arm geo Irenaeus^{gr} Origen Serapion Epiphanius Severian Hesychius and numerous Latin manuscripts, which alone would be sufficient." (White, 254)

For purposes of clarification, what White is trying to identify using scholarly language, symbols, numbers, and names are all the manuscript witnesses that contain the reading "Isaiah the prophet" as found in the Critical Text. For example, the symbols "Ⲱ B D L Δ Θ" designate Greek uncial manuscripts (Greek mss written in all capital letters) containing the reading whereas the numbers "33 205 565 700 892" are references to specific Greek minuscule manuscripts (Greek mss written in all lower-case letters) supporting the reading. Meanwhile, the names "Irenaeus^{gr} Origen Serapion Epiphanius Severian Hesychius" are references to the writings of the church fathers that support the reading "Isaiah the prophet" in Mark 1:2. Lastly, the statement regarding USB 4th assigning the reading "Isaiah the prophet" a rating of {A} is a reference to what I was talking about in [Lesson 3](#). According to the preface of the latest edition of the Greek text published by the United Bible Society (USB5) the grading system works as follows:

- A—Indicates the text is certain;
- B—Indicates the text is almost certain;
- C—Indicates the text is difficult to determine;
- D—Indicates the text is very difficult to determine. ([Ballard](#))

So, White's point in mentioning the {A} rating attached to Mark 1:2 by the 4th Edition of the Greek text published the United Bible Society is that textual scholars are universally agreed that "Isaiah the Prophet" is the correct reading.

1st Century Jewish Forms of Source Citation

In the same paragraph quoted above, after presenting the external manuscript evidence for the reading “Isaiah the prophet,” White turns his attention to the internal support for the reading which he views as “even stronger.” By internal support, White is speaking about the 1st century Jewish method of source citation spoken about in the introduction to this appendix. Specifically, White states,

- “But the internal considerations are even stronger. The desire to rescue Mark from an (misapprehended) error in citing Isaiah when the quotation is from Malachi and Isaiah together (see our discussion in the text above regarding this) is a strong argument in favor of the reading found in the modern texts.” (White, 254)

White’s parenthetical note to “see our discussion in the text above regarding this” is a reference to his discussion of Mark 1:2-3 found in the main body of his book on pages 166-168. It is on these pages that one finds White’s full explanation of why the Critical Text reading is acceptable based upon 1st century Jewish forms of source citation.

- “Why are KJV Only advocates so confident that “the prophets” is the only possible reading? The argument is that since part of the quotation given by Mark is from Malachi, Mark couldn’t have written “in Isaiah the prophet,” for this would be a “mistake” on the part of the inspired writer. Even though Mark 1:3 is from Isaiah, the preceding section is from Malachi, hence, it *must* be “in the prophets.”

It is quite certain that some scribes early on in the transmission of the text of the New Testament had the very same thought. In fact, the reason why modern scholars are so confident that the proper reading is “in Isaiah the prophet” stems partly from this very fact: it is much easier to understand why a scribe would try to “help Mark out,” so to speak, and correct what seems to be an errant citation than to figure out why someone would change it to “Isaiah the prophet.” But as in so many instances where a scribe thought he had encountered an error in the text, the error was, in fact, the scribe’s, not the text’s.

The problem with the KJV Only argument at this point is simply one of ignorance of the common form of citation at the time of the writing of the New Testament. We have at least two instances recorded for us by the apostles where a conflated citation of two different Old Testament prophets is placed under the name of the more important or major of the two prophets. One of these instances is found in Matthew 27:9, where Matthew attributes to Jeremiah a quotation that is primarily drawn from Zechariah. We note in passing that the KJV has “Jeremiah” at Matthew 27:9, and hence must make reference to this phenomenon of citing a conflated Old Testament passage by the name of the more major of the two authors to explain this. Also we find the very same attempt on the part of some later scribes to change “Jeremiah” to “Zechariah” at Matthew 27:9, though in this case their attempts did not become the majority reading of the manuscripts. The other instance is here at Mark 1:2-3, where a conflated reading, combining Malachi 3:1 with Isaiah 40:3, is cited under the single name of the more major of the two prophets, Isaiah. This was, as we said, common practice in that day, and we cannot fault the apostolic writers for using the conventional means of expressing themselves. The “error” exists when modern readers try to force the ancient writers into modern standards of citation and footnoting.

We see, then, that Mark was quite accurate in his original wording and did not need the editorial assistance of later scribes, nor of KJV Only advocates, at all.” (White, 167-168)

Once again, I would like to point out that White is very confident as to the “original wording” of Mark 1:2 despite never having seen an original manuscript a day in his life. His certainty that the Critical Text reading is correct, despite his admittance that the *TR* reading also dates from “early on in the transmission of the text of the New Testament,” rests upon his knowledge of 1st century Jewish citation practices utilized by the apostles. White offers Matthew 27:9 as the lone supporting example for the apostles’ “conventional means of expressing themselves” when dealing with “conflated” or compound quotations of the Old Testament. No other support for this notion is mentioned by White.

Having duly established White’s reasoning for why the Critical Text reading is correct, we will now turn our attention to Dr. Thomas Holland’s argument for the accuracy of the *TR*’s reading in Mark 1:2-3.

Dr. Thomas Holland & The *TR* Position on Mark 1:2-3

Just as we used James R. White’s book *The King James Only Controversy* as emblematic of the Critical Text position in the previous section of this appendix, in this section we will use Dr. Thomas Holland’s book *Crowned with Glory: The Bible from Ancient Text to Authorized Version* as representative of the *TR* position on Mark 1:2-3. A portion of Holland’s book was read during the public teaching of Lesson 10 (See Lesson 10 [video](#)).

For purposes of consistency, we will follow the format established in the previous section. First we will address the manuscript support for the *TR* reading. Second, we will look at Holland’s reply to the 1st century Jewish forms of citation argument summarized above by White.

*Manuscript Support for the *TR* Reading*

Holland chronicles the following manuscript support for the reading “written in the prophets” as found in the *TR* and the King James Bible for Mark 1:2.

- “The Traditional Text reads, “*As it is written in the prophets,*” and then cites from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. Other texts read, “As it is written in the Prophet Isaiah,” before quoting Malachi and Isaiah. The reading of the Traditional Text has considerable support. It is found in many of the Greek uncials (A, K, P, W, Π), the majority Greek minuscules (28, 1009, 1010, 1079, 1195, 1216, 1230, 1242, 1252, 1344, 1365, 1546, 1646, 2148) and the majority of Greek lectionaries. Thus, the Greek support dates from the fourth century onward. Additionally, we find the same reading in the Syriac Harclean version (616 AD), the Armenian version (fourth/fifty century) and the Ethiopic versions of the sixth century. It also received patristic citations from many of the church fathers such as the Latin version of Irenaeus (202 AD), Photius (895 AD), and Theophylact (1077 AD).” (Holland, 146-147)

Textually, there is just as much if not more manuscript support for the *TR* reading of “written in the prophets” than there is for the reading “Isaiah the prophet” in the Critical Text. In addition, to the manuscript evidence catalogued above, King James Bible researcher Will Kinney adds that the *TR* reading is quoted by “Tertullian in 220, long before anything we have in the Greek copies.” (Kinney, [Gospel of Mark: A Modern Version Mix-up](#)) In 202 AD Irenaeus stated the following in his *Against Heresies*:

- “Wherefore also Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter, does thus commence his Gospel narrative: “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in THE PROPHETS, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way”. . .

Plainly does the commencement of the Gospel quote the words of THE HOLY PROPHETS and point out Him at once, whom they confessed as God and Lord;" ([Book III, Chapter 10](#))

This Latin quotation from Irenaeus in 202 (White cites a Greek copy above that agrees with the Critical Text) coupled with the quotation by Tertullian in 220 highlights the fact that the manuscript evidence supporting the *TR* reading in Mark 1:2 is of equal antiquity with any of the witnesses supporting Critical Text reading. Therefore, secondary arguments regarding 1st century Jewish source citation are necessary on the part of textual scholars to justify their self-ascribed {A} rating for Mark 1:2 in the critical apparatus.

Response to 1st Century Jewish Forms of Source Citation Argument

Thomas Holland maintains that the notion posited by White and others that a copyist made the change from "Isaiah the prophet" to "the prophets" in Mark 1:2 in order to correct a perceived error is complete conjecture and cannot be proven. Furthermore, Holland argues that there are significant problems with the 1st century Jewish source citation argument. Holland writes:

- "Contextually there arises a problem with the reading as found in the Critical Text. The passage cites both the Prophet Malachi (3:1) and the Prophet Isaiah (40:3). The reading, "As it is written in Isaiah the Prophet," seems inconsistent. Nevertheless, it has been noted that Isaiah was the major prophet and therefore he takes preeminence over Malachi. To illustrate this point, scholars often refer to Matthew 27:9. They claim this passage is not really a citation of Jeremiah but instead a quotation of Zechariah 11:12. Jeremiah received the preeminence as the major prophet.

However, this point can be argued. The text in Matthew does not say it was *written* as the passage in Mark does. Instead the text in Matthew states, "Then was fulfilled that which was *spoken* by Jeremy." God, the Author of Scripture, is aware of who writes what and who speaks what. Simply because Zechariah writes the passage does not mean Jeremiah did not speak it. Also, Zechariah warned Israel to pay attention to what the former prophets had spoken (Zech. 7:7). The ancient Jews had a saying that, "the spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah." Much of what Zechariah received, he did so from both the Lord and the former prophet, Jeremiah.

The position presented by many that some copyist made the change from "Isaiah the Prophet" to "the prophets" in Mark 1:2 in order to correct what was perceived as a possible error is conjecture. One can just as easily speculate that an Egyptian copyist not overly familiar with Jewish Old Testament prophets recognized the Isaiah quote and made the change for what he considered to be better clarity. The point still remains that both sides have textual support for their respective positions. It also is understood, as Dr. George Kilpatrick has noted, that most of these types of textual variants were introduced into the manuscripts by the second century. Therefore, one reading is as likely (textually speaking) as the other. The difference is contextually. It is more truthful to say "the prophets" when citing two prophets. Accordingly, the reading in the Traditional Text is both textually substantial and contextually correct." (Holland, 147-148)

Dr. Holland argues for the validity of the *TR*'s reading in Mark 1:2 based upon the "substantial" nature of the manuscript evidence and the fact that the reading is "contextually correct." It is more accurate to say "the prophets" when citing two prophets than it is to say "Isaiah the prophet." Holland is not the only commentator to have reached this conclusion.

- John Gill—"As it is written in the prophets ... **Malachi and Isaiah; for passages out of both follow;** though the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Persic versions read, "as it is written in the prophet

Isaias"; and so it is in some Greek copies: **but the former seems to be the better reading, since two prophets are cited, and Isaiah is the last; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, and the greater number of Greek copies.**" ([*John Gill's Exposition of the Bible*](#))

John Lightfoot in his [*A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*](#) uses the exact same textual facts regarding the manuscript evidence from Mark 1:2-3 to make the exact opposite argument from James R. White. Rather than scribes changing the alleged original reading of "Isaiah the prophet" to "written in the prophets" to fix a perceived "error" as White contends, Lightfoot argues the converse. Lightfoot reasons that "written in the prophets" was the original reading based upon both the manuscript evidence and the "congruous" nature of the statement and that Christian Jews altered the text by inserting "in Isaiah the prophet" for "in the prophets" to make the passage conform to their custom.

- "[As it is written in the prophets.] Here a doubt is made of the true meaning: namely, whether it be *in the prophets*, or *in Esaias the prophet*. **These particulars make for the former:**

When two places are cited out of two prophets, it is far more congruously said, *as it is written in the prophets*; than, *as it is written in Esaias*: but especially when the place first alleged is not in *Esaias*, but in another *prophet*.

It was very customary among the Jews (to whose custom in this matter it is very probable the apostles conformed themselves in their sermons) to hear many testimonies cited out of many prophets under this form of speech, *as it is written in the prophets*. If one only were cited, if two, if more, this was the most common manner of citing them, *as it is written in the prophets*. But it is without all example, when two testimonies are taken out of two prophets, to name only the last, which is done here, if it were to be read, *as it is written in Esaias the prophet*. . .

But what shall we answer to antiquity, and to so many and so great men reading, *as it is written in Esaias the prophet*? "I wonder (saith the very learned Grotius), that any doubt is made of the truth of this writing, when, beside the authority of copies, and Irenaeus so citing it, there is a manifest agreement of the ancient interpreters, the Syriac, the Latin, the Arabic." True, indeed; nor can it be denied that very many of the ancients so read: but the ancients read also, *as it is written in the prophets*. One Arabic copy hath, *in Isaiah the prophet*: but another hath, *in the prophets*. Irenaeus once reads *in Isaiah*: but reads twice, *in the prophets*. And "so we find it written," saith the famous Beza (who yet follows the other reading), "in all our ancient copies except two, and that my very ancient one, in which we read, *in Esaias the prophet*."

The whole knot of the question lies in the cause of changing the reading; why, *as it is written in Esaias the prophet*, should be changed into, *as it is written in the prophets*. The cause is manifest, saith that very learned man, namely, because a double testimony is taken out of two prophets. "But there could be no cause (saith he) of changing of them." For if Mark, in his own manuscript, wrote, *as it is written in the prophets*, by what way could this reading at last creep in, *as it is written in Esaias*, when two prophets are manifestly cited?

Reader, will you give leave to an innocent and modest guess? I am apt to suspect that in the copies of the Jewish Christians it was read, *in Isaiah the prophet*; but in those of the Gentile Christians, *in the prophets*: and that the change among the Jews arose from hence, that St. Mark seems to go contrary to a most received canon and custom of the Jews: "He that reads the prophets in the synagogues *let him not skip from one prophet to another*. But in the lesser

prophets he may skip; with this provision only, that he skip not backward: that is, not from the latter to the former."

But you see how Mark *skips* here from a prophet of one rank, namely, from a prophet who was one of the twelve, to a prophet of another rank: and you see also how he *skips* backward from Malachi to Isaiah. This, perhaps, was not so pleasing to the Christian Jews, too much Judaizing yet: nor could they well bear that this allegation should be read in their churches so differently from the common use. **Hence, in Isaiah the prophet, was inserted for in the prophets."**
(Lightfoot)

So once again, we see the so-called experts contradicting each other in the realm of textual criticism. One thing is apparent; the situation with respect to Mark 1:2-3 is not as clear cut as James White leads his readers to believe in *The King James Only Controversy*. What does one do when two "scholars" interpret the exact same data in directly contradictory ways? Remember what we studied in [Lesson 2](#) about Hegelian Dialectic and the tactics of the Adversary. Satan's objective from the beginning was to question and deny what God said with the goal of establishing a competing authority. Placed in this conundrum man would become his own authority as he gets to choose for himself what he believes God said. Who is right White or Lightfoot?

As we saw in section 1, James R. White buttresses his belief that "Isaiah the prophet" is the correct reading based upon 1st century Jewish citation practices. To support this argument, Professor White appeals to Matthew 27:9-10 as another example of how Jewish scribes handled "conflated" or compound quotations from more than one prophet. The problem here is that White is making an apples to oranges comparison to try and prove his point. Mark 1:2-3 and Matthew 27:9 are not both examples of "conflated" or compound quotations from more than one prophet.

Mark 1:2-3	Matthew 27:9-10
2) As it is written in the prophets , Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee (Comes from Mal. 3:1). 3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Comes from Is. 40:3).	9) Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; 10) And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me (The entire quote is from Zech. 11:12-13).

Mark 1:2-3 is a compound quotation to be sure in that its contents can be found in more than one prophet. Meanwhile, Matthew 27:9-10 is certainly **not** a "conflated" quotation seeing that its contents are only found in Zechariah 11:12-13. The passage that White directs his readers to (Matt. 27:9-10) in order to prove that 1st century Jewish citation practices explain why the Critical Text reading in Mark 1:2-3 is correct does not even exhibit the phenomenon that White is attempting to prove. White cannot even offer one apples to apples comparison within the Biblical text to prove his assertion regarding 1st century Jewish citation practices. Even from an extra Biblical standpoint, White offers no proof that 1st century Jews cited sources in the manner he is asserting. One is just supposed to take his word for it.

Dr. Holland compounds matters further for White when he points out that Mark 1:2-3 is discussing what was "written" by the prophets whereas Matthew 27:9-10 reports what was "spoken" by Jeremiah. Holland rightly points out that "God, the Author of Scripture, is aware of who writes what and who speaks what. Simply because Zechariah writes the passage does not mean Jeremiah did not speak it." In other words, Matthew 27:9 does not assert that Jeremiah *wrote* the words contained in

Zechariah 11:12-13 but merely that Jeremiah said or *spoke* something similar. Dr. Holland then directs his readers attention to Zechariah 7:7 where the prophet tells his readers to pay attention to the things spoken by the former prophets (i.e. Jeremiah), “**Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former prophets**, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when *men* inhabited the south and the plain?”

Textually, the Greek words translated “written” in Mark 1:2-3 and “spoken” in Matthew 27:9 are not the same and carry different meanings. This is true in both the *TR* and the Critical Text. The Greek word translated “written” in Mark 1:2 is *graphō* which means to write and is variously rendered as some form of “write” or “writing” in English. In contrast, the Greek word rendered “spoken” in Matthew 27:9 is the word *rheō* which means to utter audibly and is variously translated: “speak” twelve times, “speak of” three times, and “command” one time. Is James White really saying that there is not a difference between what was “written” down and what was “spoken?” It appears that he is.

In seeking to rescue the Critical Text from a clear mistake in Mark 1:2-3, White engages in a line of unfounded Biblical reasoning and sloppy reading of Biblical texts that he would never accept from anyone else he was debating on any other topic. Yet, explanations such as these are passed off as “scholarly” when they are used to defend the Critical Text and modern versions against the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text. If this does not constitute a double standard, I am not sure what does.

Conclusion

I maintain that the reading for Mark 1:2-3 as found in the King James Bible is the correct reading. First, there is ample early and abundant manuscript support for the reading across a host of various types of witnesses i.e., Greek manuscripts, early translations, lectionaries, and patristic citations. Second, the reading “written in the prophets” is contextually consistent with the FACT that Mark is quoting from two different prophets Malachi and Isaiah. Third, I find any arguments based upon unproven 1st century Jewish citations practices to be unconvincing, shabbily argued, and guilty of perpetrating greater damage to the text than what they are supposed to be fixing.

Remember the King James and its underlying text is presumed to be wrong by **most** modern textual scholars before any discussion of the facts commences. This is done in much the same way that **many** so-called scientists exclude the possibility of intelligent primary causes before they even begin investigating the question of origins. White conveniently leaves out of his book any discussion of manuscript evidence and/or scholarly opinion that contradicts the position he is advancing. Meanwhile, the Christian public is supposed to view this type of textual criticism as not only helpful but necessary for establishing the correct text.

Here again, as with parallel influence and harmonization, White and his troop are found to be grasping at straws in their attempt to disprove the validity of the *TR* and the KJB. Once again, in the absence of the “originals”, how does White know that what the “original wording” of Mark 1:2-3 actually was. On the surface, White’s arguments about parallel influence, harmonization, and 1st century Jewish citation practices sound reasonable and scholarly. But under closer inspection, White’s reasoning falls apart because the verses he uses to build his argument do not even assert what he is trying to force them to say.

Must one read White, Holland, Gill, and Lightfoot in order to have confidence in the Bible they have before them? Does one need to know about 1st century Jewish citation practices to determine which reading of Mark 1:2 is correct? Are Protestant scholars who claim to believe in *sola scriptura* actually saying that one must consult extra Biblical data to identify scripture?

In the end, my main point from Lesson 10 stands. There are substantive differences in meaning that affect the accuracy of the text between *TR* and the Critical Text and their representative English translations. Determining which text or reading is correct cannot be determined by textual criticism alone without the aid of insight gained from the doctrine of preservation. It is the doctrine of preservation that will assist the Bible student in being able to determine which text/reading is correct, not so-called neutral or natural textual criticism which treats the Bible as though it were any other book. Textual criticism must be guided and reined in by the doctrine of preservation. Once again, this is why a proper grounding in what the Bible says about itself is a mandatory prerequisite to sorting out the textual and translational issues. It is to this task that we will now turn our attention to in Lesson 11 as we begin a detailed study of the doctrine of inspiration.

Sunday, December 6, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 11: Understanding the Various Theories of Inspiration

Introduction

- In Lessons 6 through 10 we sought to establish an understanding of the following basic terminology: revelation, inspiration, illumination, and preservation. Now, with that accomplished, we can turn our attention to a detailed study of God's written revelation and the process whereby that was accomplished, namely inspiration.
- We saw in Lesson 7 that inspiration is the Bible's claim for itself (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21). Moreover, we observed that God exercised the same supernatural force to inspire His word that He utilized when He created heaven, earth, and mankind. This understanding of inspiration helps one to understand how the word of God can be "quick and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12-13). God literally breathed His own life into His word just as He did into mankind and all of creation.
- In short, we defined inspiration as the supernatural process whereby God recorded in writing (*graphē*) those aspects of His revelation that He wanted mankind to possess forever (Isaiah 30:8).
- In this lesson we want to begin an exploration of the ideas that various people and theological systems have developed to try to explain what inspiration is and is not. These theories are varied and sundry and they come from theology, which unfortunately is often nothing more than merely human viewpoint.
- Today our objective is to survey the views of inspiration covered by Pastor Richard Jordan in Grace School of the Bible and use the writings of other theologians for elaboration or clarification where needed. These views include the following five:
 - Natural View
 - Dynamic View
 - Partial View or Spiritual-Rule-Only View
 - Existential View
 - Plenary Verbal View

Natural View

- The *Natural View* says that the Bible is inspired in the same manner as William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, or Homer's *Odyssey*, or Dante's *Inferno*. In other words, the Bible is just a high level of human achievement written by gifted men, but it was not written by God.
- This would be equivalent to the inspiration you felt when writing love notes, poems, and sonnets for your husband or wife when they first struck your fancy.

- Revelation 1:10—people that believe the *Natural View* are talking about the Bible being written in the spirit. You are inspired; you are in the spirit. It is just a poetic sort of elevated human spirit.
- II Peter 1:21—natural inspiration comes via the will of men and finds its origin in the heart of man. A man's soul may be stirred to write wonderful and sweeping prose, but this is a very different thing from a human being speaking because he is thusly moved by God the Holy Spirit.
- The following is a sampling of what leading Evangelical theologians have said regarding the *Natural View*.
 - Lewis Sperry Chafer—"As there have been exceptional artists, musicians, and poets who have produced masterpieces which have not been excelled, it is contended by the proponent of this theory that there have been exceptional men of spiritual insight who, because of their native gifts, were able to write the Scriptures. This is the lowest notion of inspiration and emphasizes the human authorship over the divine." (Chafer, 70)
 - Charles C. Ryrie—"This view understands the writers of the Bible to be men of great genius who did not need any supernatural help in writing the Bible." (Ryrie, 73)
 - Paul Enns—"This view teaches that there is nothing supernatural about biblical inspiration; the writers of Scripture were simply men of unusual ability who wrote the books of the Bible in the same way that an individual would write any other book today. The writers were men of unusual religious insight, writing on religious subjects in the same way like Shakespeare or Schiller wrote literature." (Enns, 160)
 - Charles F. Baker—"This is the lowest concept of inspiration. It places the inspiration of Scripture on the same plane with so-called inspiring writings of the great authors and poets of history. But, as already noted, Biblical inspiration refers to the fact the Scriptures are God-breathed, not that they are inspiring to the reader." (Baker, 38)

Dynamic View

- The *Dynamic Viewpoint* says that the content and the concept are important. You hear the word "dynamic" a lot when discussing Bible translations. The dynamic theory says that only the main thought of a particular writing is inspired. In other words, inspiration consists of ideas and thoughts; and it's the central message that is important. The dynamic viewpoint indicates that it is not just words, but what are important are the thoughts, the ideas, the flow, and the meaning behind the words.
- Matthew 24:35—the problem with the *Dynamic View* is that Christ said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, **but my words shall not pass away.**" So, it is not just the thoughts and the flow that are important, but it is the words themselves.
- In the coming weeks, as we study the issue of inspiration, you will see that there are times when single letters in words make all the difference in how one understands a passage of Scripture. An entire argument will hang on one letter and one word. This highlights the importance of words themselves in inspiration. With the dynamic viewpoint, it's the idea and the content that are important i.e., just the thoughts and the flow and not the words.

- In Grace School of the Bible, Brother Jordan equates the Dynamic View of inspiration with Neo-Orthodoxy's approach to Scripture.
 - "Neo-orthodoxy tells you that whether Adam was a real historical person or not is not what counts. It is the teaching of the passage that counts. Whether Cain and Abel were real individuals is not important, but it is the supra history – the thing that's above the actual details. It is the thought, the meaning, and the concept that is trying to be conveyed that is important." (Jordan, *MSS 101*-Lesson 2)
- Regarding the *Dynamic View* theologians have written the following:
 - Lewis Sperry Chafer—"This hypothesis attempts to conceive of thoughts apart from words, the theory being that God imparted ideas but left the human author free to express them in his own language. Quite apart from the fact that ideas are not transferable by any other medium than words, this scheme ignores the immeasurable importance of *words* in any message. Even a legal document which men execute over trivial matters may depend wholly upon the words therein." (Chafer, 69)
 - Charles C. Ryrie—"Some are willing to acknowledge that the concepts of the Bible are inspired but not the words. Supposedly this allows for an authoritative conceptual message to have been given but using words that can in some instances be erroneous. The obvious fallacy in this view is this: how are concepts expressed? Through words. Change the words and you have changed the concepts. You cannot separate the two. In order for concepts to be inspired, it is imperative that the words that express them be also." (Ryrie, 74-75)
 - Paul Enns—"This view suggests that only the concepts or ideas of the writers are inspired but not the words. In this view God gave an idea or concept to the writer who then penned the idea in his own words. According to this view there can be errors in Scripture because the choice of words is left to the writer and is not superintended by God."
 - Charles F. Baker—"Proponents of this theory (Concept Inspiration) state that God placed concepts of truth in the minds of the Bible writers but left it to them to give expression to these concepts. If this view were true it would be inconsistent to call the Bible the Word of God, for it would be only the word of man. . . Further, it is questionable whether it is possible to convey a concept apart from words. Concepts become meaningful only as they are framed in words." (Baker, 39)

Partial View or Spiritual-Rule-Only View

- In Grace School of the Bible Pastor Jordan separated the *Partial View* and *Spiritual-Rule-Only View*. Due to their close connection I have elected to combine the two views and cover them together in one section.
- Partial Inspiration says that only certain parts of the Bible are inspired. This is the Modernist's view, and the Liberal's view. They only accept parts of the Bible. They talk about love and brotherhood, and they reject the part that deals with sin, and righteousness, and judgment.
 - II Timothy 3:16—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, . . ."

- This view maintains that the Bible is an infallible rule in terms of faith and practice, matters of religion, ethics, and in matters of spiritual value, but not in its historical and scientific statements.
- In other words, if you want to know about creation, forget about going to the Bible. But, if you want to know about ethics or morality it's fine to go to the Bible. As long as it's a spiritual, religious, or ethical question, the Bible has good information. But, if you want anything above that (if you are looking for historical accuracy), forget it! If you are looking for scientific statements, forget it! The Bible said that the sun stood still, but do not worry about that, because that is a way of looking at something back before man had better sense. The *Spiritual-Rule-Only View* maintains that just the ethical and spiritual content of the Bible is important.
- The problem here is that this is not what the Bible claims for itself.
 - John 17:17—the Lord Jesus Christ did not place a limit upon the truthfulness of his word.
 - John 3:12—if the Bible cannot be trusted in terms of the earthly things it reports then how can it be trusted in terms of the spiritual things that it reports?
- Leading Evangelical theologians have stated the following regarding the *Partial View*.
 - Lewis Sperry Chafer—"According to this conception, inspiration reaches only to doctrinal teachings and precepts, to truths unknowable by the human authors. Thus the objective in all inspiration—to secure inerrant writings—is denied to certain parts of the Bible." (Chafer, 69)
 - Charles C. Ryrie—"Partial inspiration teaches that some portions are, in fact, not inspired at all. Usually the parts that are inspired are those which convey information otherwise unknowable (like the account of Creation or prophecies). Historical portions, on the other hand, which could be known from contemporary documents, do not need to be inspired. The contemporary expression of this view of inspiration teaches that the Bible is inspired in its purpose. That means we can trust the Bible when it tells us about salvation, but we may expect that errors have crept into other parts." (Ryrie, 74)
 - Paul Enns—"The partial inspiration theory teaches that the parts of the Bible related to matters of faith and practice are inspired whereas matters related to history, science, chronology, or other non-faith matters may be in error. In this view God preserves the message of salvation amid other material that may be in error. The partial theory rejects both verbal inspiration (that inspiration extends to the words of Scripture) and plenary inspiration (that inspiration extends to the entirety of Scripture)." (Enns, 161)
 - Charles F. Baker—"A certain bishop is purported to have said that he believed the Bible to have been inspired in spots. When asked for the authority for such a statement, he quoted Hebrews 1:1, stating that this meant that God spoke at various times in varying degrees. Thus some spots were fully inspired, others were only partially inspired, and still other not inspired at all. The bishop was embarrassed when a layman asked: "How do you know that Hebrews 1:1, the one Scripture upon which you based your argument, is one of those fully inspired spots? . . . Who is to judge which parts of the Bible are to be accepted as truth? . . . Why should God guide a man to state the truth in one sentence and allow him to state error in the next? If He was able to guide him in the first case, why should He not also guide him at other times?" (Baker, 38-39)

- Charles F. Baker—“Some claim that the spiritual or doctrinal truth in the Bible is inspired but that the historical, geographical and scientific references are not, and are therefore liable to error. . . while inspiration pervades all parts of the Bible, it guarantees only the accurate communication of spiritual truth, and that in matters of historical, geographical, and scientific detail the writers employed only such information which they had at their natural disposal. Which may or may not have been in error.” (Baker, 39-41)

Existential View

- The *Existential View* says that the only parts of the Bible that are inspired are the parts that speak to you. A lot of Modernists and Liberals believe this kind of thing.
- Soren Kierkegaard developed what is called Existential Philosophy. He said that only the truth that edifies is truth for thee. In other words, the only time something is really truth is when it speaks to you and builds you up. So, the only parts of the Bible that are really true, and really God’s word, and really inspired are the parts that really speak to you on a personal subjective level.
- This view says that when it speaks to you, it is the Bible; and when it does not speak to you, it is not the Bible.
 - Romans 3:4—God is true and that’s all there is to it.
 - John 17:17

Plenary Verbal View

- The fifth view of inspiration is the *Plenary Verbal View*, and this is the one that you want to subscribe to. The word *Plenary* means “all” and the word *Verbal* means “words”. The *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration says that all the **words** are inspired by God.
- Matthew 24:35—what’s important is not just the ideas, the content, what it says about spiritual things, or when it speaks to you, but the words themselves are the issue in inspiration – “my words.” It is not just the concepts, the message, or the thought, but the fact that the words that I speak to you shall not pass away.
 - I Corinthians 14:37
- According to Brother Jordan, The *Plenary Verbal View* used to just be referred to as “Verbal Inspiration,” but Plenary Verbal is the full title. You will never hear anybody refer to it as Plenary Inspiration, but you will occasionally hear somebody say that they believe in Verbal Inspiration. In time, other views came along, like the *Partial View*, and sought to modify people’s understanding of inspiration. As we saw above, The *Partial View* maintains that only some of the words are inspired. So, in order to counteract the *Partial View*, theologians added the word “Verbal” to inspiration. Likewise, the *Existential View*, which maintains that the words are inspired when they speak to you, caused theologians to add the term “Plenary” to their definition of inspiration. Consequently, you will now see inspiration discussed in Systematic Theology books under the full descriptor of “Plenary Verbal Inspiration.” So occasionally, especially in older books on the subject, you will encounter someone who just calls it Verbal Inspiration.

- II Timothy 3:16—the doctrine of inspiration is primarily concerned with the words that were written down, not what happened to the writers themselves. You must remember that the Bible never says that the men were inspired. The Bible always says that what they wrote was inspired. All scripture, (*graphē*, that which is written down), was inspired. It is not the men that were inspired. Now, something happened to the men, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21—we will study what happened to them as well), but the issue in inspiration is what is written down on the page, not just what happened to the men.
- All of the theological writings we have been surveying in this lesson, along with the additional inclusion of Norman L. Geisler, adopt the *Plenary Verbal View* as the correct view of inspiration.

- Lewis Sperry Chafer—“By *verbal* inspiration is meant that, in the original writings, the Spirit guided in the choice of the words used. However, the human authorship was respected to the extent that the writers’ characteristics are preserved and their style and vocabulary are employed, but without the intrusion of error.

By *plenary* inspiration is meant that the accuracy which verbal inspiration secures, is extended to every portion of the Bible so that it is in all its parts infallible as to the truth and final as to divine authority.” (Chafer, 71)

- Paul Enns—“The strongest defense of verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is the testimony of Jesus Christ. He testified to the inspiration of the entire Scriptures, the various books of the Old Testament and the actual words of Scriptures as they had been originally recorded. The fact that He based His arguments on the precise wording of Scriptures testifies to His exalted view of Scripture. In addition, Paul acknowledged that all Scripture is God-breathed; man was the passive instrument, being guided by God in the writing of Scripture. Peter’s statement was similar in emphasizing that, in their passivity, men were carried along by the Holy Spirit in the writing of Scripture. The testimony of each of these witnesses draws attention to the verbal plenary inspiration of Scripture.” (Enns, 166)
- Charles F. Baker—“Verbal means that inspiration extends to the very words which the writers used in the original writings. This does not mean that God dictated the words, but that He so guided men to write in their own language, with their own words, and in their own style that when they had written they had said exactly what God wanted said. . . Plenary is usually taken to mean that inspiration is full, extending to all parts of the Bible. Paul did not say, “Some Scripture is inspired of God,” but ALL Scripture. Since there are no degrees of inspiration, a writing is either inspired of God or it is not inspired.” (Baker, 42)
- Norman L. Geisler—“Numerous passages make it evident that the locus of revelation and inspiration is the written word, the Scriptures (*graphē*), not simply the idea or even the writer. . . So it wasn’t simply God’s message that men were free to state in their words; the very choice of the words was from God. . . Biblical inspiration is not only verbal (located in the words), but it is also plenary, meaning that it *extends to every part of the words and all they teach or imply*. Inspiration does guarantee the truth of all that the Bible teaches, implies, or entails. . . The inspiration of God, then extends to every part of Scripture, including everything God affirmed (or denied) about any topic. It is inclusive

of not only what the Bible teaches explicitly but also with it teaches implicitly, covering not only spiritual matters but factual ones as well.” (Geisler, 174-175)

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Sunday, December 13, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever* Lesson 12: Potential Pitfalls of Plenary Inspiration

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 11 we began our study of inspiration by looking at the various views positioned by theologians over the years to explain the doctrine. In summation these views included:
 - Natural View
 - Dynamic View
 - Partial View or Spiritual-Rule-Only View
 - Existential View
 - Plenary Verbal View
- After surveying these views, we determined that the *Plenary Verbal View* is the correct position. The word *Plenary* means “all” and the word *Verbal* means “words”. The *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration says that all of the **words** are inspired by God.
- Matthew 24:35—what is important is not just the ideas, the content, what it says about spiritual things, or when it speaks to you, but the words themselves are the issue in inspiration – “my words.” It is not just the concepts, the message, or the thought, but the fact that the words that I speak to you shall not pass away.
- We concluded Lesson 11 with the following quotation from Norman L. Geisler’s *Systematic Theology in One Volume* regarding *Plenary Verbal* Inspiration.
 - “Numerous passages make it evident that the locus of revelation and inspiration is the written word, the Scriptures (*graphē*), not simply the idea or even the writer. . . So it wasn’t simply God’s message that men were free to state in their words; the very choice of the words was from God. . . Biblical inspiration is not only verbal (located in the words), but it is also plenary, meaning that it *extends to every part of the words and all they teach or imply*. Inspiration does guarantee the truth of all that the Bible teaches, implies, or entails. . . The inspiration of God, then extends to every part of Scripture, including everything God affirmed (or denied) about any topic. It is inclusive of not only what the Bible teaches explicitly but also what it teaches implicitly, covering not only spiritual matters but factual ones as well.” (Geisler, 174-175)
- As the title suggests in the lesson, we want to briefly consider some of the potential pitfalls or practical inconsistencies/misconceptions associated with the *Plenary Verbal* position.

Potential Pitfalls of the Plenary Position

- I believe that the *Plenary Verbal View* is the correct Biblical view of inspiration. That being said there are a few potential pitfalls regarding Plenary Inspiration that we need to be aware of so that we can avoid them.
- We will discuss three potential pitfalls with the following sub points.
 - The main issue with inspiration is the words on the page not what happened to the human authors.
 - *Plenary Verbal* inspiration is meaningless without Preservation.
 - *Plenary Verbal* on Inspiration but Dynamic on translation.

Words Not the Men

- In Grace School of the Bible, Brother Jordan highlights the first potential pitfall with the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration as being an over emphasis on what happened to the writers and not on their writings i.e., what they wrote down. He does this by comparing two different definitions of inspiration from the pens of Kenneth Wuest and W.E. Vine.
 - Wuest—“Inspiration is the act of God the Holy Spirit enabling the Bible writers to write down God-chosen words infallibly.” (*Untranslatable Riches from the Greek New Testament*)
 - Regarding Wuest’s definition, Brother Jordan stated, “Now, that is a good definition. God chose the words; and they write them down infallibly, which means they are all right, not just some of them but all of them. And it is the words!” (Jordan, *MSS 101*-Lesson 2)
 - Vine—“Inspiration attaches not only to the thought but to the words by which the thought is expressed. Words are signs with a definite value. Defect in the signs involves defect in the meaning conveyed. Inspiration of the scripture is inspiration of words, and the words themselves must be taken to express its real intention” (*The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*)
 - In response to Vine’s definition, Brother Jordan said, “Now that is good thinking. Dynamic Inspiration says that words are just signs that represent concepts and thoughts, so what is important is the concept and the thought. But, if you have a sign that does not convey the proper thought, then you will have a defect in communication. So, inspiration has to attach itself, not just to the thought but to the words that are conveyed; because the words are signs by which the thought is expressed, and words have a definite value. A defect in the sign of the word, involves defect in the meaning that is conveyed by the word. So, that is good thinking.” (Jordan, *MSS 101*-Lesson 2)
- After commenting thusly, Brother Jordan prompts his students to note the subtle difference between the two definitions of inspiration presented above. Wuest placed the emphasis on “the act of God the Holy Spirit enabling the Bible writers to write” whereas Vine placed the emphasis on the “words” themselves and not on what happened to the human writers.

- II Timothy 3:16—once again, the doctrine of inspiration is primarily concerned with the words that were written down, not what happened to the writers themselves. You must remember that the Bible never says that the men were inspired. The Bible always says that what they wrote is inspired. All scripture, (*graphē*, that which is written down), is inspired. It is not the men that are inspired. Now, something happens to the men, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21—we will study what happened to them as well), but the issue in inspiration is what is written down on the page, not just what happened to the men.
- In 1840, Swiss Protestant Louis Gaussen wrote *Theopneustia; or, the Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures* in French (*Théopneustie, Ou, Inspiration Plénière Des Saintes Écritures*). The following year, in 1841, an English version was published in Edinburgh, Scotland. Today, Gaussen’s work was reprinted and made available by Kregel Publications in 1971 under the title *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*.
- Originating in 1840, Gaussen’s work sits at theological crossroads within the 19th century. Gaussen was aware of the textual work of Johann Jakob Griesbach from 1774-1775 but predated the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, by Constantin von Tischendorf in 1844. Consequently, Gaussen’s work represents a popular Protestant view of inspiration before the eruption of the following controversies in the latter half of 19th century: Darwinian evolution, German higher criticism, textual theories of Westcott & Hort, and the resulting debates between fundamentalists and modernists.
- Throughout his work Gaussen is clear that the main issue of inspiration is not what happened to the writers but what they wrote down. While examples abound please consider the following few in summation of Gaussen’s view of inspiration:

- “Theopneustia (inspiration) is not a system, it is a fact; and this fact, like everything else that has taken place in the history of redemption, is one of the doctrines of our faith. . .

Meanwhile it is of consequence for us to say, and it is of consequence that it be understood, that this miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost had not the sacred writers themselves for its object—for these were only his instruments, and were soon to pass away; but that its objects were the holy books themselves, where were destined to reveal from age to age, to the Church, the counsels of God, and which were never to pass away.” (Gaussen, 24)

- “Whether they recite the mysteries of a past more ancient than creation, or those of a future more remote than the coming of the Son of man, or the eternal counsels of the Most High, or the secrets of man’s heart, or the deep things of God—whether they describe their emotions, or related what they remember, or repeat contemporary narratives, or copy over genealogy, or mark extract from uninspired documents—their writing is inspired, their narratives are directed from above; it is always God who speaks, who relates, who ordains or reveals by their mouth, and who, in order to do this, employs their personality in different measures: for “the Spirit of God has been upon them,” it is written, “and his word has been upon their tongue.” And though it be always the word of man, since they are always men who utter it, it is always, too, the word of God, seeing that it is God who superintends, employs, and guides them. They give their narratives, their doctrines, or their commandments, “not with the words of man’s wisdom, but with the word taught by the Holy Ghost;” and thus it is that God himself had not only put his seal to all these facts, and constituted himself the author of these commands, and the

revealer of all these truths, but that, further, has caused them to be given to his Church in the order, and in the measure, and in the terms which he has deemed most suitable to his heavenly purpose.” (Gaussen, 25)

- “And were we further, called to say at least what the men of God experienced in their bodily organs, in their will, or in their understandings, while engaged in tracing the pages of the sacred book, we should reply, that the powers of inspiration were not felt by all the same degree, and that their experiences were not at all uniform; but we might add, that the knowledge of such a fact bears very little on the interests of our faith, seeing that, as respects that faith, we have to do with the book, and not with the man. It is the book that is inspired, and altogether inspired: to be assured of this ought to satisfy us.” (Gaussen, 26)
- “These assertions (II Peter 1:21 and Psalm 12:6-7), which are themselves testimonies of the Word of God, have already comprised our last definition of Divine Inspiration, and lead us to characterize it, finally, as the inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of holy Scripture, in order to their guidance even in the employment of words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission.” (Gaussen, 34)
- Gaussen strongly asserts that the main issue of inspiration was the production of a book and the words contained within it. As we will see in a future lesson, Gaussen also had no problem maintaining a belief that God dictated the words of Scripture to the human authors while at the same time using each man’s personality and style in the writing process. It was not until some years later, during their controversy with the Modernists that the notion of Divine Dictation fell out of favor with Fundamentalists and Evangelicals.
- Pastor Jordan offers the following theological definition of inspiration offered by Charles F. Baker in his *A Dispensational Theology* as an example of an inadequate definition of inspiration.
 - “Theologically it means the supernatural divine superintendency **exerted over the writers of the Scripture** which guaranteed the accuracy of their writings.” (Baker, 37)
- While Pastor Baker believed in the *Plenary Verbal View* (See *A Dispensational Theology* pages 42-45) his definition focuses more on what happened to the writers than on the words they actually wrote down.
- Potential pitfall number one of the *Plenary Verbal View* is to overemphasize what happened to the writers in inspiration instead of focusing on what was written down i.e., the words.

Preservation Secures the Plenary Position

- In Grace School of the Bible, Pastor Jordan explains that while *Plenary Verbal* is the correct view of inspiration, its acceptance is meaningless without also accepting the doctrine of preservation. It is the doctrine of preservation that will help the Bible student identify where the words originally given by inspiration can be found today.
- As we have already seen in this class, Brother Jordan is not alone regarding this conclusion. Many other pastors and theologians have come to similar conclusions. Agreement on every point with the writers quoted below should not be assumed.

- Edward F. Hills—“If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scripture is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the providential preservation of the Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God’s people in every age. God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of His will, then it is obvious that **He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.**”

Although this doctrine of the providential preservation of the Old and New Testament Scriptures has sometimes been misused, nevertheless, it also has been held, either implicitly or explicitly, by all branches of the Christian Church as a necessary consequence of the divine inspiration of these Scriptures. (Hills, 2)

- Hills’ point about the implicit belief in preservation is evident in Gaussen’s book quoted above even though it is not explicitly stated.
- Wilbur N. Pickering—“**. . . if the Scriptures have not been preserved, then the doctrine of Inspiration is a purely academic matter with no relevance for us today.** If we do not have the inspired words or do not know precisely which they be, then the doctrine of Inspiration is inapplicable.” (Fuller, 269)
- Samuel C. Gipp—“Could God who overcame time (about 1,700 years transpired from the writing of the oldest Old Testament book and closing of the New Testament in 90 A.D.) and man’s human nature to write the Bible perfectly in the first place, do the same thing to preserve it?”. . . 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.” (Gipp, 18-22)
- R.B. Ouellette—“In the Bible, the writers had no problem quoting Scripture that had been preserved up to that time. Peter quotes Isaiah 40 (I Peter 1:23-25); Paul quotes extensively from the Old Testament in Romans 9-11. Each time a New Testament writer quotes from the Old Testament, he is demonstrating that God has been able to preserve His word. **Preservation is highly debated today because ultimately, the preservation issue will decide the translation issue—and preservation is completely a matter of faith in God’s power.**” (Ouellette, 33)
- In short, why go through all the trouble arguing for the inspiration of every word (*Verbal*) in all parts of Scripture (*Plenary*) and then fail to protect that doctrine by either ignoring or rejecting preservation? I agree with Pickering, if the Scriptures were not preserved “then the doctrine of Inspiration is a purely academic matter with no relevance for us today.” (Fuller, 269)
- Potential pitfall number two is to accept the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration but fail to protect it with the doctrine of preservation.

Plenary Verbal on Inspiration but Dynamic on Translation

- A third caution is also offered by Brother Jordan regarding those who would identify themselves as believing in *Plenary Verbal* inspiration, yet at the same time adopt a *Dynamic* approach when it comes to translating God's word.
 - “Plenary Verbal is the right one, but we recognize a basic inadequacy in it, and that is that it does not equip us to also identify where those inspired words are. We will have to do that on our own, and I will show you how to do that.

Let me explain the danger of the inadequacy. A man believes in Plenary Verbal Inspiration (every word is verbally inspired). There used to be a method of translating used down through the centuries called a Literal Equivalency. Because you believed in Plenary Verbal Inspiration, if you began to translate, what would you translate? You would translate every word. You would try to put the words in the other language, because the words are the issue. But, now we have something that is called Dynamic Equivalent, and that is the basis of the translating methods of the New International Version. That is the first version that has been put out in English in the last few years (it came out in 1976) that has gone over and taken Dynamic Inspiration and applies that method of inspiration to the practice of translating.

Now, the men that did that believe in Plenary Verbal Inspiration, but when they began to handle the word of God, and when they got into the practice of translating the word of God, they adopted and were affected by Dynamic Inspiration in their translating methods. So, as far as their translating methods are concerned, they abandon the Plenary Verbal viewpoint, professing to hold it, and use Dynamic Inspiration.” (Jordan, *MSS 101-Lesson 2*)

- Pitfall number three regarding *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* centers around one who accepts it as the correct view on the Bible's origin, yet functionally denies it when it comes to their philosophy of translation. In short it seems inconsistent to hold to the inspiration of every word only to turn around and advocate for a Dynamic Philosophy of translation.
- That being said, Brother Jordan also acknowledges that even the most literal of translations, such as the KJB, must from time to time utilize a *Dynamic* method when doing the work of translating. It is when translators adopt Dynamic Equivalency as their “total method” that the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration is undermined.
 - “Consequently, there is a method developed whereby every translator uses Dynamic Equivalency at times. When you read in your King James Bible where it says, “God Forbid”, that is a dynamic equivalent. There is no word for “God” in the Greek text. In Greek it would just be, “Oh no!” Well, in our language, “God Forbid” is the same type of strong expletive. It is a dynamic equivalent.

All translators use Dynamic Equivalency at some time or another in every situation. It especially helps you to get through idiomatic expressions, which is a legitimate thing. But, adopted as a total method, you abandon Plenary Verbal Inspiration. And you teach the next and the next and the next generation not to believe in Plenary Verbal.” (Jordan, *MSS 101-Lesson 2*)

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Sunday, December 20, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 13 Passages Proving the Plenary Position

Introduction

- In Lesson 12 we sought to identify some of the potential pitfalls of the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration. Specifically, we discussed the following potential pitfalls:
 - *Words not the Men*— the main issue with inspiration is the words on the page not what happened to the human authors.
 - *Preservation Secures the Plenary Position*— the correct view of inspiration is meaningless without Preservation.
 - *Plenary Verbal on Inspiration but Dynamic on Translation*—it is inconsistent to hold to the inspiration of every word (*Plenary Verbal*) only to turn around and advocate for a Dynamic Philosophy of translation.
- In this Lesson we want to consider some Biblical texts that prove the veracity of the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration.

Passages Proving the Plenary Position

- For this section we will consider the following sub-points.
 - The Bible self-authenticates its own claim of inspiration.
 - Practical examples that the words are the issue in inspiration.

Self-authenticating Nature of Inspiration

- II Timothy 3:16—**all scripture is given by inspiration of God.** That is the Bible’s claim for itself. That is what the Bible says about itself, and that is the boast that it makes for itself. “*Pas graphē theopneustos*” are the Greek words, and they simply mean “all scripture is inspired of God”. “Pas” is the word for “all, every.”
- Luke 24:44-46—“And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. 45) Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures (*graphē*), 46) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:”
- The word translated “scriptures” in verse 45 is the same word translated “scripture” in II Timothy 3:16; *graphē*. The Lord Jesus Christ called all three parts of the Hebrew Bible the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (our Old Testament), Scripture.

The Law (<i>Torah</i>)	The Prophets (<i>Neviim</i>)	The Psalms (<i>K'thuvim</i>)
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Proverbs
Leviticus	Samuel	Job
Numbers	Kings	Song of Songs
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Ruth
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Ecclesiastes
	12 Minor Prophets (1 Book)	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles

- Therefore, our Lord's attitude toward the entire Old Testament was that all of it was scripture and inspired by God.
- I Timothy 5:18—"For the scripture (*graphē*) saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward." This verse is comprised of quotations from both the Old and New Testaments.
 - Deuteronomy 25:4—"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."
 - Matthew 10:10 and Luke 10:7—"The labourer *is* worthy of his reward."
- Now, do you see what Paul did? He quoted a passage out of Deuteronomy, (the words of Moses), and then he quoted a passage out of the Gospels (the words of Christ), and he called them both scripture. Paul did not make any distinction between them. So, they are both scripture – the Old Testament and the New Testament. When he says "all scripture" he is literally talking about "all" or every part of it.
- II Corinthians 14:37—the things Paul wrote are also the commands of the Lord.
- II Peter 3:15-16—Peter calls everything Paul wrote in "all his epistles" scripture or *graphē*.
- Notice how in all of these verses the Bible self-authenticates its own inspiration. In II Timothy 3 Paul teaches you that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. Then, in Luke 24, the Lord Jesus Christ names the threefold division of the Hebrew Old Testament and calls it scripture. Later, Paul in I Timothy 5 quotes both the Old Testament and Gospels and calls them scripture. Finally, in Corinthians 14, Paul claims that the things he is writing are also the "commandments of the Lord." Finally, in II Peter 3, Peter informs his readers that everything Paul had written was scripture as well. All parts of your Bible, both Old and New Testaments, are *graphē* or that which was written down by God Almighty.
- II Timothy 3:16—once again, the Greek word for "scripture" is "*graphē*". Our word "graph" comes from that word. "*Graphē*" means "to write down, something that is written down". Now it is very important that you get this point. What does the verse say is inspired? Scripture is

inspired; the writings are inspired. The thing that is written down on the page is the thing that is inspired. You want to be careful to notice that the verse says that the “writings” are inspired, not the “writers”.

Words not the Men: Practical Examples

- I Kings 13 is a passage that highlights the importance of the words and not what happened to the writers. In I Kings 13, there is a man who prophesies in the name of the Lord, without even foreseeing that he was going to do it.
 - I Kings 13:1-7—God tells this young man of God to go down to the king and prophesy against him. He goes down and he does it, and the king reaches out to get him; but when he does, his hand withers up. The man of God prays for the king, and his hand is restored. Then, the king says, you come on down to my house, and I will give you a reward (verse 7).
 - I Kings 13:8-10—God essentially tells the young man of God, “You go down there and tell them what I have told you, and then get out of there. Do not eat anything and do not tarry. Do not even come back the same way. Do not get familiar enough with the territory to return the same way that you went.” So, the man of God, following the Lord’s instructions, goes back a different way and finds himself in Bethel at the end of verse 10.
 - I Kings 13:11-17—on the way back, there is an old prophet living in Bethel. You know this old prophet had to be a ‘compromiser’ or God would have used him to start with to go down and rebuke the king. Anyway, this old prophet seeks out the man of God and tells him that he wants to meet and dine with him back at his house (He was an experienced man in the ministry, and he wanted to talk with the young man.). The man of God tells him in verses 16-17; no, I cannot come home with you. God told me not to stay, and not to eat, and not to drink and so forth.
 - I Kings 13:18—the old prophet just flat out lies to the man of God. He tells the young man that God sent him a further revelation and you are supposed to come home with me.
 - I Kings 13:19—so the man of God harkens unto the words of the old prophets and goes back with him to his house to eat and drink.
 - I Kings 13:20-22—the word of the Lord came unto the old prophet to pronounce judgement upon the man of God for not harkening unto the words that God had previously given him.
 - I Kings 13:23-24—before the man of God got home a lion slew him just as the old prophet had predicted by the word of Lord.
- There are many points of practical application that could be made from this passage. My main reasoning for bringing it up in this Lesson is to point out the following. That old lying prophet in Bethel has the man of God in trouble to start with. Then, suddenly, something happened to him that he was not used to happening – the Lord came and put a word in his mouth and pronounced judgment on the man of God. That old prophet did not foresee that happening. This is an example of a man that spoke the word of the Lord without foreseeing that he was going to do it. He did not plan it, it just happened.

- This story from I Kings 13 helps to illustrate our main point regarding inspiration; **the issue is the words not the instrument.**
- John 11 provides a New Testament example of a similar phenomenon.
 - John 11:49-52—Here Caiaphas prophesied something without even knowing what he was doing when he did it.
- According to the Holy Spirits commentary in verses 51 and 52, Caiaphas said something that the Holy Spirit says is a prophecy about Christ dying for Israel and for the children of God that were scattered abroad. The rest of the nation is scattered to the four winds of the earth out there. And old Caiaphas never knew what he did. In fact, he probably died never knowing about it. The only way you know what he did is because the Holy Spirit wrote it down in the passage.
- So, there is a man who prophesied something (the passage said he did) but he did not know anything about it. My point to you is that the important issue **is the words on the page, not the man.**
- I Peter 1:10—many of the prophets spoke/wrote things that they did not fully understand.
- Our final example comes from the story of Balaam and Balak recorded in Numbers 22 -25.
 - Numbers 22:1-7—the children of Israel have pitched camp near Moab, and Balak the King sees them, and he knows what they have done to everybody else that got in their way. So, Balak says, “I am going to get me a prophet to come down here and curse these people.” So, he sends men to Balaam.
 - Numbers 22:8-12—Balaam says, “Okay, but I have to pray about it before I go.” So he went and prayed and asked the Lord about it, and the Lord said, “Number one, you cannot go. Number two, you cannot curse them because I have already blessed them. The Lord tells him *you cannot go with these guys anyway.*”
 - Numbers 22:13— So, Balaam went back the next day and told the men of Moab that he could not go with them. Notice though that Balaam only tells them part of the story. He does not tell them that God forbade him from cursing Israel.
 - Numbers 22:14-19— So, Balak sent the men back to Balaam to offer him more money – “the reward of divination”. The men did just that, and Balaam said, “Well, let me go pray about it again.”
 - Numbers 22:20—the Lord said, “Look Balaam, if the guys come to you in the morning and ask you to go, you can go.” That being said, Balaam would still have to speak the word that God gave him.
 - Numbers 22:21—so, in the morning Balaam woke up and told them that he is ready to go with them. But, that was not what the Lord had said. Balaam just decided to go and so he went.

- Numbers 22:22-35—Balaam and his donkey were withstood by the angels of Lord. In verse 35, Balaam is told again that he is allowed to speak only the words that he is given to speak.
- Numbers 22:36-38—in verse 38 Balaam tells Balak that he can only speak, “the word that God putteth in my mouth.”
- Numbers 23:1-10—the next day Balaam double crosses Balak and blesses Israel according to the “word” the Lord put in Balaam’s mouth.
- Numbers 23:11—Balak gets upset with Balaam for double crossing him. Balak said, “I am paying you wages and I put you up in the Holiday Inn. I am treating you real nice and buying you steaks for supper. But what are you doing? I hired, you to curse them and you are blessing them.”
- Numbers 23:12—Balaam replies by saying I cannot speak anything other than what “the Lord hath put in my mouth.”
- Numbers 23:13-15—Balak takes Balaam to a different place and goes through the whole religious charade again. In verse 15, Balaam tells Balak that he is once again going to go consult the Lord.
- Numbers 23:16-24—Balaam goes out and blesses Israel according to the “word” that the LORD put in Balaam’s mouth. Balaam did not want to bless Israel, he wanted to curse them but every time he opened his mouth out came blessing.
- Numbers 23:25-30—now they go to a third spot.
- Numbers 24:1-9—Balaam blesses Israel for a third time.
- Numbers 24:10-13—after listening to Balaam tell him what will befall his people, Balak has a fit.
- My point in studying these passages with you is two-fold. First, I want you to understand whenever you see the issue of prophecy and this type of inspiration going on, the issue is not the people or the man, but the issue is the words that they are speaking and/or writing down, i.e., the *graphē*.
- II Timothy 3:16— the English word “inspiration” is a different word. The Greek word is “*theopneustos*” “*Theos*” means “God” and “*pneo*” means “to breathe”. When you put those two words together, you have “God-breathed”. All scripture is given by inspiration, “*theopneustos*” – God breathed it out. In other words, when it says that all scripture is given by inspiration, it means that God breathed it. What does that mean? It means that the scripture came out of the mouth of God. What do you do when you breathe? It goes in and comes out of your mouth. The scriptures came out of the mouth of God and that means that whatever the scripture says, who said it? It came out of God’s mouth.

- Psalms 33:6—notice *Natural Revelation* in Psalms 33. Do you remember what Natural Revelation is? Natural Revelation is God’s revelation in creation. We went over this in Lesson 6. Natural Revelation was authored in exactly the same way as the Written Revelation is authored.
- Second, in these accounts the various men speak the words that God put/placed in their mouths. In other words, God gave them the exact words He wanted said/written. Consider the following examples from the exchange between Balaam and Balak in Numbers 22-24.
 - Numbers 22:38—And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? **the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.**
 - Numbers 23:5— **And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth,** and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.
 - Numbers 23:12—And he answered and said, **Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?**
 - Numbers 23:16—And the LORD met Balaam, **and put a word in his mouth,** and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.
- Verses such as these bring up the question of how inspiration occurred because they seem to imply the notion of dictation. God placed His word into the mouth of Balaam thereby causing Balaam to utter forth only those words that God gave him to speak.
- The notion of Mechanical or Divine Dictation as a descriptor for how *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* was accomplished has fallen on hard times in the past 150 years or so but this was not always the case. In the next Lesson we will begin looking at whether or not dictation was the mechanism by which inspiration was accomplished.

Sunday, December 27, 2015—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 14 Divine Dictation: The Mechanism of Inspiration? Part 1

Introduction

- In Lesson 13 we looked at passages proving the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration. First, we looked at how the Bible self-authenticates its own inspiration. Second, we looked at some passages that demonstrated practically that the issue in inspiration is the words that are written down and not the men.
 - I Kings 13—is an example of a man that spoke the word of the Lord without foreseeing that he was going to do it. He did not plan it, it just happened.
 - John 11—Caiaphas said something that the Holy Spirit says is a prophecy and he never knew he did it.
 - Numbers 22-24—Balaam did not want to bless Israel, he wanted to curse them, but he could only speak the words that God placed in his mouth.
- My goal in considering these passages was two-fold. First, I wanted you to grasp in a practical way that the main issue in inspiration is not the people or the man, but the words that are being spoken and/or written down, i.e., the *graphē*.
- Second, I wanted you to see that the various men speak the words that God put/placed in their mouths. In other words, God gave them the exact words He wanted said/written. Consider the following examples from the exchange between Balaam and Balak in Numbers 22-24.
 - Numbers 22:38—And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? **the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.**
 - Numbers 23:5— **And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth,** and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.
 - Numbers 23:12—And he answered and said, **Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?**
 - Numbers 23:16—And the LORD met Balaam, **and put a word in his mouth,** and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.
- These verses in Numbers bring up an important question regarding the mechanism by which the inspiration of the words was accomplished. They seem to imply the notion of dictation; God placed His word into the mouth of Balaam thereby causing Balaam to utter forth only those words that God gave him to speak.

- The notion of Mechanical or Divine Dictation as a descriptor for how *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* was accomplished has fallen on hard times in the past 150 years or so but this was not always the case. In this lesson we want to begin a consideration of whether or not dictation is an appropriate Scriptural descriptor to explain how inspiration was accomplished.
- In order to accomplish this task, we will first survey what modern theologians have said regarding the notion of dictation. Second, we will consider historic articulations of inspiration before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. Last, and most importantly, we will consider the Bible's testimony concerning itself.

Divine Dictation and Modern Theologians

- Virtually all modern Systematic Theology books discuss the notion of dictation under the heading of false or spurious views of inspiration along with the following: *Natural, Dynamic, Partial, and Existential Views* surveyed in Lesson 11. Consequently, the notion of dictation is almost universally rejected as false by modern Evangelical scholarship.
- It is also important to note that discussions of dictation in modern Systematic Theology books ascribe either of the following words to the notion: 1) Mechanical, or 2) Divine. Consequently, the terms Mechanical Dictation or Divine Dictation are synonyms for they are used interchangeably by modern authors.
- For the sake of consistency, we will sample the writings of the same authors cited in Lesson 11 when presenting the various theories of inspiration. We will include each author's terminology in parenthesis after his name.
 - Lewis Sperry Chafer (*Mechanical or Dictation Theory*)—"Had God dictated the Scriptures to men, the style and writing would be uniform. It would be the diction and vocabulary of the divine Author, and free from the idiosyncrasies of men (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15-16). All evidence of interest on the part of the human authors would be wanting (cf. Rom. 9:1-3). It is true that the human authors did not always realize the purpose of their writings. Moses could hardly have known the typical significance latent in the history of Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Joseph, or of the typology of Christ hidden in his description of the tabernacle which he wrote according to the pattern that was showed him in the Mount. . . A message which is dictated is obviously the product of the one who dictates; but if one is left free to write in behalf of another and then it is discovered that, while writing according to his own feelings, style, and vocabulary, he has recorded the precise message of the one in whose behalf he wrote and as perfectly as though it had been dictated by that one, the conviction is engendered that a supernatural accomplishment has been wrought. Under this arrangement, the human author is given full scope for his authorship, yet the exalted message is itself secured. The result is as complete as dictation could make it; but the method, though not lacking in mystery which always accompanies the supernatural, is more in harmony with God's ways of dealing with men in which He uses, rather than annuls, their wills. There is no intimation that God ever dictated any message to a man other than that which Moses transcribed when in Jehovah's presence in the holy Mount. This theory is easily classified as one in which the divine authorship is emphasized almost to the point of exclusion of the human authorship." (Chafer, 68)

- Paul Enns (*Divine Dictation*)—the dictation view states that God dictated the words of Scripture and the men wrote them down in a passive manner, being mere amanuenses (secretaries) who wrote only the words they were told to write. This claim would render the Bible similar to the Koran which supposedly was dictated in Arabic from heaven. Although some parts of the Bible were given by dictation (cf. Ex. 20:1, “And God spake all these words”), the books of the Bible reveal a distinct contrast in style and vocabulary, suggesting the authors were not mere automatons. The beginning student in Greek will quickly discover the difference in styles between the gospel of John and the gospel of Luke. John wrote in simple style with a limited vocabulary, whereas Luke wrote with an expanded vocabulary and a more sophisticated style. If the dictation theory were true, the style of the books of the Bible should be uniform.” (Enns, 161-162)
- Charles F. Baker (*Mechanical Inspiration*)—“This is the view that the writers of the Bible were merely secretaries to whom God dictated the Bible. Thus it is sometimes referred to as the Dictation Theory of Inspiration. It is true that there are some parts of the Bible that might be classified as dictation, such as those passages which read, “Thus saith the Lord.” It would also seem that it was a case of dictation when God spoke the law to Moses in the mount and said to him: “Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.” (Ex. 34:27)

The major portion of Scripture, however, cannot be classified a dictation. It is evident that the style and vocabulary differ from one writer to the next. Surely when the Apostles wrote letters expressing their feelings in the first person singular, this could not be classified as dictation from God. Hodge says:

“The church has never held what has been stigmatized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. The sacred writers were not machines. Their self-consciousness was not suspended; nor were their intellectual powers superseded. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was men, not machines; not unconscious instruments, but living, thinking, willing minds, whom the Spirit used as his organs. . . The sacred writers impressed their peculiarities on their several productions as plainly as though they were the subjects of no extraordinary influence.” (Baker, 39-40)

- Norman L. Geisler (*Secretary/Musical Instrument*)—“The mode of operation by which the Holy Spirit worked with the authors in order to assure an infallible and inerrant product is a matter of much speculation among theologians. The mystery remains inscrutable, but the process is intelligible and the parameters are definable.

Two factors define the limits within which legitimate speculation may occur: 1) the product is infallible and inerrant; 2) whatever the means used, different personalities, different styles, and the freedom of the authors manifested in their books must be accounted for.

The first point is known as the *doctrine* of Scripture and is supported above by numerous references. The second is known from the *data* of Scripture, clearly manifested in its human characteristics.

Like illustrations of the Trinity, no analogies of scriptural inspiration are perfect, some are better than others, and still others are misleading. Several fall into the latter category.

In particular, two illustrations would be avoided: that of a *secretary* and that of a *musical instrument*. Early church fathers were particularly known to use the latter. The problem with these illustrations is that they lend to the false charge that evangelicals believe in mechanical dictation.

The *musical instrument* illustration is unhelpful because a musical instrument has no free will, no personality, and no literary style—it is an inanimate object, and not an efficient cause of the notes but only an instrumental cause.

The *secretary* illustration is not much better, because faithful secretaries take dictation. They are not inanimate or non-free instruments, nevertheless, by the very nature of their occupation, they are not creating the material by merely recording it. The words written are not theirs, nor is their personality expressed. This is not true of Biblical inspiration, which, as we have seen employs freedom, style, vocabulary, and personalities of the various Biblical authors to convey God's Word to humankind.

In his noted *Theopneustia*, Louis Gaussen (1790-1863) uses the illustration of an *orchestra conductor*. This is somewhat better, since all members of the orchestra are freely participating and expressing their distinctive sounds while the master brings them together in unity and harmony, as does God with the Scriptures. Even here the analogy breaks down, however, since the whole sound is not really the result of each member playing his own solo. Further, instrumentalists make mistakes, while the Bible does not.

Many evangelicals have been content to rely on the *providently pre-planned personalities* model, whereby God preplanned the lives, styles, and vocabularies of the various Biblical authors so that they would freely choose to write the correct thing in the right way at the right time, which God, by preordained divine concurrence, has determined would be their part of His Word. While it is no doubt true, even this does not account for the whole story. For one thing, it does not explain how free will fits into the picture. Were the free choices of the various authors causally predetermined? If so, were they really free? Further, how could God guarantee that the results would be infallible and inerrant if the authors were free to do otherwise?

While some models are better than others, no matter how good the model is, there always seems to be some mystery left at the very point where there is a divine/human encounter. This is true of the doctrines of predestination and free will as well as the doctrines of how the two natures of Christ relate and the mode of inspiration." (Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 178-179)

- As usual, I find Geisler's comments to be the widest ranging and complete. I appreciate the fact that Geisler acknowledges that "no matter how good the model is, there always seems to be some mystery left at the very point where there is a divine/human encounter." This is no doubt true; it is exceedingly difficult to illustrate the supernatural nature of divine inspiration.
- What troubles me, is the overall lack of Scriptural support offered by these theologians to justify their positions. To a man, they seem to be more concerned with the freedom of thought, expression, and personality afforded to the human authors than on explaining how they were able to record on paper the very words God wanted written. Apart from some form of dictation, it is difficult to conceive how the standard demanded by the *Plenary Verbal View* of inspiration would

have been accomplished. Some of the statements made regarding why dictation is a poor descriptor for how inspiration was accomplished seem very close to arguing for Dynamic Inspiration.

- Moreover, some of the statements quoted above seem to be contrary to the Biblical text itself. For example, Chafer stated, “There is no intimation that God ever dictated any message to a man other than that which Moses transcribed when in Jehovah’s presence in the holy Mount” (Baker says something very similar.). All this makes one wonder if Chafer has ever considered the story of Balaam and Balak from Numbers 22-24 (or the other two passages we considered in Lesson 13 in I Kings 13 & John 11) as an example of dictation. Balaam is only allowed to speak the words that God placed in his mouth despite his desired will to do otherwise.
- The quote from Charles Hodge (different person from A.A. Hodge of Warfield and Hodge fame.) found in Pastor Baker’s book is truly puzzling. Hodge stated, “the church has never held what has been stigmatized as the mechanical theory of inspiration.” First of all, if one reads between the lines, Hodge reveals that his thoughts on “the mechanical theory of inspiration” are a response to how inspiration had been “stigmatized.” This speaks to one of my fundamental contentions, Fundamentalist and Evangelical views on inspiration changed as a result of the controversies with evolutionists, German higher critics, and Modernists in the late 19th and early 20th century. Hodge, writing in 1872, reflects the stigmatism that had been placed upon the notion of dictation by theological liberals during the second half of the 19th century. This stigmatism did not exist thirty years earlier in 1840 when Louis Gaussen wrote *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* and used the word “dictation” liberally throughout to describe the mechanism by which Plenary inspiration was accomplished (more on Gaussen in Lesson 15.).
- Secondly, I find Hodge’s statement quoted in the previous point to be a bit misleading. Hodge leaves his readers with the impression that at no point throughout church history was the “mechanical theory of inspiration” ever articulated. Meanwhile, Geisler correctly conveys the fact that the church fathers did use the imagery of a musical instrument to describe how inspiration was accomplished.
- In the next section we will turn our attention to historical articulations of inspiration before the publication of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859.

Historic Articulations of Inspiration

- The words “dictate”, “dictation”, or “*dictare*” in Latin have a long history of being associated with the inspiration of God’s word. Please recall from above that Geisler objected to the imagery of a *secretary* or *musical instrument* as illustrations of inspiration because they “lend to the false charge that evangelicals believe in mechanical dictation.” In this section we will consider the testimony as to the usage of this imagery for inspiration from the following three eras of church history:
 - The Pre-Reformation Fathers
 - The Reformers
 - Post-Reformation Theologians

Testimony of the Pre-Reformation Fathers

- From very early in church history, the imagery of a musical instrument was used to illustrate how inspiration was accomplished. Please consider the following examples.
 - Justin Martyr (c. 160 AD)—“... Rather, they presented themselves in a pure manner to the energy of the Divine Spirit, so that the divine plectrum itself could descend from heaven **and use those righteous men as an instrument like a harp or lyre. Thereby, the Divine Spirit could reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.**” (cataloged in Bercot, 601-602)
 - Athenagoras (c. 175 AD)—“We have the prophets as witnesses of the things we comprehend and believe. These were men who declared things about God and the things of God. They were guided by the Spirit of God. . . It would be irrational for us to disbelieve the Spirit from God and to give heed to the mere human opinions. **For He moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments.**” (cataloged in Bercot, 602)
 - Athenagoras (c. 175 AD)—“Prophets were lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, **and they spoke the things with which they were inspired. The Spirit operated through them just as a flute player breaths into a flute.**” (cataloged in Bercot, 602)
 - Hippolytus (c. 200 AD)—“These fathers were furnished with the Spirit and they were largely honored by the Word Himself. They were similar to instruments of music. For they had the Word always in union with them, **like a plectrum (the small implement by which a lyre was plucked). When moved by Him, the prophets spoke what God willed.** For they did not speak of their own power. Let there be no mistake about that. Nor did they speak the things which pleased themselves.” (cataloged in Bercot, 602)
 - Eusebius quoting Caius (c. 215 AD)—“For this reason, (the heretics) have boldly laid their hands upon the divine Scriptures, alleging that they have corrected them. . . and as to the great audacity implied in this offense, it is not likely that even they themselves can be ignorant. **For either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit (and are thus infidels),** or else they think that they themselves are wiser than the Holy Spirit (which makes them demoniacs).” (cataloged by Bercot, 602-603)
 - Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430 AD)—“When they write what He has taught and said, it should not be asserted that He did not write it, **since the members only put down what they had come to know at the dictation (*dictis*) of the Head. Therefore, whatever He wanted us to read concerning His words and deeds, He commanded His disciples, His hands to write.** Hence, one cannot but receive what he reads in the Gospels, though written by the disciples, as though it were written by the very hand of the Lord himself.” (quoted by Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 217)
- Robert D. Preus is the author of Chapter 12, “The View of the Bible Held by the Church: The Early Church Through Luther” found in the book *Inerrancy* edited by Norman L. Geisler.

According to Preus, Augustine used the terms inspire and dictate interchangeably in a large variety of contexts. (Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 364)

- Thomas Aquinas (c. 1125-1274)—“Prophecy is a type of knowledge impressed on the prophet’s intellect from a divine revelation; this happens after the manner of education. Now the truth of knowledge is the same in both the student and the teachers since the student’s knowledge is a likeness of the teacher’s knowledge.” (Aquinas, [*Summa Theologica*](#))
- Geisler offers the following commentary on this quotation from Aquinas, “Unlike the mechanical illustration used by many of his predecessors (such as God playing on a musical instrument), Aquinas provided new insight into the process of inspiration. Just as a teacher activates the potential of the student for knowledge, so God (the Primary Cause) activates the potential of man (the secondary cause) to know what He desires to reveal to him. Thus, the prophet is not a puppet or even a secretary but a human learner. And, like a human teacher, God only activates in the prophet what he has the potentiality to receive in terms of his own capacities, culture, language, and literary forms.” (Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 219)
- The nuanced articulation of inspiration offered by Aquinas notwithstanding, there is ample evidence that the Church Fathers, from very early in church history and stretching through the Medieval Period, conceived of dictation as being the primary means by which inspiration was accomplished.

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Sunday, January 10, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 15 Divine Dictation: The Mechanism of Inspiration? Part 2

Introduction

- During Lesson 14 we began looking at the topic of whether or not Divine Dictation is an appropriate descriptor for how *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* i.e., the inspiration of every word, was accomplished.
- The following four verses from the book of Numbers (also see Lesson 13) were used as the jumping off point to begin this discussion.
 - Numbers 22:38—And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? **the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.**
 - Numbers 23:5— **And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth,** and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.
 - Numbers 23:12—And he answered and said, **Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?**
 - Numbers 23:16—And the LORD met Balaam, **and put a word in his mouth,** and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.
- These verses in Numbers seem to imply the notion of dictation; God placed His word into the mouth of Balaam thereby causing Balaam to utter forth only those words that God gave him to speak.
- The notion of Mechanical or Divine Dictation as a descriptor for how *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* was accomplished has fallen on hard times in the past 150 years or so but this was not always the case. In this lesson we want to continue our consideration of whether or not dictation is an appropriate Scriptural descriptor to explain how inspiration was accomplished.
- In order to accomplish this task, I outlined the following three points for our consideration in Lesson 14: first, survey what modern theologians have said regarding the notion of dictation; second, consider historic articulations of inspiration before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859; last, and most importantly, we will consider the Bible's testimony concerning itself.
- In Lesson 14 we accomplished our first objective by surveying what modern theologians have said about the notion of dictation in their Systematic Theology books. Time, however, would not allow us to conclude our consideration of the historical articulations of inspiration before the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. Please recall that I had broken point two up into the following time periods:
 - The Pre-Reformation Fathers
 - The Reformers
 - Post-Reformation Theologians

- During Lesson 14 we only had time to consider the writings of the Pre-Reformation Fathers. In doing so, we saw that the words “dictate”, “dictation”, or “*dictare*” in Latin have a long history of being associated with the inspiration of God’s word. By way of review please recall the following abbreviated sampling.
 - Justin Martyr (c. 160 AD)—“. . . the energy of the Divine Spirit, so that the divine plectrum itself could descend from heaven **and use those righteous men as an instrument like a harp or lyre. Thereby, the Divine Spirit could reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.**” (cataloged in Bercot, 601-602)
 - Hippolytus (c. 200 AD)—“They were similar to instruments of music. For they had the Word always in union with them, **like a plectrum (the small implement by which a lyre was plucked). When moved by Him, the prophets spoke what God willed.** For they did not speak of their own power. Let there be no mistake about that. Nor did they speak the things which pleased themselves.” (cataloged in Bercot, 602)
 - Eusebius quoting Caius (c. 215 AD)—“For this reason, (the heretics) have boldly laid their hands upon the divine Scriptures, alleging that they have corrected them. . . and as to the great audacity implied in this offense, it is not likely that even they themselves can be ignorant. **For either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit (and are thus infidels),** or else they think that they themselves are wiser than the Holy Spirit (which makes them demoniacs).” (cataloged by Bercot, 602-603)
 - Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430 AD)—“When they write what He has taught and said, it should not be asserted that He did not write it, **since the members only put down what they had come to know at the dictation (*dictis*) of the Head. Therefore, whatever He wanted us to read concerning His words and deeds, He commanded His disciples, His hands to write.** Hence, one cannot but receive what he reads in the Gospels, though written by the disciples, as though it were written by the very hand of the Lord himself.” (quoted by Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 217)
- Robert D. Preus is the author of Chapter 12, “The View of the Bible Held by the Church: The Early Church Through Luther” found in the book *Inerrancy* edited by Norman L. Geisler. According to Preus, Augustine used the terms ‘inspire’ and ‘dictate’ interchangeably in a large variety of contexts. (Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 364)
- There is ample evidence that the Pre-Reformation Fathers, from very early in church history and stretching through the Medieval Period, conceived of dictation as being the primary means by which inspiration was accomplished.
- We will now turn our attention to finishing our consideration of historic articulations of inspiration by looking at our final two time periods: 1) the Reformers and 2) Post-Reformation Theologians.

Historic Articulations of Inspiration

Testimony of the Reformers

- The arrival of the Reformation may have changed a lot of things, but an explanation of how inspiration was accomplished was not one of them. Explicit as well as implicit examples of dictation being used as a descriptor for inspiration abound in the writings of the Reformers.
 - Martin Luther (1483-1546)—“He is called a prophet who has received his understanding directly from God without further intervention, **into whose mouth the Holy Ghost has given the words**. For He (the Spirit) is the source, and they have no other authority than God. . . Here (2 Sam. 23:2, “The Spirit of the Lord spake to me, and His word was in my tongue”) it becomes too marvelous and soars too high for me. . .” (Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 223)
 - “The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, **written and (I might say) lettered and formed in letters**, just as Christ is the eternal Word of God veiled in human nature.” (quoted in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 377)
 - “**The very order of the words found in Scripture are intentionally arranged by the Holy Spirit. Thus, not merely the phrases and expression in Scripture are divine but their very words and their arrangements.**” (quoted in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 377-378)
 - “**The prophets do not set forth statements that they have spun up in their own mind. What they have heard from God Himself. . . they proclaim and set forth.**” (quoted in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 378)
- While Martin Luther did not explicitly use the word dictation, the concept is present in his thinking when he uttered statements like: “The very order of the words found in Scripture are intentionally arranged by the Holy Spirit. Thus, not merely the phrases and expression in Scripture are divine but their very words and their arrangements.”
 - John Calvin (1509-1564)—“He commanded also that the prophecies be committed to writing and be accounted part of His Word. To these at the same time histories were added, also the labour of the prophets, **but composed under the Holy Spirit’s dictation** . . . Yet they were not to do this except from the Lord, that is, with Christ’s Spirit going **before them and in a sense dictating their words**. . . **They were sure and genuine penmen of the Holy Spirit, and their writings are therefore to be considered oracles of God**. . .” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV.viii.8f;cf.I.vi.2)
 - “In order to uphold the authority of Scripture, he (Paul) declares it to be divinely inspired: for if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that man should receive it with reverence . . . Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him first of all lay down as a settled point this—that **the law and the prophecies are not teaching (*doctrinam*) delivered by the will of man, but dictated (*dictatum*) by the Holy Ghost**. . . Moses and the prophets did not utter at random what we have from their hand, but, **since they spoke by divine impulse, they confidently and fearlessly testified as was actually the case, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spoke**. . . We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it proceeded from Him alone.” ([*Calvin, Commentary on II Timothy*](#))

- It should be noted that John Calvin as a principle disciple of Augustine, followed him in using the terms dictation and inspiration interchangeably. Modern theologians have spilled much ink trying to convince modern readers that Calvin did not mean what he clearly appears to be teaching.

Testimony of Post-Reformation Theologians

- Johnathan Edwards (1703-1758)—“**God had designed the meaning which the penman never thought of, which he makes appear these ways: by his own interpretation, and by his directing the penman to such a phrase and manner of speaking, that has a much more exact agreement and consonancy with the thing remotely pointed to, than with the thing meant by the penman.**” (quoted in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 405)
- Moses, then, was so intimately conversant with God and so continually under the divine conduct, it cannot be thought that when he wrote the history of the creation and the fall of man, and the history of the church from the creation, **that he should not be under the divine direction in such an affair. Doubtless he wrote by God’s direction**, as we are informed that he wrote the law and the history of the Israelitish church.” (quoted in Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 405)
- “Ministers are not to make those things that seem right to their own reason a rule in their interpreting a revelation, but the revelation is to be the rule of its own interpretation; i.e., the way that they must interpret Scripture is not to compare **the dictates of the Spirit of God** in his revelation with what their own reason says, and then to force such an interpretation as shall be agreeable to those dictates, but they must **interpret the dictates of the Spirit of God by comparing them with other dictates of Scripture.** (Minkema & Bailey, *Reason, Revelation and Preaching: An Unpublished Ordination Sermon by Jonathan Edwards*, 27.)
- Noah Webster (1785-1843)—in his famous Dictionary published in 1828, Webster defined the verb “dictate” as: 1) To tell with authority; to deliver, as an order, command, or direction; as, what God has dictated, it is our duty to believe; 2) To order or instruct what is to be said or written; as, a general dictates orders to his troops; 3) **To suggest; to admonish; to direct by impulse on the mind. We say, the spirit of God dictated the messages of the prophets to Israel.** Conscience often dictates to men the rules by which they are to govern their conduct.
- In seeking to define the word “dictate,” Webster attached to the process whereby the spirit of God delivered “the messages of the prophets to Israel” to the English definition. This very fact speaks to widespread use of the word in this fashion before the controversies of the latter half of the 19th century.
 - Louis Gaussen (1840)—uses the term “dictation” at least 23 times in the first four chapters of his classic book *Theopneustia (The Divine Inspiration of the Bible)* to describe the process by which inspiration was accomplished. Please consider the following sampling:
 - “Well, then, so it is with the Bible. It is not, as some will have it, a book which God employed men, whom he had previously enlightened, to write under his

auspices. **No—it is a book which he dictated to them; it is the word of God; the Spirit of the Lord spake by its authors, and His words were upon their tongues.**” (Guassen, 49)

- “Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and so simple can be the word of man? was asked of the philosophers of the last century by one who was himself too celebrated a philosopher. And all its pages have replied, No—it is impossible; for every where, traversing so many ages, and whichever it be of God—employed writers that hold the pen, king or shepherd, scribe or fisherman, priest or publican, you every where perceive that one same Author, at a thousand years’ interval, **and that one same eternal Spirit, has conceived and dictated all.**” (Gaussen, 57)
- “It ought already to be fully acknowledged, that *all that part of Scriptures* at least called PROPHECY, whatever it be, **has been completely dictated by God; so that the words as well as the thought have been given by him.**” Gaussen, 67)
- “**These psalms were to such a degree all dictated by the Holy Ghost**, that the Jews, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself, called them by the name of THE LAW; all their utterances had the force of law; their smallest words were from God. . . The whole Old Testament then is, in a scriptural sense of the expression, a WRITTEN PROPHECY. **It is plenarily inspired therefore by God. . .**” (Gaussen, 71)
- “His wish (Paul’s) is, that every one of them, if he have really received the Holy Ghost, should employ the gifts he has received in acknowledging that the things that he wrote unto them were the commandments of the Lord; **and so fully convinced is he that what he writes is dictated by inspiration of God, that, after having dictated ORDERS to the churches. . .**” (Gaussen, 81)
- “All these sacred books, without exception are the word of the Lord. ALL SCRIPTURE says St. Paul, is **INSPIRED BY GOD.** . . in the apostle’s idea, all without exception, in each and all of the books of the Scriptures, **is dictated by the Spirit of God.**” (Gaussen, 127)
- “And just as we believe, because it tells us so, that Jesus Christ is God, and that He became man; **so also we believe that the Holy Ghost is God, and that He dictated the whole of the Scriptures.**” (Gaussen, 139)
- “**If it was God himself that dictated the letter of the sacred oracles**, that is a fact past recall; and no more can the copies made of them, than the translations given to us of them, undo that first act.” (Gaussen, 165)
- So, we see from these quotes that Gaussen used the terms “plenary” and “dictation” interchangeably when referring to inspiration. In addition to using the term “dictation,” Gaussen employs the musical instrument imagery utilized by the early church as well as frequently noting the numerous passages in the Old Testament where God placed his words upon the tongue of the prophet as illustrations for how inspiration was accomplished.

- Lastly, regarding Gaussen, he has no problem with using the terminology “dictation” while at the same time making allowances for the variety in personality and literary style exhibited by the human authors (interested parties are encouraged to read the whole of Chapter 1 Part V on the “Individuality of Sacred Writers”).
 - “The individuality of the sacred writers, so profoundly stamped on the books they have respectively written, seems to many impossible to be reconciled with a plenary inspiration. No one, say they, can read the Scriptures without being struck with the differences in language, conception, and style, discernible in their authors; so that even were the titles of the several books to give us no intimation that we were passing from one author to the another, still we should almost instantly discover from the change of their character, that we no longer to do with the same writer, but that a new personage had taken the pen. Who could read the writings of Isaiah and Ezekiel, of Amos and Hosea, of Zephaniah and Habakkuk, of Jeremiah, and Daniel and proceed to the study of Paul and Peter, or of John, without observing, with respect to each of them, how much his view of the truth, his reasoning, and his language, have been influenced by his bias, his condition in life, his genius, his education, his recollections—all circumstances, in short that have acted upon his outer and inner man?” (Gaussen, 38)
- Charles Hodge (1872)—“**The church has never held what has been stigmatized as the mechanical theory of inspiration. The sacred writers were not machines.** Their self-consciousness was not suspended; nor were their intellectual powers superseded. Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It was men, not machines; not unconscious instruments, but living, thinking, willing minds, whom the Spirit used as His organs. . . The sacred writers impressed their peculiarities on their several productions as plainly as though they were the subjects of no extraordinary influence.” (Hodge, 156-157)
- B.B. Warfield & A.A. Hodge (1881)—coauthored an article for the April, 1881 issue of *The Presbyterian Review* titled “[Inspiration](#)” in which they stated the following, in part, regarding inspiration.
 - “The human agency, both in the histories out of which the Scriptures sprang, and in their immediate composition and inscription, is everywhere apparent, and gives substance and form to the entire collection of writings. It is not merely in the matter of verbal expression or literary composition that the personal idiosyncrasies of each author are freely manifested by the untrammelled play of all his faculties, but the very substance of what they write is evidently for the most part the product of their own mental and spiritual activities. This is true **except in that comparatively small element of the whole body of sacred writing, in which the human authors simply report the word of God objectively communicated, or as in some of the prophecies they wrote by Divine dictation.** As the general characteristic of all their work, each writer was put to that special part of the general work for which he alone was adapted by his original endowments, education, special information, and providential position. Each drew from the stores of his own original information, from the contributions of other men, and from all other natural sources. Each sought knowledge, like all other authors, from the use of his own natural faculties of thought and feeling, of intuition and of logical inference, of memory and imagination, and of religious experience. Each gave evidence of his own special

limitations of knowledge and mental power and of his personal defects, as well as of his powers. Each wrote upon a definite occasion, under special historically grouped circumstances, from his own stand-point in the progressively unfolded plan of redemption, and each made his own special contribution to the fabric of God's Word." (Warfield & Hodge, 225-260)

- **"We believe that the great majority of those who object to the affirmation that Inspiration is verbal, are impelled thereto by a feeling, more or less definite, that the phrase implies that Inspiration is, in its essence, a process of verbal dictation, or that, at least in some way, the revelation of the thought, or the inspiration of the writer, was by means of the control which God exercised over His words. And there is the more excuse for this misapprehension because of the extremely mechanical conceptions of Inspiration maintained by many former advocates of the use of this term "verbal." This view, however, we repudiate as earnestly as any of those who object to the language in question. At the present time the advocates of the strictest doctrine of Inspiration, in insisting that it is verbal, do not mean that in any way the thoughts were inspired by means of the words, but simply that the divine superintendence, which we call Inspiration, extended to the verbal expression of the thoughts of the sacred writers, as well as to the thoughts themselves, and that, hence, the Bible considered as a record, an utterance in words of a divine revelation, is the Word of God to us. Hence, in all the affirmations of Scripture of every kind, there is no more error in the words of the original autographs than in the thoughts they were chosen to express. The thoughts and words are both alike human, and, therefore, subject to human limitations, but the divine superintendence and guarantee extends to the one as much as the other."** (Warfield & Hodge, 225-260)
- In 1948, some 27 years after his death in 1921, Warfield's *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* was published posthumously. Henry Krabbendam summarizes Warfield's teaching on inspiration in an essay titled "B.B. Warfield vs. G.C. Berkouwer on Scripture" for Geisler's 1980 publication *Inerrancy* (see Chapter 14). Krabbendam summarizes Warfield's position as follows:
 - "Since Warfield characterized Scripture as being not so much a human product breathed into by the Spirit as a divine product breathed out by God through the instrumentality of human authors, the question becomes pressing as to how he envisioned the relationship of the divine and the human with regard to Scripture. . . Warfield rejects the so-called mechanical theory of Scripture production, in which inspiration is conceived as dictation and the human writers regarded as implements rather than instruments and as pens rather than penmen. He marshals several arguments against the mechanical theory by showing that Scripture is fully man's word. First, he points to the numerous times the New Testament refers to Scripture in terms of its human authors (e.g., Matt. 22:24; Mark 12:19; John 12:39; Rom. 11:9). Second, he points out that passages of the Old Testament are quoted in the New Testament as being spoken by men, even if these men were "in the Spirit" (see Mark 12:36). Third he emphasizes the obvious marks of human authorship, such as peculiarities and differences in vocabulary and style.

Although Warfield rejects the dictation theory, he is just as critical of the opposite extreme, which in his position is the more common error, namely the exclusion of the divine factor from the origin and nature of Scripture. While Scripture is fully man's word, it is not a purely human book.

In rejecting both extremes—Scripture as a purely divine or as a purely human book—Warfield does not opt for the solution of its being partly divine and partly human. The Bible is not divided between two factors that are mutually exclusive, so that the one limits the other and the entrance of the one spells the exit of the other. No, the evidence that shows that Scriptures both as the Word of God and the word of man leads to the conclusion that the Bible is simultaneously the divine utterance of God and the product of man's effort Warfield writes:

The human and divine factors in inspiration are conceived as flowing confluent and harmoniously to the production of a common product. Over every word of Scriptures is it to be affirmed, in turn, that it is God's word and that it is man's word. All the qualities and divinity and humanity are to be sought and found in every portion and element of the Scripture. While, on the other hand, no quality inconsistent with either divinity or humanity can be found in any portion or element of Scripture.

The concept, in which the Bible is regarded as both a human product in every part and every word and a divine product to the smallest detail, Warfield calls *concursum*. Both the divine and the human elements form the inseparable constituents of one simple uncompounded product in which the human coloration and variety, as well as the divine perfection and infallibility, are acknowledged. Thus Warfield holds that, according to the Word of God and the doctrine of the church;

By special, supernatural, extraordinary, influence of the Holy Ghost, the sacred writers have been guided in their writing in such a way, as while their humanity was not superseded, it was yet so dominated that their words became at the same time the words of God, and thus, in every case and all alike, absolutely infallible.

Warfield emphasizes that the concept of *concursum* is not unique to the relationship of the divine and the human factors with regard to the origin and nature of Scripture. He points out that the same relationship obtained with regard to the act of faith as both a work of God and an activity of man.

It must be evident by now that Warfield holds to the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures as the Word of God, and that by virtue of that inspiration they are fully true, fully authoritative, fully infallible, and fully inerrant.” (Geisler, *Inerrancy*, 426-428)

- There can be no doubt that understanding of inspiration had changed since the mid-19th century.

Conclusion

- The careers of Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, and B.B Warfield transpired during a time of great doctrinal controversy especially as it related to the origin and authority of the Bible. Even the Wikipedia entry for Warfield acknowledges this point when it states,
 - “Much of Warfield's work centered upon the Bible's "inspiration" by God — that while the authors of the Bible were men, the ultimate author was God himself. The growing influence of modernist theology denied that the Bible was inspired, and alternative theories of the origin of the Christian faith were being explored.” ([Wikipedia](#))

- During the thirty years between the publication of Gaussen's *Divine Inspiration* in 1840 and Charles Hodges' *Systematical Theology* in 1871 the theological landscape had changed drastically. The intervening thirty years saw the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin, the growth and influence of German Higher Criticism, and the resulting theological liberalism of the Modernists. In response to the controversy, these men and their contemporaries altered many Protestant doctrines in an attempt to answer their critics. The doctrine of inspiration is one such example.
- It has only been in the last 150 years or so that the notion of Divine Dictation has fallen out of favor among professional theologians. For most of the history of the dispensation of grace, Christian thinkers, theologians, and philosophers had no problem with viewing dictation as the means by which inspiration was accomplished.
- The final arbiter in this debate, as with all theological debates, should be "what saith the Scriptures?" To this we will turn our attention in the next lesson.

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Sunday, January 17, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 16 Divine Dictation: The Mechanism of Inspiration? Part 3

Introduction

- In Lesson 15, we concluded our consideration of the historical articulations of inspiration before the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859. In doing so, we concluded that, before the controversies of the latter half of the 19th century, dictation or the imagery of a musician playing an instrument was a perfectly acceptable way of explaining the mechanism by which *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* was accomplished.
- Therefore, having concluded our investigation of the first two points on this topic we are now ready to look at the third. In Lesson 14, I told you that we were going to study the following three points regarding Divine Dictation:
 - Study what modern theologians have said regarding the notion of dictation (Lesson 14).
 - Consider historic articulations of inspiration before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859 under the following three categories.
 - The Pre-Reformation Fathers (Lesson 14)
 - The Reformers (Lesson 15)
 - Post-Reformation Theologians (Lesson 15)
 - Consider the Bible's testimony concerning itself. (Lessons 16 & 17)
- In this lesson we will begin our consideration of the third and final point regarding Divine Dictation i.e., the Bible's testimony concerning itself. As I said at the end of Lesson 14, the Bible is to be our final arbiter in answering this question. That fact that a host of Christian theologians and philosophers throughout church history have used dictation to describe how inspiration was accomplished is meaningless if the notion is not substantiated by scripture.

Dictation: What Saith the Scripture?

- In seeking to answer this question, we will study the following three sub-points:
 - Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Testimony of the Law and the Prophets
 - Testimony of the Apostle Paul

Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ

- Matthew 22:29-31—Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, **not knowing the scriptures**, nor the power of God. 30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31) But as touching the resurrection of the dead, **have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying**, (quotes Exodus 3:6)
 - Who wrote Exodus 3:6? Moses. Jesus asks them, “have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God.” He said, “It’s not just what Moses said, or wrote, but it is what God said to you.” Christ says that what Moses wrote in Exodus 3 was spoken unto them by God. God spoke through Moses.
- Luke 24:44-46—“And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. 45) Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures (*graphē*), 46) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:”
 - The word translated “scriptures” in verse 45 is the same word translated “scripture” in II Timothy 3:16; *graphē*. The Lord Jesus Christ called all three parts of the Hebrew Bible the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (our Old Testament), Scripture. Therefore, our Lord’s attitude toward the entire Old Testament was that all of it was scripture and inspired by God.
- In the book of Hebrews, the Law, the prophets, and Psalms are all said to be the words of the Holy Spirit.
- Hebrews 3:7—Wherefore (**as the Holy Ghost saith**, To day if ye will hear his voice, (quotation of Psalm 95)
 - The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalms chapter 95. So, in the book of Hebrews you are told that words in the book of Psalms are really the words of the Holy Spirit. When you read the book of Psalms, you are reading what the Holy Spirit said.
- Hebrews 9:8—**The Holy Ghost this signifying** that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:
 - The writer of Hebrews is talking about the regulations written down back in the books of Moses, (in the book of Exodus), about the tabernacle. Moses wrote some things down, that the book of Hebrews now tells you was really God the Holy Spirit signifying.

Who wrote Exodus? The writer of the book of Hebrews says that the Holy Spirit wrote it. So when someone tells you that God the Holy Spirit says something to you, and they quote a verse of scripture, they are being scriptural; and so are you when you do it. The word of God is God’s word. Don’t you forget that! When you speak it, you are speaking with the authority of Almighty God; and when you face it, you are facing Almighty God.
- Hebrews 10:15-16—**Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us**: for after that he had said before, 16) This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34)

- The author of Hebrews is saying that the Holy Spirit is the one who spoke in Jeremiah 31:31-34. So the Holy Spirit is said to be the speaker in the Psalms, the Law, and the Prophets.

Testimony of the Law and the Prophets

- Exodus 4:28-31— And Moses told Aaron **all the words of the LORD who had sent him**, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29) And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: 30) And **Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses**, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31) **And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel**, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.
 - God puts the words into the mouths of Moses and Aaron. The words they spoke are the words that God put in their mouths.
- Exodus 19:25-20:1—So Moses went down unto the people, **and spake unto them**. 20:1) **And God spake all these words, saying, . . .**
 - When Moses spake to them, he gave them the words that God gave him to say.
- Exodus 24:4—**And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD**, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Numbers 11:24—And Moses went out, **and told the people the words of the LORD**, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.
 - Notice what Moses did – he told the people the words of the LORD. He got the words from the LORD and then he communicated them to the people.
- Numbers 22:38—And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? **the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak**.
 - Once again, here is a man who spake even though it was going against his will, and against his desires, to say what he said. “The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.” He said, “I do not have any choice; that’s all that will come out of my mouth because I am God’s spokesman.”
- II Samuel 23:1-2—Now these *be* the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, 2) **The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue**.
 - Now, that is some claim to inspiration. David is a man who was conscious of what was going on, “The Spirit of God spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.” Turn to the New Testament and notice the attitude of the New Testament writers about what David said. What does the Lord Jesus think about that? Does he think David is a little overzealous? *Is that a hyper view of inspiration David? You should not feel that way.*

- Mark 12:35-36—And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? 36) **For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool** (Psalm 110:1).
 - Jesus says that when David wrote down Psalm 110:1, he did it by the Holy Spirit. Jesus just confirmed the method of inspiration outlined in II Samuel 23. Christ is not the only one to do this with respect to the writings of David. Consider Peter's statement in Acts 1.
- Acts 1:16—Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, **which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake** before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.
 - Who wrote Psalm 41? David did; it is a Psalm of David. But, whom does the verse say spoke it? The verse says the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke it. Well, then who spoke it? David wrote it down, but what he wrote down was what God the Holy Spirit spoke through him. Do you see how strong that thing is?
 - E.W. Bullinger states the following regarding Acts 1:16, "It was David's "mouth," and David's pen, David's vocal organs, and David's hand; but they were not David's words. They were the words "which the Holy Ghost spake before concerning Judas." David knew nothing about Judas, David could not possibly have spoken anything about Judas. David's "mouth" spake concerning Ahithophel; but they were the words "which the Holy Ghost spake concerning Judas."

David was "a prophet": and, being a prophet, he "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). Hence, in Psalm 16, he spake concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:30,31). In the same way he "spake before concerning Judas."
(Bullinger, 2)
- Jeremiah 1:4-9—Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 5) Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 6) Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child. 7) But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, **and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak**. 8) Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. 9) **Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.**
- Jeremiah 5:14—Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, **I will make my words in thy mouth fire**, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.
- Jeremiah 6:18-19—Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what *is* among them. 19) Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, *even* the fruit of their thoughts, **because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.**

- Jeremiah has given the people the revelation, the words of God in God's own words, and when they reject what Jeremiah says, God said, "You rejected me!" God is equal to his word.
- Jeremiah 36:1-8—And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2) **Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel**, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. 3) It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. 4) Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: **and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.** 5) And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I *am* shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: 6) Therefore go thou, **and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people** in the LORD'S house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. 7) It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people. 8) And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, **reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD'S house.**
 - Jeremiah dictates to his secretary, Baruch, the words of the LORD. There is not any way to describe that except with the word dictation. So you do not have to be afraid of the word "dictation." The words come out of Jeremiah's mouth; Baruch writes them down, and then the scripture says (by inspiration in verse 8) that the words that he read are God's words. Jeremiah is writing down the revelation of God in God's own words and they are equal to God. When Jeremiah speaks, God speaks. There is no difference.
- Ezekiel 2:1-2—And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, **and I will speak unto thee.** 2) **And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me**, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.
 - The spirit comes in and Ezekiel begins to get the revelation.
- Ezekiel 3:10-11—Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.** 11) And go, **get thee to them of the captivity**, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.
 - "God gave Ezekiel the words to say, and he went out and gave them to the people. Go preach it Ezekiel, and whether they get it or they do not, you go tell them my words.

Turn to the book of Revelation and you will see a similar kind of a thing. In fact the way you understand Revelation 1 is by understanding Ezekiel 2. Revelation 1:10-11 "I was in

the Spirit (*like Ezekiel was*) on the Lord's day, (*transported up into the future day of the Lord*), and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: (*the Lord Jesus*) and, **What thou seest, write in a book**, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea." He says to write these things in a book. What is John writing in a book? He is writing what God shows him, and what God gives him. He instructs him to write down the revelation of God and to write it down in God's very own words.

Look at Revelation 22. John writes it down. Do not fail to understand what is going on in this passage. Revelation 22:18,19 – “For I testify unto **every man that heareth the words (*the individual words*) of the prophecy of this book**, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man **shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy**, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things **which are written in the book.**” The words that John wrote down were the words that God gave him to write down. That is the bible's attitude toward inspiration.” (Jordan, MSS 101, Lesson 4)

- Acts 3:18, 21—But those things, **which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets**, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled . . . 21) Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, **which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets** since the world began.

- God shewed by the mouth of all his prophets? In other words, God was speaking by the mouth of those prophets. It is pretty obvious what is being said. When those prophets spoke, it was God speaking through them. If you just read the bible and take what the bible writers and speakers say about inspiration, you do not have much problem understanding that the scripture came right out of the mouth of God and that God has made his word equal to himself.
- Regarding Acts 3:18 Dr. Bullinger wrote, “The particular "things" referred to here are "that Christ should suffer"; but the assertion is comprehensive and includes all other things "showed" by God.

Note, that it was God who, before, had showed them. It was the same God who had fulfilled them. The "mouth" was the mouth of "all His prophets," but they were not the prophets' words. They were the words of God.” (Bullinger, 2)

- Luke 1:67, 70—And his father Zacharias **was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, . . .70) As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets**, which have been since the world began:
 - Zacharias speaks by the filling of the Holy Spirit. And what does he say? He says that God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets in verse 70. There is no doubt about what these verses mean when it comes to the issue of inspiration. Go back and read about some of these prophets. The prophets were the mouthpiece of God, speaking/writing only those things which God had placed in their mouths.

- Next week will consider our third sub-point on The Testimony of Paul

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Sunday, January 24, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 17 Divine Dictation: The Mechanism of Inspiration? Part 4

Introduction

- In Lesson 14, I told you that we were going to study the following three points regarding Divine Dictation:
 - Study what modern theologians have said regarding the notion of dictation (Lesson 14).
 - Consider historic articulations of inspiration before the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859 under the following three categories.
 - The Pre-Reformation Fathers (Lesson 14)
 - The Reformers (Lesson 15)
 - Post-Reformation Theologians (Lesson 15)
 - Consider the Bible's testimony concerning itself. (Lessons 16 & 17)
- Last week, in Lesson 16, we began looking at the third and final point regarding Divine Dictation i.e., the Bible's testimony concerning itself. In doing so, I outlined the following three sub-points under which we would consider the Bible's testimony concerning itself.
 - Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Testimony of the Law and the Prophets
 - Testimony of the Apostle Paul
- This morning, in Lesson 17, we will look at the final sub-point regarding the Testimony of the Apostle Paul and end with some concluding remarks regarding the issue of Divine Dictation.
- Remember, just because a host of Christian theologians and philosophers throughout church history have used dictation to describe how inspiration was accomplished, it is meaningless if the notion is not substantiated by scripture.

Dictation: What Saith the Scripture?

Testimony of the Apostle Paul

- Acts 22:14-15—And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, **and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.** 15) **For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.**
 - What did Paul hear? He heard the words of Christ's mouth. He had direct revelations from the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Acts 28:25—And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, **Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet** unto our fathers, (quotes Isaiah 6:9-10)
 - Who spoke Isaiah 6? When you go back there and read it you are reading what the Holy Spirit spoke. God breathed it! The thing that he wrote down back there came out of the mouth of God Almighty. God dictated the words of Isaiah 6 through the penmanship of Isaiah so that the very words that Isaiah wrote down were the very words that God determined should be written down. So, what Isaiah 6 says is what God said. So, when you are dealing with Isaiah 6, you are not dealing with Isaiah, you are dealing with God.
- Galatians 1:1-12—But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12) For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, **but by the revelation of Jesus Christ**.
 - Read the verse closely, it was not *by* the revelation from Christ, not just something sent to him, but it was the revelation *of* Jesus Christ. In other words, the Lord revealed himself to Paul and spoke with Paul face-to-face just like he did with Moses. He put his words in Paul's mouth, and Paul went out to preach and write those things down.
- I Corinthians 14:37—If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord**.
- I Timothy 6:2-3—. . . **These things teach and exhort**. 3) If any man teach otherwise, and **consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
 - The words that Paul wrote down in I Timothy were the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's words were the words of the glorified Christ. Not only are these passages from the pen of the Apostle Paul strong with regard to Pauline authority, but they are also strong in regard to the doctrine of inspiration. The words of Christ to us today are found in Paul's epistles. Paul's epistles are not made up of Paul's interpretation of the things that Christ gave him. It is not just Paul's interpretation of the ministry of Christ, but you have the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ given to Paul and written down for you and for me.
- II Corinthians 13:3—Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.
 - That is something, isn't it? Who is speaking in Paul? Christ is speaking in Paul. The words that Paul speaks came from Christ.
- I Corinthians 7:12, 25— But to the rest **speak I, not the Lord**: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. . . 25) Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

- Here is one example from the pen of Paul where he says that he is speaking to the Corinthians “not the Lord.” Yet, what Paul wrote to them is considered scripture. This is evident by the very fact that it was included in the book of I Corinthians.
- Later, in I Corinthians 14 Paul states the following:
 - I Corinthians 14:37—If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.
- Paul did not say, “Everything I wrote unto you were the commandments of the Lord accept that part in chapter 7 where I offered my own judgement.” No, everything Paul wrote to the Corinthians was to be taken as the commandments of the Lord even the part where Paul offered his own judgement in chapter 7.
- I Corinthians 5:9—Paul wrote other things to the Corinthians that did not qualify as scripture because they were not written by inspiration of God. Consequently, they are not found in the cannon because they were not inspired. Yet, Paul’s judgment recorded in I Corinthians 7 is.
- Therefore, Paul’s judgement in I Corinthians 7 would be subject to all the verses we have studied regarding inspiration (II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:21). How can that be the case? Paul, based on a mind that had been stirred by God the Holy Spirit and saturated with the words of God through the process of inspiration, was able to, out of that mind, write something that the Holy Spirit considered scripture.
- This is not hard to see when one considers the context of I Corinthians 7. In verse 1, Paul begins to address the Corinthians with respect to the questions they had written him about.
 - I Corinthians 7:1—Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
- In seeking to answer their questions, Paul references the teachings of the Lord during his earthly ministry regarding divorce and remarriage in verses 10 and 11 when he states:
 - I Corinthians 7:10-11—And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband: 11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.
- The statement recorded in verses 10 and 11 does not go beyond the teaching offered by Christ in Matthew 5:32, 19:6-9; Mark 10:11-12, or Luke 16:18 on the subject of divorce and remarriage. In verse 12 and following, Paul expands upon the teaching of the Lord during his earthly ministry by offering instructions regarding divorce and remarriage not found in the gospels. Thus, it makes sense to view Paul’s, statement in verse 12, “speak I, not the Lord” as a statement regarding the specific nature and more complete nature of the content revealed to him on the subject of divorce and remarriage as it relates to the body of Christ. In other words, Paul is not saying that he is just speaking and offering his

own judgment, rather he is referring to the further revelation committed to him with respect to the questions raised by the Corinthians.

- I Corinthians 7:40—the Spirit of God in Paul was able to bear witness to the authenticity of Paul’s judgment. In other words, Paul’s judgment was completely congruent with the mind of God the Holy Spirit on the matter.
- So here is an example, where God the Holy Spirit is able to record God’s word out of the mind, experience, and vocabulary of the Apostle Paul. This brings to mind what we studied about inspiration in Job 32:8 (But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.). The book of Luke stands out as another example of this type of phenomena.
 - Luke 1:1-4—Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2) Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3) It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4) That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.
- Luke did not just write the book of Luke out of his own understanding from having interviewed the eyewitnesses alone. Rather, the Holy Spirit reached into the research that Luke had conducted to draw out and set forth in writing via the process of inspiration the Holy Spirit’s inspired history. The Holy Spirit used the knowledge gleaned from Luke’s research to state the history in God’s own words.
- What’s going on in I Corinthians 7 is very similar to what we saw last week in Lesson 16 where the Old Testament claims that Moses said something unto Israel (Exodus 3:1-6) while the New Testament clearly states that God said that unto Israel (Matthew 22:31). I Corinthians 7 states that Paul said something or offered his judgment while I Corinthians 14 says that what Paul wrote in chapter 7 was the commandment of the Lord. The only difference is that in I Corinthians we see the example occurring within the same book, not across the testaments.
- Verses like I Corinthians 7:12, 25, and those few like it, do not disqualify the notion of divine dictation. They fit the pattern exhibited across the whole of Scripture where a thing attributed to a human writer/speaker in one place is elsewhere attributed to God himself in another. Paul was able to write out of the supernatural understanding that God had given him and still have what was written qualify as inspired scripture. This could not be said for Paul’s first epistles addressed to the Corinthians, referred to in I Corinthians 5:9.

The Word and the Words

- Finis Dake stated, “The bible writers say 3,808 times that they were writing the words of God.”
- According to Dr. E.W. Bullinger, “The Word of God is thus for those “that believe.” The “Word” as a whole; and the “words” of which it is made up. They cannot be separated.” (Bullinger, 3)

- Jeremiah 15:16— Thy **words were found**, and I did eat them; and **thy word** was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.
- John 17:8, 14— **For I have given unto them the words** which thou gavest me; . . .14) **I have given them thy word**; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.
- While Bullinger does not use the term dictation or offer any theories with respect to how it was accomplished, he just believed it. He believed it to be the *word* of God made up of the *words* of God. Bullinger did believe that all the *words*, every single one came from God and without them one would not have the *word* of God.
- Bullinger concludes his “Preliminary Remarks” to *How to Enjoy the Bible* with the following words:
 - “With these introductory remarks we shall proceed to divide what we may call our essential and fundamental principles of Bible study into two parts:
 - First, those connected with THE "WORD" as a whole; and
 - Second: those connected with THE "WORDS" of which the Word is composed.” (Bullinger, 6)
- John 8:58—Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am**.
 - The Lord Jesus Christ hung the doctrine of his deity on the tense of one verb. The Jehovah God of the Old Testament is the Jesus Christ of the New Testament. Jesus means “Jehovah Saviour”. And Jesus built that whole doctrine on the tense of a verb, not just the verb but the tense.
- John 10:34-35—Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35) If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;
 - Christ hinges an argument about his being the son of God, and he states that they do not have any right to argue with him about calling himself the son of God if the scripture called them gods. He takes that one word of Psalm 82 and builds his case on it. That is how carefully the Lord Jesus Christ considered the authority of that book down to one word, one phrase. The verb tense is even important and not only that but the very number of the noun is important.
- Galatians 3:16—Now to Abraham and his **seed** were the promises made. He saith not, And to **seeds**, as of many; **but as of one**, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
 - The whole argument of this passage is that God used the singular, and not the plural, of the noun. I am saying that the bible writers make an entire point and depend upon one phrase, or the tense of the verb, or a single word in a passage, or the number of the noun. That is how minutely close God calls it. The words are important, not just the phrases, or the concepts, or the idea, or the sense and the flow.

Concluding Thoughts on Dictation

- Based upon the verses we have considered in Lessons 16 and 17, it seems reasonable to conceive that God accomplished the inspiration of His *word* by dictating the *words* to human authors.
- In Lesson 3 of Manuscript Evidence 101 Brother Jordan states the following regarding dictation before he touches upon the verses contained in this lesson. He states:
 - *God dictated the words of the scripture through human authors.* In other words, God reaches into the library of their vocabulary in such a way that the very words they used were the very words God had determined they would use from eternity past. That is where you take into account the human element. You take into account the fact that it is not a sterile kind of a thing – the writers were not glorified stenographers who had no part in it. God reaches into the library of their vocabulary; he reaches into their personality, and their circumstances, and he writes the words out through that.

Now, there are limitations on inspiration that we will study in future lessons, and you will see all the nuances of this. But the point that Paul is making in 2 Timothy 3:16 is that what is written on that page are the words that God Almighty put there.

Some of you people are writing with pens. Some of you are writing with pencils. You write with different instruments. What you write down takes on the character of the personality of that instrument. I have two pens in my pocket, and one has a finer tip than the other. The tip determines the way the characters look in large measure. You can write with a fountain pen or a ball-point pen, and you will notice a difference when you write with them.

The different characteristics of the instrument that is writing are there as God dictates the words out, but God Almighty is responsible for the words that are recorded. That means that whatever the scripture says, God says, and that is important!” (Jordan, MSS 101 Lesson 3)

- In Lesson 2 we covered the following presuppositions with respect to the word of God.
 - God exists. (Psalms 14:1)
 - God has magnified his *word* above his own name. (Psalms 138:2)
 - God’s *word* is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)
 - God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated his *word* to mankind. (I Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21)
 - God’s *words* were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (Isaiah 30:8, I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve those *words* that he inspired. (Psalm 12:6-7)

- In determining whether or not dictation is an appropriate descriptor for how inspiration was accomplished one must consider the following questions.
 - Which one of the Biblical presuppositions listed above would the notion of dictation undermine?
 - What attribute of God or aspect of His fundamental nature and character does the notion of dictation overthrow?
 - What passage of scripture falsifies (proves false) the dictation view of inspiration?
 - Are there passages that suggest that God dictated his word to the human authors (see passages cited above)?
- So then, why should we let a group of unbelieving critics who deny all the presuppositions identified above talk us out of a particular view of inspiration?
- In seeking to save the doctrine of inspiration from how it had been “stigmatized” by its critics, modern Theologians failed to adequately meet the critics’ accusations. The critics claim the Bible is not of divine origins and cite the “human elements” as their proof. If God created humans, he can certainly use their individual styles and vocabulary to record his word. How does changing the definition of dictation or just backing away from it all together solve the critics’ accusations of the Bible not being a divine book? The real issue is, IS THERE A GOD TO DICTATE? (Contributed by Nathan Kooienga)
- When we consider the Genesis creation account along with the account in the first chapter of John and also Colossians 1:17, we meet a God that Creates and sustains in being all things (besides Himself), *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). We are confronted with a terribly powerful and wise being. Is it possible to approach this topic with the idea of it being too large a task for God to dictate His word? Do we really want to say God had no idea what had transpired in the lives of these writers? NO! David wrote how well God knew him in the 139th Psalm. David tells us God knew everything about him even to his very thoughts. Likewise, God knew these men intimately, for he created them and sustained them, in being, from moment to moment. If this is an accurate picture of the God we serve, then we must listen to God’s words to Job (Job 38:4), “where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.” How can we side with the critics and say the creator cannot use his creation to complete His will as He pleases? Again, God’s word recorded by Jeremiah (32:27) “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?” In my opinion The God of the Bible, the creator of the cosmos is capable of dictating his book while using “human elements”. If God chose to do it this way that is his prerogative who are we to say he cannot? He is an awesome God and not prone to writer’s block. (Contributed by Nathan Kooienga)
- When one combines these presuppositions with the verses we studied in this lesson regarding how inspiration was accomplished it is not hard to see why many throughout church history

conceived of *Plenary Verbal Inspiration* (or just *Verbal Inspiration*) as having been accomplished through the mechanism of dictation. How else does God take his eternally settled upon word and communicate it to human authors without error? I see no problem with viewing God as having accomplished the inspiration of every word (*Plenary Verbal View*) through a process of dictation.

Works Cited

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 Lesson 18 God's Design in Inspiration

Introduction

- Thus far we have considered the following points regarding the doctrine of inspiration.
 - Considered the various views of inspiration: *Natural*, *Dynamic*, *Partial (Spiritual-Rule-Only)*, *Existential*, and *Plenary Verbal* (Lesson 11)
 - Identified the *Plenary Verbal View* as the correct position. (Lessons 11 and 12)
 - Recognized Potential Pitfalls of the Plenary Position (Lesson 12)
 - *Words Not the Men*—the main issue with inspiration is the words on the page not what happened to the human authors.
 - *Preservation Secures the Plenary Position*—*Plenary Verbal* inspiration is meaningless without Preservation.
 - *Plenary Verbal on Inspiration but Dynamic on Translation*— it is inconsistent to hold to the inspiration of every word (*Plenary Verbal*) only to turn around and advocate for a Dynamic Philosophy of translation.
 - Studied Passages Proving the Plenary Position (Lesson 13)
 - *Self-authenticating Nature of Inspiration*—the Bible self-authenticates its own claim of inspiration.
 - *Words Not the Men: Practical Examples*— demonstrated practically that the issue in inspiration is the words that are written down and not the men (I Kings 13, John 11, and Numbers 22-24)
 - Considered whether or not Dictation is a scripturally approached descriptor to describe how Plenary Verbal Inspiration was accomplished (Lessons 14-17)
 - *Divine Dictation and Modern Theologians*— the notion of dictation is almost universally rejected as false by modern Evangelical scholarship.
 - *Historic Articulations of Inspiration*— the words “dictate”, “dictation”, or “dictare” in Latin have a long history of being associated with the inspiration of God's word.
 - The Pre-Reformation Fathers
 - The Reformers
 - Post-Reformation Theologians

- *Dictation: What Saith the Scripture?*—God dictated the words of the scripture through human authors.
 - Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - Testimony of the Law and the Prophets
 - Testimony of the Apostle Paul
- In this Lesson we want to begin considering God’s design in inspiration. In other words, what was God seeking to accomplish by inspiring every word of scripture? Simply stated, **God’s design in inspiration was to make the written word equal with the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- The scriptures see no difference between the written word of God and the living Word, Jesus Christ. The same attributes that are applied to the scriptures are applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in your Bible. The Bible sees no difference between the two.
- God attributes his own attributes to his word, so that when you deal with God’s word you are dealing with God Himself.

God’s Attributes and the Written Word

- There is no difference between what God says and what the scriptures say.
 - Roman 9:17—**For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh**, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.
- Romans 9:17 is a quotation of Exodus 9:16. If you go back and look at the context of Exodus 9 it says, “Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews” in verse 13. Exodus 9 says that Jehovah God said that unto Pharaoh, but Romans 9 says that “scripture saith unto Pharaoh.” That is an illustration of the power and the authority of the written word of God. It can be used interchangeably with Jehovah God. God the Holy Spirit wrote both verses.
- God attributes His own attributes to His word.
 - Galatians 3:8—**And the scripture (*graphē*), foreseeing** that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
- Does God possess the ability to foresee the future? Yes. Paul gives an attribute of God to the scripture – **“The scripture, foreseeing** that God would justify the heathen . . .” The written word of God has the ability to foresee the future. It foresees that God is going to justify the heathen, and therefore it says it “preached before the gospel unto Abraham.”
- Tell me something – did Abraham have a bible? No, Abraham did not have a bible. Five hundred years passed before Moses ever wrote any of that stuff down. He did not have a bible. Therefore, the scripture is doing something that cannot be done. Abraham did not have a bible to preach to

him. So, how could the scripture preach to him? God preached to him! And Paul says that the scripture did it!

- Do you know what Paul is saying? He is saying that the scripture and God are one. They are equal. Now that is how close that connection is between them. You just cannot get around the connection; it is that close. If that book is not that close to God and it is not God's word, then the whole thing is just a bunch of baloney; it's a lie.

The Equality of the Living and Written Word

- In *How to Enjoy the Bible*, Dr. E.W. Bullinger sees no difference between the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ and the written word, i.e., the word of God.
 - "When we speak of the "Word" we can never separate the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the written word, the Scriptures of Truth.

Each of these is called the "Word," because the Greek word *Logos* is used of both.

Logos means the spoken or written word, because it makes manifest, and reveals to us the invisible thoughts.

It is used of Christ, the Living Word, because He reveals the invisible God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, He being in the bosom of the Father, This one [hath] declared [Him]" (John 1:18).

This is why Christ is called "The Word of God," because He makes known, reveals, and explains the Father. . .

This is why the Scriptures are called "the Word of God," because they make known the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word.

Christ is "the Way" to the Father (John 14). He makes God known to us in all His attributes, will, and words. "I have given them Thy Word." It is always "THY Word" (John 17:8, 14, 17)." (Bullinger, 7-8)

- John 1:1—in your Bible there is a connection between the written and the living Word that you do not want to miss. *They are both called the "word of God"*
 - Revelation 19:13—And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: **and his name is called The Word of God.**
 - Hebrews 4:12—For **the word of God** *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- The living Word, (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the written word are both called by the same name. They have the same title given to them. The reason for that is that the connection between the living Word and the written word of God is absolutely astounding – the two are completely and inseparable.

- Bullinger goes on to identify the following three manifestations of the Word: 1) The Incarnate Word, 2) The Written Word, and 3) The Preached Word.
 - “Christ reveals the Father. The Scripture reveals Christ. The Spirit reveals both in the written and in the preached Word (1 Cor. 12:7, 8).

How wonderfully does this magnify the preached Word; and show the solemnity of the charge in 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word."

It shows how small and worthless are all the schemes, tricks and contrivances of present-day evangelists and mission preachers with their ever-new fashions and modern methods, when we see what a high and dignified place God has given to the Preached Word.

How careful should we be that nothing in our manner or matter should lower that dignity, or imply in the slightest degree that the Written Word has lost any of its power; or needs any handmaids or helpmeets.

"I HAVE GIVEN THEM THY WORD" (John 17:14) is the all-sufficient assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to the Father. He did not say I have given them Aids to devotion. He did not say I have given them a Hymn-book, or I have given them thy Word AND something else.

He did not give anything instead of, or in addition to, that Word. And that being so, we are assured that the Word which He gave is all-sufficient, in itself, to accomplish all the purposes of God.

The Word that is preached makes known the Written Word; the Word that is written makes known Christ the Living Word; and Christ makes known God our Father.” (Bullinger, 8-9)

- “Hence it is, that the same things are stated of both the Living and the Written Word, as it is well put by Joseph Hart:

The Scriptures and the Word
Bear one tremendous name,
The Living and the Written Word
In all things are the same.” (Bullinger, 9)

- In Grace School of the Bible, Pastor Jordan illustrates this point thusly:
 - “Now listen people that book (your bible), is not God. I just had to put my bible aside because it is coming all apart. You understand that the book is not God. You can scribble on your bible; you can tear it up and it will fall apart; it will wax and decay. God Almighty will never do any of those things. You can throw your bible in a mud hole, but you cannot throw God in a mud hole.

But, having said all of that, I will tell you that the closest thing you will ever come to God himself on this earth is that book. That is why that book is important to you. That is why

you study it and become friends with it, and that is why it is different from any other book. It is the word of God, and it is so closely connected with the living God. The only contact that you have with the Lord Jesus Christ outside of the pages of that book is on an inner-subjective level (it is inside of you), on a spirit level. Therefore, God has given you that written word in order to be able to evaluate, by an objective standard in black and white, those subjective experiences that you have. Your bible is an objective standard by which to measure everything." (Jordan, MMS 101)

Similar Declarations regarding the Living Word and the Written Word

"His name is called THE WORD OF GOD," Revelation 19:13.
They "pressed upon Him to hear THE WORD OF GOD," Luke 5:1.

The Prince of PEACE, Isaiah 9:6.
The Gospel of PEACE, Romans 10:15.

Jesus said,..."No man cometh unto the Father, but BY ME," John 14:6.
"Make me to go in the PATH of Thy Commandments," Psalms 119:35.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am THE WAY," John 14:6.
"Teach me, O Lord, THE WAY of Thy statutes," Psalms 119:33.

"I am...THE TRUTH," John 14:6.
"Thy Word is TRUTH," John 17:17.

Christ—"Full of grace and TRUTH," John 1:14.
"All Thy Commandments are TRUTH," Psalms 119:151.

"These things saith He...that is TRUE," Revelation 3:7.
"The Judgments of the Lord are TRUE," Psalms 19:9.

"Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal LIFE," 1 John 5:20.
"Holding forth the Word of LIFE," Philippians 2:16.

"A bone of Him shall not be broken," John 19:36.
"The scripture cannot be broken," John 10:35.

"I am the Living Bread...if any man eat of this Bread he shall LIVE for ever," John 6:51.
"Man shall not LIVE by bread alone, but by every Word of God," Luke 4:4.

"With Thee is the FOUNTAIN OF LIFE," Psalms 36:9.
"Thy Law...is a FOUNTAIN OF LIFE," Proverbs 13:14.

Jesus said, "I am the LIGHT of the World," John 8:12.
David said, "Thy Word is a LIGHT unto my path," Psalms 119:105.

"The Life was the LIGHT," John 1:4.
"The Law is LIGHT," Proverbs 6:23.

"Thou art my LAMP, O Lord," 2 Sam 22:29.
"Thy Word is a LAMP unto my feet," Psalms 119:105.

"I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of FIRE," Zechariah 2:5.

"Is not My Word like as a FIRE? saith the Lord," Jeremiah 23:29.

"The Light of Israel shall be for a FIRE," Isaiah 10:17.

"I will make My Words in thy mouth FIRE," Jeremiah 5:14.

"To you which believe, He is PRECIOUS," 1 Peter 2:7.

"Exceeding great and PRECIOUS Promises," 2 Peter 1:4.

"My beloved is...chiefest among ten THOUSAND," Song of Solomon 5:10.

"The Law of Thy mouth is better unto me than THOUSANDS of gold and silver," Psalms 119:72.

"His Mouth is most SWEET," Song of Solomon 5:16.

"How SWEET are Thy Words unto my taste," Psalms 119:103.

"His Name shall be called WONDERFUL," Isaiah 9:6.

"Thy Testimonies are WONDERFUL," Psalms 119:129.

"Christ, the POWER OF GOD," 1 Corinthians 1:24.

"The Gospel is the POWER OF GOD," Romans 1:16.

Lord, "Thou art GOOD, and doest Good," Psalms 119:68.

"GOOD is the Word of the Lord," Isaiah 39:8.

"Ye have known Him that is FROM THE BEGINNING," 1 John 2:13.

"Thy Word is true FROM THE BEGINNING," Psalms 119:160.

"From Everlasting to EVERLASTING Thou art God," Psalms 90:2.

"The righteousness of Thy Testimonies is EVERLASTING," Psalms 119:144.

"Thy throne, O God, is FOR EVER AND EVER," Hebrews 1:8.

"Thy testimonies,...Thou hast founded them FOR EVER," Psalms 119:152.

"The Lord shall ENDURE for ever," Psalms 9:7.

"The Word of the Lord ENDURETH for ever," 1 Peter 1:25.

"Christ ABIDETH for ever," John 12:34.

"The Word of God...ABIDETH for ever," 1 Peter 1:23.

"Worship Him that LIVETH for ever," Revelation 4:10.

"The Word of God LIVETH for ever," 1 Peter 1:23.

Christ's Kingdom "shall STAND FOR EVER," Daniel 2:44.

"The Word of our God shall STAND FOR EVER," Isaiah 40:8.

The STONE..."on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder," Luke 20:18.

"Is not my Word...saith the Lord, like a HAMMER that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jeremiah 23:29.

Christ, "A STUMBLING Stone," Romans 9:33.

They "STUMBLE at the Word," 1 Peter 2:8.

"Lo, I am with you ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world," Matthew 28:20.

"Thy commandments...are EVER WITH ME," Psalms 119:98.

"Christ may DWELL in your hearts by faith," Ephesians 3:17.

"Let the Word of Christ DWELL in you richly," Col 3:16.

Christ said, "ABIDE in me, and I IN YOU," John 15:4.

"If... my Words ABIDE in you," John 15:7.

"Hereby we know that He ABIDETH in us," 1 John 3:24.

"The Word of God ABIDETH in you," 1 John 2:14.

Christ called, "FAITHFUL and true," Revelation 19:11.

"Thy Testimonies...are very FAITHFUL," Psalms 119:138.

"Out of His mouth goeth a sharp SWORD," Revelation 19:15.

"The Word of God...is sharper than any two-edged SWORD," Hebrews 4:12.

Probably refers to both the Living Word and the written Word.

"The Lord TRIETH the Righteous," Psalms 11:5.

"The Word of the Lord TRIED him," Psalms 105:19.

Christ a "TRIED Stone," Isaiah 28:16.

"The Word of the Lord is TRIED," Psalms 18:30.

(Bullinger, 9-11)

Similar Affects Attributed to the Living Word and the Written Word

We are "BORN OF God," 1 John 5:18.

"BORN...by the Word of God," 1 Peter 1:23.

"BEGOTTEN...by...Jesus Christ," 1 Peter 1:3.

BEGOTTEN...through The Gospel," 1 Corinthians 4:15.

"The Son QUICKENETH whom He will," John 5:21.

"Thy Word hath QUICKENED me," Psalms 119:50.

"You hath he QUICKENED who were dead," &c., Ephesians 2:1.

"Thy Precepts...with them thou hast QUICKENED me," Psalms 119:93.

"He that eateth me, even he shall LIVE by me," John 6:57.

"Desire the sincere milk of The Word, that ye may GROW thereby," 1 Peter 2:2.

"Christ hath made us FREE," Galations 5:1.

"The Truth shall make you FREE," John 8:32.

"The Blood of Jesus Christ...CLEANSETH us from all sin," 1 John 1:7.

"YE are CLEAN through the Word which I have spoken," John 15:3.

Christ "is able also to SAVE them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him," Hebrews 7:25.

"Receive...the engrafted Word, which is able to SAVE your souls," James 1:21.

"SANCTIFIED in Christ Jesus," 1 Corinthians 1:2.

"SANCTIFIED by the Word of God and prayer," 1 Timothy 4:5.

"SANCTIFIED through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," Hebrews 10:10.

"SANCTIFY them through THY TRUTH. Thy Word is truth," John 17:17.

"Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us WISDOM," 1 Corinthians 1:30.

"The Holy Scriptures...able to make thee WISE unto salvation," 2 Timothy 3:15.

Christ "HEALED them," Matthew 4:24.

"He sent His Word and HEALED them," Psalms 107:20.

"Striving according to His Working which WORKETH in me mightily," Colossians 1:29.

"The Word of God which effectually WORKETH also in you that believe," 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

"The Lord Jesus Christ...shall JUDGE the quick and the dead," 2 Timothy 4:1.

"The Word that I have spoken...shall JUDGE him," John 12:48.

"I will go unto God, my exceeding Joy," Psalms 43:4.

"Thy Word was unto me the JOY and rejoicing of my heart," Jeremiah 15:16.

(Bullinger 11-12)

- Bullinger follows up the preceding lists of similarities between the Living and written Word with the following comments.

- "Thus we see that the Living Word and the Written Word cannot be separated. And we can understand also why they cannot be separated in the preaching of the Word.

To preach the Written Word without preaching Christ is not preaching at all. Neither is it done in the power of the Spirit.

When Paul went to Thessalonica, he ("as his manner was") "reasoned with them out of the SCRIPTURES" (not as is done to-day, out of the newspapers, or out of the preacher's own head or experience); but he did not end there. We are immediately told that this preaching consisted in "opening and setting forth that CHRIST (the Living Word) must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ (the Messiah)" (Acts 17:1-3).

If the Living Word and the Written Word cannot be separated, we learn that in sitting down to the study of the Word and Words of God it is to hear His voice, to choose that "better part"; to sit at Jesus' feet, and hear HIS word (Luke 10:39)." (Bullinger, 13)

- Brother Jordan offered the following summation regarding God's design in inspiration:

- “The living Word, (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the written word are that close. God attributes his own attributes to his word, and the reason for that is that he is demonstrating that word to be the final authority. It is what he says. *When you are dealing with God’s word, you are dealing with God himself.* And if you are going to deal with God, you will have to deal with his word. That is God’s design and inspiration.” (Jordan. *MSS 101*, Lesson 1)
- Once again we see that the Bible is not like any other book. God attributes his own attributes to his word. That is why we need to take Satan’s policy of evil against God’s word, outlined in Lessons 2 and 3 seriously.

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Sunday, February 7, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 19 The Living Word's Attitude Toward the Written Word

Introduction

- In Lesson 18 we studied that **God's design in inspiration was to make the written word equal with the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.**
- First, we noted that God attributes His own attributes to His word. According to Galatians 3:8, the scriptures, like God, can see the future and therefore preached unto Abraham before God's written word even existed.
- Second, we studied the absolute equality between the Living Word (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the written word (the scriptures). In doing so, we looked at 39 pairs of verses where similar declarations are made regarding the Living and Written Word and fifteen pairs of passages that attribute similar effects to Christ and the scriptures.
- In the end, we considered the following statement from Brother Jordan regarding God's design in inspiration:
 - "The living Word, (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the written word are that close. God attributes His own attributes to His word, and the reason for that is that He is demonstrating that word to be the final authority. It is what He says. *When you are dealing with God's word, you are dealing with God Himself.* And if you are going to deal with God, you will have to deal with His word. That is God's design and inspiration." (Jordan. *MSS 101*, Lesson 1)
- Today, in this Lesson, we want to consider the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Living Word) toward the written word. In other words, what did the Lord Jesus Christ believe about the Old Testament Scriptures?

The Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ

- As we consider the testimony of the Living Word toward the written word, I would like to do so under the following four sub-points:
 - Attitude Toward the Words Themselves
 - General Declarations Regarding Scripture
 - Critical Theories of Old Testament Authorship
 - Advanced Authentication of the New Testament

Attitude Toward the Words Themselves

- Jesus Christ believed that every word in the Bible was the word of God. He even believed the very words in the bible.
- Matthew 22:29-32—Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30) For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31) But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32) **I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**”
 - “The point is that the whole argument turns on the fact that God says, “I am.” It is the tense of the verb that is important. He does not say, “I was a God of the living when they were alive.” He says, “I am, right now, the God of the living.” Then the implication is that Abraham, who is dead, is included in the verse. It says, “I am”. Right now, in the present tense, God is the God of Abraham, so Abraham must be alive. Isaac must be alive, and Jacob must be alive. That is the issue that is being dealt with, and the whole thing turns on the tense of that verb – present tense.” In short, Jesus Christ believed every word of scripture.” (Jordan, MSS 101, Lesson 5)
- Matthew 22:41-46—While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42) Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The Son* of David. 43) He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45) If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46) And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.
 - “Jesus hangs the Pharisees on one word. David called Him Lord. Well, how can Jesus be David’s son and his Lord? He takes that one word and builds a question on it. The Lord Jesus Christ believed the very words of the bible.” The point is that the whole argument
- My point is that Christ believed the Old Testament to be the very words of God, and He divided between them. The attitude of Christ is that the words are the very words of God.
- Luke 4:16-21—notice what Jesus does as he reads from Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue in Nazareth.

Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
<p>1) The Spirit of the Lord GOD <i>is</i> upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to <i>them that are</i> bound;</p> <p>2) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;</p>	<p>18) The Spirit of the Lord <i>is</i> upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,</p> <p>19) To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.</p>

- In Luke 4, Jesus stopped reading at the comma in Isaiah 61:2, closed the book, gave it back to the minster, and said unto them “this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” What did Jesus just do? He rightly divided between His first and second comings. That is how precise Christ was in His attitude and handling of the scriptures (*graphē*).
- Matthew 4:4—But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**
- When you believe that your Bible is entirely comprised of the words of God that places you in some pretty good company. We need to have the same attitude toward the scriptures that our Lord had.

General Declarations Regarding Scripture

- John 10:35—Jesus Asserted Its Unbreakability. He said, “. . . the scripture cannot be broken.” Geisler believes that this is equivalent to claiming that the Bible is infallible.
- Matthew 4:3-10—Jesus Affirmed Its Divine Authority. When the Lord Jesus Christ was tempted, He answered Satan every time with the words “it is written.” He just kept coming back with verses. He recognized that the power, spiritually, is in the book, in the words of God.
- Matthew 26:24, 54—Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy. Jesus Christ not only believed the very words of scripture; He not only acknowledged the power of scripture, but He also fulfilled the prophecies of scripture. He is fulfilling the prophecies of the scripture. He has come to do exactly what they say must be done.
 - Matthew 27:46—Christ quotes Psalm 22:1 in fulfillment of the scriptures.
- Matthew 5:17-18—Jesus Affirmed Its Imperishability. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, i.e., to do what they said needed to be done. He recognized their authority in that regard, and He also verified their truthfulness. Jesus Christ never one time questioned the Old Testament. He always quoted it in such a way as to endorse it, and He endorsed it as verbally inspired.

- Matthew 15:3, 6—Jesus Declared Their Ultimate Supremacy. The Bible is exalted above all human instruction.
- Matthew 22:29 and John 17:17—Jesus Affirmed Their Factual Accuracy. In short, the Bible is wholly true and without error.
- Mark 13:19—Jesus Affirmed Their Scientific Accuracy. Even on the highly debated matter of the origin of the world and mankind, Jesus insisted on the truthfulness of scripture. (Geisler, 197-202)
 - Matthew 19:4-5—Jesus believed that God created Adam and Eve “at the beginning.”

Critical Theories of Old Testament Authorship

- There are 66 chapters in Isaiah. The first 39 chapters in Isaiah are a unit, and chapters 40 through 66 are another unit. It is interesting that Isaiah has 66 chapters just like your Bible has 66 books. It is also interesting that whoever wrote the book of Isaiah knew right where to make the break – after the 39th chapter.
- There are 39 books in the Old Testament. Also, the first 39 chapters of Isaiah talk about the judgment on the nation Israel and the captivity and that kind of thing. Then John the Baptist shows up in chapter 40 of the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 40:3 – “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” Isn’t it interesting that Isaiah 1:2 says, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth”, which refers to the heaven and the earth just like Genesis does. There are 39 chapters, and then there is a break, and then you begin in chapter 40 and see a verse quoted about John the Baptist. Then you read chapter 66 and you conclude with the new heaven and the new earth. The book of Isaiah is like a capsule of the bible. The second half of the book is about the restoration – what God is going to restore.
- There is a view out there called *Deutero-Isaiah* (*Deutero* means two) which maintains that one Isaiah wrote the first 39 chapters, and that an entirely different Isaiah wrote chapters 40 through 66. This view was posited by the German Rationalists and Higher Critics.
- John 12:37-38—But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38) That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?
 - Verse 38 is a quotation from Isaiah 53:1. According to Christ in John 12:38, Isaiah the prophet wrote Isaiah 53, and Isaiah 53 is in the second section of the book. So, I know if there are two authors to Isaiah, I know that Isaiah the prophet wrote the second section in spite of the fact that some people say that he wrote the first and editors wrote the second.

- John 12:39-41— Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41) These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.
 - Verse 40 is a quote from Isaiah 6:10, the first section of Isaiah. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ said that it was spoken by Esaias. So did the Lord Jesus Christ believe the *Deutero-Isaiah* theory? No, Jesus says in John 12 that Isaiah the prophet wrote the first part of the book of Isaiah, and Isaiah the prophet also wrote the second part of the book of Isaiah.
- As with the *Deutero-Isaiah* theory, there are many who question whether or not Moses wrote Genesis through Deuteronomy. In fact, these people say that Moses could not even write. I have never quite understood how they figured that out, since Moses was trained in the School of the Egyptians and had all their wisdom according to Acts 7:22.
- Supporters of the Graph-Wellhausen Theory maintain that Genesis through Deuteronomy were written by five different authors J, E, P, D, R. The Jehovah passages, the passages where God is called by the name of Jehovah, are written by “J”. The passages where God is called by the name of Elohim are written by “E”. The priestly passages are written by “P”. The Deuteronomic passages, the law passages, are written by “D”. “R” is a redactor or an editor that put all this stuff together.
- John 5:45-47—Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust. 46) For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47) But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?
 - The Lord Jesus Christ believed that Moses wrote all five books.
- Jesus Christ verifies the authenticity of the following Old Testament figures and narratives. Christ believed these events as having occurred in history.
 - God created Adam and Eve—Matthew 19:4-5
 - The birth of Seth—Luke 3:38
 - Marriage before the flood—Luke 17:27
 - The days of Noah and the flood—Matthew 24:37-38
 - Noah’s son Shem and his descendants—Luke 3:35-36
 - The birth of Abraham—Luke 3:34
 - Sodom and Gomorra—Luke 17:29-32

- Moses and the burning bush—Matthew 12:26; Luke 20:37
- Israel ate manna in the wilderness—John 6:31-51
- The brazen serpent—John 3:14
- Jonah was swallowed by a whale—Matthew 12:40
- David wrote the Psalms ascribed to him—Matthew 22:43-45
- Daniel was a prophet not a mere historian—Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14
- The slaying of Zechariah—Matthew 23:35 (Geisler, 197-202)

Advanced Authentication of the New Testament

- In John 16, Jesus gave an advanced announcement concerning the inspiration of the New Testament. The New Testament had not been written when Jesus Christ was on the earth, and yet He gives a pre-authenticating announcement about the New Testament. This is a very important passage for us to grasp.
- John 16:12-14—I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14) He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.
 - “The Lord Jesus Christ pre-announced the coming of the Holy Spirit in such a way that guarantees the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament. There are two words that you need to remember: authenticity and genuineness. “Authenticity” means “truthfulness, and accuracy”. When we say that the scriptures are authentic, we mean that they are true, and they are accurate. “Genuineness” means “the scriptures are written by who they say they were written by”. The genuineness of Genesis means that Moses really wrote it. The authenticity of Genesis means that what is written is true and accurate.” (Jordan, MSS 101, Lesson 5)
- John 16:13—Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.
 - Notice how Christ guarantees the authenticity and the genuineness of the New Testament.

- John 14:26—But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
 - You want to be able to get John 16:12, 13 and John 14:26 together. So when those men, (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), begin to write down the gospel account, Jesus Christ has already given assurance of the fact that the Holy Spirit is going to bring to remembrance those things. There is a pre-authentication of the gospel records. We can now look back and see how He was given a statement that preannounced and guaranteed the authenticity of those books. This passage is very important in understanding that the New Testament books were pre-authenticated.

Final Thoughts

- You need to remember that Jesus Christ never one time questioned the Old Testament. He always quoted it in such a way as to endorse it. When he endorsed it, he endorsed it as verbally inspired. Remember these three things and fix them in your mind.
 - Christ never questioned the Old Testament.
 - Christ always quoted it in such a way as to endorse it.
 - Christ endorsed it as verbally inspired.
- There are only three possibilities concerning that testimony of Christ to scripture.
 - *Number One*—there are errors in the scripture, but Jesus did not know about them; so He really is not God. (And if He is not God, you can just throw the whole Bible out the window, and we can stop studying right now.)
 - *Number Two*—there are errors, and Jesus Christ knew about them, and He covered them up. (Well, then He is not holy, and He would not be a suitable or sufficient Savior.)
 - *Number Three*—there are not any errors and that it is God's word; and when you are dealing with the bible, you are dealing with God Himself. This is the one we opt for. (Jordan, *MMS 101*)

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Sunday, February 14, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 20 The New Testament Writer's Attitude Toward the Written Word

Introduction

- Last week, in Lesson 19, we looked at the attitude of the Living Word (the Lord Jesus Christ) toward the written word. In doing so we observed the following:
 - Jesus Christ believed that every word in the Bible was the word of God.
 - Jesus Christ verifies the historical authenticity of Old Testament figures and events.
 - Jesus Christ gave advanced authentication for the New Testament.
 - Jesus Christ never one time questioned the Old Testament. He always quoted it in such a way as to endorse it as verbally inspired.
- Given the testimony of the Living Word toward the written word we concluded Lesson 19 by noting the following three options:
 - *Number One*—there are errors in the scripture, but Jesus did not know about them; so He really is not God. (And if He is not God, you can just throw the whole Bible out the window, and we can stop studying right now.)
 - *Number Two*—there are errors, and Jesus Christ knew about them, and He covered them up. (Well, then He is not holy, and He would not be a suitable or sufficient Savior.)
 - *Number Three*—there are not any errors and that it is God's word; and when you are dealing with the Bible, you are dealing with God himself.
- Having established a firm understanding of our Lord's thoughts regarding the scriptures we will now turn our attention to ascertaining the attitude of the writers of the New Testament toward the written word. We will do this by considering the following two points:
 - New Testament writers affirm the Old Testament
 - New Testament writers on the New Testament

New Testaments Writers Affirm the Old Testament

- The writers of the New Testament give ample evidence that the Old Testament is exactly what it claims to be—the inspired word of God.
- The Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament about 250 times, and it is alluded to approximately 850 times. There are only five books in the Old Testament that are not quoted in

the New Testament – Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. All of the other books are quoted and/or alluded to in the New Testament. The New Testament writers view the Old Testament as authoritative and authentic.

- The Apostle Paul cited the Old Testament over and over again. In Romans 4, Paul talks about Abraham, and he never questions whether or not Abraham believed God, or that his faith was counted unto him for righteousness. Paul just accepted it as true.
- In Romans 9 Paul talks about Isaac, Esau, Jacob, and Pharaoh as well as Sodom and Gomorra. In Romans 3, he quotes Psalms 14, Psalms 5, Psalms 140 and he says that they are all scripture. Paul never questions or denies the Old Testament; rather, he quotes it in such a way so as to affirm it.
- The following is list of Old Testament persons and events affirmed by the New Testament writers. Please note that this list excludes examples from the four gospels made by Christ. Please see Lesson 19 for a list of Old Testament historical verifications found in the narrative of the four gospels.
 - Creation of the universe (Genesis 1)—Colossians 1:16
 - Creation of Adam and Eve (Genesis 1-2)—I Corinthians 11:8-9; 15:45; I Timothy 2:13
 - God resting on the seventh day (Genesis 1)—Hebrews 4:3-4
 - Marriage of Adam and Eve (Genesis 2)—I Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 5:31
 - The temptation of Eve (Genesis 3)—II Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:14
 - The disobedience of Adam (Genesis 3)—Romans 5:12-19
 - The sacrifices of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)—Hebrews 11:4
 - The murder of Abel by Cain (Genesis 4)—I John 3:12; Jude 11
 - The birth of Seth (Genesis 4)—Luke 3:38
 - The translation of Enoch to heaven (Genesis 5)—Hebrews 11:5
 - Marriage before the flood (Genesis 6)—Luke 17:27
 - The preservation of Noah and his family (Genesis 8-9)—I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:5
 - The call of Abraham (Genesis 12-13)—Hebrews 11:8
 - Tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14)—Hebrews 7:1-3
 - Justification of Abraham (Genesis 15)—Romans 4:3
 - Ishmael (Genesis 16)—Galatians 4:21-26

- Promise of Isaac (Genesis 17)—Hebrews 11:18
- Abraham's sojourn (Genesis 20)—Hebrews 11:9
- Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21)—Acts 7:8
- Offering of Isaac (Genesis 22)—Hebrews 11:17
- Exodus through the Red Sea (Exodus 14)—I Corinthians 10:1-2
- Provision of Manna (Exodus 16-17)—I Corinthians 10:3-5
- Fall of Jericho (Joshua 6)—Hebrews 11:30
- Miracles of Elijah (I Kings 17-18)—James 5:17-18
- Three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)—Hebrews 11:34
- Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6)—Hebrews 11:33 (Geisler, 201-202)

New Testament Writers on the New Testament

- The New Testament views itself as scripture. The New Testament writers view other New Testament authors as writing scripture. In other words, they viewed them as inspired and writing with equal authority.
- II Peter 3:1-2—This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: 2) That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:
 - Peter says, “I want you to remember what the Old Testament prophets said as well as what I and the other apostles have commanded.” He does not consider that there was any gap between them, but total equality. In other words, Peter considered what he was saying as equal with the Old Testament.
- II Peter 3:15-16— And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16) As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, **as *they do also the other scriptures***, unto their own destruction.
 - Peter calls everything Paul wrote in “all his epistles” scripture or *graphē*. When the New Testament writers look out and see the other authors writing books, they say, “Hey, that is scripture too.” They recognize what is going on. They know and recognize each other's books. There is a process whereby they are able to authoritatively identify which books are authoritative and authentic.

- I Timothy 5:18—“For the scripture (*graphē*) saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.” As we have already seen in Lesson 13, this verse is comprised of quotations from both the Old and New Testaments.
 - Deuteronomy 25:4—“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.”
 - Matthew 10:10 and Luke 10:7—“The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.”
- Now, do you see what Paul did? He quoted a passage out of Deuteronomy, (the words of Moses), and then he quoted a passage out of the Gospels (the words of Christ), and he called them both scripture. Paul did not make any distinction between them. So, they are both scripture—the Old Testament and the New Testament. Paul considers Luke 10 just as authoritative as Deuteronomy 25. That is important for you to realize, so you understand that Paul and the other New Testament writers consider their writings as equally inspired as the rest of the word of God.
- I Thessalonians 4:8—He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.
 - In other words, if you despise what Paul is telling you, you despise what God said.
- I Thessalonians 4:15—For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, ...
 - “That expression “by the word of the Lord” denotes a special and specific prophetic announcement, and it is used repeatedly in the Old Testament to describe God’s word coming unto someone and then going out through them.

Let’s look at a couple of verses. There is a formula that denotes a specific and special prophetic announcement – God’s word. Paul is very conscious of the fact that he is giving out more than just his own word and that he is giving out God’s word.

Genesis 15:1 – “AFTER these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying . . .”

Do you see that? The word of the LORD comes to Abraham in a vision and gives him the communication. There are a number of passages like this, but I just picked out a couple samples for you.

II Samuel 7:4 – “And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying . . .”

Do you see that formula—“the word of the LORD?” It has to do with a prophetic announcement. Paul knew what he was doing when he used that expression.

I Kings 12:22 – “But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying.” The word comes to him.

Now, you can run other references in the Old Testament and see the significance of what Paul is doing in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 when he says, “For this we say unto you by the

word of the Lord.” He is saying, “What I am writing to you people here is God Almighty’s communication to you.” Paul is conscious of what he is doing.

By the way, 1 Thessalonians is probably Paul’s first epistle (if not his first, then it is his second). But his very first epistles bear the highest claim to inspiration of any of them. He makes the highest claim to inspiration right at the beginning of his writing ministry. Paul starts out right at the beginning knowing what he is doing.” (Jordan, MSS 101, Lesson 5)

- I Timothy 6:3—If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness.
 - I Timothy 6 is a passage about Paul’s authority as the apostle of the Gentiles, but it also shows you his estimation of the scripture. In Chapter 6 Paul is talking about what he had written in the book of I Timothy. It is obvious that Christ’s words were coming from Paul’s mouth, and he was conscious of that fact.
- II Corinthians 13:3—Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.
 - The words of Jesus Christ were coming from Paul’s mouth, and he was conscious of that.
- II Thessalonians 3:6, 14—Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. . . 14) And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
 - Paul is commanding them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to do some things; and he says that if the man does not “obey our word by this epistle” (i.e., the epistle that he is in the process of writing), that they are to have no company with him.

Conclusion

- Considering the evidence, the choice is clear: either the Bible or the critics? What the Bible affirms the critics deny.
- If Jesus is the Son of God, then the Bible is the Word of God, including what it says about the historical events listed in Lessons 19 and 20.
- On the contrary, if the Bible is not the Word of God, then Christ is not the Son of God. The Words of God, the Living and the written, are tied together.

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Sunday, February 21, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 21 Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Undesigned Coincidences

Please note that Brother Craig Holcom's lesson on Undesigned Coincidences from July 27, 2014 was used as a basis to write this lesson.

Introduction

- Since Lesson 18 we have been looking at the close connection between the Living Word (the Lord Jesus Christ) and the written word, i.e., the scriptures. In doing so we considered the attitude of the Living Word toward the written word (Lesson 19) as well as the attitude of the New Testament writers toward the scriptures (Lesson 20).
- In our day, the word of God is being attacked on all fronts. For example, the authenticity of the Biblical books is routinely questioned. For instance, critics have questioned who really wrote the gospels. Consider the following case in point; critics of God's word will say things like "the gospels are just forgeries". They weren't really written by the actual disciples of Jesus, they were written much later than the first century. They are for the most part just made up stories like the Lord of the Rings or the Narnia stories.
- While this type of attack on the veracity of God's word is nothing new, they began in earnest a couple hundred years ago with the advent of German Higher Criticism and the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834).
- Over the last two centuries, Christian philosophers and theologians have sought to counter the arguments made by the opponents of the divine origin of scriptures. As we have seen, some, certainly not all, of the answers offered by Christian academia have not been helpful or productive and have altered the understanding of basic Christian doctrine amongst the faithful (Inspiration & Inerrancy).
- One area where Christian apologetics has shined brightest is in its presentation of the internal evidence of the Bible's divine origin.
- In this lesson we want to begin a consideration of the internal evidence found within scripture that speaks to having been inspired by God. Under the general category of internal evidence for inspiration I would like to consider the following points:
 - Undesigned Coincidences
 - Fulfilled Prophecy
- In this lesson we will use the notion of *Undesigned Coincidences (UC)* to demonstrate the reliability of the Bible. This discussion will extend to:

- The authenticity of the books—they were written by who they claim to have been written by.
- The genuineness of the books—they are trustworthy history, an accurate presentation of the material they report.
- In seeking to accomplish this task, we will first consider what *UC* are and then consider examples of them from both the four Gospels and the Pauline Epistles.

What is an *Undesigned Coincidence*?

- In our day, the notion of *UC* as a defense of the Bible's divine nature has been championed loudly by Dr. Timothy McGrew, a professor of Philosophy at Western Michigan University.
- Dr. McGrew has produced a nine-part lecture series on the reliability of the Bible in addition to participating in websites devoted to Christian Apologetics such as Apologetics315.com
- While McGrew uses the notion of *UC* in his defense of the veracity of the Bible, he was not the first to do so. Earlier Christian thinkers and theologians to use *UC* in support of the Bible's truthfulness include:
 - William Paley—English Clergyman and Apologist: 1743-1805
 - [*Horae Paulinae*](#) (1790)
 - John James Blunt—English Anglican: 1794-1855
 - [*Undesigned Coincidences in the Writings Both of the Old and New Testament : An Argument of Their Veracity : With an Appendix, Containing Undesigned Coincidences Between the Gospels and Acts, and Josephus*](#) (1851)
 - Edmund Bennett—American Lawyer: 1824-1898
 - [*The Four Gospels From a Lawyer's Standpoint*](#) (1899)
- According to William Paley, *UC* are markers of the authenticity of scripture and validate its reliability.
 - “The very particularity of St. Paul's epistles; the perpetual recurrence of names of persons and places; the frequent allusion to the incident of his private life, and the circumstances of his condition and history; and the connection and parallelism of these with the same circumstances in the Acts of the Apostles, so as to enable us, for the most part, to confront them one with another; as well as the relations which subsist between the circumstances, as mentioned or referred to in the different Epistles—afford no inconsiderable proof of the genuineness of the writings, and the reality of the transactions. For as no advertency is sufficient to guard against slips and contradictions, when circumstances are multiplied, and when they are liable to be detected by

contemporary accounts equally circumstantial, an imposter, I should expect, would either have avoided particulars entirely, contenting himself with doctrinal discussion, moral precepts, and general reflections; or if, for the sake of imitating St. Paul's style, he should have thought it necessary to intersperse his composition with names and circumstances, he would have placed them out of the reach of comparison with the history." (Paley, 168)

- In short, *UC* provide us with evidence for the reliability and truthfulness for what the Biblical writers report in a way that made up stories or simply copies of made up stories or forgeries claiming to report events not really witnessed could not provide.
- Dr. McGrew states the following regarding *UC*:
 - "Sometimes two works by different authors (for example Acts, which was written by Luke, and the Pauline epistles) interlock in a way that would be very unlikely if one were copied from the other or both were copied from a common source. For example, one book may mention in passing a detail that answers a question raised by the other. The two records fit together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Fictions and forgeries aren't like that. Why would a forger leave loose ends, unanswered questions? And how could a forger control what another writes to make it interlock with what you have written? But this is what we expect to find when both writers are talking about real historical events that they both are familiar with." (McGrew)

- When we see parallel passages in the N.T. we usually simply see one as filling in a few more details not supplied in the other account. But sometimes they supply much more than that, especially when we find details in passages that are not even in the same context as another passage.
- When considering *UC* it is important to keep in mind that we have the luxury of possessing a completed Bible. We have all twenty-seven New Testament books bound together in one book. Consequently, we sometimes miss or don't think about things like these *UC*. Bear in mind that the New Testament books were not originally bound together in one book. Rather they were twenty-seven separate books written by eight to nine different men. That is what makes the cumulative force of this argument for the genuineness of the Bible so strong.

Undesigned Coincidences in the Gospels

- Regarding why there are four gospel accounts and not more or less, Christians have typically stated the following:
 - Each presents a different quality of Christ's character: 1) Matthew as King, 2) Mark as Suffering servant, 3) Luke as the Son of Man, and 4) John as Deity.
 - Via all four gospels we get a full picture of who Christ is through the four different accounts.
- While these are valid points, there is more. As stated above, when we compare them, they provide us with evidence for the reliability and truthfulness of what they report in a way that made up stories or simply copies of made up stories or forgeries claiming to report events not really witnessed could not provide.

- Critics of the New Testament claim that the Gospels are just copies of made up stories. They will say things like, Matthew just copied Mark and made up some stuff of his own to go along with it. Like if we went and bought a copy of the Grand Rapids press and then bought another copy to verify what we read in the first copy. Consequently, the critics will tell us that we can't use the gospels as separate independent witnesses.
- Dr. McGrew disagrees. He maintains that by noting the *UC* in the gospel narratives we build a case that "the Gospel authors were well informed and habitually truthful."

UC #1—Waiting to be Healed

- Matthew 8:14-16— so if the people believed that Jesus could heal them, why did they wait till evening? If you were sick would you want to wait to get in to see a Doctor?
- Mark 1:21, 29-32—Mark tells the same story, but he gives us this detail in verse 21, "straightway on the sabbath day. . ." The reason the people waited till evening in Matthew 8 is because they were waiting for the Sabbath to end.
- So, do you see here how these accounts interlock? Was Matthew simply copying from Mark? No, why would he leave out this detail. Was Mark copying Matthew? No, Matthew doesn't even include the detail.
 - Mark is explaining Matthew
- So, a skeptic could come along and say, "Well Matthew could have copied from Mark and just left out that little detail. While this admittedly could be the case in one instance, if we have numerous instances like this, it builds the case that it is more than just accidental. It builds a case of cumulative force, which makes it ridiculous to claim accident or forgery.

UC#2—Tell No Man

- Luke 9:28-36—why did they tell "no man in those days any of those things which they had seen?"
- Mark 9:9-10—so Mark gives us the command whereas Luke gives us what they did while offering no explanation for it. Luke just leaves the reader with a curious reaction on the part of the disciples.
 - Now we have Mark explaining something from Matthew and Luke

UC#3—The Feeding of the 5,000

- Mark 6:31, 39—Mark's account of the feeding of the 5,000 gives two details that the other gospel writers do not.
 - Verse 31—" . . many were coming and going and they had no leisure so much as to eat."
 - Verse 39—And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

- Show picture. Why would Mark say this?
- John 6:4—John tells us that the context for the feeding of the 5,000 was during the Passover season. Passover is in the midst of the growing season, the only time of year when there would have been “much green grass” spoken of in Mark. In addition, this also explains the reason “Many were coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” The first century Jewish historian Josephus stated there may have been as many as one million pilgrims in Jerusalem at Passover. Even if he is exaggerating, there must have been a mass of people and this explains this detail given in Mark.
 - So now we have Mark explaining something found in Matthew and Luke and we have John explaining something found in Mark.
- Notice the way this is happening? Mark doesn’t tell us why there were many people coming and going. John doesn’t tell us that there were many coming and going, but he gives us the explanation for it. See how the accounts interlock in this *undesigned* manner?

UC#4—Events in Herod’s Place

- Matthew 14:1-2—two questions arise here that are not answered by Matthew. First, why would Herod be talking to his servants about this? Does this seem a bit odd? Someone of Herod’s stature discussing something of this nature with servants? Second, how would Matthew know what Herod was talking about in his Palace?
- Luke 8:3— Luke, in a totally different context, when talking about women who ministered to Jesus mentions “Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward.
 - Here we see in a totally different context, a totally undesigned interlocking of Luke and Matthew.
- Would anyone think Luke would have made up this information about Joanna in a totally different context just to explain Matthew? Don’t miss what’s happening, each of the gospels is explaining things in other gospels in a non-deliberate, undesigned way that gives them the mark of truth.

UC#5—Mighty Works in Bethsaida

- Matthew 11:21—what are the mighty works Matthew is talking about? For Chorazin the Bible doesn’t tell us. But for Bethsaida we may find an answer. Wouldn’t that be fortunate for us?
- John 6:5—why Phillip? Philip is not really a major character.
- Luke 9:10-11—in Luke, Bethsaida is the setting for the feeding of the 5,000.
- John 12:21—look at the interlocking of Luke and John. Luke doesn’t mention Philip in this context at all. Meanwhile, John doesn’t mention Bethsaida as the setting of the miracle. Only by putting the two accounts together can we understand why Jesus speaks to Phillip in John 6.

- We see that John and Luke interlock.
- As to the mighty works done in Bethsaida in Matthew 11 one needs Luke 9 to learn that Bethsaida was where the feeding of the 5,000 took place. Also note that Matthew gives the account of the feeding of the 5,000 in chapter 14, after the woes are pronounced in Matthew 11. This is on account of the fact that Matthew arranges things thematically rather than chronologically. By comparing Luke, who arranges his account chronologically, we find that the feeding of the 5,000 took place before the woes were pronounced.
- Luke explains and informs Matthew

UC#6—I Will Destroy This Temple

- Mark 14:58, 15:29—In Mark 14 the Jews, before the high priest, at Jesus’ trial, make the accusation “we heard Him say I will destroy this temple”... Later in chapter 15, they mockingly throw this accusation at Jesus while on the cross. There is nothing in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, or Luke) that could have been the pretext for this accusation.
- John 2:18-19—the Jews don’t get what He is talking about. John gives the original statement but not the accusation; the synoptic gospels give us the accusation but not the original statement. Only by putting the two together do we get the whole picture.

UC#7—Jesus Questions Peter

- John 21:15—this example is interesting because the context is after the resurrection. So a mark of authenticity here would be extremely important. Notice carefully the content of what Christ asks Peter: “do you love me more than these...” Without a context, Christ’s question seems challenging and mean. The context is not found in John.
- Matthew 26:33—Matthew records this boast although John does not. Also remember right after this Peter denies knowing the Lord three times. Another connection between John and the synoptic gospels is where Christ asks the question three times and the synoptics where Peter denies Christ.

UC#8—Jews Accusation Against Jesus

- Luke 23:2-4—the Jews make this grave accusation against Jesus, “He is claiming to be a king.” The Jews want Jesus put to death for blasphemy, but why would Pilate care about that? Pilate was probably blasphemer himself. So, they bring this charge that would be a clear violation of Roman law. Christ claiming to be king.
- But look at Pilate’s response. Christ admits to the charge and Pilate says “I find no guilt in this Man.” The Jews had to have been highly annoyed at this point. So why does Pilate find no guilt?
- John 18:33-38—Pilate asks, “are you king of the Jews?” Jesus answers “my kingdom is not of this world”. Pilate surmises this is a spiritual kingdom (i.e. make believe). Pilate thus pronounces “I find no fault in this Man”.
- Only by comparing Luke and John do we get the full story.

Conclusion

- “We are not left merely to guess what forgery looks like. The gnostic “gospels” of the second century afford us a clear illustration of how writers of the time who were forging a document on the basis of documents already known make use of their material. Thus, the “Gospel of Peter” is studded with phrases that sound like they have been lifted directly from the canonical Gospels:
 - “And one of them brought a crown of thorns and put it on the head of the Lord.” (cf. Mark 15:17)
 - “And they brought two malefactors, and they crucified the Lord between them.” (cf. Luke 23:32-33)
 - “And in that hour the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was rent in twain.” (cf. Mark 15:38)
 - “But who shall roll away for us the stone ...?” (cf. Mark 16:3)
 - “Whom seek ye? Him that was crucified? He is risen and gone.” (cf. Mark 16:6)

The degree of verbal similarity between the Synoptic Gospels and the “Gospel of Peter” is high precisely because the forger—and he must be a forger, for he is writing long after Peter’s death—wants to create a certain effect. He wants to give a ring of authenticity to the text he is manufacturing in order to ensure its favorable reception in a community where the established texts carry high prestige.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 3](#))

- Notice there is at least one line between all the gospels. Critics make a big deal about which gospel was written first, who copied from who etc. The force of this evidence is that it doesn’t matter. This evidence points to independent testimony. The gospels are four separate witnesses giving accurate truthful accounts of actual historical events.
- These *UC* serve as internal proof of the Bible’s inspiration. Only a book written under divine inspiration would exhibit characteristics such as these.

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Video series by Dr. Timothy McGrew on the Apologetics315 YouTube page.

- [Who Wrote the Gospels?](#)
- [External Evidence for the Truth of the Gospels](#)
- [Internal Evidence for the Truth of the Gospels, Part 2](#)
- [Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels \(Matthew & Mark\)](#)
- [Alleged Historical Errors in the Gospels \(Luke & John\)](#)
- [Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels](#)
- [Alleged Contradictions in the Gospels, Part 2](#)
- [The Resurrection of Jesus](#)

Sunday, February 28, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 22 Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Undesigned Coincidences, Part 2

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 21 we began looking at the internal evidence of inspiration. Under the general category of internal evidence for inspiration I said that we would consider the following points:
 - Undesigned Coincidences
 - Fulfilled Prophecy
- Last week, with the help of William Paley, Dr. Timothy McGrew, and Craig Holcom we studied the general concept of *Undesigned Coincidences* (*UC*) and looked at examples found in the four gospels. In doing so we concluded:
 - This evidence (*UC* in the gospels) points to independent testimony. The gospels are four separate witnesses giving accurate truthful accounts of actual historical events. These *UC* serve as internal proof of the Bible's inspiration. Only a book written under divine inspiration would exhibit characteristics such as these.
- This morning I want consider some examples of *UC* in Paul's epistles. This seems prudent given the fact that our assembly believes that Paul is the apostle of the gentiles for the current dispensation of grace.

Undesigned Coincidences in the Pauline Epistles

- In his [*Horae Paulinae*](#) (1790), William Paley examines the Book of Acts, on the one hand, and the Pauline epistles, on the other, with a view to showing how each might illustrate the other. Paley's *Horae Paulinae* was the first work to explore this sort of argument in detail. Paley's object is to show the numerous correspondences between the Pauline epistles and the book of Acts.
- "Paley stresses, in the first chapter of the *Horae Paulinae*, that the indirectness, the evident undesignedness, is what makes these coincidences significant. The information that makes the passages from the epistles interlock with the history is dropped casually and naturally into the narrative. By contrast, although there is a very close verbal parallel between Paul's description of the last supper in I Corinthians 11:24-25 and the words of institution in Luke 22:17-20, this coincidence might easily be explained by the hypothesis that one of the sources is copied from the other. That is not to say that either author actually did copy from the other. But when the points of coincidence are too obvious, the correspondence might have been forged after the historical work became well known, or vice versa." (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 2](#))

- “If there were only a small number of undesigned coincidences, we might shrug them off as statistical noise. After all, in a large box of jigsaw puzzle pieces taken at random, one piece, from many different puzzles, someone searching with great patience might find a few pairs that fit together (more or less) by sheer accident. But when a large number of pieces fit together, sometimes in clusters, the chance explanation rapidly becomes absurd. That is why, to appreciate the force of the argument from undesigned coincidences, we must have the patience to work through multiple examples. But the picture that emerges when we take the time to do this will amply repay us for the labor and study we bestow on the project.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 2](#))

Pauline UC#1—I am of Paul and I am of Apollos

- I Corinthians 1:12, 3:6—both of these verses suggest that Apollos had been at Corinth; the second also suggests that Paul had preceded him there.
- Acts 18:19, 23, 26; 19:1—“after his first visit to Greece, Paul went from Corinth to Ephesus, where he left his companions Priscilla and Aquilla; he returned to Palestine, stopping in Jerusalem, and then went north into Asia Minor (Acts 18:19, 23), ultimately making his way back to Ephesus. It is during the period of these later travels that Apollos comes on the scene, being instructed in Ephesus by Priscilla and Aquilla (Acts 18:26) and passing from them over to Achaia, where “he greatly helped those who through grace had believed” (Acts 18:27). We might have inferred from this alone that Apollos went to Corinth on this trip, but we need not stop here, as we find that Paul came back to Ephesus at the very time that Apollos was in Corinth (Acts 19:1).” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 2](#))

Pauline UC#2—Letters of Commendation

- There is a further point of coincidence, equally indirect, between this passage of Acts and an expression Paul uses when remonstrating with the Corinthians in his second epistle.
- II Corinthians 3:1-2
- Acts 18:27—as it happens, the book of Acts provides the clue to Paul’s language; for when Apollos, having been instructed by Priscilla and Aquilla, made his own trip to Corinth, “the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him” (Acts 18:27).
- “What should we infer from the way that the book of Acts interlocks with the Corinthian epistles? The examples we have looked at here offer us some evidence that the authors of each were well informed and habitually truthful. That falls short of a demonstration, of course, but all historical evidence falls short of mathematical demonstration. The case is a *prima facie* one, and it would be strengthened if we found other, similar arguments with respect to these texts. Paley gives a dozen for each of these epistles.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 2](#))

Pauline UC#3—Contribution for the Poor Saints at Jerusalem

- “One of the benefits of having both Paul’s letters and a history of Paul’s activities (the book of Acts) from another hand is that we are able to compare points of contact across the two genres. Their overlap is all the more valuable since they appear to have been written largely or wholly independently of one another, with very little verbal similarity at any point.

What should we expect from such material, if each is independently grounded in the facts? With luck, and if the material is extensive, we should be able to find multiple instances where the documents refer to the same people or events. Of course, we should not expect the history and the letters to correspond point-for-point; in the nature of the case, there will be much in the letters that would be out of place in the history, while the history—in keeping with the historical standards of the times—may organize material conceptually rather than chronologically and may compress or pass over some incidents in the course of the narration. And occasionally, the correspondences may cross over several letters, creating a network of related passages that cannot with any plausibility be dismissed as fabrication or forgery.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 3](#))

- Romans 15:25-26—here we have three points of interest all in the same passage in one of the letters: a collection being take up in Macedonia, a similar collection in Achaia, and Paul’s plan to travel to Jerusalem to take this aid to the saints there.
- Acts 20:2-3—we find Paul on the way back to Palestine, but there is not a word about a contribution.
- Acts 24:17-19—Paul mentions that he came to bring alms to his countrymen, but there is no mention of where the monies come from.
- The points of correspondence are so indirect that there is no suspicion of copying here. Two other passages from the letters enable us to fill out the picture.
- I Corinthians 16:1-4—we see that there was a contribution being collected at Corinth, the capital of Achaia, for the Christians of Jerusalem.
- II Corinthians 8:1-4, 9:2—we find the churches of Macedonia introduced as already engaged in a collection for this very purpose.
- “Thus all of the circumstances brought together in those two verses in Romans are corroborated by a number of other passages in the history of Acts and in the Corinthian epistles. And each of these, by some hint in the passage, or by the date of the writing in which the passage occurs, can be fixed at a particular time—a period toward the close of Paul’s second missionary journey.

Does this conformity, scattered and indirect, with not a whiff of verbal similarity, look like forgery on one part or on the other? Or rather, does each passage stand perfectly naturally in

connection with its own context? If so, the suggestion that such a coincidence is the effect of design is most improbable.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 3](#))

- “The book of Acts and the Pauline epistles are verbally independent; their interconnections are indirect. That is what makes their harmonies so impressive as evidence that both give us substantially truthful representations of real events.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 3](#))

Pauline UC#4—Greet Prisca and Aquila

- “There are certain parts of Paul’s letters that we typically pass over in silence. The long lists of greetings, in particular, are flyover territory for expository preachers. “Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas...” The congregation is probably snoring already. And yet such passages can, on occasion, furnish us with beautiful examples of coincidence without design.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))
- Romans 16:3-4—“first, the fact that this greeting appears in the epistle to the *Romans* suggests that Prisca and Aquila are inhabitants of that city.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))
- Acts 18:2—so Priscilla and Aquila were originally inhabitants of Rome, perhaps recently returned once the expulsion under Claudius ceased to be enforced. This is one point of coincidence.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))
- Acts 18:3, 18—“again, from Acts 18, we find that Paul stayed with them (18:3), and when he left, they departed with him (18:18). From this, it would be a fair inference that they were fellow workers with him, though only Paul’s greeting in Romans makes this fact explicit.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))
- Acts 18:12-17—“third, Paul says that they “laid down their own necks” for his sake. How so? See Acts 18:12-17, where Paul is dragged before the Roman tribunal and Sosthenes is beaten by the mob. If Aquila and Prisca were Paul’s fellow workers Christ Jesus in Corinth, it is clear that they, too, were exposed to dangers.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))
- “Fourth, Paul indicates that the churches of the Gentiles give thanks for them. Given the themes of the entire letter, this singling out of the Gentiles seems to have more than ordinary significance. And going back to Acts 18:2, we find that Aquila was a Jew, expelled from Rome when the emperor Claudius, exasperated with riots in the Jewish quarter that had something to do with a fellow named “Chrestus” (a common Roman misspelling of “Christus”), decided to evict the Jews. Yet they were working with Paul, who in this very city declared that he was turning from the Jews to the Gentiles and from that time forward conducted a highly effective mission among them (18:5-11). So Prisca and Aquila, though Jews, took part in the ministry to the Gentiles. And that is how they earned the thanks of the Gentile churches.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))

- Romans 16:1—*why commend a servant of the church at Cenchrea?* Paul is writing, apparently, from Corinth. Perhaps Cenchrea is, then, in the neighborhood of Corinth.
- Acts 18:18—we find from the book of Acts that Paul himself, upon leaving Corinth, visited Cenchrea.
- “Thus the apparently barren lists of greetings furnish us with numerous points of indirect correspondence—consistency and even harmony, but without verbal borrowing—with the events in the historical narrative of Acts.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 4](#))

Pauline UC#5—The Life and Journeys of Timothy

- I Corinthians 4:17—Paul explains that he has sent Timothy unto the Corinthians. From that passage alone, however, we cannot tell whether he has sent him *before* the letter or *with* it, in which case the language of “sending” would be anticipation of the act.
- I Corinthians 16:10-11—makes it plain that Paul had sent Timothy before writing the letter, as he speaks of Timothy’s arrival as something independent from their receipt of the letter itself.
- “But the comparison of these two passages raises an interesting question. If Timothy had been sent first, why should he not arrive first? And if he arrived first, what use would it be to send, after the fact, instructions on how they were to receive him?

The only plausible resolution is that Timothy, though sent first, must have taken some indirect route to Corinth. The fastest method of travel from Ephesus, where Paul was writing, to Corinth would be to take a ship; with a fair wind, the journey between these two cities on opposite sides of the archipelago can be made in a very short time.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 6](#))

- Acts 19:21-22—“we discover that Timothy, when he left Ephesus, took the land route, and went up through Macedonia. Here once again we have the characteristic of undesigned coincidences that neither the historical account nor the letters could plausibly be said to have been written up from the other. The letter does not mention Timothy’s journey through Macedonia at all; the book of Acts does not mention Paul’s letter. But what we find in the book of Acts is the only plausible way of reconciling those stray comments Paul makes in the letter.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 6](#))
- “It is not always so in historical work. Jortin’s *Life of Erasmus*, for example, is framed almost entirely from Erasmus’s letters, and for just that reason it gives us virtually nothing that cannot be found in the letters themselves. There is much parallel material between the letters and Jortin’s biography, but there is no *interlocking*. The coincidences do not qualify as *undesigned*.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 6](#))

- II Timothy 3:15—clearly, this is a reference to the Jewish scriptures; but Paul gives no clue as to how Timothy, who was not circumcised until after his conversion as a young man (Acts 16:3), had acquired such knowledge.
- Acts 16:1—his mother made sure he was instructed in the scriptures of her people.

Pauline UC#6—Acts Was Not Written by Someone Copying Paul's Letters

- “A life as rich in travel and relationships as Paul’s was, documented both by his letters and by the history of the book of Acts, affords many opportunities for undesigned coincidences to emerge—so many, in fact, that it is worth pausing to see some of the evidence that Acts was not written by someone who had Paul’s letters before him.

Leafing through II Corinthians, we notice how conspicuous a part is played by Titus. He is named multiple times (see chapters 7 and 8 in particular), and Paul describes him in II Corinthians 8:23 as “my partner and fellow helper concerning you.” Yet in the book of Acts, his name does not appear even once. It would be a poor fabricator who could not make more of his material than this. Yet in real historical documents, the omission of some person or event that we could hardly imagine ourselves omitting is quite common.

Or consider Paul’s enumeration of his sufferings in II Corinthians 11:24-25. “Thrice was I beaten with rods”—but only one of those occasions makes it into the history (Acts 16:22). “Thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep”—what an opportunity to tell a set of dramatic tales! Yet not one of these three is mentioned in the book of Acts, where the one disastrous voyage that is recounted (Acts 27) takes place years after this letter was penned.

Or compare the account Paul gives of his escape from Damascus in II Corinthians 11:32-33 with the account of the same adventure in Acts 9:23-25. The main facts are the same, but the differences make it perfectly clear that the history was not written up from the letter. In II Corinthians, for example, Paul says that Aretas had the city guarded, though there is no information as to who did the guarding. In Acts, it is told that the Jews kept watch at the gates for Paul, for which they probably needed the leave of the ethnarch; yet Aretas goes unnamed. True, it is not hard to reconcile these statements. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se*, as the saying goes: he who does a thing by another does it himself. But here again, it is not credible to suggest that the author of Acts wrote his history from the letter.

This same manifest independence is visible in I Corinthians as well. Consider all of the problems that the church at Corinth had written about, problems to which Paul replies in 1 Corinthians 7 and 8: problems about marriage, about calling, about the unmarried, about food offered to idols. It is wholly natural that they should make these inquiries of Paul and wholly natural that he should reply to them. Yet in the book of Acts we find no trace of these problems at Corinth, and the one place that the question of food offered to idols is touched upon, the Jerusalem council arguably enjoins something stricter than Paul himself, writing later than that event, imposes (Acts 15:20).

All of these passages provide evidence that the history was written independently of these letters. The numerous coincidences between them, some of which we have already seen in this series and some of which we will be looking at in subsequent installments, are therefore genuinely undesigned. And that is why they provide evidence of their substantial trustworthiness.

One more touch of verisimilitude in 1 Corinthians itself, noted by Paley in his *Horae Paulinae*, though not really an undesigned coincidence, deserves attention. Paul begins chapter 7 with a reference to earlier correspondence now lost: “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me. . .”

The issues they have raised, however foreign to us, are the sorts of things we can well imagine arising in a young church of the time. But other parts of the letter reveal that there were graver and more embarrassing problems that they had not written about but that Paul had evidently learned of from other sources: bitter quarreling and divisions (1:11, 11:18), sexual immorality (5:1), and lawsuits between members of the church (6:1). What is more natural or probable than that their letter to Paul should speak of the issues that did not reflect poorly on any of them, while rumor carried to Paul’s ears (“It is commonly reported . . .” 5:1) an account of the more scandalous matters? This manner of dividing the issues Paul addresses would be most improbable in a forgery. It has the ring of truth.” (McGrew, [Undesigned Coincidences: Part 5](#))

Conclusion

- Please recall from Lesson 21 last week that *UC* demonstrate the reliability of the Bible and demonstrate the following:
 - The authenticity of the books—they were written by who they claim to have been written by.
 - The genuineness of the books—they are trustworthy history, an accurate presentation of the material they report.
- These *UC* serve as internal proof of the Bible’s inspiration. Only a book written under divine inspiration would exhibit characteristics such as these.

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Sunday, March 6, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 23 Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Fulfilled Prophecy

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 22 we continued our consideration of the internal evidence of inspiration by looking at Undesigned Coincidences between the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles.
- In Lesson 21 I said that we would be looking at two primary categories of internal evidence for the Bible's inspiration: 1) Undesigned Coincidences, and 2) fulfilled prophecy. Having completed our cursory study (much more could be said) of Undesigned Coincidences we are now ready to turn our attention to a consideration of fulfilled prophecy.

Our Prophetic God

- Fulfilled prophecies give clear attestation to the hand of God in human history and are some of the most important evidences we have for the divine origin and inspiration of the Bible. The Bible is the only religious document in existence that provides more than two thousand prophecies that validate its historical claims. Biblical prophecy deals with everything from the Lord Jesus Christ, the nation Israel, Gentile nations (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome), cities (Tyre), and people (Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus). (Story, 37)
- Other religions have, of course, made prophetic claims, but in no other religion in the world has prophecy been fulfilled so completely and so accurately as what is recorded in the Bible.
- Many believe that the issue of fulfilled prophecy is the single greatest Divine apologetic.
- Isaiah 46:9-10—Remember the former things of old: for *I am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, 10) **Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:**
 - God almighty has the capacity to declare from the beginning the things “not yet done.” God’s ability to do this stems from the fact that, as God, He knows the “end from the beginning.” Whatever, God declares “shall stand” i.e., it will come to pass.
- Numbers 23:19—**God is not a man, that he should lie;** neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it*? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?
 - If God would be wrong about something, He declared in advance He would not be God. What makes God God is the fact that He knows the end from the beginning and cannot lie or be wrong about anything He declares. God’s knowledge is infinite, and His word cannot be broken (John 10:35).

- Isaiah 48:3, 5—**I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass. . . 5)** I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.
 - God’s ability to predict an event in advance and have it come to pass as it was foretold is what sets God apart from the man-made gods of the Gentiles. Furthermore, not only does God possess the capacity to declare the end from the beginning, He had the audacity to set forth His predictions in writing. The issue of fulfilled prophecy is not only one of the greatest proofs for the existence of God, it also serves as strong internal evidence for inspiration.
- Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:20-22—God issues strong decrees concerning the use or misuse of prophecy and the identification of true and false prophets. God instructed Israel to put to death anyone who prophesied on any authority other than God’s—even if his prophecy came to pass. Moreover, if a prophecy did not come to pass, even if it was spoken in the name of the Lord, that person was to be put to death as a false prophet. (Story, 37)

Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled in Christ

- “The Old Testament, written over a one-thousand-year period, contains nearly three hundred references to the coming Messiah.” (McDowell, 164) The fact that all three hundred of these prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ establishes solid internal conformation of inspiration.
- Not only was the Old Testament written over a 1,000-year time span but it was also completed at least 250 years before the advent of Christ. According to the traditional view of the Septuagint (which I am not necessarily endorsing), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament dates its origin to about 250 B.C. When one considers that a complete Hebrew Old Testament must have predated its translation into Greek, the date for the completion of the Old Testament is pushed back even further into antiquity. 450 B.C. is the date accepted by most conservative scholars for the completion of the Old Testament. Therefore, suffice it to say that there was at least a 400-year gap (many times longer) between the prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and their fulfilment in the advent of Christ.
- In his book *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell catalogues 61 Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ during his first advent. Time and space will not permit an exhaustive investigation of all 61 prophecies in this lesson. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain a copy of McDowell’s book and look at pages 168 through 192.
- For our purposes we will consider the following ten prophetic utterances fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ.

Born at Bethlehem

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Micah 5:2—But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, <i>though</i> thou be little among the thousands of Judah, <i>yet</i> out of thee shall he come forth unto me <i>that is</i> to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth <i>have been</i> from of old, from everlasting.	Matthew 2:1—Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Also see Luke 2:4-7 & John 7:42

- God eliminated all the cities of the world, save one, for the entrance of his Son into the world. Jesus was born in precisely the place that the prophet predicted.

Preceded by a Messenger

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Isaiah 40:3—The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Also see Malachi 3:1	Matthew 3:1-3—In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2) And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3) For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Also see Luke 1:17 & John 1:23

- John the Baptist was the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 according to the Matthew, Luke, and John.

Entrance into Jerusalem on a Donkey

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Zechariah 9:9—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he <i>is</i> just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.	Luke 19:35-37—And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. 36) And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37) And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Also see Matt. 21:6-7

Betrayed By a Friend

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Psalm 41:9—Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up <i>his</i> heel against me. Also see Psalm 55:12-14	Matthew 10:4—Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. Also see Matt. 26:49-50 & John 13:21

Betrayed for Thirty Pieces of Silver

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Zechariah 11:12—And I said unto them, If ye think good, give <i>me</i> my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty <i>pieces</i> of silver.	Matthew 26:15—And said <i>unto them</i> , What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

Silver to be thrown in the House of the LORD

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Zechariah 11:13—And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty <i>pieces</i> of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.	Matthew 27:5—And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Silver Used to Purchase the Potter's Field

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Zechariah 11:13— And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty <i>pieces</i> of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.	Matthew 27:7— And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Silent before His Accusers

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Isaiah 53:7— He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth	Matthew 27:12— And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

Hands and Feet Pierced

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Psalm 22:16—For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. Also see Zech. 12:10	John 20:25—The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Also see Luke 23:33

- Here we see the Roman manner of exaction foretold before the Roman Empire even existed.

Numbered with the Transgressors

Prophecy	Fulfillment
Isaiah 53:12— Therefore will I divide him <i>a portion</i> with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.	Mathew 27:38— Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. Also see Mark 15:27-28

Fulfilled Prophecy and the Life of Jesus: Engineered or Lucky?

- In the face of the internal evidence of inspiration provided by fulfilled prophecy, skeptics and critics have tried to rescue their enterprise arguing either one of the following in respect to the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies.
 - Engineered Fulfillment
 - Accidental Fulfillment

Engineered Fulfillment

- In 1965, radical New Testament scholar H.J. Schonfield wrote a book titled *The Passover Plot* in which he argued that Jesus was a messianic pretender who conspired to fulfill prophecy in order to substantiate His claims. There are several lines of argumentation that demonstrate the implausibility of Schonfield's thesis:
 - “There is no way that Jesus could have controlled many events necessary for the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. For example, He could not control where He was born (Mic. 5:2), how He would be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14), when He would die (Dan. 9:25), what tribe (Gen. 49:10) and lineage He would be from (II Sam. 7:12), or other facts about His life that have corresponded to prophecy.

... there is no way short of being supernatural that Jesus could have manipulated the events and people in His life to respond in exactly the way necessary for it to appear that He was fulfilling all these prophecies, including John's heralding (Matt. 3), His accuser's reactions (Matt. 27:12), how the soldiers cast lots for His garments (John 19:23-24), and how they would pierce His side with a spear (John 19:34).

Indeed, even Schonfield admits that the plot failed when the Romans actually pierced Christ. The fact is that anyone with all this power would have to be divine—the very thing the *Passover Plot* hypothesis attempts to avoid. In short, it takes a bigger miracle to believe the *Passover Plot* than to accept these prophecies as supernatural.” (McDowell, 192-193)

- Belief that the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies was engineered by Christ during his earthly ministry would require belief in a greater supernatural act than simply believing in their organic fulfillment as recorded in the four gospels.

Accidental Fulfillment

- A second argument one might utilize to try and escape the internal evidence for inspiration provided by fulfilled prophecy is coincidence. In other words, Jesus fulfilled all 61 Old Testament prophecies conserving His first advent by accident and happenstance.
- In 1944 a book appeared by Peter Stoner titled [*Science Speaks*](#). Among other things, Stoner's work presented the mathematical probability of the ten prophetic statements we looked at above ever having been fulfilled in one person. The following is quotation from Stoner's book:
 - “. . . the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies (The same ten we looked at above. Stoner combined a few of them.) is 1 in 10^{17} .

Let us try to visualize this chance. If you mark one of ten tickets, and place all of the tickets in a hat, and thoroughly stir them, and then ask a blindfolded man to draw one, his chance of getting the right ticket is one in ten. Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10^{17} of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ.

This means that the fulfillment of these eight prophecies alone proves that God inspired the writing of those prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one change in 10^{17} of being absolute.

... Sometimes we weigh our chances in the business world, and say if an investment has nine chances in ten of being profitable, and only one chance in ten of being a failure, it is safe enough for us to make the investment. Whoever heard of an investment that had only one chance in 10^{17} of failure? The business world has no conception of such an investment. Yet we are offered this investment by God. By the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior we know, from only these eight prophecies which lack only 1 chance in 10^{17} of being an absolute proof, that that investment will yield the wonderful dividend of eternal life with Christ. Can anyone be so unreasonable as to reject Jesus Christ and pin his hope of eternal life on such a slim chance as finding the right silver dollar among this great mass, covering the whole state of Texas two feet deep? It does not seem possible, yet every man who rejects Christ is doing just that.

More than three hundred prophecies from the Old Testament which deal with the first advent of Christ have been listed. Every one of them was completely fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Let us see what happens when we take more than eight prophecies.

Suppose we add eight more prophecies to our list, and assume that their chance of fulfillment is the same as the eight just considered. The chance that one man would fulfill all sixteen is $1 \times 10^{28} \times 10^{17}$ or 1 in 10^{45} .

Let us try to visualize this as we did before. Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.) If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired. Certainly God directed the writing of His Word.

In order to extend this consideration beyond all bounds of human comprehension, let us consider forty-eight prophecies, similar in their human chance of fulfillment to the eight which we originally considered, using a much more conservative number, 1 in 10^{21} . Applying the same principle of probability used so far, we find the chance that any one man fulfilled all forty-eight prophecies to be 1 in 10^{157} .

This is really a large number and it represents an extremely small chance. Let us try to visualize it. The silver dollar, which we have been using, is entirely too large. We must select a smaller object. The electron is about as small an object as we know of. It is so small that it will take 2.5×10^{15} of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we were going to count the electrons in this line one inch long, and counted 250 each minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just the one-inch line of electrons. If we had a cubic inch of these electrons and we tried to count them, it would take us 1.2×10^{38} years (2×10^{28} times the 6 billion years back to the creation of the solar system).

With this introduction, let us go back to our chance of 1 in 10^{157} . Let us suppose that we are taking this number of electrons, marking one, and thoroughly stirring it into the whole mass, then blindfolding a man and letting him try to find the right one. What chance has he of finding the right one? What kind of a pile will this number of electrons make? They make an inconceivably large volume.

... To the extent, then, that we know this blindfolded man cannot pick out the marked electron, we know that the Bible is inspired. This is not merely evidence. It is proof of the Bible's inspiration by God—proof so definite that the universe is not large enough to hold the evidence. Some will say that our estimates of the probability of the fulfillment of these prophecies are too large and the numbers should be reduced. Ask a man to submit his own estimates, and if they are smaller than these we have used, we shall add a few more prophecies to be evaluated and this same number will be reestablished or perhaps exceeded.

Our Bible students claim that there are more than three hundred prophecies dealing with Christ's first advent. If this number is correct, and it no doubt is, you could set your estimates ridiculously low on the whole three hundred prophecies and still obtain tremendous evidence of inspiration.

For example you may place all of your estimates at one in four. You may say that one man in four has been born in Bethlehem; that one of these children in four was taken to Egypt, to avoid slaughter; that one in four of these came back and made his home in Nazareth; that one in four of these was a carpenter; that one in four of these was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver; that one in four of these has been crucified on a cross; that one in four was then buried in a rich man's tomb; yes, even that one in four rose from the dead on the third day; and so on for all of the three hundred prophecies and from them I will build a number much larger than the one we obtained from the forty-eight prophecies.

Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.” (Stoner, 100-110)

- The accidental fulfillment argument is just as ridiculous as the engineered fulfillment argument if not more so.

Conclusion

- The issue of fulfilled prophecy remains one of strongest apologetic arguments for the existence of God and internal evidences for the inspiration of scripture.

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Sunday, March 13, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 24 External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the Old Testament

Introduction

- Way back at the beginning of this class, in Lesson 2, we discussed the difference between an Evidential and Presuppositional approach to the topic of inspiration. Specifically, I stated:
 - “In the weeks and months leading up to the start of class I gave a lot of thought to how I should begin and the best order for covering the material. While I knew I was going to start with the issue of inspiration, originally, I thought I would cover the evidentiary proofs of inspiration first.

As I pondered my options further I decided that beginning with an evidentialist approach might send the wrong message. I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God because that is the Bible’s claim for itself. This does not mean that there are no evidentiary proofs that speak to the Bible’s inspiration, it just means that we need to base our study on the proper set of assumptions.

- God exists. (Psalms 14:1)
- God has magnified His word above His own name. (Psalms 138:2)
- God’s word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)
- God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated His word to mankind. (I Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21)
- God’s words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (I Peter 1:23)
- God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7)

So, for the purposes of this class, we are going to initially adopt a presuppositional approach that assumes the Bible to be the inspired word of God at the outset. This assumption is made on account of the FACT that the Bible claims to be inspired by God. After we have learned what the Bible says about itself, we will consider the many evidential proofs that the Bible is, in fact, of divine origin.

I am aware of the division that exists within Christian Apologetics between the presuppositional and evidential approaches. It is my view that both are valid and have a seat at the table. Consequently, throughout the course of this study we will be looking at both. There is ample internal and external evidence that the Bible was given by inspiration of God and is therefore of divine origin.” (Ross, [Lesson 2](#))

- After taking some time to get our footing (Lessons 1-10), we have spent the last twelve lessons (Lesson 11-23) studying the Bible’s own claim of inspiration as well as the internal evidence that substantiates that claim.

- Now beginning with Lesson 24, I would like to adopt a more evidentialist approach and look at some of the external proofs for inspiration. In order to accomplish this task, I intend to touch upon the following:
 - Historicity of the Old Testament
 - Historicity of the New Testament
 - The Transmission of the Text
- For the remainder of this lesson we will focus on the first of these three points—the Historicity of the Old Testament.

Historicity of the Old Testament

- We have already seen in Lessons 19 and 20 that Jesus and the rest of the New Testament authors referred to the most disputed passages of the Old Testament as historical, including the creation of Adam and Eve, Jonah and the whale, and Noah's flood. Indeed, the New Testament writers refer to persons or events from every chapter of Genesis 1-22 and many others from the rest of the Old Testament.
- First, it is important to state at the outset that the purpose of this lesson is not to exhaust this subject. We could easily spend twenty plus lessons just on the topic of the historical reliability of the Old Testament. The amount of available literature that has been written on this topic is as deep as it is wide.
- Unlike the *Book of Mormon* or the Islamic *Quran*, the Bible was not written in a historical vacuum. Consider the following unique features of the Scriptures:
 - Written over a 1,500-year span.
 - Written by more than forty authors from every walk of life:
 - Kings, military leaders, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, tax collectors, poets, musicians, statesmen, scholars, and shepherds.
 - Written in different places:
 - Moses in the wilderness
 - Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - John while in exile on the isle of Patmos

- Written at different times:
 - David in times of war
 - Solomon in times of peace and prosperity
- Written on three continents:
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - Europe
- Written in three languages:
 - Hebrew
 - Aramaic
 - Greek
- Written in a wide variety of literary styles:
 - Poetry, historical narrative, song, romance, personal correspondence, memoirs, satire, biography, autobiography, law, prophecy, parable, and allegory.
- In spite of its diversity, the Bible presents a single unfolding story: God’s redemption of human beings.
 - “Contrast the books of the Bible with the compilation of Western classics called the *Great Books of the Western World*. The Great Books contains selections from more than 450 works by close to 100 authors spanning a period of about twenty-five centuries: Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, Hobbes, Spinoza, Calvin, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Hume, Kant, Darwin, Tolstoy, Whitehead, and Joyce, to name but a handful. While these individuals are all part of the Western tradition of ideas, they often display incredible diversity of views on just about every subject. And while their views share commonalities, they also display numerous conflicting and contradictory positions and perspectives. In fact, they frequently go out of their way to critique and refute key ideas proposed by their predecessors. . . The uniqueness of the Bible shown does not prove that it is inspired. It does, however, challenge any person sincerely seeking truth to consider seriously its unique quality in terms of its continuity.” (List amended from McDowell, 3-7)
- The Bible is an historical document of demonstrable accuracy and reliability. It is full of information on the history of the Hebrew people as well as other ancient civilizations. In every area in which it can be checked-out: historically, culturally, geographically, and scientifically the Bible has been verified as factual by extra-biblical sources. (Story, 33)

- “Over the past one hundred years, the archaeologist’s spade has verified numerous events, customs, cities, and nations mentioned in the Old Testament. At one time many scholars dismissed some of the Old Testament as mythical because they had no outside confirmation of the people, places, or events in doubt. But archaeology has changed all that, demonstrating the Old Testament’s reliability on literally hundreds of historical facts.” (Story, 36)
- In his 1992 book *Defending Your Faith: How to Answer the Tough Questions*, Christian apologist Dan Story provided the following list of archeological confirmations of the Old Testament. In the intermittent 24 years this list has grown by leaps and bounds.
 - The Ebla Tablets. Since 1974, archeologists have unearthed seventeen thousand tablets at Tell Mardikh in northern Syria. These tablets contain a record of laws, customs, and events from the same area Moses and the patriarchs lived. This discovery helped to disprove the Documentary hypothesis which, in part, claimed that Moses lived before the invention of written language and therefore could not have composed the first five books of the Old Testament. Thus Bible critics claimed that the Old Testament was written much later (and by many unknown authors) than traditionally thought. However, the Ebla Tablets prove that written language existed at least a thousand years before Moses...
 - Archaeology has proven that Israel derives its ancestry from Mesopotamia, as the Bible teaches (Genesis 11:27-12:4)
 - Archaeology suggests that the world’s languages likely arose from a common origin, as Genesis 11 teaches.
 - Jericho, and several other cities mentioned in the Old Testament previously thought to be legendary by skeptics, have now been discovered by archaeologists.
 - Bible critics used to claim that the Hittite civilization mentioned in Genesis did not exist at the time of Abraham because there was no record of it apart from the Old Testament. However, archaeology has discovered that it not only existed but it lasted more than 1,000 years. Now you can get a doctorate in Hittite studies from the University of Chicago.
 - Social customs and stories in the Old Testament credited to the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac) are in harmony with archaeological discoveries, casting additional light on the historical accuracy of the Biblical record. (Story, 36)
- See the PowerPoint provided by Bud Chrysler of Chrysler Ministries for further examples.
 - [Click here](#) to review the PowerPoint.

Conclusion

- Literally thousands of archaeological finds have validated the picture presented in the Old Testament, none have refuted it. Negative higher criticism of the Old Testament, based as it is on philosophical presuppositions and not factual data, has crumbled under the facts of archaeological discoveries. (Geisler, 345) Regarding the historicity of the Old Testament, world-renowned archeologist William F. Albright stated:
 - “There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition.” (Albright, 176)
- Nelson Glueck, author of *Rivers in the Desert* has stated:
 - “It can be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference.” (Glueck, 31)
- Norman L. Geisler states the following in his chapter on “The Historicity of the Old Testament” in his *Systematic Theology In One Volume*:
 - “Even usually liberal sources are now admitting the overall historical reliability of the Old Testament. Excerpting from his book, *Is the Bible True?*, Jeffery L. Sheler notes for U.S. News & World Report:

In extraordinary ways, modern archaeology has affirmed the historical core of the Old Testament—corroborating key portions of the stories of Israel’s patriarchs, the Exodus, the Davidic monarchy, and the life and times of Jesus.” (Geisler, 331)
- “In other words, in every instance where the Bible could be checked-out historically against extra-biblical sources, the Bible has always been found accurate in what it reports.” (Story, 37)
- Given the fact that the Bible has been proven to be trustworthy in what it reports when checked against extra-Biblical sources it is reasonable to assume that one can trust its spiritual content as well. This would extend to the Bible’s internal claim to have been given by inspiration of God.

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Sunday, March 20, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 25 External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the New Testament

Introduction

- Last week, in Lesson 24, we began our consideration of the External Evidence of Inspiration by looking at some things regarding the historical reliability of the Old Testament.
- This week, in Lesson 25, we want to do the same with respect to the historicity of the New Testament.
- As with our discussion of the historicity of the Old Testament, our purpose is not to exhaust the amount of available material on the historical accuracy of the New Testament. Rather, our purpose is to point out some extra-Biblical highpoints that provide external evidence that the New Testament was written by inspiration of God.
- Since the evidence for the historical reliability for the book of Acts is the strongest, we will focus our investigation on a consideration of the Acts of the Apostles.

The Historicity of Acts

- Acts 1:1-2—the book of Acts is the second part of a two-part treatise addressed to Theophilus.
- Luke 1:1-3—speaks to the “former treatise” addressed to Theophilus spoken of in Acts 1:1.
- A careful reading of Luke 1:1-3 ought to highlight the following points: first, Luke interviewed eyewitnesses who were present from the beginning of the events recorded; second, Luke’s goal is to present a chronological record of the events as they were commonly believed. While the Gospel of Luke is written to present Christ as the son of man, it also doubles as a chronological history of the life of Christ. When coupled with Acts, the Gospel of Luke takes its reader from the annunciation of the Christ’s birth all the way through to Paul’s imprisonment in Rome in Acts 28. Considering that Luke did not write by his own will or in his own words, but rather the words of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the foolishness of doubting these events becomes clear.
- “The date and authenticity of the book of Acts is crucial to the historicity of early Christianity and, thus, to apologetics in general. If Acts was written before AD 70 while the eyewitness were still alive, then it has great historical value in informing us of the earliest Christian beliefs.” (Geisler, *ST*, 348)
- Furthermore, if Acts was written by Luke, the same author as the Gospel of Luke who was also the travel companion of the Apostle Paul; it would provide a point of contact between the narratives of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the author of the majority of the New Testament.

- II Timothy 4:9-11—Luke was with Paul at the end of this life.
- “If Acts was written by AD 62 (the traditional date), then it was written by a contemporary of Jesus (who died in AD 33). And, if Acts is shown to be accurate history, then it brings credibility to its reports about the most basic Christian beliefs in miracles (Acts 2:22), death (Acts 2:23), resurrection (Acts 2:24, 3:29-32), and ascension of Christ (Acts 1:9-10). Further, if Luke wrote Acts, then his “former treatise” (Acts 1:1), the gospel of Luke, should be extended the same credibility manifested in the book of Acts.” (Geisler, *ST*, 348)

Evidence for an Early Date for Acts

- In his book *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, Roman historian Colin Hemer offers seventeen reasons for accepting the traditional early date for the authorship of the book of Acts. By extension, Hemer’s argumentation also indirectly testifies to the historicity of the book of Luke. Norman L. Geisler believes that Hemer’s first five arguments are sufficient to prove that Acts was penned before 62 AD.
 - “There is no mention in Acts of the crucial historical event of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, which places the Acts before that event.
 - There is no hint of the outbreak of the Jewish War in 66 or of any serious deterioration of relations between Romans and Jews, which implies Acts was written before that time.
 - There is no hint of the more immediate deterioration of Christian relations with Rome involved in the Neronian persecution of the late 60s.
 - There is no hint of the death of James at the hands of the Sanhedrin in c. 62, recorded by Josephus (*Antiquities*, 20.9.1.200)
 - Since the apostle Paul was still alive (Acts 28), it must have been written before his death (c. AD 65).” (Geisler, *ST*, 349)
- “By comparison, claiming that Acts was written after AD 62 is like claiming that a book on the life of John F. Kennedy was written after 1963 (when he was assassinated) but never mentions his death; if the event had already occurred, it was too important to omit. In the same way, any book like Acts that was written after the death of the apostle Paul (c. AD 65) or the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) would surely have mentioned these momentous events.” (Geisler, *ST*, 349)

Luke Was a First-Rate Historian

- In addition to the arguments for early authorship of Acts, Colin Hemer demonstrates that the book was written by a careful historian. According to Hemer, Luke’s skill as a historian is demonstrated by his use of the following three categories of knowledge: 1) Common Knowledge,

2) Specialized Knowledge, and 3) Specific Local Knowledge. For our purposes we will consider examples of Specialized and Specific Local Knowledge.

- Examples of *Specialized Knowledge* include:
 - Acts 1:12, 19; 3:2, 11—shows knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem.
 - Acts 4:6—Annas is pictured as continuing to have great prestige and to bear the title ‘high priest’ deposition by the Romans and the appointment of Caiaphas.
 - Acts 12:4—gives details on the organization of a military guard.
 - Acts 13:7—he correctly identified Cyprus as a proconsular (senatorial) province at this time, with the proconsul resident at Paphos (v. 6)
 - Acts 16:8—he acknowledges the part played by Troas in the system of communication.
 - Acts 17:1—Amphipolis and Apollonia are known as stations (and presumably overnight stops) on the Egyptian Way from Philippi to Thessalonica.
 - Acts 27 & 28—contains many details in the geography and navigational details of the voyage to Rome.
- Regarding *Specific Local Knowledge*, Luke manifests an incredible array of knowledge regarding local places, names, conditions, customs, and circumstances that befit only an eyewitness contemporary of the time and events recorded. Hemer identifies eighty-four facts in the last sixteen chapters of Acts that have been confirmed by extra-Biblical historical and archeological research (*Please note that I reproduced this information without alteration from its source. Any differences in spelling or terminology found in this list when compared against the KJB are the sources not my own*):
 - 1) the natural crossing between correctly named ports (Acts 13:4-5)
 - 2) the proper port (Perga) along the direct destination of a ship crossing from Cyprus (13:13)
 - 3) the proper location of Lycaonia (Acts 14:6)
 - 4) the unusual but correct declension of the name Lystra (14:6)
 - 5) the correct language spoke in Lystra—Lycaonian (14:11)
 - 6) the gods known to be so associated—Jupiter and Mercurius (14:12)
 - 7) the proper port, Attalia, which returning travelers would use (14:25)
 - 8) the correct order of approach to Derbe and then Lystra from the Cilician Gates (16:1, cf. 15:41)
 - 9) the proper form of the name Troas (16:8)
 - 10) the place of a conspicuous sailors’ landmark, Samothracia (16:11)
 - 11) the proper description of Philippi as a Roman colony (16:12)

- 12) the right location of the river (Gangites) near Philippi (16:13)
- 13) the proper association of Thyatira as a center of dyeing (16:14)
- 14) correct designations for the magistrates of the colony (16:22)
- 15) the proper locations (Amphipolis and Apollonia) where travelers would spend successive nights on this journey (17:1)
- 16) the presence of a synagogue in Thessalonica (17:1)
- 17) the proper term “politarchs” used for the magistrates there (17:6)
- 18) the correct implication that sea travel is a most convenient way of reaching Athens, with the favoring east winds of summer sailing (14:14-15)
- 19) the abundant idols in Athens (17:16)
- 20) the reference to the synagogue in Athens (17:17)
- 21) the depiction of the Athenian life of philosophical debate in the Agora (17:17)
- 22) the use of the correct Athenian slang word for Paul, a babbler (*spermologos*, 17:18) as well as the court Areopagus (17:19)
- 23) the proper characterization of the Athenian character (17:21)
- 24) an altar to the “unknown god” (17:23)
- 25) the proper reaction of Greek philosophers, who denied the bodily resurrection (17:32)
- 26) Areopagite as the correct title for a member of the court (17:34)
- 27) The Corinthian synagogue (18:4)
- 28) the correct designation of Gallio as proconsul, resident in Corinth (18:12)
- 29) the bema (judgment seat), which overlooks Corinth’s forum (18:16)
- 30) the name of Tyrannus as attested from Ephesus in first-century inscriptions (19:9)
- 31) well-known shrines and images of Diana (19:24)
- 32) the well-attested “great goddess Diana” (19:27)
- 33) that the Ephesians theatre was the meeting place of the city (19:29)
- 34) the correct titled grammateus for the chief executive magistrate in Ephesus (19:35)
- 35) the proper title of honor “neokoros,” authorized by the Romans (19:35)
- 36) the correct name to designate the goddess (19:37)
- 37) the proper term for those holding court (19:38)
- 38) use of the plural anthupatoi, perhaps a remarkable reference to the fact that two men were conjointly exercising the function of proconsul at this time (19:38)
- 39) the “regular” assembly, as the precise phrase is attested elsewhere (19:39)
- 40) use of precise ethnic designation, beraiaios (20:4)
- 41) employment of the ethnic term Asianos (20:4)
- 42) the implied recognition of the strategic importance assigned to the city of Troas (20:7)
- 43) the danger of the coastal trip in this location (20:13)
- 44) the correct sequence of places (20:14-15)
- 45) the correct name of the city (21:1)
- 46) the appropriate route passing across the open sea south of Cyprus favored by persistent northeast winds (21:3)

- 47) the suitable distance between these cities (21:8)
- 48) a characteristically Jewish act of piety (21:24)
- 49) the Jewish law regarding Gentile use of the temple area (21:18)
- 50) the permanent stationing of a Roman cohort at Antonia to suppress any disturbance at festival times (21:31)
- 51) the flight of steps used by the guards (21:31, 35)
- 52) the common way to obtain Roman citizenship at this time (22:28)
- 53) the tribune being impressed with Roman rather than Tarsian citizenship (22:39)
- 54) Ananias being high priest at this time (23:2)
- 55) Felix being governor at this time (23:34)
- 56) the natural stopping point on the way to Cesarea (23:31)
- 57) whose jurisdiction Cilicia was in at the time (23:34)
- 58) the provincial penal procedure of the time (24:1-9)
- 59) the name of Festus, which agrees precisely with that given by Josephus (24:27)
- 60) the right of appeal as Roman citizens (25:11)
- 61) the correct legal formula (25:18)
- 62) the characteristic form of reference to the emperor at the time (25:26)
- 63) the best shipping lanes at the time (27:5)
- 64) the common bonding of Cilicia and Pamphylia (27:4)
- 65) the principal port to find a ship to Italy (27:5-6)
- 66) the slow passage to Cnidus, in the face of the typical northwest wind (27:7)
- 67) the right rout to sail in view of the winds (27:7)
- 68) the locations of Fair Havens and the neighboring site of Lasea (27:8)
- 69) Fair Havens as a poorly sheltered roadstead (27:12)
- 70) a noted tendency of a south wind in these climates to back suddenly into a violent northeaster (27:13)
- 71) the nature of a square-rigged ancient ship, having no option but to drive before a gale (27:15)
- 72) the precise place and name of this island (27:16)
- 73) the appropriate maneuvers for the safety of the ship in its particular plight (27:16)
- 74) the fourteenth night—a remarkable calculation, based inevitably on a compounding of estimates and probabilities confirmed in the judgment of experienced Mediterranean navigators (27:27)
- 75) the proper term of the time for the Adriatic (27:27)
- 76) the precise term (Bolisantes) for taking soundings, and the correct depth of the water near Malta (27:28)
- 77) a position that suits the probable line of approach of a ship released to run before an easterly wind (27:39)
- 78) the severe liability of guards who permitted a prisoner to escape (27:42)
- 79) the local people and superstitions of the day (28:4-6)
- 80) the proper title Publius (28:7)
- 81) Rhegium as a refuge to await a southerly wind to carry them through the straight (28:13)

- 82) Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae as correctly placed stopping places on the Appian Way (28:15)
- 83) appropriate means of custody with Roman soldiers (28:16)
- 84) the conditions of imprisonment, living at his own expense (28:30-31) (Hemer quoted in Geisler and Turek, 256-259)

Theological Implications of Luke's Accuracy

- The accuracy of the preceding list is quite astounding when one considers that Luke recorded these details without the aid of modern GPS, maps, or nautical charts. Can there be any doubt that Luke was an eyewitness to the events he records or at least possessed access to eyewitness testimony, not to mention the knowledge of the Holy Spirit Himself? In short, Luke's use of geographical details, specialized knowledge of nautical details, and specific local knowledge testify to the historical reliability of his writings.
- "The historicity of the book of Acts is confirmed by overwhelming evidence. Nothing like this amount of detailed confirmation exists for any other book from antiquity. Acts is not only a direct confirmation of the earliest Christian belief in the death and resurrection of Christ but also indirectly of the gospel record, for the same author (Luke) wrote a gospel as well. Further, substantially the same basic events are recorded in two other gospels (Matthew and Mark) and, for that matter, the gospel of John provides the same picture of the most crucial events, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ." (Geisler, *ST*, 353)
- Simply stated, the historicity of the Book of Acts is confirmed by overwhelming evidence. As one might expect, this reality makes skeptics rather uncomfortable. In the same book that Luke reports eighty-four historically-confirmed details, he also records a total of thirty-five miracles. To make matters worse for the skeptics, many of these miracles are recorded in the second half of the Book of Acts within the same historical narrative that has been verified extra Biblically. For example, Luke records the following Pauline miracles:
 - temporarily blinded a sorcerer (13:11)
 - cured a man who was crippled from birth (14:8)
 - exorcized an evil spirit from a possessed girl (16:18)
 - performed many miracles that convinced many in the city of Ephesus to turn from sorcery to Jesus (19:11-20)
 - raised a man from the dead who had died after falling out a window during a long-winded lecture (20:9-10)
 - healed Publius' father of dysentery, and healed numerous others who were sick on Malta (28:8-9) (Geisler and Turek, 260)

- Dr. Norman Geisler offers the following assessment of the situation, “in light of the fact that Luke has proven accurate with so many trivial details, it is nothing but pure anti-supernatural bias to say he’s not telling the truth about the miracles he records.” (Geisler and Turek, 260)

Conclusion

- Nothing from antiquity compares with the amount of detailed confirmation that exists for the historical reliability for the Book of Acts. Not only does this offer direct confirmation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, it also indirectly proves the historical reliability of the Gospel of Luke. Paralleling Matthew and Mark, the evidence suggests that all three of the so-called synoptic Gospels were written before 60 A.D., within thirty years after the death of Jesus. (Geisler, *BECA*, 8)
- Much more ink could be spilt here covering the historicity of the rest of the New Testament i.e., the Gospel accounts and the epistles of Paul but, alas, we have neither the time nor the space. Suffice it to say that the historical reliability of the New Testament has been established to such a degree that even the most “ultra-liberal” scholars have been forced to acknowledge that the following points concerning Jesus and Christianity are actual historical facts, according to Dr. Gary Habermas:
 - Jesus died by Roman crucifixion.
 - He was buried, most likely in a private tomb.
 - Soon afterwards his disciples were discouraged, bereaved, and despondent, having lost hope.
 - Jesus’ tomb was found empty very soon after his interment.
 - The disciples had experiences that they believed were actual appearances of the risen Jesus.
 - Due to these experiences, the disciple’s lives were transformed. They were even willing to die for their belief.
 - The proclamation of the Resurrection took place very early, from the beginning of church history.
 - The disciple’s public testimony and preaching of the Resurrection took place in the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified and buried.
 - The gospel message centered on the preaching of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- Sunday was the primary day for gathering and worship.
- James, the brother of Jesus and a skeptic before this time, was converted when he believed he also saw the risen Jesus.
- A few years later, Saul of Tarsus (Paul) became a believer, due to an experience that he also believed was an appearance of the risen Jesus. (Habermas, 9-10)
- It is only a foolish heart attitude that would doubt the historical reliability of the Bible. As we have seen, “if Christians can demonstrate that the Bible is truthful in all areas in which it can be validated, we have before us the most powerful and compelling evidence for the truthfulness of Christianity.” (Story, 34) After weighing the evidence, any reasonable person must accept the Bible as God’s chosen medium for revealing spiritual truth to humanity. The Bible alone can sustain its truth claims in any area in which it can be investigated; therefore, it is reasonable to trust the Bible in the arena of spiritual truth.

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Sunday, April 10, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*,
Lesson 26 External Evidence of Inspiration: The Transmission of the Text

Introduction

- Beginning with Lesson 24, we adopted a more evidentialist approach and began looking at some of the external proofs for inspiration. In order to accomplish this task, I told you that we would consider the following three points:
 - Historicity of the Old Testament
 - Historicity of the New Testament
 - The Transmission of the Text
- In Lessons 24 and 25 we looked at the external evidence for inspiration by studying the historicity of both the Old and New Testaments. There is much more that could be said about the historical reliability of the Bible that is beyond the space I wish to devote to the topic in this class.
- This week we want to consider the third and final point identified above—namely the transmission of the text. Once again, my intention in this lesson is not to exhaust all that could be said about the topic. In fact, as we will see moving forward, a discussion of textual issues will play a big role in this class.
- This morning we will not seek to cast judgment upon any of the manuscript witnesses, rather we will just discuss them in a general sense. In future lessons we will discuss them more critically and seek to identify criteria for distinguishing between sound and unsound manuscripts.
- The very fact that the Bible was copied so extensively speaks to the fact that people believed it to be the word of God and of divine authority. To accomplish our purpose this morning we will touch upon a few points regarding the transmission of both the Old and New Testament.

Transmission of the Old Testament

- Romans 3:1-2—one of the reasons God created the nation of Israel was so that they could watch over God's word. The oracles of God were committed or entrusted to the nation of Israel.
- Deuteronomy 31:24-28—the tribe of Levi was given the responsibility to teach Israel the word of God.
- Deuteronomy 10:2-8—Moses places the Ten Commandments into the Ark. In verse 8, who was given the responsibility of taking care of the Ark? The Levites.

- Deuteronomy 31:9-13—the Levites were given the responsibility of copying and teaching the Word.
- Ezra 7:6-7—Ezra was a member of the tribe of Levi. He was a ready scribe and an expert in the Law of Moses. He was part of the group of People who God had established for the handling of the Word of God.
- Ezra 7:10-11—Ezra made copies of the Word of God.
- My point is that God did not simply allow his word to be handled and copied by anyone. In the Old Testament He established a specific group of men (the Levitical priesthood) whose job it was to see to the care and copying of the word of God.
- The Levitical scribes knew they were duplicating God’s word, so they went to incredible lengths to prevent error from creeping into their work. The whole process of copying the Bible was controlled by strict religious rituals and the scribes carefully counted every line, word, syllable, and letter to ensure accuracy.
- Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the oldest existing Old Testament manuscript was the Masoretic Text (the Hebrew text supporting the KJB) which dates from around 900 AD.
- Among the manuscripts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls were fragments and two copies of the book of Isaiah. The copies of the book of Isaiah were dated to around 150 BC—almost one thousand years older than the Masoretic Text.
- A comparison of the two sources proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5% variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.
- In addition to being historical confirmation of the Biblical doctrine of Preservation (not just of the thoughts but of the very words themselves), these facts also serve as strong external evidence of the inspiration of those words.

Transmission of the New Testament

- There is also much evidence to support the reliability and inspiration of the New Testament. Let’s consider the following three areas:
 - Early Eyewitness Testimony
 - Short Time Gap
 - Number of Available Witness

Early Eyewitness Testimony

- The New Testament writers were either eyewitnesses themselves or interviewed eyewitnesses to the events they recorded.
 - Luke 1:2
 - I Corinthians 15:4-8
 - II Peter 1:16
- We convict people in a court of law every day in this nation based on the testimony of eyewitnesses.
- The New Testament documents are written within 35 years of the events recorded. No other religious or secular document from antiquity can make such a claim.
 - Luke 1—Acts 1—Acts 28

Short Time Gap

- Many other religious documents have tremendous time spans between when they were transmitted orally and when they were eventually written down. For example, the sayings of Buddha were not recorded until 500 years after his death.
 - See PowerPoint charts. [Click here](#) to view the PowerPoint.
- Regarding the New Testament documents, unlike other ancient works whether secular or religious, not enough time elapsed between when Jesus spoke and when His words were recorded to allow for misrepresentation or the development of legendary material.

Number of Available Witness

- There are more extant manuscripts of the New Testament than there are for any ten works of ancient history combined.
 - Use chart to show the number of copies of the New Testament compared with Homer's *Iliad*.
- There are over 86,000 known quotations of Scripture made by the church fathers. Even if we did not have any copies of the New Testament, we could still reconstruct all but eleven verses of the entire New Testament from material written by the church fathers within 150 to 200 years of the life of Christ.

- Show chart on the PowerPoint
- There is more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text than for any ten pieces of classical literature combined.
- The Bible is in better textual shape than the 37 plays of William Shakespeare written in the 17th century after the invention of the printing press.
- People do not question whether or not they have accurately understood Plato, Aristotle, or Socrates, yet they will doubt the veracity of the Biblical text when there is exponentially more historical/textual evidence supporting the New Testament. All of this demonstrates the huge bias that people have against the Bible in their thinking.

The Charge of Circular Reasoning

- Unbelievers accuse Christians of using circular reasoning and unsupported assumptions to justify their beliefs. Christians allegedly take unsupported assumptions and use them, to justify other unsupported assumptions, in effect, using "fiction to support fiction." Here is a sample conversation that is illustrative of the Christian use of circular reasoning with respect to the Bible being the word of God, according to unbelievers:
 - Unbelievers Question: "How do you know the Bible is true? How do you know it is the word of God?"

Christian Answer: "Because the Bible says it is God's word. The Bible is internally consistent and harmonious. Its writers, who lived thousands of years apart, agree on the same message. It also contains many fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the New Testament. The odds of that happening by chance, according to Christian theologians, are astronomical. The Bible also agrees with history, archaeology and science. It is the only book that is complete with a chronicle of humanity's history, salvation, and future predicament."
- Definition—a use of reason in which the premises depends on or is equivalent to the conclusion, a method of false logic by which "this is used to prove that, and that is used to prove this"; also called circular logic. (Dictionary.com)
 - Show diagram on the PowerPoint
- Definition—a formal logical fallacy in which the proposition to be proved is assumed implicitly or explicitly in one of the premises. For example: "Only an untrustworthy person would run for office. The fact that politicians are untrustworthy is proof of this." (Wikipedia.org)

- The common accusation that Christians use circular reasoning is actually true. In fact, everyone uses some degree of circular reasoning when defending his ultimate standard (though not everyone realizes this fact). (Viet, [Circular Reasoning](#))
- All philosophical systems start with *axioms* (presuppositions), or non-provable propositions accepted as true, and deduce *theorems* from them. Therefore Christians should not be faulted for having axioms as well, which are the propositions of Scripture (a proposition is a fact about a thing, e.g. God is love). So the question for any axiomatic system is whether it is *self-consistent* and is *consistent with the real world*. (Sarfati, [Using the Bible to Prove the Bible](#))
- *Self-consistency*—means that the axioms do not contradict each other. Indeed, allegedly circular reasoning at least demonstrates the *internal* consistency of the Bible's claims it makes about itself. If the Bible had actually disclaimed divine inspiration, it would indeed be illogical to defend it. (Sarfati, [Using the Bible to Prove the Bible](#))
- *Consistent with the real world*—Christian axioms provide the basis for a coherent *worldview*, i.e. a thought map that can guide us throughout all aspects of life. Non-Christian axioms fail these tests, as do the axioms of other 'holy books'.
 - Biblical axioms logically and historically provided the basis for modern science. A major one is that the universe is orderly, because it was made by a God of order, not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). But why should the universe be orderly if there were no God, or if Zeus and his gang were in charge, or if the universe were one big Thought, as Eastern religions teach? It could change Its mind!

Also very importantly, the Christian axioms provide a basis for *objective right and wrong*. Note, it is important to understand the point here—*not* that atheists cannot be moral but that they have *no objective basis for this morality from within their own system*.

Christian axioms also provide a basis for voluntary choice, since we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27). But evolutionists believe that we are just machines and that our thoughts are really motions of atoms in our brains, which are just 'computers made of meat'. But then they realize that we cannot function in the everyday world like this. Science is supposed to be about predictability, yet an evolutionist can far more easily predict behaviour if he treats his wife as a free agent with desires and dislikes. For example, if he brings her flowers, then he will make her happy, i.e. for all practical purposes, his wife is a free agent who likes flowers. Nothing is gained in the practical world by treating her as an automaton with certain olfactory responses programmed by genes that in turn produce certain brain chemistry. So evolutionists claim that free will is a 'useful illusion'. (Sarfati, [Using the Bible to Prove the Bible](#))

- The truth is that everyone uses some degree of circular reasoning when defending their ultimate standard (though not everyone realizes this fact). Yet, if used properly, the use of circular reasoning is not arbitrary and, therefore, not fallacious. Contrary to popular belief, circular

reasoning is surprisingly a valid argument. Circular reasoning is a logical fallacy only when it is arbitrary, proving nothing beyond what it assumes. (Viet, [Circular Reasoning](#))

- However, not all circular reasoning is fallacious. Certain standards must be assumed. Dr. Jason Lisle gave this example of a non-arbitrary use of circular reasoning:
 - Without laws of logic, we could not make an argument.
 - We can make an argument.
 - Therefore, there must be laws of logic. (Viet, [Circular Reasoning](#))
- While this argument is circular, it is a non-fallacious use of circular reasoning. Since we could not prove anything apart from the laws of logic, we must presuppose the laws of logic even to prove they exist. In fact, if someone were trying to *disprove* that laws of logic exist, he'd have to use the laws of logic in his attempt, thereby refuting himself. Your non-Christian friend must agree there are certain standards that can be proven with circular reasoning. (Viet, [Circular Reasoning](#))
- The independent and extra Biblical evidence afforded by history and archaeology serves to break the cycle. If the Bible can be proven to be correct in all areas in which it can be checked extra Biblically, then we have the most compelling evidence for accepting its spiritual truth claims—including its own teaching regarding its own inspiration.

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Sunday, April 17, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 27 Disclaimers Regarding the Limitations of Inspiration

Introduction

- After studying the doctrine of inspiration for the better part of 26 weeks, I would like to conclude this section of the class by looking at some disclaimers regarding the limitations of inspiration.
- Just as it was vitally important to clearly identify and defend what inspiration is from the Bible; it is of equal importance to be aware of the doctrine's limitations.
- In order to accomplish this task, we will consider the following major points:
 - Disclaimers Regarding Inspiration
 - Four Summary Statements
- Please note that unless otherwise stated, these notes have been amended from the Sixth Lesson of Manuscript Evidence 101 taught by Pastor Richard Jordan in Grace School of the Bible.

Disclaimers Regarding Inspiration

Disclaimer Number One

- **Inspiration does not mean that all parts of the Bible are dispensationally applicable to the members of the body of Christ during the dispensation of grace. It only means that all parts of the canon (Genesis through Revelation) are equally inspired.**
 - This should be self-evident. Ephesians is more important to us as members of the body of Christ than the book of Revelation. That being said, it is all God's word, and, because of that, it is important and profitable; but you must remember to rightly divide the scripture to get the profit that God intended for you in the Bible. So, it is all equally inspired, but it is just not all of equal importance. When you talk about the inspired word of God, it is every bit inspired; but you are not describing the importance of it as far as its practical application to you.

Disclaimer Number Two

- **Inspiration does not guarantee the inspiration of any particular modern or ancient translation.**
 - Now, why would that be true? It is not the function of the doctrine of inspiration to deal with the issue of the transmission of the text. The doctrine of preservation is the doctrine that does that. We have been dealing with inspiration—the scriptures came out of the

mouth of God, God breathed them, He speaks them out, and the scriptures come right out of His mouth. The idea of the transmission of the text and where the Bible is today is covered by the doctrine of preservation.

The reason I point that out to you is this. People will say, “Are you trying to say that the King James Bible is the inspired word of God?” They will try to make fun of you if you believe that the Authorized Version, or Luther’s German Receptus, etc., are copies of the inspired word of God. They say, “Do you mean that the translators were inspired like the original writers were?” And the answer is “NO”. We are not describing that.

I have learned this. You must be very careful in your statement of what you are trying to say because people have all kinds of false concepts. People jump to all kinds of conclusions about what they think they heard you say. You want to say it in the most proper and clear and persuasive fashion. You want to distinguish between inspiration and preservation. What you hold in your hand is the preserved word of God. Inspiration deals with the written text of the scripture. Inspiration deals with what God wrote down, not the process but the result. It deals with what He wrote down on the page. The words are inspired.

Now, what happened to those inspired words is determined by the doctrine of preservation. If you have a consistent doctrine of preservation (what God wrote down He has preserved through history and therefore you can hold it in your hands today), then you can say that you hold the preserved word. You have a copy of the original.

Therefore, if you have the preserved word of God, you have an inspired Bible. But, inspiration means that the original copies came out of the mouth of God. Preservation is what gets it to you.

So, the doctrine of inspiration does not guarantee the inspiration of any particular modern or ancient translation. Preservation does what inspiration ceased when the canon of scripture was completed. There is no inspiration today, but there is providential preservation.

Disclaimer Number Three

- **Inspiration does not allow for any false information, but it does on occasion record the lie of someone. Just because something is recorded in the Bible that does not mean it is always the truth. It is always an accurate record of what went on; but if somebody lies to somebody else, the record of the lie is accurate, but the lie is still a lie.**
 - Genesis 3:4—if I tell you that verse four is a lie, am I saying the text is wrong, or that the man who said it is wrong? I am saying that the man who said it is wrong. If I tell you that verse four is true, what am I saying? Am I saying that the devil did not tell a lie? No, I am saying that it is an accurate record of what Satan said. You must be really careful to distinguish between those things.

- Job 42:7—Well wait a minute! All of that stuff is recorded in the book of Job, and God says that it is not right. It is false information; it is bad information. It is off from center, meaning it is not accurate. But, God is not impugning the inspiration of the book of Job. He is not saying that the book of Job is not an accurate record. God is saying that it was accurately recorded, but what they said is not accurate.
- You want to remember this. Inspiration does not allow for any false information. Everything that is recorded is true and accurate in its record, but that does not mean that God did not record someone's lie or some misinformation that someone put out.

Disclaimer Number Four

- **Inspiration does not mean that all Bible writers had personal illumination. Every Bible writer did not have personal illumination about all that he was writing down.**
 - This is one of the ways you know that the Bible had to come out of God's mouth. The dynamic inspiration idea is that it goes into the mind of man, and he comprehends it, and he spits it out. Consequently, that would mean there is no way to transfer the thought if it was incomprehensible to the man.
 - I Peter 1:10-11—the Old Testament prophets searched their own writings diligently. They were trying to figure out what the Spirit meant when he wrote through them about the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. Therefore, it is pretty obvious that the OT prophets did not all have personal illumination at all times with respect to everything that they wrote.
 - Daniel 7:1, 15, 28—Daniel did not grasp what was going on. He writes the dream down in verses 1-28, but he does not fully understand what is happening. He had the facts but he did not have the illumination to understand the facts, and that is not unusual. He writes 27 verses there, and in half of them he is just writing the dream down, and in the other half of them, you have the explanation that was given him. Yet, he still does not understand it.
 - One needs to understand that just because a Biblical writer wrote something that does not necessarily mean that he understood everything that he wrote down. This is why it is very important for one to understand the issue of progressive revelation. Something can be written down in time past and not understood by the men that wrote it down. Yet, it is inspired, and it is right.

Disclaimer Number Five

- **Inspiration does not prohibit personal research by a writer.**
 - That is very important because a lot of people will try to get after you about the issues of inspiration. They will claim that you are saying that the man who wrote it had to sit on a stump somewhere knowing nothing, and God just bore a hole in his head and poured the information in. That is not what is implied by inspiration. Inspiration does not imply that God does not take into account the activities, and the knowledge, and the frame of reference of the man who wrote it. Nor does it imply that when you read about someone

in the scripture who has personally investigated things, that therefore God could not have inspired him because the man was not in a trance and all that kind of stuff.

I have never read about anybody or heard about anybody that teaches plenary verbal inspiration and believes that the men were put into a trance, or a vision, or whatever in order to write the text of the scripture. If you ever hear anybody say that, please know that they are wrong. God did not just blank-out their mind and pick up their pen in a magical kind of operation and cause them to write. He reached into the library of their vocabulary; and out of that He chose words and moved upon them in such a way that the words they wrote down were the very words that He wanted them to write down. The words came out of His mouth through them onto the paper.

- Luke 1:1-4—Luke is saying, “Listen Theophilus, I am writing this to you, and I want you to know at the outset that I have been a good historian. I checked the references; I talked to the eyewitness accounts; I talked to the people that were there – the people that know. When I got this piece of information, I checked it out.” It is amazing how many historical references there are in the book of Luke. As you read Luke sometime, mark down the dates, and the references, and that kind of thing, and you will be impressed with the job that Luke did. My point to you is that Luke personally researched the data, and he said, “I’ve checked all the facts that you are going to read in this book.” Yet, the book of Luke is inspired by God.
- Thus, inspiration does not mean that the writer is prohibited from doing personal research.

Disclaimer Number Six

- **Inspiration does not deny the use of extra-biblical sources.**

- I say it that way because I cannot come up with any better way to communicate what I have in my mind.
- Acts 17:28—When Luke wrote Acts 17:28, he wrote it down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that is an inspired passage. That does not mean that God Almighty put those words in the poet’s mouth, but it does mean that God Almighty accurately recorded them here. If you look back in history books, you can find the source.
- Titus 1:12
- I Chronicles 29:29—When he says, “the book of Samuel the seer (see I Samuel 9:9 for a definition of “seer”), and the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer” that demonstrates that the nation Israel had extensive archives of public records. What is written in Chronicles is easily checkable; it is easy to verify the information. It is taken from well-known public records that only prove the legitimate nature of the work that you are reading in Chronicles as having been done by a well-informed author.
- There are at least fourteen different source references recorded in I Chronicles and II Chronicles.

- II Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22, 20:34, 24:27, 26:22, 27:7, 32:32—Do you see the historic references when you read these things? They show you that Israel had extensive archives and that the guys that compiled this information back there had it readily available to them. The public also had it readily available to them, and they are referring people to the records.
- Inspiration does not allow for any false information. It does not necessarily mean that God, on occasion, does not record something that was not originally inspired. He takes it and puts it in the Bible; and the part that is in the Bible is inspired, because it is what is written down in this book. If God can record Satan's lie, he can record public records.

Disclaimer Number Seven

- **Inspiration does not overwhelm the personality of the human author. Inspiration does not mean that a guy just goes into a catatonic state while the Lord gives him the words.**
 - See our discussion of Divine Dictation in Lessons 14 through 18.

Disclaimer Number Eight

- **Inspiration does not mean uniformity in all the details given in describing the same event.**
 - An example of that are the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You have four inspired accounts of the earthly ministry of Christ each given from a different perspective. So, inspiration does not mean that all of the details are the same, rather, it shows the design and purpose in giving a particular viewpoint, which might necessitate different details.
 - See our discussion of Undesigned Coincidences in Lessons 21 and 22.

Four Summary Statements

Summary Statement Number One

- **Plenary Verbal Inspiration assures us that God included all of the necessary things that He wanted us to know and excluded everything else.**
 - In other words, everything that you need is in the Bible and what is not in the Bible, you do not need. That is pretty simple. If God wrote the very words down, then you can be sure and confident that everything that He wanted written down is there and that everything that is excluded is unnecessary.

Summary Statement Number Two

- **Inspiration has been completed.**
 - Colossians 1:25—the word of God has been completed in its contents, in its subjects, and in its canon. There is no more revelation being given today. Revelation has been

completed. Revelation produces inspiration. Illumination produces preservation. Revelation is completed; inspiration is completed. They do not function today.

The Charismatic movement teaches that God is still revealing himself today. According to Pentecostalism, Jesus shows up and speaks to people when they are speaking in tongues. They profess to believe in a continuing revelation, which means that there is a continuing inspiration, meaning that the word of God is not completed. It is being added to every time they speak and every time they preach. That is a dangerous doctrine! The reason it is so dangerous is because that would mean that your Bible is not complete, therefore, it is not the last word, and it is not completely and absolutely authoritative. (That is Satan's design – to cause you not to believe that it is complete and absolutely authoritative.)

When you believe as do the Charismatics, (that revelation and inspiration are not finished), you get into Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Charles Russell, and Herbert Armstrong type stuff. They believe that the Bible is not complete, and that they are getting further revelation. They believed that what they wrote was of equal inspiration and authority as the canonical scriptures.

Summary Statement Number Three

- **The Bible is complete.**
 - Revelation and inspiration are completed. God has completed it, and it is finished. The writing of the scripture is complete, which means if verbal inspiration assures you that God included everything that is necessary, all that He wanted you to have is in the Bible, then the Bible is complete. If you add those two things together, you come up with the fact that the canon is complete without any *Apocrypha* or any extra books.

Paul says in Colossians 1:25 that the scripture is completed as to its content – its subject matter. In Colossians 1:25, Paul is saying that the dispensation of the grace of God is given to me to fulfil the word of God—to bring the word of God to its completion. Without Paul's revelation, the word of God would never be complete in its subject matter.

Therefore, the scripture is infallible; it is authoritative; it is sufficient; it is effective.

Summary Statement Number Four

- **The Bible should not be treated like any other book.**
 - Many encounter problems studying manuscript evidence because they approach the subject from the vantage point of human viewpoint. In other words, the subject is broached with a lack of thorough understanding of the fundamental underlying doctrines.
 - “The Christian Church has long confessed that the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, are divine Scriptures, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. . . Since the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament has, in all ages, stimulated the copying of these sacred books, it is evident that this doctrine is important for the history of the New Testament text, no matter whether it be a true doctrine or only

a belief of the Christian Church.” But what if it be true? What if the original New Testament manuscripts actually were inspired of God? If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament is a true doctrine, then New Testament textual criticism is different from the textual criticism of ordinary books.” (Hills, 1-2)

- “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism; the consistently Christian method and the naturalistic method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- Grounding ourselves in these basic concepts will help us wade through the manuscript and textual issues later on. Possessing the ability to judge the textual and historical information from the vantage point of what the Bible teaches about itself is the only source of clarity on these difficult issues. In short, if our doctrine is correct it ought to commend itself to us in both history and our experience.

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Sunday, September 11, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 28 Introduction to Preservation

Introduction

- Since our last meeting on April 17, I have been reading and studying in preparation for the resumption of class. The bulk of my reading over the last four and half months has focused on the doctrine of preservation. In the interest of full transparency, I have read a host of books or portions thereof as well as essays and articles in theological journals. My reading has traversed both sides of the preservation controversy, and included the titles listed in the summer 2016 Reading List on page 8.
 - During our intermission I also wrote a paper titled *The King James Bible in America: An Orthographic, Historical, and Textual Investigation*. This paper is currently undergoing a peer review by a group of pastors and Bible teachers.
- Much of what I read was very challenging to my previous thinking on the topic of preservation. More than once during the course of the past four and half months I contemplated giving up and just ending the class. As the reading list demonstrates there are scholarly men with high academic credentials on both sides of this issue. All of this just highlights all the more our need to base our thinking on this topic upon God's word, not mere human opinion.
- I am still in the process of working through how to explain where I am at on these issues. I am aware that doing this in real time, in front of a live audience, might expose me to criticism as I work through the limitations of terminology. Here is what I know; even within the King James Camp there is no universally agreed upon viewpoint to which everyone subscribes. There are many sub-views that are arrived at via various means and for a variety of reasons. There is a tendency exhibited by some to consider those with nuanced or slightly different views as not being “King James enough.” That being said, all I am asking for is a fair hearing before one decides to brand me one way or the other.

Review

- After dealing with some preliminary issues (Lessons 1-10), the main objective of our first term was to set forth a clear understanding of the doctrine of inspiration. In doing so, we considered the following:
 - Various Theories of Inspiration (Lesson 11)
 - Potential Pitfalls of the Plenary Position (Lesson 12)
 - Passages Proving the Plenary Position (Lesson 13)
 - Divine Dictation as the Mechanism of Inspiration? (Lessons 14-17)

- God's Design in Inspiration: Equality Between the Living and Written Word (Lesson 18)
 - The Living Word's Attitude Toward the Written Word (Lesson 19)
 - The New Testament Writer's Attitude Toward the Written Word (Lesson 20)
 - Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Undesigned Coincidences (Lessons 21-22)
 - Internal Evidence of Inspiration: Fulfilled Prophecy (Lesson 23)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the Old Testament (Lesson 24)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Historicity of the New Testament (Lesson 25)
 - External Evidence of Inspiration: The Transmission of the Text (Lesson 26)
 - Disclaimers Regarding the Limitations of Inspiration (Lesson 27)
- In Lesson 2, I introduced you to the following set of presuppositions that we used to guide our study of inspiration.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified His word above His own name. (Psalms 138:2)
 - God's word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)
 - God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated His word to mankind. (I Timothy 3:16 & II Peter 1:21)
 - God's words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (Isaiah 30:8, I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7)
 - Generally speaking, the first five of these presuppositions are not in dispute among leading Evangelical and Fundamentalists theologians. However, the same could certainly not be said for the sixth presupposition regarding preservation. Much ink has been spilt debating this doctrine. It is to understand the sixth presupposition i.e., the doctrine of preservation, that we will devote the majority of our time in this section of the class.

- Introductory Lessons 3 and 4 as well as 8 through 10 did touch upon preservation, perhaps a bit prematurely, but lack the details we will begin covering this morning. By way of review, we observed the following basic points about preservation in these early lessons.
 - Preservation is the Bible's claim for itself. God promised to preserve that which He inspired.
 - God did not see fit to accomplish His fundamental promise of preservation by preserving the original autographs. This is evident because, had He chosen to accomplish preservation in this fashion, we would possess the originals today.
 - To accomplish the preservation of His word, God did not preserve it in a state of "exact sameness" but in a state of "pureness."
 - There are substantive differences in meaning between the *TR* and the Critical Text that impact the accuracy of the text, some of which impact doctrine.
- The goal of these early lessons **was not** to set forth a fully developed doctrine of preservation. One must first fully appreciate the doctrine of inspiration before being able to fully grasp the doctrine of preservation in its fullness. Put another way, if one does not accurately understand inspiration, he will struggle to understand what is being preserved and how to scripturally identify the process.

Taking Stock of the Facts

- Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
- Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
 - Alexandrian manuscripts \aleph (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus), the two so-called oldest and best, differ with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone.
 - The manuscripts comprising the Alexandrian Text Type differ from those comprising the Byzantine Text Type.
 - No two Byzantine manuscripts read exactly the same.
- Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
 - Editions of the *TR* are not exactly the same.
 - The *TR* differs from the Critical Text
 - Critical Text editions are not exactly the same.

- United Bible Society
- Nestle-Aland
- Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
- Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
- Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.
- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)
- All of this raises serious questions as to the extent and means by which preservation was accomplished. Some, as we will see in the coming weeks, go so far as to say that there is no such thing as preservation i.e., it is a contrived doctrine to support King James Onlyism.
- What is clear is this, demanding “exact sameness” or “identical wording” as your standard of preservation reaches beyond the historical and textual facts and is ultimately unhelpful and detrimental to one’s position. Yet, this is exactly what many King James advocates argue for when they hold to “plenary preservation” or “identical preservation.” Opponents of the King James are more than happy to allow King James advocates to adopt this standard as their burden of proof because they know the “verbatim” or “identical” preservation cannot be sustained in the light of the facts.
- The following points are inescapable:
 - God promised to persevere His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:89, 111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.
 - This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.

- God did not supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
 - Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
- If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.
- So how do we make sense of all of this? One could adopt a completely humanistic or naturalistic approach and try to reason through the conundrum on the basis of human viewpoint alone. Or, one can look to God’s word for guidance and insight into how to think about the problem, just as we did in our investigation of inspiration. I believe that we should allow the Holy Spirit to instruct us how to think about the issue. When in doubt, the viewpoint of faith is always best.
- This brings us back to the end of Lesson 27 where we left off last April. Many encounter problems studying manuscript evidence/textual criticism because they approach the subject from the vantage point of human viewpoint. In other words, the subject is broached with a lack of thorough understanding of the fundamental underlying doctrines.
- As we have seen through our study of inspiration, the Bible is unlike any other book and should be approached accordingly. Once again, Dr. Edward F. Hills pointed this out in his 1956 book *The King James Version Defended*.
 - “The Christian Church has long confessed that the books of the New Testament, as well as those of the Old, are divine Scriptures, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “. . . Since the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament has, in all ages, stimulated the copying of these sacred books, it is evident that this doctrine is important for the history of the New Testament text, no matter whether it be a true doctrine or only a belief of the Christian Church. But what if it be true? What if the original New Testament manuscripts actually were inspired of God? If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the New Testament is a true doctrine, then New Testament textual criticism is different from the textual criticism of ordinary books.” (Hills, 1-2)
 - “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism; the consistently Christian method and the naturalistic method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- What does Hills mean when he uses the phrase “naturalistic method” in these quotes? He is referring to the methodology of “naturalism” or the “philosophical viewpoint according to which

everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted.” ([Google Definition](#))

- Drs. Westcott and Hort, in the introduction to [The New Testament in the Original Greek](#), started their task with the presupposition that the Bible is to be treated like any other book.
 - “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate. (Westcott and Hort, 73)
- This presupposition is no doubt a result of their low view of inspiration. When speaking about “primitive corruption” in the text, Dr. Hort states:
 - “Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in. They may be due to the original writer, or his amanuensis if wrote from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers.” (Westcott and Hort, 280-281)
- On this point Hort stands in opposition to modern Evangelical scholarship in that he allows for “corruption” to have entered the text via the “original writer.” Such a position explains why Hort is reluctant to ascribe infallibility to the text in any form. In a letter addressed to J.B. Lightfoot dated May 1, 1860, Hort stated in part:
 - “I am convinced that any view of the Gospels, which distinctly and consistently recognizes for them a natural and historical origin (whether under a special Divine superintendence or not) and assumes that they did not drop down ready-made from heaven, must and will be ‘startling’ to an immense portion of educated English people. But so far, at least, Westcott and I are perfectly agreed, and I confess I had hoped that you (Lightfoot) would assent. . . If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N.T. practically a *sine quo non* for co-operation, I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels. I am most anxious to find the N.T. infallible, and have a strong sense of the Divine purpose guiding all its parts; but I cannot see how the exact limits of such guidance can be ascertained except by unbiased a posteriori criticism. . . (Regarding the question of “Providence” in Biblical Hort writes) Most strongly I recognize it; but I am not prepared to say that it necessarily involves absolute infallibility.” (Hort, 419-421)
- This is the type of textual criticism that Dr. Hills is referring to when he talks about the “naturalistic method.” He is speaking about an approach to the scriptures that doubts their supernatural origin, doubts their infallibility even in the original autographs, and treats the Bible as though it were any other book. Such was the approach of Drs. Westcott and Hort.

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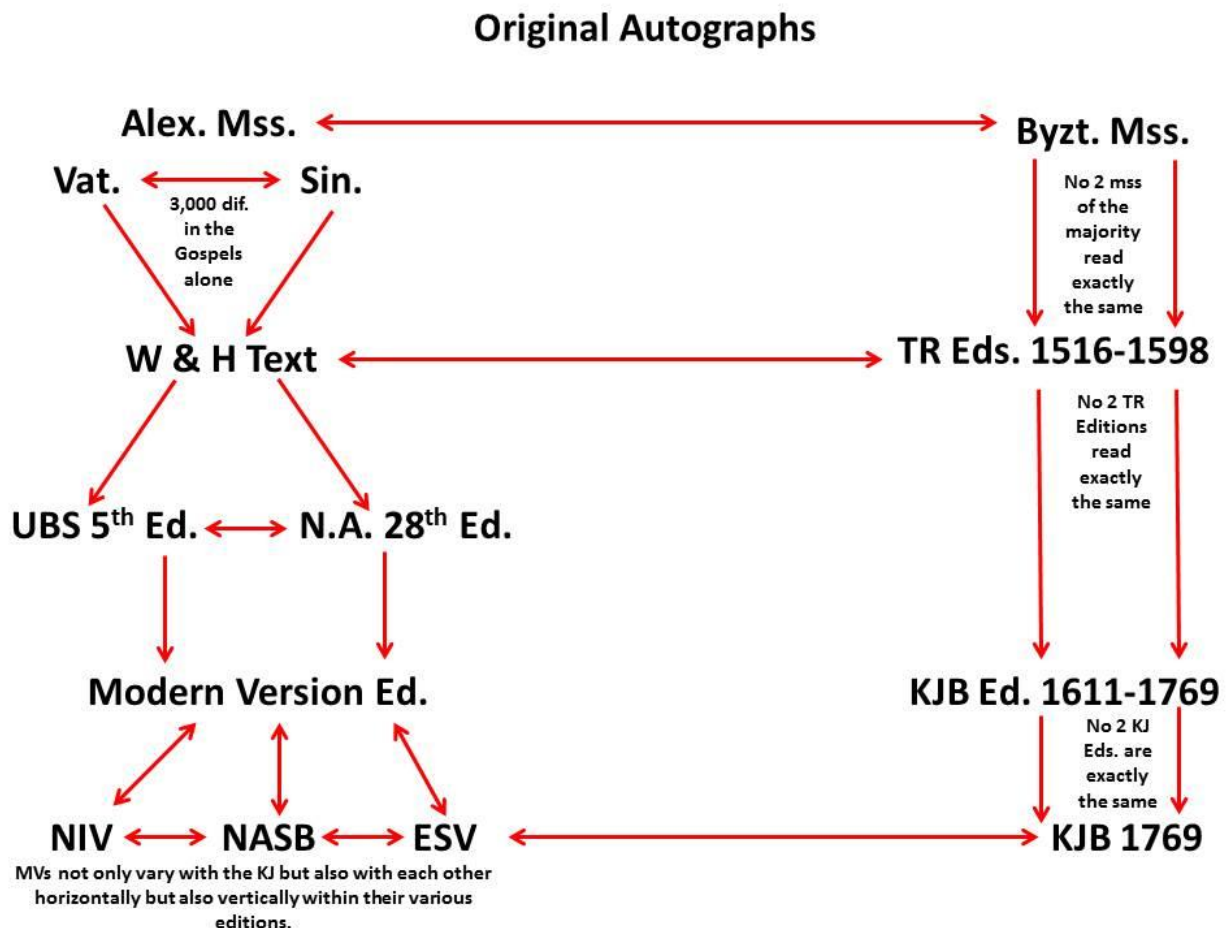
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Sunday, September 18, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 29 Introduction to Preservation, Part 2

Introduction/Review

- Last week we resumed class by reviewing some key points from Term 1 (Lessons 1-27) regarding inspiration and preservation.
- The bulk of our time in Lesson 28 was spent on “Taking Stock of the Facts” as they pertain to the textual debate and the doctrine of preservation. In order to accomplish this task, I provided you with some written statements as I drew the following diagram on the board:



- After presenting the diagram we read the following summary statement from the pen of Kevin T. Bauder:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two

modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)

- From this we concluded that demanding “exact sameness” or “identical wording” as your standard of preservation reaches beyond the historical and textual facts and is ultimately unhelpful and detrimental to one’s position. Yet, this is exactly what many King James advocates argue for when they hold to “plenary preservation” or “identical preservation.” Opponents of the King James are more than happy to allow King James advocates to adopt this standard as their burden of proof because they know that the “verbatim” or “identical” preservation cannot be sustained in the light of the facts.
 - God promised to persevere His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:89, 111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.
 - This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.
 - God did not supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
 - Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
 - If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.
- So how do we make sense of all of this? One could adopt a completely humanistic or naturalistic approach and try to reason through the conundrum on the basis of human viewpoint alone. Or, one can look to God’s word for guidance and insight into how to think about the problem, just as we did in our investigation of inspiration. I believe that we should allow the Holy Spirit to instruct us how to think about the issue. When in doubt, the viewpoint of faith is always best.
 - Drs. Westcott & Hort maintained that the Bible should be treated like any other book on account of their low view of inspiration. They maintained that corruption could have entered the text at the hands of the original writers and thereby refused to ascribe “absolute infallibility” even to the original autographs. (See Lesson 28 for supporting quotations.)
- Today, I want to finish my point regarding the book of Jeremiah and its importance in terms of framing the discussion.

Using the Book of Jeremiah to Frame the Discussion

- Practically speaking, we need to not put more emphasis on something than God does. Please consider the following questions about Mary as an example.
 - Was Mary the mother of Jesus?
 - Was Mary a virgin?
 - Was Mary a perpetual virgin?
 - Was Mary the mother of God?
- Only two of these statements are true. What happens when someone embraces all four and thereby places more emphasis on Mary than God does? They wind up with a statue (idol) in their front yard.
- Likewise, we need to not ascribe more importance to the original autographs than God does. Nor should we demand more from the doctrine of preservation than God does in His word. I want to use the book of Jeremiah to illustrate both of these points.
- Jeremiah 36:1-4—Baruch writes from the mouth of Jeremiah the original manuscript of Jeremiah 1-36 (Original #1).
 - Jeremiah 36:20-24—Jehoiakim and Jehudi destroy the original manuscript of Jeremiah. Note that the text explicitly states in verse 24 that “they were not afraid.” Don’t they know that they just destroyed an original autograph?
- Jeremiah 36:27-32—God re-inspires Jeremiah in chapters 1 through 36 and adds “many like words” to what was destroyed in the fire by Jehoiakim (Original #2).
 - Jeremiah 45:1—these additional words comprise chapters 45 through 52 at a minimum and possibly chapters 37 through 41 as well.
- Jeremiah 51:61-63—Jeremiah writing at the bidding of God the Holy Spirit tells Seraiah to destroy Original #2 by tying a stone to it and throwing it into the Euphrates River after it is read in Babylon. God almighty orders the destruction of Original #2. Why would God do this? Didn’t God know that a bunch of Fundamentalists in the 20th and 21st century would be looking for the originals?
- Daniel 9:2—over 70 years later Daniel comes to understand, by reading the book of Jeremiah, that the captivity was supposed to last 70 years. How is that possible if Original #2 was destroyed? Copies were made prior to the captivity. Once the copies were made, God did not care what happened to the original. The original contents of Original #2 were preserved via the copying process. Daniel had access to the inspired word of God through the copy he had in front of him.
- Matthew 2:17-18—contains a quotation from Jeremiah 31:15. First, how did Matthew have access to what Jeremiah said over 470 years (70 year captivity + 400 years of silence) later if God

had not preserved His word. So God secured the contents of the book of Jeremiah despite directing Jeremiah to have Original #2 thrown in the Euphrates River.

- This seems to suggest that modern attempts to search for, find, and/or reconstruct the originals are out of step with how the Bible would teach you to think about things.
 - *Searching for the Original Bible* by James Price
 - *The Quest for the Original New Testament* by Comfort
- Second, notice that Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18 do not possess identical or verbatim wording i.e., they are not exactly the same even within the KJB.

Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:18
Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, <i>and</i> bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they <i>were</i> not.	In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping <i>for</i> her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.
A voice was heard in Ramah,	In Rama was there a voice heard,
lamentation, <i>and</i> bitter weeping;	lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning,
Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children,	Rachel weeping <i>for</i> her children, and would not be comforted,
because they <i>were</i> not.	because they are not.

- These facts demonstrate that demanding “exact sameness” as the standard for preservation is excessive and reaches beyond how the Bible would teach you to think about the matter. Necessitating “plenary verbal preservation” or “identical preservation” demands that the words be preserved exactly as they were given under inspiration without any wording differences of any kind.
- While these two verses (Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18) do not exhibit identical wording, they are “substantively equivalent” with each other i.e., they possess a “doctrinal equivalence.” They say/teach/communicate the exact same doctrinal content without using the exact same individual words. Put a different way, they constitute a different way of saying the same thing NOT a substantive difference in meaning.
- Psalms 12:6-7—what the doctrine of preservation assures is exactly what verse 6 states, namely the preservation of a **Pure Text i.e., a text that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “fundamental character” despite not being preserved in a state of “exact sameness.”**

- This understanding of preservation is in line with the definition of the word provided by Noah Webster in his *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).
 - **“The act of preserving or keeping safe; the act of keeping from injury, destruction or decay; as the preservation of life or health; the preservation of buildings from fire or decay; the preservation of grain from insects; the preservation of fruit or plants. **When a thing is kept entirely from decay, or nearly in its original state, we say it is in a high state of preservation.**”**
- Once again, I believe that the key to untying this knot resides in recognizing the difference between: 1) a different way of saying the same thing, and 2) a substantive difference in meaning.
- I believe that God preserved His word for the same reason I believe that God inspired it. Preservation is the Bible’s claim for itself. **The doctrine of preservation impacts how one ought to look at the textual and translational issues and ensures that we have more than just a shell of the “original Bible” as the Originals Only position maintains.**
- In the coming weeks, we will begin to further elaborate on these matters.

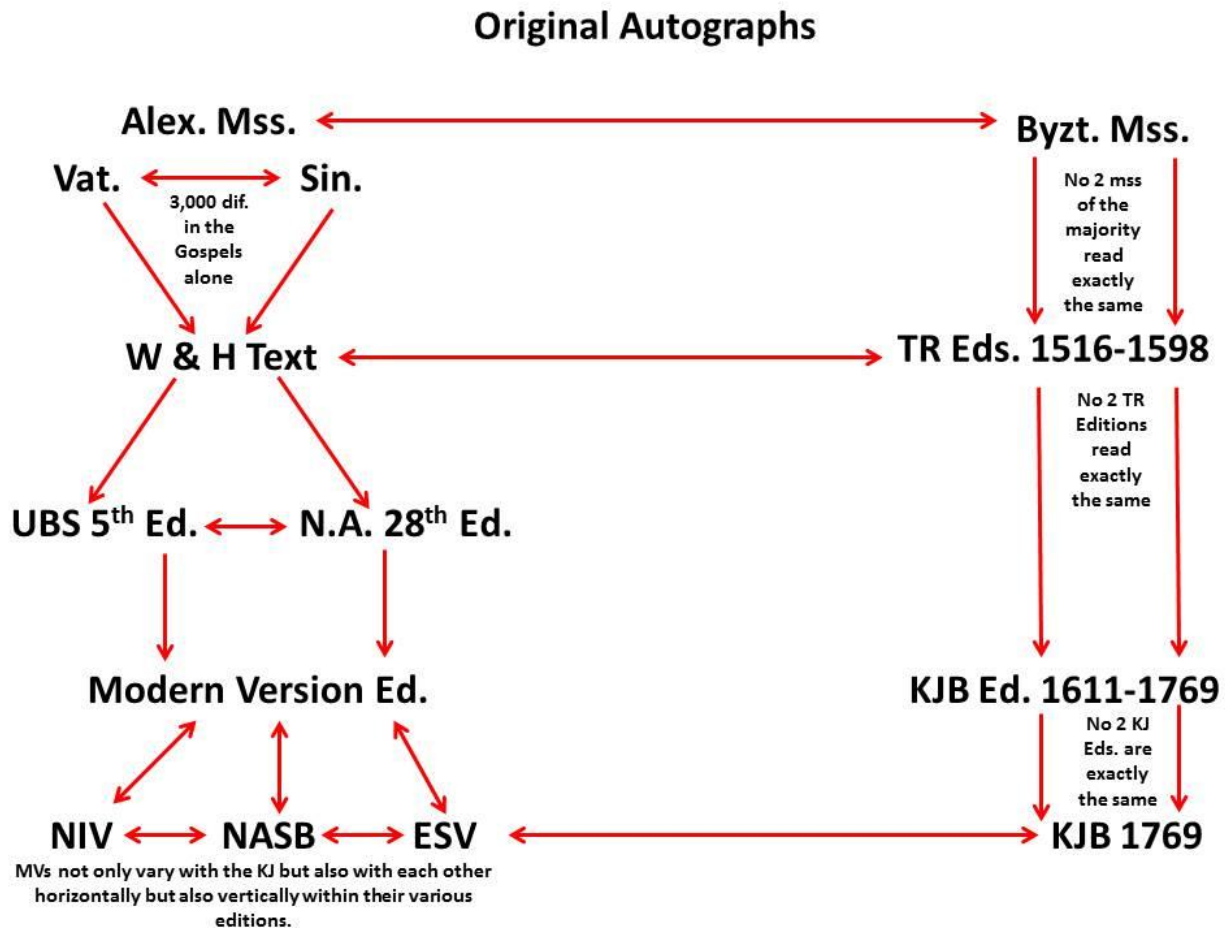
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Appendix A

Taking Stock of the Facts: Exact Sameness Chart and Explanation

This appendix seeks to combine the written description provided in Lesson 28 with representative chart produced and presented in Lesson 29. In short, the written description and the chart are designed to work in concert with each other.



- Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
- Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
 - Alexandrian manuscripts ⌵ (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus), the two so-called oldest and best, differ with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone.
 - The manuscripts comprising the Alexandrian Text Type differ from those comprising the Byzantine Text Type.
 - No two Byzantine manuscripts read exactly the same.

- Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
 - Editions of the TR are not exactly the same.
 - The TR differs from the Critical Text
 - Critical Text editions are not exactly the same.
 - United Bible Society 5th Edition
 - Nestle-Aland 28th Edition
- Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
- Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
- Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.
- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)

Sunday, September 25, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 30 Various Views of Preservation

Introduction/Review

- Two weeks ago, we resumed class by looking at some introductory things related to preservation. After laying out six indisputable facts and discussing their implications, we used the book of Jeremiah as a case study to teach us how to think through these issues.
- In this lesson, I want to use what we learned last week as a jumping off point to discuss the various views of preservation that have been articulated by Evangelical and Fundamentalist theologians.

Preservation or Restoration: The Core Issue

- In Lesson 8 Understanding Basic Terminology: Preservation (11/15/15), we discussed some basic information regarding preservation from the pen of Dr. R.B. Ouellette the Pastor of First Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Michigan in his book *A More Sure Word: Which Bible Can You Trust?*. Dr. Ouellette described the relationship between inspiration and preservation as follows:
 - “. . . inspiration was completed in the past, preservation began in the past and carries through today . . .” (Ouellette, 34)
- Dr. Ouellette acknowledged that preservation is a hotly debated topic in our day. Likewise, he shared some thoughts as to why he believed that to be the case.
 - “There are seminaries that exist today that seem to ‘explain away’ every verse that teaches preservation. I have a problem with some who feel that verses or doctrine must be ‘explained away’. I prefer to read the Bible and understand it literally. When God says His word will last forever, that it will last for a thousand generations, I believe that means God will preserve His word forever.

In the Bible, the writers had no problem quoting Scripture that had been preserved up to that time. Peter quotes Isaiah 40 (I Peter 1:23-25); Paul quotes extensively from the Old Testament in Romans 9-11. Each time a New Testament writer quotes from the Old Testament, he is demonstrating that God has been able to preserve His word.

Preservation is highly debated today because ultimately, the preservation issue will decide the translation issue—and preservation is completely a matter of faith in God’s power.” (Ouellette, 33)

- Elsewhere, Ouellette states the following regarding Matthew 24:35, Psalms 119:60, and Psalms 119:89:
 - “It sounds to me as though God is teaching us a doctrine of preservation. The Scriptures clearly teach that even if Heaven and Earth were to pass away, the words would not. We

are clearly taught that the righteous judgements of God endure forever, and that His Word has been forever settled in Heaven.” (Ouellette, 47)

- Dr. Ouellette cites statements issued by Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary (DBTS) and Gordon Fee in his book *The Textual Criticism of the New Testament* as a case in point of the propensity the exists within Christian academia to “explain away the clear teaching of Scripture” with respect to preservation. He writes in part,
 - “. . . issues related to the biblical text are matters of faith—regardless of which side of the issue one takes. Textual scholarship should not operate solely upon scientific principles as though there was nothing divine about the origin of our Bible. **The Bible does have something to say about its own preservation, thus necessitating a doctrine of preservation.**” (Ouellette, 52)
- In a later chapter, Ouellette summarizes his thoughts regarding preservation with the following statement,
 - “Those who advocate the Westcott and Hort position (i.e., the Critical Text) always have trouble with the preservation issue because it negates their practice. In the question of Bible translations, **one either has a “preserved” Bible or a “restored, reconstructed” Bible.**” (Ouellette, 83)
- This is an important central question:
 - Do we have a preserved word or a restored, reconstructed word?
 - Jeremiah 51:61-63—should we be trying to “reconstruct” what God ordered to be destroyed. Is it even possible to do so?
- King James-Only advocate Floyd Nolan Jones states the following regarding this question in his book *Which Version is the Bible?*
 - “The uncompromising stand is taken herein that God gave us His pure Word in the original autographs, and that He preserved it in its pure form unto this day—and will continue so doing forever. Indeed preservation is the only issue separating the Biblicist from other professing Christians in this matter; yet, the traditional viewpoint has always been that God not only gave mankind His pure word but that He also assumed the oversight of its preservation as well. Over the years, this position has deteriorated and the contemporary view is that God has not protected the Scriptures, that they are not available in a pure form, and that this necessitates **their recovery by reconstructing them from the Greek manuscripts which have survived today.**” (Jones, 3-4)
- Elsewhere, speaking about contemporary scholarship Jones states,

- “They have altered the crucial doctrine of **preservation** to that of **restoration**—and most text critics do not believe that such restoration is even any longer possible. . . Is it reasonable that God gave man His pure infallible Word and then allowed it to become so corrupted over time that He (we) was left to call and rely upon unregenerate men to restore it?” (Jones, 19-20)
- David W. Cloud concurs with both Ouellette and Jones when he writes:
 - “The doctrine of biblical preservation lies at the very heart of the Bible text debate. The Bible cannot be treated as any other book. It is God’s Word. God gave it and God has promised to preserve it. The underlying thesis, though, of modern textual criticism is that the Bible became corrupted through the centuries and **it is the task of textual criticism to restore it in its original purity.**” (Cloud, 101)
- The importance of this central question (Preservation or Restoration?) has not been lost on modern version advocates. As we saw in Lesson 8, standard Systematic Theology books have largely ignored any discussion of preservation. The same, however, could not be said for theological journals and standalone works. It is to these works that we will now turn our attention in an effort to understand the various views of preservation that have been enunciated.

Views on Preservation

- In order to frame this discussion, we will use Professor William W. Combs’ article titled “The Preservation of Scripture” from the Fall 2000 issue of the *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. In seeking to outline the variety of viewpoints regarding preservation, Combs states the following:
 - “The views of evangelical Christians who are currently engaged in the present debate about preservation can be classified a number of ways. At the most fundamental level, one can make a twofold division: 1) those who deny the Scriptures teach any doctrine of preservation and 2) those who affirm there is a doctrine of preservation taught by the Scripture either directly or indirectly. However, a threefold division is more helpful since those in group 2, who affirm a doctrine of preservation, are themselves sharply divided as to what that doctrine teaches. On the one side are those who believe that the Scriptures have been preserved in the totality of the biblical manuscripts (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), and on the other side, are those who believe that the Scriptures have only been accurately preserved in the KJV/TR/MT tradition—that any other textual tradition is corrupt.” (Combs, 6)
- According to Combs, there are essentially three positions with respect to the doctrine of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition

- View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Before summarizing each of the three positions, Combs offers the following general words of caution.
 - “Right at the onset, we must distinguish between belief in a doctrine of preservation and simply, belief in preservation. This is crucial in understanding exactly what those in group 1 are denying. To my knowledge, no one in that group denies the preservation of Scripture, that is, that the books of the Old and New Testaments have been substantially preserved to our day. But they do deny that Scripture anywhere promises, either directly or indirectly, its own preservation—a doctrine of preservation. That is, they can speak of the preservation of Scripture because it is a historical reality, but it is not a theological necessity. . . Those in group 2, who affirm a doctrine of preservation, also believe that the historical evidence demonstrates the preservation of Scripture, but add that this preservation is a theological necessity—Scripture must be preserved because Scripture itself promises its own preservation.” (Combs, 6-7)
- With these caveats in mind, let’s take a closer look at each of the three views identified by Combs.

View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation

- The two most outspoken proponents of this view are Daniel B. Wallace author of “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism” in *Grace Theological Journal* (Spring 1991) and W. Edward Glenny author of “The Preservation of Scripture” found in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary*.
- Regarding the origin of their “novel” view, Combs states:
 - “Though it is impossible to prove that most evangelical Christians have always affirmed a doctrine of preservation, the position of Wallace and Glenny appears to be a rather novel one. It is clearly the rise of the KJV/TR position that they are seeking to refute—a preservation that hints at, and often openly declares, the perfect preservation of the text of Scripture. But in refuting the extreme view, they have eliminated any vestige of the preservation of Scripture as a doctrine.” (Combs, 7)
- After surveying the “Biblical Problems” with the notion of preservation, Glenny declares:
 - “We do not have a promise in God’s Word that he will preserve it, let alone details about how He will preserve it. . . not only does no verse in Scripture explain how God will preserve His Word, but there is no statement in Scripture from which one can establish the doctrine of preservation of the text of scripture.” (Glenny, 945-95)
- So according to the view articulated by Wallace and Glenny, preservation in a general sense is a historical reality but not a scriptural necessity. In seeking to explain their position, Combs states:

- “Whatever has been preserved, whether it is the Bible or, for instance Julius Caesar’s *Commentaries on the Galliac War*, has been preserved because God is in control of the universe. Any ancient document that is extant today owes its present existence to God’s preservation. So we can say that all the works of ancient authors in existence today have been “providentially preserved.” But again, this does not necessarily imply a doctrine of preservation—that God must preserve. God did not have to preserve Caesar’s *Commentaries* . . . A doctrine of preservation of the Scriptures says that they must be preserved—that they cannot have perished.” (Combs, 8)
- On this view there is no distinction made between the preservation of Paul or Caesar. Wallace and Glennie put forth the following two arguments against the doctrine of preservation.
 - “First, preservation is not a necessary corollary of inspiration; that is, while inspiration is a true doctrine, there is nothing in the doctrine itself that demands that what God inspired He was bound to preserve. Second, the biblical texts that are used to support a doctrine of preservation have been misrepresented, and, in fact, do not teach such a doctrine.” (Combs, 8)

View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition

- The following are just some summary statements regarding this view of preservation as summarized by Combs.
 - “Although this doctrine receives greater emphasis and is more fundamental in the KJB/TR position, as we noted earlier, the preservation arguments also show up in most formulations of the MT position. This distinguishing factor in this expression of the doctrine of preservation is the notion that God has only accurately preserved the Scriptures in a particular translation (KJV) and printed Greek text (TR) or in a particular manuscript tradition (Byzantine). Other translations of the Bible and other Greek texts are corrupt to such a degree that they generally cannot be called the Word of God.” (Combs, 8)
- Combs accurately identifies that advocates of this position tend to utilize the term providential as a descriptor for how preservation occurred.
 - “This view of preservation is often described by its supporters as nothing more than providential preservation. When, for example, opponents charge that those who hold this view actually believe in a continuing miracle of inspiration, advocates commonly protest that that is not their position. . .they, we are told, believe in providential preservation. However, one gets the impression from their discussions that for the advocates of this viewpoint the word providential has taken on an unusual meaning, that providential preservation places the preservation of the Scriptures on a different level than other works.” (Combs, 9)

- Lastly, in his summary of this type of preservation, Combs addresses the issue of public availability throughout history and the importance of the TR.
 - “Finally, preservation means that the biblical text has always been publicly available throughout the history of the church. Hills says, “It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special, providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God’s people in every age.” These last two points are quite important because they are used to rule out immediately any printed Greek text or version that is not based on the TR. Only the TR, we are told, displays the kind of “perfect” preservation that Scripture promises for itself, and the only Greek text available throughout all of church history, according to this view, has been the TR. Any printed text or version not based upon the TR must therefore be of necessity corrupt—not worthy of the title, “the Word of God.” (Combs, 11)
- Another name for this viewpoint might be “perfect” or “identical” preservation. *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* edited by Kent Brandenburg stands out as a primary example of this viewpoint. Generally, supporters of this view demand “exact sameness” or “identical wording” as their standard of preservation. Therefore, “perfect” according to this view means “verbatim” wording without any differences of any kind.
- Consequently, I would consider my personal views on preservation to be a nuanced version of the TR position on the matter.

View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts

- This view holds that God has preserved His word in the totality of available manuscript witnesses. Supporters of this position acknowledge and affirm “that a doctrine of preservation is taught in Scripture.” However, they have rejected the view that “preservation is restricted to just a single text-type (e.g., Byzantine Text), printed text (e.g., TR), or version (e.g., KJV).” (Combs, 11)
- The following statement from Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary is emblematic of this position.
 - “While the Bible clearly teaches the ultimate indestructibility of the verbal revelation of God (Matthew 25:34; I Peter 1:25), it does not tell how and where the written manuscript lineage of that Word is preserved. We believe that God has providentially preserved His word in the many manuscripts, fragments, versions, translations, and copies of the Scripture that are available, and that by diligent study, comparison, and correlation, the original text (words) can be ascertained.” (Quoted by Combs, 11)
- According to this view, the original text needs to be ascertained i.e., determined in order that it might be “reconstructed” or “restored” from the mass of preserved manuscripts. James R. White is representative of this position in *The King James Only Controversy* when he states:

- “But the tenacity of the New Testament text, while forcing us to deal with textual variants, also provides us with assurance that our work is not in vain. One of those variant readings is indeed the original. We are called to invest our energies in **discovering** which one it is.” (White, 48)
- Advocates of this view, like the previous one, generally see a connection between inspiration and preservation. The difference lies in how far they extend the connection. Supporters of the KJV/TR position restrict the relationship between inspiration and preservation to the KJV, TR, or MT only. In contrast, proponents of the Totality of Manuscripts position do not.
- Given the parameters of this position, it is obvious that it does not require that the preserved text be available to God’s people at all times.

Conclusion

- Next week we will begin a study of the Biblical data to determine whether or not there is a doctrine of preservation taught in the Bible.
- Once we have ascertained the answer to this question we will begin to explore other issues related to preservation such as the extant and method of preservation. These considerations will help us determine where preservation occurred.

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Sunday, October 2, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 31 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Psalm 12:6-7

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 30 we surveyed the following three views of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Views 2 and 3 maintain that the scriptures do teach a doctrine of preservation, i.e., they hold that preservation is the Bible's claim for itself. However, they disagree in the particulars regarding how and where preservation occurred.
- Meanwhile the first view denies the existence of any formal doctrine of preservation, i.e., it asserts that the scriptures **do not** claim their own preservation.
- Consequently, the first order of business in a study of preservation is to survey the relevant passages in order to ascertain whether or not the scriptures do teach their own preservation. As we consider each passage, I will also be careful to note how views 2 and 3 might differ from each other in how they understand a particular passage.
- Once we have answered the core question of whether or not the scriptures teach their own preservation, we can then consider the extant and method of preservation which divides views 2 and 3.

Psalm 12:6-7

- Any study of preservation must begin with a consideration of Psalm 12:6-7. These verses are shrouded in controversy and are in many respects a microcosm of the entire debate regarding preservation.
- For many King James supporters Psalm 12:6-7 comprise the clearest statement of God's promise to preserve His "words" found in the entire canon of scripture. It is from this passage that many derive their belief in the doctrine of preservation. This is due largely to the fact that the King James actually uses the word "preserve" in verse 7.
- Meanwhile, many modern version advocates view these verses as referring to something altogether different. The controversy centers on what is being preserved in this passage; God's "words" or God's people? To be clear, just because one does not hold that Psalm 12:6-7 are

referring to the preservation of God’s “words” does not automatically mean that they do not believe in the doctrine of preservation.

- Generally speaking, those who seek to deny that Psalm 12:6-7 is teaching the preservation of the “words” do so by utilizing grammatical and contextual arguments.
- In order to adequately discuss all the relevant aspects of this controversy, we will consider the following points regarding whether or not Psalm 12:6-7 is teaching the preservation of the “words.”
 - Grammatical Arguments: Gender Discordance
 - Contextual Arguments: Preservation of the Righteous
 - Correct Exposition: Preservation of the Words
 - Extreme uses of Psalm 12:6-7 in pro-King James argumentation

Grammatical Arguments: Gender Discordance

- A consideration of how various translations render these verses in English illustrates the issue of alleged “gender discordance”.

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
6) The words of the LORD <i>are</i> pure words: <i>as</i> silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7) Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.	6) And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times. 7) You, LORD, will keep the needy safe and will protect us forever from the wicked,	6) The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. 7) You, O LORD, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever.	6) The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. 7) You, O LORD, will keep them; you will guard us from this generation forever.

- The NIV, NASB, and ESV all have the LORD protecting, preserving, or guarding his people “from this generation forever.” This is evident from their use of the pronoun “us” (NIV and ESV) and “him” (NASB) in verse 7.
- In contrast, the King James has the LORD preserving “them” in verse 7. In order to determine what is being preserved in the King James one must look to the nearest antecedent which is found in verse 6. What is being discussed in verse 6 in all four versions? The “words of the LORD.” So to what is the “them” referring to in verse 7 in the King James? To the “words of the LORD” in verse 6. So what is the King James saying that the LORD will preserve “from this generation for ever” in verse 7? The “words of the Lord” in verse 6.

- In summation, modern versions teach the eternal preservation of God’s people whereas the King James is teaching the eternal preservation of the “words of the Lord.” A substantive difference in meaning if ever there was one.
- The reason for the discrepancy is based upon an alleged technicality of Hebrew grammar often referred to as “gender discordance” in the relevant literature.
- Professor William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary succinctly summarizes the grammatical concerns as follows:
 - “. . . it is more probable that verse 7 (“Thou shalt keep them. . . thou shalt preserve them”) is not referring to “the words of the LORD” in verse 6. That is, the antecedent of “them” in verse 7 is probably not the “words” of verse 6. The Hebrew term for “them” (twice in v. 7) is masculine, while the term for “words” is feminine. Therefore, most interpreters and versions understand the promise of preservation in verse 7 to apply to the “poor” and “needy” of verse 5.” (Combs, 15)
- Professor Combs goes on to cite the NIV as an example. Please note the phenomena on the following table comparing the KJB with the NIV. A similar chart could be produced for both the NASB and the ESV.

KJB	NIV
5) For the oppression of the poor (mas.), for the sighing of the needy (mas.), now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set <i>him</i> in safety <i>from him that</i> puffeth at him.	5) "Because the poor (mas.) are plundered and the needy (mas.) groan, I will now arise," says the LORD. "I will protect them from those who malign them."
6) The words (fem.) of the LORD <i>are</i> pure words: <i>as</i> silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.	6) And the words (fem.) of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.
7) Thou shalt keep them (mas.), O LORD, thou shalt preserve them (mas.) from this generation for ever.	7) You, LORD, will keep the needy (mas.) safe and will protect us (mas.) forever from the wicked,

- In short, this argument asserts that the masculine words in verse 7 must match the masculine words in verse 5 because there must be an agreement in terms of gender. Therefore, what is being preserved in verse 7 is not the “words” from verse 6 because the Hebrew word is feminine not masculine.
- W. Edward Glenny of Central Baptist Theological Seminary concurs with Professor Combs regarding the grammar of the passage.
 - “Hebrew grammar requires that it be the righteous whom God is keeping and preserving in verse 7. The word “them” (v. 7a) is a masculine pronominal suffix and “the words” of verse 6a is feminine in gender. In the Hebrew text, verse 7b reads “You will preserve

him from this generation forever.” Delitzsch says the “him” refers “to the man who yearns for deliverance mentioned in the divine utterance (v. 5 in Eng.). The connection is clear in the Hebrew because these pronouns are both third masculine singular.” (Glenny, 91)

- So for many expositors these arguments based upon “gender discordance” are sufficient to disqualify Psalm 12:6-7 as a passage teaching the preservation of scripture.
- As one might expect, not all expositors agree with Combs and Glenny regarding the role of “gender discordance” in establishing the correct understating/translation of Psalm 12:6-7. One such example is Dr. Thomas Strouse, who wrote an “Article Review” of Professor Combs’ article on “The Preservation of Scripture” quoted above for *Sound Words from New England* in the spring of 2001.
- According to Strouse, the grammatical arguments put forth by Combs and Glenny are flawed in at least two ways.
 - “However, two important grammatical points overturn his argument. First, the rule of proximity requires “words” to be the natural, contextual antecedent for “them.” Second, it is not uncommon, especially in the Psalter, for feminine plural noun synonyms for the “words” of the Lord to be the antecedent for masculine plural pronouns/pronominal suffixes, which seem to “masculinize” the verbal extension of the patriarchal God of the Old Testament. Several examples of this supposed gender difficulty occur in Psalm 119. In verse 111, the feminine plural “testimonies” is the antecedent for the masculine plural pronoun “they”. Again, in three passages the feminine plural synonyms for “words” have masculine plural pronominal suffixes (vv. 129, 152, 167).” (Strouse, 2)
- In other words, it seems quite common, especially in the other Psalm dealing with God’s word to exhibit the same “gender discordance” exhibited in Psalm 12:6-7. Let’s consider the following examples.

Psalm 119:111

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
Thy testimonies (fem. pl) have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they (mas. pl) <i>are</i> the rejoicing of my heart.	Your statutes (fem. pl) are my heritage forever; they (mas. pl) are the joy of my heart.	I have inherited Your testimonies (fem. pl) forever, For they (mas. pl) are the joy of my heart.	Your testimonies (fem. pl) are my heritage forever, for they (mas. pl) are the joy of my heart.

Psalm 119:129

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
Your testimonies (fem. pl) are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them (mas. pl).	Your statutes (fem. pl) are wonderful; therefore I obey them (mas. pl).	Your testimonies (fem. pl) are wonderful; Therefore my soul observes them (mas. pl).	Your testimonies (fem. pl) are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them (mas. pl).

Psalm 119:167

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
My soul hath kept thy testimonies (fem. pl); and I love them (mas. pl) exceedingly.	I obey your statutes (fem. pl), for I love them (mas. pl) greatly.	My soul keeps Your testimonies (fem. pl), And I love them (mas. pl) exceedingly.	My soul keeps your testimonies (fem. pl); I love them (mas. pl) exceedingly.

- These verses are all talking about the word of God and exhibit the same gender discord as Psalm 12:6-7. Yet, modern versions have not seen fit to rectify the discord in these passages by translating them different from the KJB. Therefore, it seems that proximity takes precedence over gender accord even in modern versions.
- The grammatical argument against the preservation of God’s words in Psalm 12:6-7 appears to be false. The classic Hebrew Grammar book *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar* states the following regarding “gender discordance” so called in the Hebrew text.
 - “Through a weakening in the distinction of gender, which is noticeable elsewhere and which probably passed from the colloquial language into that of literature, masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives.” (Kautzsch, 440)
- Here are some other examples of so called “gender discordance” from elsewhere in the Hebrew scriptures.
 - Genesis 31:9—Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your (**masculine plural pronoun suffix—referring to Rachel and Leah**) father, and given *them* to me.
 - NIV, NASB, and ESV all follow the King James
 - Genesis 32:15—Thirty milch camels with their (**masculine plural pronoun suffix—referring to the thirty female camels**) colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals.”
 - NIV, NASB, and ESV all follow the King James

- Exodus 1:21—And it came to pass, because the midwives (**fem.**) feared God, that he made them (**masculine plural pronoun suffix — a reference to the midwives**) houses.
 - NIV, NASB, and ESV all follow the King James
- More recently (1990), the Hebrew grammar by Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Conner titled *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* states, “The masculine pronoun is often used for a feminine antecedent.” (Waltke & O’Conner, 361)
- Before offering some closing comments on this matter, I would like to consider one more occurrence of “gender discordance” from Psalm 119.

Psalm 119:152

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
Concerning thy testimonies (fem. pl), I have known of old that thou hast founded them (mas. pl) for ever.	Long ago I learned from your statutes (fem. pl) that you established them (mas. pl) to last forever.	Of old I have known from Your testimonies (fem. pl) That You have founded them (mas. pl) forever.	Long have I known from your testimonies (fem. pl) that you have founded them (mas. pl) forever.

- Once again, we see an occurrence of “gender discordance” in a Psalm speaking about the eternal nature of the Lord’s “testimonies.” Yet, once again, the modern versions follow the King James and make no attempt to fix the “discord” as they did in Psalm 12:6-7.
- Above, we quoted from Professor William Combs’ article “The Preservation of Scripture” in which he cited “gender discordance” in Psalm 12:5-7 as a means for arguing that the passage is not referring to the preservation of the “words” and can therefore not be used to establish a “doctrine of preservation.” (Combs, 15)
- Later, in the same article, however, we find Professor Combs stating that Psalm 119:152 “appears to be a fairly direct promise of preservation” (Combs, 18). In the whole of his comments on this verse, Combs says nothing about the “gender discordance” clearly demonstrated above.
- Why would someone hold that “gender discordance” disqualifies the preservation of the “words” in one passage (Psalm 12) while, at the same time, asserting that another passage (Psalm 119:152) exhibiting the same grammatical phenomena is “a fairly direct promise of preservation”?
- If accordance in gender trumps proximity, why is the principle not applied consistently throughout the Hebrew Old Testament? Why is gender accordance all of sudden a problem in Psalm 12:6-7 when it is not in a host of other passages?

- At a minimum, it would seem that the alleged grammatical rule regarding gender agreement in the Hebrew text is selectively applied at best. Regarding the instances of “gender discordance” in Psalm 119 noted above, Dr. Thomas Strouse states:
 - “These examples show the importance of maintaining the Biblically accepted Hebrew grammar of closest antecedent and the Biblically accepted gender discordance in exception cases for theological reasons.” (Strouse, “The Permanent Preservation of God’s Words: Psalm12:6-7, 32)
- As demonstrated above, even modern versions adopt discordance in gender in order to adequately convey the sense in English.
- On the other end of the spectrum, grammatical arguments based on “gender discordance” demonstrate the lengths some are willing to go in their argumentation to remove the testimony of the clearest verse in the canon regarding the preservation of scripture.
- On this point it seems that Daniel B. Wallace and W. Edward Glenny are more consistent in their total denial of a doctrine of preservation than William W. Combs. Combs holds that “gender discordance” excludes Psalm 12:6-7 from teaching the preservation of the “words” while at the same time maintaining Psalm 119:152 does while exhibiting the same grammatical realities.
- If Psalm 12:6-7 does not teach the preservation of the “words”, proof must be furnished via a different line of argumentation. Grammatical arguments based upon “gender discordance” are inconsistent and unpersuasive.
- In the next Lesson we will consider arguments from the contents of Psalm 12.

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Sunday, October 16, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 32 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Psalm 12:6-7 (Part 2)

Introduction/Review

- In the previous lesson we began our investigation into whether or not the scriptures teach a formal doctrine of perseveration. Please recall the following three views laid out in Lesson 30:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- We commenced this process by initiating an examination of the relevant passages commonly used to teach the doctrine of preservation. Our investigation began with Psalm 12:6-7.
- By way of review, we observed the following general points about Psalm 12:6-7 in Lesson 31:
 - Many believe it to be the clearest and most important promise in the entire cannon regarding God’s promise to preserve His word.
 - Controversy surrounds the passage regarding who or what is being preserved: 1) the “words” or 2) the people i.e., “poor” and “needy” from verse 5.
 - Those who maintain that the passage is teaching the preservation of the people generally make two arguments to support their position: 1) Grammatical Arguments and 2) Contextual Arguments.
- As we investigate Psalm 12 we will consider the following points:
 - Grammatical Arguments: Gender Discordance
 - Contextual Arguments: Preservation of the Righteous
 - Correct Exposition: Preservation of the Words
 - Extreme uses of Psalm 12:6-7 in pro-King James argumentation
- The bulk of Lesson 31 focused on point one; “Grammatical Arguments: Gender discordance”. It was concluded that arguments based upon gender agreeance were inconsistent, irregular, and therefore inadequate for proving that Psalm 12:6-7 does not teach the preservation of the “words.”

- In this lesson we want to focus our attention on points two and three; namely: “Contextual Arguments” and the “Actual Teaching” of the passage.

Psalm 12:6-7

Contextual Arguments: The Preservation of the Righteous

- For the sake of consistency, let’s begin our discussion by looking at William W. Combs’ essay “The Preservation of Scripture.” Combs summarizes the contextual arguments as follows:
 - “David’s subject in the Psalm is stated right in verse 1: “Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.” David is concerned about the righteous who are being oppressed by the wicked of “this generation.” In the midst of this he declares his assurance that God will preserve the righteous forever. Taken in this sense, this passage has no bearing on the doctrine of preservation.” (Combs, 15)
- In other words, according to Combs, the context of the passage is about the preservation of God’s people not the “words” of God.
- W. Edward Glenny agrees with Combs regarding the context of Psalm 12 and offers the following expanded explanation in his essay, “The Preservation of Scripture”:
 - “The psalm is an expression of David’s confidence in the pure words of God. In verse 4 he prays for deliverance from the proud flatterers all around him who cannot be trusted (v. 2b). Verse 5 gives the source of David’s confidence; he is assured that the Lord will deliver him from those maligning him. In verses 6-8 David declares that his confidence is in God’s Word. In this context, David’s expression of confidence in God’s Word in verse 6 refers to his confidence in God’s affirmation that He will deliver the afflicted (v. 5). Then, in verse 7, on the basis of his confidence in God’s Word (vv. 5-6), David declares his assurance that God will preserve forever the righteous, who are being afflicted, by the wicked of “this generation.” The pronoun “them” in verse 7 (“thou shalt keep them”) does not refer to the “words” of verse 6. It refers to the “poor” and the “needy” of verse 5, and the “godly” and “faithful” men of verse 1, whom the Lord will “preserve” (v. 7b). Furthermore, in context the “generation” (v. 7) must be the wicked who are all around the psalmist and dominate his society (vv. 1-4). It would not make sense to say that God will preserve His Word from the generation of David throughout eternity. What about the generations before David? Was God not concerned about His Word then? The point of the psalm is that the godly man will never cease; the faithful will never “fail from among the children of men” (v. 1). The righteous will never disappear from the face of the earth because God will “preserve them from this generation forever” (v. 7). Verse 8 clinches the contextual arguments. It again returns to the topic of the wicked all around from whom David and future generations of the righteous will be delivered.” (Glenny, 90-91)

- First, it is important to note that Glenny’s contextual argument is predicated and depended upon the grammatical argument regarding “gender discordance.” We have already concluded in Lesson 31 that grammatical arguments based upon gender accordance are inconsistent and inconclusive. Consequently, since Glenny’s contextual argument is so grammar dependent, I find his exposition based upon contextual consideration to be inconclusive.
- Second, to argue that since David states, “from this generation for ever” in verse 7 means that God was not concerned about the preservation of His word before David’s generation, is not a sound argument and disregards a host of relevant cross references.
 - Exodus 24:4—is Glenny saying that God did not care what happened to the words written by Moses before the time David.
 - Isaiah 30:8—does this verse mean that God was not concerned about His word before the book of Isaiah was written?
- In Psalm 12, David is speaking from the point of view of the scriptures he is in the process of penning.
- Third, where are the relevant cross-references to support Glenny’s contextual interpretation that God’s people will be perpetually preserved in an earthly sense from evil doers? God’s people continue to suffer many things at the hands of wicked men even in the dispensation of grace. While there are no cross-references to support the notion that God will preserve His people from evil doers, there are ample parallel passages to support the teaching that God will preserve His word “forever.”
 - Psalm 119:152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
- Combs and Glenny are not the only writers to deny that Psalm 12:6-7 is referring to the preservation of God’s written word based upon grammatical and contextual arguments. Jon Rehurek’s “Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous? The Biblical View” uses Combs, Glenny, and J.J. Stewart Perowne’s *Commentary of Psalms: 2 Volumes in 1* to argue similarly. Rehurek concludes:
 - “. . . this passage does not speak of the preservation of God’s written Word; it only addresses the purity and trustworthiness of His words and the preservation that is being spoken of concerns the righteous men.” (Rehurek, 83)
- After considering the relevant writings, it is evident that grammatical and contextual arguments are working in concert with each other by those who seek to deny that Psalm 12:6-7 are teaching the preservation of the written word.

Correct Exposition: Preservation of the Words

- Preservationist Thomas M. Strouse acknowledges that the King James rendering of Psalm 12:6-7 stands in contradiction to that of modern versions. Strouse views the passage as one of the “clearest promises” of preservation in the Old Testament.
 - “Psalm 12 is a psalm of contrasts. It contrasts the Godly with the ungodly and the Words of the Lord with the words of men. The latter contrast provides the backdrop to one of the clearest promises in the OT of the preservation of God’s Words.” (Strouse, 29)
- Structurally, Strouse sees the psalm as one of asymmetric contrasts:
 - “The structure of the psalm is asymmetric. This structure causes the focus to be on C, God’s Promises (see below). David’s lament carries the reader from the need for Divine help, because of the words of the ungodly, to focus on the promises of God for deliverance, which include the permanent preservation of His Words, the antidote to the words of the ever-present wicked.
 - (A) The recognition of the need for Divine help (v. 1)
 - (B) The threat of the words of the ungodly (vv. 2-4)
 - (C) God’s promises (v. 5)
 - (A’) The antidote of the Words of God (vv. 6-7)
 - (B’) The recognition of the need for Divine help (v. 8) (Strouse, 30)
- Without reproducing the totality of his article, Strouse draws his reader’s attention to verse 5, or statement C above.
 - “The structure of the psalm focuses on the promises of God. The Lord promised that, because “of the oppression of the poor,” and “of the sighing of the needy,” He would “arise and set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.” Since the “poor” were despoiled and the “needy” were groaning, the Lord made significant promises.” (Strouse, 31)
- Psalm 12:5—notice that the protection of the “poor” and “needy” is based upon what the LORD said i.e., His words. In the near context, the psalmist has already expressed that the Lord will “arise” to help the “poor” and “needy”.
 - Psalm 9:18-19—contains the Lord’s promise to “arise” and protect the “poor” and “needy.”

- Psalm 10:12-14—the Lord will “arise” to help the “poor.”
- The promise of hope offered in verse 5 is only as good as the Lord’s ability to perform/execute His promise.
- Psalm 12:6-7—with the promise of God in mind in verse 5, the words of the Lord are contrasted in verses 6 and 7 with the words of the ungodly in verses 2 through 4. Regarding verses 6 and 7 Strouse writes:
 - “The content of God’s help was the assurance of His ever-present Words with promises of deliverance as an antidote to the words of the wicked. The psalmist reflected on this quality and endurance of the great tangible help that the Lord desires to give man—His perfect words. The quality of the Lord’s Words is likened to purified silver from a refining furnace. The result of the seven-fold refining process produced one hundred percent perfect silver in the ancient world, an apt illustration for the quality of the perfect Words of the Lord. David revealed the endurance of God’s Words, indicating that they would be preserved from that generation forever.” (Strouse, 31)
- The expression “from this generation for ever” reflects that David is referring to the “words” of hope he has been in the process of penning. In other words, the statement applies to the words David is in the process of writing under inspiration. Attempts to argue that the verse is not teaching the preservation of God’s “words” because it only mentions the current generation and nothing before David, are weak and fail to take into account how Psalm 12 fits into the book of Psalms as a whole.
- Psalm 12:8—David concludes the psalm by recognizing his need for the Lord’s help given that the wicked surround him on every side. Consequently,
 - “David recognized that the proud words of the wicked flatterers were a constant problem, but the perfect words of God will always counter man’s lies.” (Strouse, 31)
- Without the preservation of the “words”, what hope do the poor and needy have of their foretold future deliverance. Arguing that this passage does not teach the preservation of the “words” throws the content of the Lord’s promise in verse 5 into question. Not only that, as we have already pointed out, the poor and needy have not been perpetually and supernaturally kept safe from the wicked since the generation of David.
- The entire psalm is about the words of the wicked versus the words of God.
- In the end, I believe that the passage is teaching the preservation of the “words.” That being said, I would disagree with Strouse that His promise necessitates “exact sameness” or “verbatim” wording.

Extreme uses of Psalm 12:6-7 in pro-King James Argumentation

- Many King James advocates hold either explicitly or implicitly that Psalm 12:6-7 is referring to the KJB. In other words, they have in their thinking the notion that David is speaking directly about the KJB in this passage.
- The expression “as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times” at the end of verse 6 is taken to be a direct reference to the KJB. This argument is made because the KJB is the seventh translation of the *Textus Receptus* into the English.
 - 1525—Tyndale
 - 1535—Coverdale
 - 1537—Matthews
 - 1539—Great Bible
 - 1560—Geneva Bible
 - 1568—Bishops Bible
 - 1611—King James Bible
- This assertion is based upon the numerical argument that seven is the number of perfection coupled with King James having been the seventh transition of the TR into English; therefore, it is argued that the King James is “perfect.” In order to make this argument one must make the following assumptions:
 - David is speaking about the KJB when he wrote Psalm 12.
 - All the various editions of the six earlier TR translations into English should not be counted.
- In her booklet, *The Hidden History of the English Scriptures: Given by Inspiration to All Generations* commemorating the 400th anniversary of the KJB, Gail Riplinger includes a section titled ““Purified Seven Times” Not Eight.”
 - “The KJB translators would not approve of further tampering with the English Bible. . . The KJB translators did not see their translation as one in the midst of a chain of ever evolving English translations. They wanted their Bible to be one of which no one could justly say, ‘It is good, except this word or that word. . .’ They planned: “to make . . . out of many good ones (Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Geneva, and the Bishops’) one principal good one, not justly to be expected against; that hath been our endeavor, that

our mark' The translators said that their translations was "perfected." . . . The KJB translators' assertion that their edition "perfected" leaves no work left for the new version translators. The enemy is at war with the word of God." (Riplinger, 48-49)

- Gail Riplinger's comments above typify the type of reasoning regarding Psalm 12:6-7 present in much pro-King James literature and teaching.
- A less extreme view of Psalm 12:6-7 might hold that the verses in question necessitate a sevenfold refinement process in any receptor language in order for God's "perfect" word to exist in that language.
- The dictionary defines a simile as a comparison between two things using the words "like" or "as". Psalm 12:6 contains a simile to explain how pure God's "words" are. How pure are the words of God, "as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times."
- While I believe that Psalm 12:6-7 is teaching the preservation of the "words" I do not believe that the psalmist penned these verses with an early 17th century English translation in mind. Rather David is referring to the "words" he is the process of writing in Hebrew.
- It was those Hebrew words that God preserved thereby giving the King James translators something to translate into English. This is not to say that translations cannot be part of the preservation process, it simply means that David is not referring to or speaking about the KJB in Psalm 12.

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Sunday, October 30, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 33 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Psalm 119

Introduction

- In Lessons 31 and 32 we commenced our study of whether or not the Bible teaches its own preservation by looking at Psalm 12:6-7. Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of looking at passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- In summation of Lessons 31 and 32, I presented the reasons why I believe that Psalms 12:6-7 does teach the preservation of the written word.
- In this Lesson we want to continue our examination of the relevant passages regarding preservation. We will do this by considering a cluster of verses from Psalm 119.

General Comments on Psalm 119

- Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the entire Bible. Most commentators and Bible students acknowledge that the entire chapter is speaking about the Law or God's written word to the nation of Israel.
- Throughout the chapter a host of different yet synonymous words are used interchangeably to refer to the scriptures. Please note that the number in parenthesis indicates that number of times that the word or phrase occurs in Psalm 119.
 - Psalm 119:1—"law of the Lord" (24x)
 - Psalm 119:2—"testimonies" (22x)
 - Psalm 119:3—"his ways" (6x)
 - Psalm 119:4—"thy precepts" (21x)
 - Psalm 119:5—"thy statutes" (22x)

- Psalm 119:6—“thy commandments” (21x)
- Psalm 119:7—“righteous judgements” (18x)
- Psalm 119:9, 11—“thy word” (38x)
- Virtually every verse in Psalm 119 contains a reference to the words of God. There are 176 verses in the Psalm and 172 of them contain one of the words identified above. Please bear these facts in mind as we look a few of the verses.

Psalm 119:89

- King James advocate D.A. Waite lists this verse as one of the texts supporting the doctrine of preservation in his book, *Defending the King James Bible*. Waite reasons:
 - “God’s words are not in doubt. It is permanent. It is unconfused and plain. God has settled, that means it has been preserved, kept pure. Nothing has been lost. . . Some people say, “Well, its settled in Heaven but not on earth.” But God needs it less than we do; He knows His Words. WE are the ones who need it. He is using this verse, Psalm 119:89, to show us that God has given us Words that are settled. . . It is true that God’s Words’ are not only preserved and settled “in heaven” but they are also preserved by Heaven’s Omnipotent God.” (Waite, 7-8).
- In short Waite is arguing that there is perfect archetypal Bible in heaven which mandates and necessitates a corollary Bible on earth. For Waite this archetypal Bible exists on earth via preservation. Please note that Waite’s definition of “perfect” in this case assumes identical wording as the standard.
- Meanwhile, Dr. Combs of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary views the verse as containing no direct reference to “God’s written revelation” at all. Using A.A. Anderson’s work *The Psalms* to buttress his argument, Combs states:
 - “It seems more likely that “your word” in verse 89 has no direct reference to God’s written revelation. As Anderson notes, “thy word . . . is probably the expression of God’s all-embracing purpose and will (cf. Isaiah 40:8).” God’s purpose, His will, is “firmly fixed” in heaven “beyond the reach of all disturbing causes.” . . . Thus, it would appear that this verse has no direct application to the doctrine of preservation.” (Combs, 17)
- Ultimately, I agree with Combs that Psalm 119:89 is not a direct promise of preservation. That being said, the assertion that “thy word” is in no way related to God’s written revelation is a bit troubling. Why would the phrase “thy word” within the context of Psalm 119 not be referring to God’s written revelation?

- I have used the Psalm 119:89 in this class as our third presupposition, not as a verse that directly promises the preservation of God’s word on earth.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified His word above His own name. (Psalms 138:2)
 - **God’s word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalm 119:89)**
 - God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated His word to mankind. (I Timothy 3:16 & II Peter 1:21)
 - God’s words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (Isaiah 30:8, I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7)
- King James advocates are not the only ones who view Psalm 119:89 as a statement as to the eternal existence of God’s written word in heaven. Combs quotes Wayne Grudem’s essay “Scripture’s Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture” as follows:
 - “. . . a copy of words that God in heaven has permanently decided on and has subsequently caused to be committed to writing by men.” (quoted in Combs, 16)
- This is precisely the way I am using the verse in the above presuppositions. The verse is referring to the written word of God in heaven but is not speaking about its preservation on earth. Other verses in Psalm 119 speak to the issue of preservation.
- Galatians 3:8—would not be possible if God’s word was not eternally settled upon in heaven.

Psalm 119:111

- We already encountered this verse back in Lesson 31 when we were discussing the issue of “gender discordance” as it related to Psalm 12:6-7. Please remember that this verse exhibits the same phenomena, yet the translators of the modern versions follow the King James in giving priority to proximity over gender agreeance.

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
Thy testimonies (fem. pl.) have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they (mas. pl.) <i>are</i> the rejoicing of my heart.	Your statutes (fem. pl.) are my heritage forever; they (mas. pl.) are the joy of my heart.	I have inherited Your testimonies (fem. pl.) forever, for they (mas. pl.) are the joy of my heart.	Your testimonies (fem. pl.) are my heritage forever, for they (mas. pl.) are the joy of my heart.

- Regarding this verse, King James advocate D.A. Waite writes:

- “If you take God’s Testimonies as a “heritage for ever,” they must be preserved if we are to keep them.” (Waite, 8)
- R.B. Ouellette includes Psalm 119:111 in a list of preservation passages along with the following remarks:
 - “The doctrine of preservation is based on the Bible itself. Since the Bible is to be our authority in matters of faith and practice, it is important to see what God has stated about its preservation for each generation. . . There are seminaries that exist today that seem to ‘explain away’ every verse that teaches preservation. I have a problem with some who feel that verses or doctrine must be ‘explained away.’ I prefer to read the Bible and understand it literally. When God says His word will last forever, that it will last for a thousand generations, I believe that means God will preserve His word forever.” (Ouellette, 32-33)
- William W. Combs, Daniel B. Wallace, John Reherek and W. Edward Glenny do not comment on this verse in their writings on preservation.

Psalm 119:152

- As we already noted in Lesson 31, Dr. Combs believes that “verse 152 appears to be a fairly direct promise of preservation,” despite the “gender discordance” observable in the verse. (Combes, 18)

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
Concerning thy testimonies (fem. pl.), I have known of old that thou hast founded them (mas. pl.) for ever.	Long ago I learned from your statutes (fem. pl.) that you established them (mas. pl.) to last forever.	Of old I have known from Your testimonies (fem. pl.) that You have founded them (mas. pl.) forever.	Long have I known from your testimonies (fem. pl.) that you have founded them (mas. pl.) forever.

- In support of his conclusion that Psalm 119:152 is a “direct promise of preservation,” Combes states:
 - “This verse would seem to offer stronger support (than Psalm 119:89) for a doctrine of preservation. The context (vv. 145-52) makes clear reference to God’s written revelation in the Torah. The Psalmist says he will observe the Lord’s “statutes” (v. 145) and keep his “testimonies” (v. 146). He waits for his “words” (v. 147) and meditates in his “word” (v. 148) and asks to be revived according to the Lord’s “ordinances” (v. 149). The Psalmist observed that the wicked do not obey his “law” (v. 150). Finally, he concludes in verses 151-52 . . . These “testimonies, have been founded forever,” meaning as the NIV puts it, “you established them to last forever.” (Combs, 18)
- In contrast, W. Edward Glenny of Central Baptist Theological Seminary denies that the verse has anything to do with preservation.

- “In Psalm 119:152 the Psalmist states “Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that Thou hast founded them forever.” In the previous verse he stated that God’s Word is truth and verse 150 teaches that the wicked are far from God’s law. In contrast to the wicked, the Psalmist is trusting in God’s Word (vv. 145-149). His confidence is that God’s law is not fickle, it is trustworthy and based on God’s unchanging moral character. That must be the meaning of verse 152 in its context.” (Glenny, 88)
- King James advocates R.B. Oullette, D.A. Waite, David Cloud, and Jack McElroy are in agreement with William W. Combs that Psalm 119:152 establishes the fundamental promise of preservation.

Psalm 119:160

- This verse is very similar to Psalm 119:152 in that it is part of the section where the Psalmist is making numerous references to the Law: “law” (v. 153), “word” (v. 154), “statutes” (v. 155), “judgments” (v. 156), “testimonies” (v. 157), “word” (v. 158), and “precepts” (v. 159).
- Because of these contextual realities, Combs concludes the following with respect to Psalm 119:160:
 - “This verse, then, like 152, would also seem to strongly imply a doctrine of preservation.” (Combs, 18-19)
- Once again, W. Edward Glenny denies that Psalm 119:160 teaches a doctrine of preservation by arguing that the verse is simply speaking about the “infallibility,” “absolute trustworthiness,” and “dependability” of God’s word. Glenny writes:
 - “The Psalmists’ hope is not based on the belief that the text of God’s word will remain intact centuries after he dies, nor is he concerned that he has lost part of God’s Word. His confidence is in the fact that God’s word is true and infallible. In contrast with those who do not keep God’s Word (v. 158), he keeps it and is depending upon it to quicken him because it is true (v. 160a). Therefore, when he says, “every one of thy righteous judgements endureth forever,” he must be expressing his confidence in the infallibility and absolute trustworthiness of God’s Word. Every statement in God’s word is dependable.” (Glenny, 89)
- Regarding Psalm 119:160, D.A. Waite simply says, ““endureth forever”—that is Bible Preservation!” (Waite, 8)

Other Passages from the Psalms

- D. A. Waite views these additional Psalms as dealing with preservation. In the interest of time and space, I have just provided the reference followed by Waite’s comments on each verse.

- Psalm 78:1-7—“These verses certainly indicate that God intended to preserve His Words for all time.” (Waite, 7)
- Psalm 105:8—“If a “generation” is twenty years, this would be 20,000 years. If a “generation were thirty years, it would be 30, 000 years! God wants us to clearly see His promise of Bible preservation.” (Waite, 7)

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Sunday, November 6, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 34 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Isaiah 30:8

Introduction

- Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of looking at passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- In Lessons 31 and 32 we commenced our study of whether or not the Bible teaches its own preservation by looking at Psalm 12:6-7.
- Last week in Lesson 33, we considered a cluster of verses regarding preservation found in Psalm 119.
- In this lesson, I would like to consider the impact of Isaiah 30:8 upon the doctrine of preservation.

Isaiah 30:8

- Much of the relevant literature on the topic of preservation does not include any discussion of this verse. In my mind this is unfortunate because this verse speaks to why God would have something written down and noted in a book. The purpose and intent of doing so is explicitly stated in verse 8, “that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.”
- This was God’s motivation for any of the words He had written down under inspiration. “When God talks about preserving His words, He is talking about preserving His words that are written on the page in a book.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 9)
- The use of the word “book” in Isaiah 30:8 is important. The Hebrew word (*cepher*) translated “book” occurs 184 times in 174 verses in the Hebrew Old Testament. One hundred thirty-eight (138) times the King James translators rendered the word as “book” in English.
- As God progressively gave His word to Israel in “time past”, the text portrays the human authors as writing a book and subsequently adding to it as more scripture is written down.
- Exodus 17:14—God tells Moses to write it in a book for a Memorial.

- Exodus 24:4—what did Moses write in the book? All the “words.”
- Exodus 24:7—Moses reads the “book of the covenant” in verse 7. What was in the “book of the covenant”? The “words” that Moses wrote in verse 4.
- Deuteronomy 29:20-21, 27—what is “written in this book” in verse 20? The words that Moses wrote down (Exodus 24:4). Why did God want Moses to write them down? So, that they would be an everlasting “memorial” (Exodus 17:14) of what God said.
- Deuteronomy 31:24-26—what was Moses writing in the book of the law? The words that God wanted Israel to remember forever. The book of the law included Genesis through Deuteronomy.
- Joshua 1:8—after the death of Moses, Joshua emphasizes the importance of the “book of the law.”
- Joshua 24:26—Joshua is adding to the words written by Moses.
- I Samuel 10:25—Samuel is adding to the book started by Moses and expanded by Joshua.
- I Kings 14:19—references “the book of the chronicles of the Kings of Israel.”
- II Kings 14:6—the words written in the book of the law were still in existence at the time that II Kings was written.
- II Chronicles 24:27—speaks of the words “written in the story of the book of the kings.”
- Psalm 40:7—the book is made up of books.
- Isaiah 34:16—the book of the Lord.
- Jeremiah 30:2—Jeremiah is told to write the words in a book.
- Jeremiah 36:2, 8, 11, 32; 51:60—recall that Daniel came to understand by books that the Babylonian captivity would last seventy years. One of the books that Daniel read was the book of Jeremiah. So, Daniel had access to what was written down despite not possessing the original manuscript. Therefore, God wanted His word noted in a book so that it could be “for ever and ever.”
- Isaiah 59:20—is a reference to the Second Coming of Christ.
 - Romans 11:26-27—Paul quotes Isaiah 59:20 as a reference to the Second Coming of Christ and the salvation of Israel when Christ comes back at the Second Advent.

- Isaiah 59:21—“As for me, this *is* my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that *is* upon thee, **and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.**”
- Regarding the implications of Isaiah 59:20 on the doctrine of preservation, Brother Jordan stated the following in Grace School of the Bible:
 - “He is talking about the people in the millennium. They have the word that God put in their mouth back in Isaiah (the Old Testament) and He says, “Even after the millennium, my word is still going to last forever and ever.”

Folks, if the millennium is 2000 AD plus and Isaiah is 700 BC, you have preservation for 2700 years right there demanded in the text in order to meet the qualifications of the text. God said, “I put the words in your mouth (Isaiah) and wrote them down in a book to be there for ever, and they will be available at the Second Advent of Christ, and they will even continue after that.” That is preservation.

If I can demonstrate, in the bible, that in the millennium God says His word is going to be present, then I can sure demonstrate the fact that it is somewhere in the dispensation of grace. If God will have His word in the millennium, He is going to preserve it through the time before the millennium.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 9)

- Isaiah 29:18-19—“And in that day (the millennium) shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. 19) The meek also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
 - “In that Kingdom, when the deaf hear, they will hear the words of the bible that Isaiah is told to write down. God is going to preserve that book. That is the doctrine of preservation; that is God’s promise to preserve his word. (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 9)
- Isaiah 30:8—God told Isaiah to write His words in a book so that they would be available for the deaf to hear read to them in the millennium. Regarding those who deny the doctrine of preservation Brother Jordan stated:
 - “When you are studying preservation, you are not studying a figment of some fellow’s imagination who just likes to run off at the mouth without studying.

There are a lot of real simple people in the world who believe in the preservation of the scripture. They believe that they have the preserved word of God, but they do not have all of that fancy scholarship and information. They just have faith to believe that God Almighty has preserved His word.

I want you to remember this, *any believer that you meet that does not believe in the issue of preservation has been taught not to believe it.*” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 9)

- Despite the lack of discussion of Isaiah 30:8 in the scholarly literature, there is strong scriptural evidence that the verse does help establish the Biblical doctrine of the preservation of God’s written word.

Practical Reasons for Writing a Book

- The following is a list of practical reasons, covered in Grace School of the Bible for why God wrote and preserved a book.
- *To preserve the original revelation.*
 - “Can you imagine how confusing and sloppy it would get if you were just passing on oral communication? If you get a line of people and whisper something in someone’s ear at the beginning of the line and then he whispers it into the next person’s ear and so on, by the time it reaches the last person, it will be something entirely different.

Now can you imagine how it would go if you had oral tradition to keep passing down the word of God. You never would know if you had it right or not.

God wanted His revelation preserved in a book.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 8)

- *A written text groups all the material together.*
 - “You can get all the material together under one cover. It would be horrible if you had to hunt around for people who had bits and pieces of the oral communication. . . With the written text, you can get it all in one book.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 8)
- *A written text is independent of the speaker and the writer.*
 - “In Jeremiah 36, Jeremiah is in jail. He writes the thing down and gives it to his secretary and says, “Go read it to the king.” It is independent of him.

Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:9 – “Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.” He said, “They have me in jail like a criminal, but the word of God is not bound.”

They wrote it down and sent it out. It is independent regardless of what happens to the speaker.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 8)

- *The written text is mobile.*
 - “It transcends the life and times of the writers and the students. It is mobile.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 8)
- *The written text makes everybody responsible.*
 - “Luke 16:29 – “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”

You have the book, so you have the revelation that you need.” (Jordan, MSS 101—Lesson 8)

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Sunday, November 13, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 35 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Isaiah 40:8 & I Peter 1:23-25

Introduction

- Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of looking at passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- In Lessons 31 and 32 we commenced our consideration of whether or not the Bible teaches its own preservation by looking at Psalm 12:6-7.
- In Lesson 33, we studied a cluster of verses regarding preservation found in Psalm 119.
- Last week in Lesson 34, we considered the impact of Isaiah 30:8 upon the doctrine of preservation.
- In this Lesson, we study the impact of Isaiah 40:8 and its New Testament cross-reference I Peter 1:23-25 upon the doctrine of preservation. Please note that the comments below were originally part of Lesson 34 but that we did not have enough time to cover them last week. Consequently, I decided to round out our discussion of Isaiah 40:8 in this Lesson by also touching on its sister verse in I Peter.

Isaiah 40:8

- This verse has attracted more attention in the scholarly literature than has Isaiah 30:8.
- Remaining true to his non-preservationist stance, Dr. W. Edward Glenny sees the verse as a general statement of the infallibility of God's promise to deliver Israel from their captivity.
 - "This OT context speaks of the infallibility of God's promise to deliver His people from their captivity in Babylon. His promises will come to pass. Second . . . it is speaking of the infallibility and incorruptible nature of the Word of God not of the preservation of the text of Scripture." (Glenny, 89-90)
- To bolster his position, Glenny quotes Grudem's commentary on I Peter:

- “. . . the Isaiah passage is a statement about the character of God’s words generally, without reference to any particular form in which they occur.” (Glenny, 90)
- Taking the middle of the road position once again is Dr. William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary. Not willing to go as far as Glenny (see above) or Strouse (see below), Combs concludes that Isaiah 40:8 “should not be pressed to affirm a specific and direct promise of the preservation of God’s written revelation. Instead, it may have a more indirect application to the doctrine.” (Combs, 20)
- Combs reasons as follows to support his conclusion.
 - “In this verse we are again faced with the problem of identifying “the word of our God,” as well as the meaning of “stands forever.” The Hebrew word for “stands” (μWq) when it is used figuratively can have the ideas of “fixed,” “confirmed,” “established,” “endure,” and according to BDB in this verse the particular sense is “be fulfilled.” BDB also suggests parallels with Isaiah 14:24, “The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, ‘Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand,’” and Isaiah 46:10, “Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’” Thus, the idea would be that “the word of our God stands forever” in the sense that it will “be fulfilled.” However, commentators universally understand the emphasis to be more that of “permanence”— the permanence of God’s word in contrast to “the grass” and “the flowers.” Moyer says that in verses 6–8 “the message is the contrast between human transience and divine permanence, designed to affirm that what the Lord promises he will most surely keep and perform.” Thus, Isaiah says that the plans and purposes of the nations will fail, “but the word of our God stands forever”—his plans are fixed, established, permanent; they cannot be “annulled by the passage of time.” Alexander suggests that “there is a tacit antithesis between the word of God and man; what man says is uncertain and precarious, what God says cannot fail.” What God says, his word, cannot be changed; it is immutable.” (Combs, 19-20)
- In summation, Combs views the verse as being more about the immutability of God’s word than its preservation.
- In his essay, “Preservation of the Bible: Providential or Miraculous? The Biblical View?” Jon Rehurek comments on Isaiah 40:8 in a section titled *Infallibility Texts*. Rehurek, like Combes, sees the passages as indirectly applying to the doctrine of preservation.
 - “The promises of God are sure and reliable. Once again, the focus is on the abiding truthfulness of the words of the Lord; whereas men fail, the words will never fail. And, even more specifically, the text emphasizes that important truth. Oswalt says, “Whatever may lie ahead for the Israelites, they may know that God’s word of promise will not fail them.” This may apply indirectly to the preservation of the written word of God, but it is not the direct meaning of the statements of Isaiah. In comparison to the frailty of flowers

and grass, the promises of God “stand forever,” firmly established, unshakeable, immovable, and unfailing. “Stands” has the idea of being “fixed,” “confirmed,” “established,” “enduring,” and in this verse, means “be fulfilled.” ... Because the focus is on the permanence of God’s promises (v. 8), this certainly has application to the written words of God, albeit indirectly and by implication.” (Rehurek, 84-85)

- Preservationist Dr. Thomas Strouse comments on the verse in *The Locus Classicus Passages* section of his essay titled “The Translation Model Predicted by Scripture.” Regarding Isaiah 40:8, Strouse states:
 - “Isaiah contrasted the frailty of man with the permanence of God’s Word when he uttered, “the grass, withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (40:8; cf. v. 7). Surely Isaiah alluded to the very words which he preached and ultimately inscripturated in his book. Isaiah could write (8:1), was commanded to write (30:8), and did write (34:16). Isaiah taught the perfect, verbal, plenary permanence of Scripture.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 245)
- Donald L. Brake includes a discussion of Isaiah 40:8 as “direct biblical evidence” of preservation in his essay “The Preservation of Scriptures.” Brake writes:
 - “Isaiah 40:8 adds the thought of endurance to the concept of the stability of the Word. . . . Isaiah 40 begins the third major section of the prophecy of Isaiah. It has as its general theme the idea of comfort while awaiting deliverance. In verses 1 through 11, Isaiah tells the nation of the endurance of God’s Word, which becomes a source of comfort. The theme of verses 1 through 11 is the proclamation of the perishable nature of all flesh and the imperishable nature of the Word of God, . . . What comes out of man’s mouth is uncertain and temporary, but what God speaks is as eternal as his very character.” (Brake in *Counterfeit or Genuine*, 182)
- Dr. David H. Sorenson states the following regarding Isaiah 40:8 in his book *Touch Not the Unclean Things: The Text Issue and Separation*:
 - “Isaiah 40:8 says (quotes the verse) ...The word translated as “shall stand” also has the sense to be established or to persist. The prophet, in essence, wrote that God’s Word will persist forever.” (Sorenson, 54)
- Preservationists Jack McElroy, Dr. Jack A. Moorman, and Dr. Thomas Holland all include Isaiah 40:8 in their respective lists of verses that teach the preservation of scripture. Dr. David Cloud states the following regarding Isaiah 40:8 and Isaiah 59:21 (see discussion in Lesson 34) in his book *Myths About the Modern Bible Versions*:
 - “Isaiah adds his “amen” to the doctrine of preservation. According to Isaiah 59:21, it is the very words of God which will be preserved. Note the preservation of God’s Word is

connected with its usage among believing people. The Scriptures will be preserved by use, not disuse.” (Cloud, 108)

I Peter 1:23-25

- Given that Peter quotes Isaiah 40:8 in I Peter 1:23-25, it made sense to insert our discussion of the passage into the reworked notes for this lesson. Regarding I Peter 1:23-25, preservationist D.A. Waite states:

- “That is a reference to Bible preservation, isn’t it? The Word of God is incorruptible. Strong defines his words as follows:

- “862. *apthartos* (ä'-fthär-tos) from 1 (as a negative particle) and derivative of 5351; undecaying (in essence or continuance): not (in, un-)corruptible, immortal.”

God’s words cannot be corrupted, corroded, decayed like our bodies. When we die and are put into the earth, our bodies see corruption. They are decayed and vanish away into dust, but the Words of God are incorruptible. They live and abide forever. That is a promise of God’s preservation. The illustration of that is given in verse 24: (quotes verses 24-25)

This teaches preservation, the opposite of what happens to the flower or the grass. You know full well what happens to pretty flowers when it begins to snow. They perish. They go away. The Words of God do not go away. They do not perish. They endure.” (Waite, 14)

- Please recall from above that Dr. William W. Combs does not believe that Isaiah 40:8 does not “affirm a specific and direct promise of the preservation of God’s written revelation.” Rather Combes views the verse as having a more “indirect application to the doctrine.” Consequently, Combes does not view Peter’s citation of Isaiah to be affirming a doctrine of preservation either.
- “But does this verse directly teach that God’s written revelation is “imperishable”; in other words, does it directly affirm a doctrine of preservation. There are several problems with that interpretation. First, it is not certain that the phrase “living and enduring’ in verse 12 modifies “word.” A case can be made that it modifies God— “through the word of the living and enduring God (marginal reading of the NRSV and the NEB).” The same two participles are applied to God in Daniel 6:27 (LXX). However, it must be admitted that this reading is rejected by most commentators. Second, Peter is quoting Isiah 40:8 in verses 24 and 25, and we have already noted that his text is probably not a direct promise of the preservation of Scripture. Third, it is not clear that Peter’s reference to the word of God in verse 23 and the “word which was preached” in verse 25 is a reference to Scripture. As was previously explained, in the New Testament the “word of God,” more often than not, has reference to the gospel message, rather than

God's special written revelation. Finally, the passage in Peter ends with the words: "And this is the word which was preached to you." This would seem to indicate that Peter's emphasis though has been on the gospel message as proclaimed to his readers, not on God's written revelation. That gospel message may have included references to God's Word written, but it does not appear that this is Peter's primary emphasis. Therefore, any reference to the preservation of Scriptures in these passages is probably indirect at best." (Combs, 25-26)

- So, Comb's first reason that I Peter 1:23-25 is not teaching preservation is on account of a technicality regarding what the phrase "living and enduring" refers to; a point upon which he admits that "most commentators" reject. His second, reason follows from his teaching that Isaiah 40:8 is not a "direct" promise of preservation. Thirdly, he wants his readers to embrace the notion that the phrase "word of God" refers primarily to the "gospel message" and not "God's special written revelation." Personally, I find none of this reasoning compelling to say the least.
- Like Waite, preservationist Gary La More views I Peter 1:23-25 as clearly establishing a doctrine of preservation. La More is the author of Chapter Seven of *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* titled, "Words Which Abide Forever: 1 Peter 1:23-25." In this chapter La More states the following with respect to I Peter 1:23-25:
 - "Verses 23-25 of 1 Peter 1 reveal to the reader that God has provided for him the vehicle of his salvation. The purifying of the soul in v. 22 that results in the holiness of vv. 15, 16 comes because of the regeneration experience that is described in v. 23 as: "Being born again, not of (ἐκ, *ek*, "out of," "from") corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by (διὰ, *dia*, "through," "by means of") the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." So, how does this regeneration come about? It comes about by the Divine Word. The Divine Word is the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. This Divine Word is the means God uses to impart new life in an unbeliever (cf. Rom. 10:17; Jas. 1:18). Moreover, Peter's emphasis on the fact that the Word of God is living (cf. Heb. 4:12) suggests its power—unlike that of any merely human words—to generate new life in Christ. . .

Therefore, in order to be regenerated, a man must have a Divine Word that is living and abiding forever. Without a living and abiding Word being preserved continuously by God, the believer would not have what he needs to be born again. God has promised perpetuity to His Word because He knows that without it there would be no hope of eternal salvation. An eternal God has given an eternal Word that results in an eternal salvation.

In verses 24 and 25, God refers to Isaiah 40:6-8 and contrasts the perishable nature of the flesh with the eternal viability of the Word of God. The saints, with all the blessings of verses 3 through 13, are born from above of imperishable seed (verse 23). All else, all undegenerated flesh on earth, however affluent and currently powerful and prestigious, is like grass—perishable. The flower that stems from it is destined to fade and fall.

Corruptible seed, standing in sharp contrast with incorruptible, must exist somewhere. The words of men are corrupt and corruptible seed, including words of men posing as words of god. This passage explicitly teaches that Scripture is categorically incorruptible seed. . .

In contrast to the corruptible seed, the Word of God, which gave life to the believer is eternal. The “but” of verse 25 is adversative. Without a doubt, earthly glory fades (see verse 24) but the word of God abides forever (v. 25).” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 70-71)

- Regarding the question of whether I Peter 1:23-25 is simply referring to the preached gospel as Combs suggested or the written Word of God, La More writes:
 - “The gospel message proclaimed was preached using His Word (*rhama*). The Word that abides forever in v. 23 is (present tense) the Word (the Gospel text) that is preached (v. 25), equating the two (*logos* in v. 23 and *rhama* in v. 25). The Old Testament was used, for the Gospel was “per the Scriptures” (I Corinthians 15:2, 3), so this passage does apply to the written Word of God (and not merely to the oral Word). Since this Word was the text of the Old Testament, no Old Testament passages were lost at the time of I Peter. The teaching here is that the Word that believers preach on earth is eternal. Believers preach the whole counsel of God’s Word (Acts 20:27), therefore, every Word must be available.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 72)
- While I take exception with some of La More’s exposition on dispensational grounds, his core message appears sound. I Peter 1:23-25 does teach the preservation of God’s word.

Other Old Testament Passages

- Besides Psalms 12:6-7, Psalms 119:89, 111, 152, 160 as well as Isaiah 30:8; 40:8, there are other Old Testament passages that some preservationists have identified as having an impact upon the doctrine of preservation. Some of these include the following:
 - Proverbs 22:20-21—“Here is a clear statement by the Lord that He has given us things in WRITING so that we might have “certainty” about them. The only way we can have that certainty today is for God to have preserved every one of His “words of truth.” This truly is a promise of Bible preservation.” (Waite, 8)
 - Ecclesiastes 3:14—“If God has done anything or given us anything, it is perfect. He has given us His words, therefore His Words are perfect. We can’t add to it or take away from it. It has been **preserved exactly**.” (Waite, 8)

- Please note that Waite's standard of preservation as well as the one set forth by Strouse, and McElroy is none other than "exact sameness." It is on this point, i.e., the extent of preservation, that I would disagree with these brothers.

Conclusion

- Only an extreme position that seeks to deny any doctrine of preservation advanced by Drs. Wallace and Glennie sees Isaiah 40:8 and its sister passage I Peter 1:23-25 as having no bearing upon the preservation of scripture. Even moderates such as Combs and Rehurek acknowledge the verses' application to the doctrine of preservation even if it is just indirectly.
- These two verses from Isaiah (30:8; 40:8) stand out as clear internal witnesses to Biblical doctrine and promise of preservation. Preservation is a Biblical doctrine that cannot be ignored, swept under the rug, or explained away. The cumulative force of the relevant passages is clear and irrefutable, God has promised to preserve His word.

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Sunday, November 20, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 36 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Matthew 4:4

Introduction

- Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of studying the relevant passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation. This is an important first step before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- In Lessons 31 and 32 we commenced our study of whether or not the Bible teaches its own preservation by looking at Psalm 12:6-7.
- In Lesson 33, we considered a cluster of verses regarding preservation found in Psalm 119. Lesson 34 covered the impact of Isaiah 30:8 upon the doctrine of preservation. Meanwhile, Lesson 35 considered how Isaiah 40:8 and its cross-reference I Peter 1:23-25 help establish the doctrine of preservation.
- In this lesson, I would like to begin a consideration of the relevant New Testament texts regarding preservation beginning with Matthew 4:4.

Matthew 4:4

- Much of the relevant writings on both sides of the preservation debate leave out any discussion of Matthew 4:4. Those who deny that the scriptures teach a formal doctrine of preservation (View 1) such as Drs. Daniel Wallace and W. Edward Glenny do not comment on the verse in their writings. Likewise, those who accept a more limited notion of preservation (View 3) such as Dr. William W. Combs and Jon Reherek do not include any discussion of the verse in their essays on the topic.
- Even much of the pro-King James literature (View 2) fails to note the potential impact of Matthew 4:4 upon the doctrine of preservation. The verse is frequently noted in lists of verses viewed to support the doctrine of preservation but little if any explanation is ever offered.
- Two notable exceptions are Drs. Thomas M. Strouse and D.A. Waite. Dr. Waite's *Defending the King James Bible* contains an entire page and half explanation of the verse's impact upon the doctrine of preservation. Meanwhile, Dr. Strouse devoted an entire chapter of *Thou Shalt Keep*

Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture to an exposition of Matthew 4:4 as it relates to the doctrine of preservation.

- Given that these two writings are the most thorough explanations of the verse in terms of its impact upon the doctrine of preservation, we will survey the comments made by Waite and Strouse below. Thirdly, we will consider the issue of “exact sameness” as it relates to Matthew 4:4 and the overall promise of preservation. Lastly, next week in Lesson 37, we will discuss the importance of the Perfect Passive tense upon the proper exposition of the text. Our discussion of Matthew 4:4 will be organized as follows:
 - D.A. Waite on Matthew 4:4
 - Thomas M. Strouse on Matthew 4:4
 - Matthew 4:4 and the Challenge of “Exact Sameness”
 - Impact on the Perfect Passive Tense (Lesson 37)

D.A. Waite on Matthew 4:4

- Waite’s comments on Matthew 4:4 are broken up into two sections: 1) general comments and 2) a discussion of the impact of the perfect tense on the phrase “it is written.” Below we will discuss Waite’s comments on the impact of the perfect tense. In this section, I would just like to note the nature of Waite’s general comments. Waite writes:
 - “When Jesus said, “It is written,” that referred to the Old Testament. . . How can a man or woman live by every word of God that proceeds out of the mouth of God unless God has preserved these Words to listen to? It is impossible. And you and I who speak English and may not know Greek or Hebrew, how will we know God’s Words unless He has preserved it to the present day, and then we have it accurately and faithfully translated into English. What the Lord Jesus Christ was telling Satan was that the Old Testament has been preserved. He is quoting from Deuteronomy. The Old Testament had been preserved right down until His day and man should live by those very Words. That is a number of years, about 1500 years from Moses until Jesus’s day. He kept, guarded, and preserved “EVERY WORD.”” (Waite, 9)
- Waite’s fundamental point is that Jesus could not quote Deuteronomy 8:3 in refutation of the Adversary’s assault unless God’s word had been preserved. Mankind had access to the words of God 1500 years after they were written by Moses. This seems like strong scriptural evidence of preservation.

Thomas M. Strouse on Matthew 4:4

- Strouse’s comments on Matthew 4:4 are far more extensive and wide ranging then the explanation offered above by Waite. Strouse expounds upon every phrase of Matthew 4:4 into its own section. The following is Strouse’s breakdown of the verse:
 - Inspiration—“Proceedeth Out of the Mouth of God”
 - Authority—“Man Shall Live”
 - Availability—“By Every Word”
 - Preservation—“It Is Written”
- Strouse states the following in his introductory remarks:
 - “Satan tempted the Lord Jesus Christ early in His ministry (Mt. 4:1-11). The Lord answered the tempter with three references from Deuteronomy (8:3, 6:13, and 6:16, respectively). The first answer is significant. He stated, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (v. 4, cited from Dt. 8:3). This response summarizes the Lord’s Bibliology.
 - He affirmed the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration of the autographa by stating the source of Scripture—“proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”
 - He affirmed the authority of the written Scripture, and consequently its infallibility and inerrancy, by upholding it as a standard by which—“man shall . . . live.”
 - He affirmed the availability of Scripture since He declared His personal access and implied mankind’s general access to God’s Words—“by every word.”
 - He affirmed the doctrine of verbal, plenary preservation of Scripture by the expression—“It is written.”
 - ... The living word (Christ) validated His written Words since He believed He had the verbal, plenary Old Testament (OT) Words intact in His day. The purpose of this chapter is to examine in detail the Lord’s claims about the full and complete text of the Hebrew OT available in His day.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 35)
- In short, the Lord Jesus Christ believed in and affirmed the preservation of the Old Testament. According to Strouse, the Lord’s Bibliology includes the belief in: 1) plenary verbal inspiration,

2) the infallibility and inerrancy of scripture, 3) the availability and personal access of scripture, and 4) the plenary preservation of scripture.

- I will comment upon Strouse’s fourth point in the section below on Matthew 4:4 and the Challenge of “Exact Sameness”
- In footnote number 27, Strouse offers the following important insight:
 - “Although the Lord Jesus could have rebuked Satan with the power of His own personal authority (cf. Mt. 16:23), Christ submitted His personal authority to the written Scripture, and chose to rebuke His chief adversary with the highest authority—the written Words of God (Psalm. 138:2).” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 35)
- In this footnote Strouse, points out the complete reliance upon and confidence the Lord Jesus Christ had in the written word of God during his earthly ministry.
- Given the fact that Strouse’s essay is extensive and exceeds the topical limitations of this lesson we will limit our discussion of his comments to only those portions that deal directly with the topic of preservation. In the section titled “Preservation—“It Is Written””, Strouse states the following regarding preservation:
 - “The passage at hand utilizes the expression “it is written” four times (vv. 4, 6, 7, 10). The Lord submitted Himself to the written OT Scriptures in response to Satan’s temptations and claimed the preservation of three passages (Dt. 8:3, 6:16, and 6:13) for His defense (cf. Eph. 6:17). Satan was forced to submit himself to the written Scripture and even declared the preservation of Psalm. 91:11-12 (v. 6) with “it is written” . . . Christ declared that the Hebrew text Dt. 8:3, was still intact, including the consonants and vowels, up to His day.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 38)
- In pointing out that Satan quotes Psalm 91:11-13 in Matthew 4:6, Strouse raises a fascinating point. Even the Adversary believes in the doctrine of preservation. How can the adversary believe in the doctrine of preservation while many within Christian academia do not? Satan’s ability to quote Psalm 91 to the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry means that God’s words were preserved from the time of David forever just as Psalm 12:6-7 in the KJB assert.
- Strouse points out that God incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ was consistent in both belief and practice with what was promised in the Old Testament cannon.
 - “The incarnate God in the person of Jesus Christ was consistent in His belief and practice since He submitted Himself to the perfectly preserved inscripturated words He promised He would keep. It behooves Christians, including pastors, believers, and scholars, to emulate Christ’s teaching in their Bibliology. . .” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 39)

- At this point it is instructive to note that no modern version differs with the KJB in terms of how Matthew 4:4 should read.

KJB	NIV	NASB	ESV
But he answered and said, It is written , Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.	Jesus answered, " It is written : 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'	But He answered and said, " It is written , 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"	But he answered, " It is written , "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

- The King James as well as the popular modern versions cited above all agree that man should live by “every word” that came from the mouth of God.
- Consequently, only the preservationist position is internally consistent with the totality of the Biblical data. How can the Lord Jesus Christ possess such confidence in the Old Testament scriptures if God almighty had not promised to preserve them? Furthermore, how can any Christian scholar maintain that the reading before them in Matthew 4:4, in any version, is correct (“every word”) without at the same time acknowledging the reality of Biblical preservation? How did the words get from the pen of Moses (Deuteronomy 8) to the time of Christ unless God preserved them?
- Only the King James reading of Psalm 12:6-7 is internally consistent with the totality of the Biblical data. Were the poor and the needy of David’s day preserved until the time of Christ? No, certainly not. Were the words of David’s day (Psalm 91) as well as the words of Moses (Deuteronomy 8:3) preserved until the time of Christ? Yes, absolutely or else how were both Christ and the Adversary able to quote them in Matthew 4?
- When one seeks to deny the clear teaching of one passage in order to support their theology they create problems for themselves elsewhere. While the Bible is a book of books it should always be remembered that it is a unified document that was settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89) before God moved upon a single human author to reveal (revelation) and record his words (inspiration).

Matthew 4:4 and the Challenge of “Exact Sameness”

- There is one final point from Strouse’s essay that is important to our purposes in this class. Covering this point will set us up for the second part of our discussion regarding Matthew 4:4 next week. Strouse offers three reasons why Christ utilized the Hebrew Old Testament during his earthly ministry and not the Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation of the Old Testament.

- “There are at least three Biblical arguments that defend the position that the Lord always used the Hebrew text and not the Greek LXX.
 - The Lord referred to jots and tittles that make up the Hebrew language, not the Greek language (Mt. 5:17-18).
 - The Lord referred to the three-fold division of the *Tanak*, not the LXX, which included the *Torah* (law), the *Nabi'im* (prophets), and *Kethubim* (writings), on several occasions (cf. Lk. 24:44)
 - The Lord referred to the first and last books of the *Tanak* (Luke 11:50-52), describing the brutal deaths of the prophets Abel (Genesis 4:8) to Zacharias (II Chronicles 24:20-22). Although the Lord cited precisely the Hebrew of Matthew 4:4, it is clear upon close examination of Deuteronomy 8:3 that Christ did not quote the LXX, since at least two words are different.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 38)
- Luke 4:16-21—I have long questioned the notion that Jesus and his Jewish apostles were using the Greek LXX at the time of Christ. It seems unlikely to me that a Jewish synagogue in Nazareth could not have been using the Hebrew Old Testament.
- Consequently, I think that Strouse’s first two arguments are sound regarding why the Lord Jesus Christ would have used the Hebrew Old Testament during his earthly ministry over the Greek LXX. I believe that Jesus and the Apostles were using the Hebrew Old Testament not a Greek translation.
- That being said, Strouse’s third argument hinges upon the standard of “exact sameness.” According to his third point, Strouse reasons that Christ could not have used the LXX because it has two words that are different from the Hebrew text. In the footnote attached to point three quoted above Strouse states,
 - “The LXX adds *ó* (*ho*) and *to* (*to*).” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 39)
- Strouse offers no explanation of whether or not these two Greek words alter the doctrine content of the verses in question (Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4). The bottom line for Strouse is that the wording is not exactly the same. Therefore, one must be right and other wrong.

- What happens, though, when one seeks to apply this standard to the KJB?

Deuteronomy 8:3	Matthew 4:4
. . . that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only , but by every <i>word</i> that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live .	But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone , but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

- Is Matthew 4:4 in your KJB an exact word for word quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3? No! Does that mean one of these is in error? No! They are both teaching the exact same doctrinal content without using the exact same words.

Matthew 4:4	Luke 4:4
But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.	And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

- So not only does Matthew's quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3 not match exactly but the citations of Deuteronomy by both Matthew and Luke in same context, they do not match each other exactly. Yet no one views these verses as differing substantively in terms of their doctrinal content.
- Going a step further, one should compare the Adversary's quotation of Psalm 91:11-12 with Matthew 4:6.

Psalm 91:11-12	Matthew 4:6
For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in <i>their</i> hands , lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.	He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in <i>their</i> hands they shall bear thee up , lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

- The Adversary did not quote Psalm 91 exactly as the Psalmist penned it. Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ did not correct Satan or quibble with him for not quoting God's word exactly as it was written.

- The same phenome is observable for the other “it is written” quotations of the Lord Jesus Christ during his temptation.

Deuteronomy 6:16	Matthew 4:7
Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, . . .	Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Deuteronomy 6:13	Matthew 4:10
Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.	Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

- While I agree with Waite and Strouse that Matthew 4:4, and other verses like it are vital to the establishment of the doctrine of preservation, I maintain that they go too far in demanding exact sameness or identical wording as their standard of preservation.
- In the next Lesson we will consider the importance of the perfect tense and the passive voice upon this discussion.

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Sunday, November 27, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 37 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Matthew 4:4 (Part 2)

Introduction

- Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of studying the relevant passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation. This is an important first step before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- As part of this first step we have considered the following relevant passages regarding preservation:
 - Psalm 12:6-7 (Lessons 31 & 32)
 - Psalm 119:111, 152, 160 (Lesson 33)
 - Isaiah 30:8 (Lesson 34)
 - Isaiah 40:8 & I Peter 1:23-25 (Lesson 35)
 - Matthew 4:4 (Lesson 36 & 37)
- Last week in Lesson 36 we began discussing the impact of Matthew 4:4 upon the doctrine of preservation. At the outset, I acknowledged that Matthew 4:4 is often included in lists of verses used by preservationists to establish the doctrine of preservation but that little if any exposition has ever been offered on the verse. Two exceptions to this are found in the writings of Dr. D.A. Waite and Dr. Thomas M. Strouse.
- In Lesson 36, I laid out the following four points that we would be considering with respect to Matthew 4:4 and the doctrine of preservation:
 - D.A. Waite on Matthew 4:4
 - Thomas M. Strouse on Matthew 4:4
 - Matthew 4:4 and the Challenge of “Exact Sameness”

- Impact on the Perfect Passive Tense
- The first three of these points were covered last week in Lesson 36. Our objective this morning is to consider the remaining point i.e., the Impact on the Perfect Passive Tense.

Matthew 4:4

- Last week, during our survey of the commentary on Matthew 4:4 offered by Waite and Strouse, I purposely left out any of their comments on the Perfect Passive Tense. This was a conscious decision on my part because the material on this point merited its own separate point.

Impact on the Perfect Passive Tense

- Twice in his essay “Every Word: Matthew 4:4,” Strouse briefly mentions the importance of the passive tense upon the doctrine of preservation.
 - “The perfect tense, which He utilized, expresses a completed action with a resulting state of being. The result of the action continues from the past through the present and into the future.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 35)
 - “The Greek word Γεγραπται (*Gegraptai*) is the 3ms perfect indicative passive of γράφω (*grapho*) meaning “it was, still is and will continue to remain written. Christ declared that the Hebrew text Dt. 8:3, (“not by bread alone shall man live, but by all [words] proceeding out of the mouth of Jehovah”) was still intact, including the consonants and vowels, up to his day.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 38)
- Strouse offers no further exposition regarding the significance of the perfect passive tense but rather directs his readers to consider Chapter 8 of *Thou Shalt Keep Them* which contains an entire essay devoted to the matter titled “It Is Written” by David Sutton. We will consider the Sutton essay in a few moments.
- It is a textual FACT that the verb *gegraptai* is in the perfect tense and passive voice.
 - [Click here](#) to see an interlinear view of KJB and the *Textus Receptus*.
- D.A. Waite offers a fuller explanation of why the perfect tense in Matthew 4:4 is significant when considering the doctrine of preservation. Regarding the matter Waite writes,
 - “The second thing I want to show you from that verse is that the word “written,” which is recorded scores of times in the New Testament, is in the perfect tense in the Greek. Our English word “graphite,” comes from this word, as well as the word, “mimeograph.” *Grapho* is the Greek word for “write” and *gegraptai* is the perfect tense of that verb.

There are three main past tenses in Greek. (1) There is the imperfect past tense, which is the progressive past, “was writing.” (2) There is the aorist past, which is a spot or point action, “wrote.” (3) Then you have another past tense, the perfect tense which is used here.

According to *The Intermediate Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantely, pages 200-205, **the perfect tense indicates that an action has begun in the past and the results of that act continue right on down to the very present.**

This is the tense that the Lord Jesus Christ used when He said, “It is written.” It means that the verse He quoted to Satan had been written down in the past in the Hebrew language by Moses and those very Hebrew words were preserved to the very day and hour when the Lord was quoting them to the Devil. Every time *gegraptai* is used or some other form of the perfect tense of that verb (and we have it scores of times in the New Testament) that is proof of the Bible’s preservation. God’s Words stand just as they were written down.” (Waite, 9)

- By far, the fullest treatment of the impact of the perfect passive tense in Matthew 4:4 upon the doctrine of preservation can be found in David Sutton’s essay “The Passive Perfect: “It is Written”. Sutton’s work comprises Chapter Eight of *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* edited by Kent Brandenburg. In the Introduction Sutton states:
 - “The New Testament declares the doctrine of preservation when it employs the phrase “it is written.” When quoting passages in the Old Testament, this phrase translates the perfect passive verb *gegraptai* and succinctly states that the verse at hand was written in the past and the result continues to be written down. Believers, unbelievers, the Lord Jesus Christ, and even Satan evidence the reality of preservation by using *gegraptai*. If the nature of this perfect passive *gegraptai* means that particular verses from the Old Testament are preserved just as they were written, then one should conclude that *gegraptai* implies that all the Old Testament and all the New Testament are preserved just as they were written.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 75)
- Regarding the meaning of the perfect tense Sutton writes:
 - “When God authored a perfect tense verb, He employed it over other tenses because the perfect tense expresses the unique idea that an event was accomplished in the past and the results continue in the present. . . the perfect tense shows completed past action with the results of that action continuing to the present. The perfect tense is different from the present tense, which, generally, is present, ongoing action. The perfect tense also must not be confused with the pluperfect (past perfect) tense, for the pluperfect tense views the action, along with its results, as terminating in the past.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 75-76)

- Meanwhile, the passive voice indicates the relationship between the verb and subject.
 - “The passive voice shows that the action of the verb is being done to the subject by someone. In the passive, the subject is not doing the action to something (active voice) or to itself (middle voice); something or someone acts upon the subject.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 76)
- When the passive voice is combined with the perfect tense the following meaning is conveyed, according to Sutton.
 - “Combining the perfect tense with the passive voice shows that the action of the verb completed in the past by an agent other than the subject of the verb with the results of the action continuing into the present. The perfect tense, and the perfect passive in particular, is often used in Scripture to teach doctrine and illustrate preservation of truth.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 76)
- Consider the theological implications of both the perfect tense and the perfect passive in the following examples.
 - John 1:3—“The first two verbs in the verse (“were made” and “was made”) are the aorist tense of *genomai* (ἐγένετο, *egeneto*). Thus, Jesus Christ, in six literal days, created all things. The last “was made” is the **perfect tense** form of the same verb. In other words, the results of what Jesus Christ created have continued.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 76)
 - John 1:18—“The verb “hath seen” is in the **perfect tense**. No one in the past had ever seen God (cf. Ex. 33:20), and that reality continued to the time of the writing of the Fourth Gospel. To this day, no man has seen God at any time.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 77)
 - II Timothy 1:12—“When Paul wrote the verbs translated “have believed” and “am persuaded,” he used the **perfect tense**. Paul professed that in the past he began believing on the Son and was convinced that Christ was able to keep that which he had committed to Him. Both his belief and his conviction continued to persist to the point of writing the epistle. Very clearly, the perfect tense establishes actions as being completed in the past with the results continuing to the present.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 77)
 - John 19:30—“Having hung on the cross for six hours and having suffered the brutality of crucifixion, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “It is finished.” *Tetelestai* is a **perfect passive** and can also be understood as “It has been finished.” God’s plan of offering His only begotten Son a sacrifice for man’s sins and Christ’s offering for them was complete for all time, yet the results of Christ’s offering would continue. . . The perfect passive *tetelestai* teaches the eternal sufficiency of Christ’s bloody death on the cross.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 77)

- I Corinthians 15:3-4—“The perfect passive verb that Paul used for the resurrection of Christ signifies that Christ was raised at a moment in the past and results of His resurrection continue . . . The perfect passive teaches that the results of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ continue.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 77)
- Ephesians 2:8-9—“This classic verse on salvation gleams its eternal security teaching from the construction of the linking verb “are” and the perfect passive participle “saved”. God is teaching believers that they are always in the state of being saved by God. In the past salvation came to the lost soul, and from that time on, he is always saved. The perfect passive clearly teaches the present results of past salvation.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 77)
- After explaining the meaning and significance of both the perfect tense and passive voice and applying it to non-preservation related texts by way of explanation and illustration, Sutton explains the significance with respect to the doctrine of preservation.
 - “Sixty-three times in the NT the exact phrase “it is written” occurs. The perfect passive verb *gegraptai* underlies fifty-nine of these references, while the other four occasions represent the perfect passive participle *gegramenon*.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 78)
- So every occurrence of “it is written” in the New Testament corresponds with a perfect passive verb in Greek, according to Sutton.
- Sutton discusses the difference between the aorist and perfect tenses in Greek.
 - “One must not confuse the aorist tense with the perfect passive, for the aorist verb *egrapsa* is used differently from the perfect passive *gegraptai*. In the NT the aorist is constantly used to describe the composition of a personal letter (cf. Acts 15:23; I Cor. 7:1), the OT Law (cf. Jn. 5:46), or a NT epistle (cf. Eph. 3:3; Philm. 21). Punctiliar action appropriately denotes the writing process, because the author at a point in time penned words on some medium. However, *gegraptai* does not encompass the process of writing the message alone, but affirms the continuation of the written message. God carefully distinguished among the form of *grapho*; consequently, the occurrences of the perfect passive inform the reader of a significant reference to Scripture that enables or bolsters some particular belief or practice.

Particular Words made up of distinguishable letters were deliberately written. Therefore, one should conclude that when God gave man the text of the Bible, He gave specific Words and not general thoughts. One should also conclude that if Words are preserved, then the letters forming those Words are also preserved.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 78)

- The first appearance of the perfect passive in the New Testament occurs in Matthew 2:5 and stands out as an example of its usage.
 - “Herod had asked the chief priests and scribes where Christ should be born. Without hesitation these religious scholars referenced the OT and gave a confident answer, which relied on the precise prophecy of Micah the prophet. Their ability to identify the Messiah was based on the preserved prophecy of Christ’s birthplace, which Divinely narrowed the possible candidates for Messiah. Since Micah 5:2 was preserved, and testified by *gegraptai*, the pinpoint knowledge of Messiah was preserved.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 78)
- After pointing out other similar usages of *gegraptai* in the New Testament, Sutton concurs with Strouse about the Adversary’s own recognition of the preservation process.
 - “It is interesting that Satan understands Scriptures’ preservation, for he too recognized that the Words of God were written in the past and continue to abide (Mt. 4:6; Lk. 4:10).” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 78)
- Sutton views the doctrine of preservation (Bibliology) as a necessary prerequisite for one’s doctrine of salvation (Soteriology).
 - “The doctrine of salvation is dependent upon preservation: if there were not preserved Words, then there would be no preached Word, and man could not believe on Jesus Christ; for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” . . . Since God preserved His Word, man has sure footing on prophecy and its fulfillment. Without preservation of Scripture, prophecies of Christ would be obscure and even lost, and salvation by grace through faith would be impossible.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 80)
- Sutton concludes his essay on the impact and significance of the perfect passive upon the doctrine of preservation as follows:
 - “The grammar of the perfect passive teaches that someone caused an event in the past and the results of that action continue to the present. Much doctrine that the believer holds is established in the perfect passive. Consistency demands that the perfect passive *gegraptai* means that the Scriptures were written in the past and they continue to be written down in the present. Based on their inspired use of the perfect passive *gegraptai*, the writers of Scripture believed in perfect preservation. Likewise, believers today should believe in the perfect preservation of Scripture, because “It is written.”” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 81)

Conclusion

- I believe that the perfect passive is significant and does play a role in the establishment of the doctrine of preservation. To argue otherwise, would place one's theological understanding of other passages in jeopardy.
- That being said, I think that Strouse, Waite, and Sutton go too far in demanding "exact sameness" or identical wording as the standard for preservation. The standard adopted by Sutton would demand not just identical wording but identical spelling. Given the historical and textual facts that no two manuscripts are exactly the same, this standard demands more than one can prove and therefore does more to harm the pro-King James position than help it.
- As we saw in Lesson 35, one could not even apply this standard to the KJB given the FACT that the New Testament citations of Old Testament verses do not possess identical wording.

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Sunday, December 4, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 38 Preservation: Examining the Relevant Passages, Matthew 24:35

Introduction

- Recall from Lesson 30 that we laid out the following three views of preservation.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Please remember that we are in the process of studying the relevant passages that establish the fundamental promise of preservation. This is an important first step before we consider the extant and location of preservation.
- As part of this first step, we have considered the following relevant passages regarding preservation.
 - Psalm 12:6-7 (Lessons 31 & 32)
 - Psalm 119:111, 152, 160 (Lesson 33)
 - Isaiah 30:8 (Lesson 34)
 - Isaiah 40:8 and I Peter 1:23-25 (Lesson 35)
 - Matthew 4:4 (Lesson 36 & 37)
- Today in Lesson 38 we want to look at one more passage that is often used to establish the fundamental promise of preservation – Matthew 24:35.

Matthew 24:35

- Non-preservationist Daniel B. Wallace argued in his 1992 essay “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism” found in the *Grace Theological Journal* that Matthew 24:35 does not teach the preservation of scripture. A note at the bottom of page 43 reads:
 - “Occasionally Matt 24:35 (“Heaven and earth will pass away. but my words will not pass away”) is used in support of preservation. But once again, even though this text has the advantage of now referring to Jesus' words (as opposed to the OT), the context is clearly eschatological: thus the words of Jesus have certainty of fulfillment. That the text does not here mean that his words will all be preserved in written form is absolutely certain

because (1) this is not only foreign to the context, but implies that the written gospels were conceived at this stage in *Heilsgeschichte*—decades before a need for them was apparently felt; (2) we certainly do not have all of Jesus' words recorded—either in scripture or elsewhere (cf. John 20:30 and 21:25).” (Wallace in *Grace Theological Journal*, 43)

- Wallace sees Matthew 24:35 as dealing with the eschatological fulfillment of Christ’s prophecy not the preservation of the written text of scripture.
- Writing in 1997, W. Edward Glenny discusses Matthew 24:35 in a section titled *Eschatological Fulfillment* in his essay, “The Preservation of Scripture.” As the section heading suggests, Glenny, like Wallace before him, sees the verse as pertaining to the fulfillment of prophecy as opposed to textual preservation. Glenny writes:
 - “That Matthew 24:35 also refers to fulfillment, not textual preservation, is evident from verse 34. These two verses read . . . (quotes the verse 34 & 35). Verse 35 itself cannot mean that all of Jesus’ words will be perfectly preserved in the text of Scripture since all of His words were not recorded in the text of Scripture, or anywhere else for that matter (cf. John 20:30; 21:25). Also, Luke 16:17 states that no part of the Law will fail; in other words, it will all come to pass. Therefore, when read in their context, these passages do not guarantee that every word of the autographs of Scripture will be preserved intact in some text or text-type. Instead, they teach that the Word of God is true, and that the OT prophecies will all come to pass; none will fail.” (Glenny in *The Bible Version Debate*, 87-88)
- Please note that Glenny provides essentially the same argument as Wallace for why Matthew 24:35 is not talking about the preservation of scripture.
- Unwilling to state that Matthew 24:35 has nothing to do with preservation like Drs. Wallace and Glenny, Dr. William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary sees the verse as having an indirect application similar to Isaiah 40:8.
 - “Jesus’ statement, “My words will not pass away,” might first seem to be a direct promise of preservation . . . (quotes Waite) . . . However, this verse would seem to promise too much. It is simply not true that *all* of Jesus’ words have been preserved. The apostle John reminds us that “there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written” (John 21:25). Certainly, Jesus must have said some things that were not recorded in the NT, and some of those words have passed away. Though it is true that God (or Jesus) is the ultimate author of Scripture, this verse is not directly referring to any written revelation.

Matthew 24:35 uses the same hyperbolic language as Matthew 5:18. “Not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law” is saying much the same thing as “My words

will not pass away.” Both the words of the Law and the words of Jesus are immutable; they cannot be set aside; they are unalterable. As the words of God, they “stand forever” (Isa. 40:8). And just as “not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law” speaks of the authority and validity of the Law, so the fact that Jesus’ “words will not pass away” give them equal authority to the OT. Carson notes “The authority and eternal validity of God’s words (Ps 119:89-90; Isa 40:6-8). But unlike Matthew 5:18, which clearly refers to the Scripture, 24:35 has reference to the authority of Jesus’ oral words. And though it is true that some of Jesus’ words were recorded in Scripture, written revelation is not the primary emphasis here. Any application to preservation would be indirect, much like Isaiah 40:8.” (Combs, 24-25)

- In summation, Combs argues that Matthew 24:35 is referring to the authority of Jesus’ spoken words all of which were not necessarily written down. Consequently, the passage only applies to the preservation of the scriptures indirectly. Please note that this is different from what Drs. Wallace and Glenny argued (see above).
- Dr. Kent Brandenburg is the general editor of *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* as well as being the author of Chapter Five titled, “My Words Shall Not Pass Away: Matthew 24:35.” In his comments on the context of Matthew 24, Dr. Brandenburg points out that God puts his own credibility on the line when it comes to the issue of predictive prophecy. Given the fact that Matthew 24 and 25 constitute one of the great prophetic passages of the New Testament, its speaker; the Lord Jesus Christ, is likewise, putting His credibility as Israel’s Messiah on the line.
 - “The Lord Jesus Christ is God, so He can speak prophetically, and He does in this text. Since He says that the events prophesied in these two chapters are going to occur, one can count on them occurring. . . The generation that witnesses the previously described signs will live to see the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the answer to the disciples’ question concerning the “when” of his coming in v. 3. The generation of people that will see these things is the generation that will enter the tribulation period. . .” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 59-61)
- Dispensationally, we know that Matthew 24 and 25 await a yet future fulfillment. Moreover, we know that the revelation of the mystery and the formation of the body of Christ interrupted the prophetic time table outlined by Christ in Matthew 24 and 25. Therefore, the generation that will see the fulfillment of Matthew 24 is still in the future. Yet, the words Christ uttered that day on the Mount of Olives have been recorded in the book of Matthew, a book we have access to during the dispensation of grace. Those to whom these words will directly apply during the Ages to Come will need access to what Christ said that day upon the Mount of Olives. They will have it the same way we have it, via the book of Matthew.
- In that context, there is no reason to assume that Christ’s words that “shall not pass away,” are anything other than the words recorded in Matthew 24. There is no reason to assume that this somehow violates that statement found in John 20:30 and 21:25. If words and deeds referred to in

these Johannian verses were necessary for us to know they would have been added to the eternal written record.

- Contextually, Matthew 24:35 is referring to the words uttered by Christ during the Olivet Discourse. These words must be preserved in written form so that the people living in the ages to come, to whom these verses will directly apply, will know what God said. This is consistent with Isaiah 30:8 and why God wrote anything in a book. The same could be said for any prophetic statement whether spoken by Christ in His earthly ministry and later recorded by the gospel writers or the Old Testament prophets. In that context, Matthew 24:35 is stating that Christ's words in the Olivet Discourse "shall not pass away", by extension we could also conclude that none of the other words of Christ that the Holy Spirit elected to record for us via inspiration will pass away either.
- Dr. D.A. Waite presents the following Biblical argument for why Matthew 24:35 extends the fundamental promise of preservation to the totality of the New Testament in addition to the Old. Please note that all the text formatting exhibited in the following quotation below belongs to Waite.
 - "The Lord is talking of **His Words**, the New Testament. Not the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament only, but His **Words** will not pass away. That means the promise extends to the New Testament. I believe, personally that the Lord Jesus was the Source and Author of every word of the Hebrew Old Testament text. He was the Revelator. He is the Word of God. In a very real sense, therefore, His *Words* include the entire Old Testament. He is also the Source and Author of all the New Testament books. Though we had human writers, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Divine Author and SOURCE of it all.
 - a. **Christ's Authorship of the Gospels.** In John 14:26 Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would "*bring all things to your remembrance*," whatsoever I have said unto you." This includes the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. John 14:26 says: (quotes the verse). He is talking to His disciples in the Upper Room. This includes **everything** He said in the four Gospels. His Words shall not pass away. The Holy Spirit of God will bring to these Apostles the exact words so that nothing is forgotten. The Holy Spirit is the MEANS.
 - b. **Christ's Authorship of the Acts of the Apostles.** Let us look at John 15:26-27 (quotes the verse). The Apostle bearing "*witness*" is written about in the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit of God bore witness through the Apostles, and the book of Acts is the record of their *witness*. When the Lord Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would *bring all things* to their remembrance, His statement included the book of Acts.
 - c. **Christ's Authorship of the Epistles.** Let us turn to John 16:12-13. The Lord Jesus said:
 - *I have yet many things to say unto you* [He's talking to His disciples], *but ye cannot bear them now.* [They couldn't understand them] (13) *Howbeit when he,*

*the Spirit of truth, is come, he will **guide you into all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself [from Himself, Himself being the SOURCE]; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

The guiding *into all truth* includes the Epistles. Notice also that it is clear that the Holy Spirit is not the Source and Author of the Words of God, but it is the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the Source and Author.

d. **Christ's Authorship of Revelation.** In John 16:13b, the Lord Jesus continued,

- "... and **He will shew you things to come.**"

Although it refers to the other New Testament prophetic books, the phrase "*things to come*" certainly refers also to the book of Revelation. So you have the book of Revelation, the Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, all the Gospels written by the Lord Jesus, working through the Holy Spirit, using human writers.

When He says, "**My Words shall not pass away**," the Lord Jesus is including the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. All of them are His *Words*. The whole New Testament is tied up in a bundle and can be held in your hand. He has promised to **preserve** the *Words* of the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. I want you to notice also in John 16:14, Jesus says:

- "*He [the Holy Spirit] shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*"

That certainly is an answer to the Charismatic Movement which glorifies the Holy Spirit instead of glorifying Christ.

In Matthew 24:35 the Lord Jesus Christ said: "*Heaven and earth shall pass away. . .*" What could be more stable than the heavens and earth? Now, we do have earthquakes, but we think of the earth as being solid. We call it *terra firma*. That means "firm earth." But the Lord Jesus said that *heaven and earth shall pass away*. Look at unbelievers and Christians who do not believe in God's preservation of His Words. They take the earth for granted. We walk on it. We assume it won't give way when we walk on it. It is a solid thing. But Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth SHALL pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.*" There will be a new heaven and a new earth, but the Words of God will continue. They are *forever settled in Heaven*; they are preserved words. They are even more preserved and more settled than either the heaven or the earth!" (Waite, 11-13)

- In [Lesson 19 The Living Word's Attitude Toward the Written Word](#) we studied how the Lord Jesus Christ gave "Advanced Authentication of the New Testament" before it was written. In doing so we utilized the exact same verses from John 14 and 16 that Waite just used in the above argument.

- Moreover, in [Lesson 20 The New Testament Writer's Attitude Toward the Written Word](#) we discussed how Paul and the other New Testament writers were penning the words of Christ.
 - Acts 22:14-15—And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, **and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.** 15) **For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.**
 - Galatians 1:1-12—But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12) For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, **but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.**
 - Read the verse closely, it was not *by* the revelation from Christ, not just something sent to him, but it was the revelation *of* Jesus Christ. In other words, the Lord revealed himself to Paul and spoke with Paul face-to-face just like he did with Moses. He put his words in Paul's mouth, and Paul went out to preach and write those things down.
 - I Corinthians 14:37—If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that **the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.**
 - I Timothy 6:2-3—. . . **These things teach and exhort.** 3) If any man teach otherwise, and **consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ**, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;
 - The words that Paul wrote down in I Timothy were the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul's words were the words of the glorified Christ. Not only are these passages from the pen of the Apostle Paul strong with regard to Pauline authority, but they are also strong in regard to the doctrine of inspiration. The words of Christ to us today are found in Paul's epistles. Paul's epistles are not made up of Paul's interpretation of the things that Christ gave him. It is not just Paul's interpretation of the ministry of Christ, but you have the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ given to Paul and written down for you and for me.
 - II Corinthians 13:3—Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.
 - That is something, isn't it? Who is speaking in Paul? Christ is speaking in Paul. The words that Paul speaks came from Christ.
- If this line of argumentation was valid in establishing the inspired nature of the entire New Testament, it is not all of sudden falsified when speaking about preservation. One cannot just

sweep away the doctrine of preservation just because they do not like the implications. Dr. David Sorenson points out that the mere fact that the Bible exists today serves as *prima facie* (accepted as correct until proven otherwise) evidence that God preserved it.

- “. . . the fact that the Bible exists today is *prima facie* evidence that God has preserved it. History is replete with examples of attacks against the Bible down through the ages, yet it has stood the test of time. Roman emperors ordered Scripture to be burned and large quantities of Bibles were. Yet, it continued. The Roman Catholic hierarchy hid it away in its cloisters, yet it continued. Catholic authorities burned at the stake men who translated the Scripture into vernacular tongues, yet it continued. Most are aware of the anecdote told of Voltaire who sneered that the day was coming when the only place one could find a Bible would be in a museum. Yet, his home today houses a Bible Society. The Communists banned and burned untold numbers of Bibles. Yet, even in places such as the former Soviet Union, the Word of God abounds. There is no question that whether it is the Old Testament or the New Testament, God has preserved His Word.” (Sorenson, 55)
- Sorenson tackles the assertions of Wallace and Glenny regarding Matthew 24:35 head on:
 - “Some allege that Jesus was simply foretelling that His words would be fulfilled (reference in the footnote is to Glenny’s essay quoted above). That is to be sure. However, Jesus clearly said that His words would not pass away. First, the context of the verse lends itself to this view. The heavens and earth indeed someday will pass away. See 2 Peter 3:12-13. The earth in its present form will not last in perpetuity. However, in distinction to that, Jesus said that His words would. Second, the etymology of the word translated as “pass away” is instructive. Thayer’s *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* lists a number of possible ways in which the word might be translated. One sense is perish. Another is to go away. Jesus in effect said that though the heavens and earth will perish, His words will not. Or to put it another way, though the heavens and earth will go away, His words will not. Common sense dictates that if the plain sense makes sense to seek no other sense. In the eschatological context of Matthew 24, verse 35 clearly bespeaks the preservation of the words of Christ.

The same critics object that these are His *spoken* words and not His *written* Word (again the reference in the footnotes is to Glenny). Thus implied is that though His spoken words may last forever, His written Word will not (Glenny’s notion is contrary to what we saw in Isaiah 30:8. The whole reason God had Isaiah “note it in a book” is so that it would stand forever.)! However, what these selfsame critics seem to miss is that the Holy Spirit inspired the very words of Jesus which he saw fit to record as Scripture. To infer that the written Word of God is anything less than eternal is inconceivable. The Psalmist wrote, “Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou has founded them for ever” (Ps. 119:152). The word translated founded also has the sense of established. David clearly implied that God’s Word is established forever. . . Likewise, Ps. 119:160 says, “Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous

judgements endureth for ever” (Please recall from Lesson 33 that Dr. Combs views both Ps. 119:152 and 160 as clear promises of preservation.) . . . The Bible clearly teaches that God has promised to preserve His Word.” (Sorenson, 52-55)

Conclusion

- The totality of the Biblical evidence is overwhelming, Matthew 24:35 is teaching the eternal preservation of the words of Christ. To claim otherwise creates more problems than it solves. As Dr. Sorenson stated, common sense dictates that we seek no other sense.

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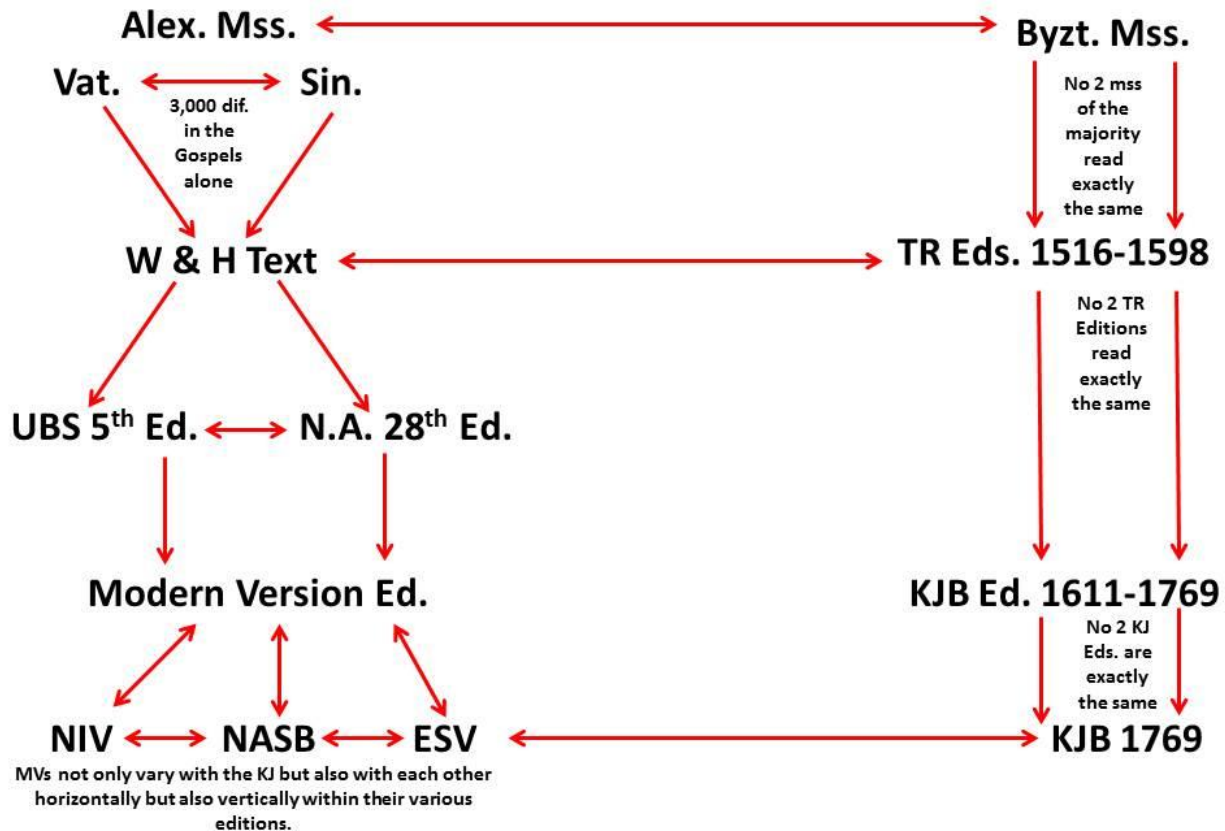
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Sunday, December 11, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 39 Preservation: Faith in the Promise of God

Review: What Have We Seen So Far?

- In Lesson 28 & 29 we began the second term of the class with an Introduction to Preservation. After reviewing some key points regarding inspiration from the first term we took stock of the following facts.
 - Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
 - Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
 - Alexandrian manuscripts א (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus), the two so-called oldest and best, differ with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone.
 - The manuscripts comprising the Alexandrian Text Type differ from those comprising the Byzantine Text Type.
 - No two Byzantine manuscripts read exactly the same.
 - Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
 - Editions of the TR are not exactly the same.
 - The TR differs from the Critical Text
 - Critical Text editions are not exactly the same.
 - United Bible Society
 - Nestle-Aland
 - Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
 - Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
 - Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.

Original Autographs



- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)
- In Lesson 29 we used the Book of Jeremiah as a case study to prove that God could preserve his word without preserving the original autographs.
 - Jeremiah 51:61-63—Jeremiah writing at the bidding of God the Holy Spirit tells Seraiah to destroy Original #2 by tying a stone to it and throwing it into the Euphrates River after it is read in Babylon. God almighty orders the destruction of Original #2. Why would God do this? Didn’t God know that a bunch of Fundamentalists in the 20th and 21st century would be looking for the originals?

- Daniel 9:2—over 70 years later Daniel comes to understand, by reading the book of Jeremiah, that the captivity was supposed to last 70 years. How is that possible if Original #2 was destroyed? Copies were made prior to the captivity. Once the copies were made, God did not care what happened to the original. The original contents of Original #2 were preserved via the copying process. Daniel had access to the inspired word of God through the copy he had in front of him.
- Matthew 2:17-18—contains a quotation from Jeremiah 31:15. First, how did Matthew have access to what Jeremiah said over 470 years (70-year captivity + 400 years of silence) later if God had not preserved His word. So, God secured the contents of the book of Jeremiah despite directing Jeremiah to have Original #2 thrown in the Euphrates River.
- In Lesson 30 after discussing the Core Issue of Preservation verses Restoration we studied how the TEXTUAL FACTS presented in Lesson 28 & 29 have given birth to the following three views on the doctrine of preservation:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- With these three views in mind, Lesson 31 through 38 were devoted to determining whether or not the scriptures teach their own preservation.
 - Psalm 12:6-7 (Lessons 31 & 32)
 - Psalm 119: 111, 152, 160 (Lesson 33)
 - Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; I Peter 1:23-25 (Lessons 34 & 35)
 - Matthew 4:4 (Lessons 36 & 37)
 - Matthew 24:35 (Lesson 38)

Introduction

- In this Lesson we want to conclude our consideration of the fundamental promise of preservation. In order to accomplish this task, we will consider the following four points:
 - Preservation: The Bible's Claim for Itself
 - Preservation: God Keeps His Promises

- Preservation: The Superiority of the Fideistic Approach
- Preservation: The Historic Position of the Reformers

Preservation: The Bible's Claim for Itself

- After studying the relevant passages as well as the scholarly comments made thereupon, I unequivocally maintain that preservation is the Bible's claim for itself. In other words, the Bible does assert and establish a doctrine of preservation.
- Even Dr. William W. Combs, a supporter of View 3 concludes that the Bible does establish a doctrine of preservation. Combs also concludes that the position of advanced by Wallace and Glenn (View 1) to "discount the force of these passages on preservation is unconvincing."
 - "It has been demonstrated that many of the verses commonly claimed by those in the KJV/TR camp to directly prove a doctrine of preservation have been misinterpreted and misapplied. On the other hand, at least two verses Psalms 119:152 and 160, would seem to suggest a more direct promise of preservation, with Isaiah 40:8 and Matthew 24:35 supplying more indirect support. In addition, Matthew 5:18 and John 10:35 also strongly imply a doctrine of preservation with their emphasis on the continuing authority of Scripture—an argument that will be explored shortly. The attempt by Wallace and Glenn to discount the force of these passages for preservation is unconvincing." (Combs, 26)
- That being said, Combs does not agree with View 2 either, he disagrees with the KJV/TR camp regarding the *method* and *extent* of preservation.
 - "Thus we conclude that some of the verses discussed above do teach a doctrine of preservation, some more directly and other more indirectly. However, they do not support the view of preservation that is put forth by the KJV/TR camp—that God has perfectly preserved the Bible to our day. Instead, they only suggest a general promise of preservation without specifying how (what method) or to what extent (how pure) God has chosen to preserve his Word." (Combs, 26)
- Questions regarding the *method* and *extent* of preservation will be addressed in further Lessons.
- Given the scope of our discussion so far, following points are inescapable:
 - God **did** promise to persevere His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 4:4, 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God **did not** see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.

- This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.
- God **did not** supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
- Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
- If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, i.e., “exact sameness” why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.

Preservation: God Keeps His Promises

- Given the fact that God has indeed promised to preserve his word, the belief in preservation is really a question of faith in the promises of God. The following scriptures demonstrate that God keeps his word and is incapable of lying.
 - I Kings 8:24—“God promised and fulfilled with His hand. He promised the temple. It was built by Solomon who praised God for His faithfulness in keeping His promises.” (Waite, 15)
 - Romans 4:20-21—“Here, the capability of God is exalted, as well as the fact that God keep His promises. Though both Abraham and Sarah had passed the age of being parents, God told Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah. He was “*fully persuaded*” to believe “*the promise of God.*”” (Waite, 15)
 - Titus 1:2—“Here is a promise-keeping God, One who has not lied, One who *cannot lie*, and One Who keeps His promises.” (Waite, 15)
 - Hebrews 10:23—“Yes, God is *faithful* and He keeps His promises.” (Waite, 15)

Preservation: The Superiority of the Fideistic Approach

- God’s fundamental promise of preservation coupled with His inability to lie as well as His faithfulness to accomplish His promises, serve as the basis for the Fideistic Approach to Textual Criticism. Either God kept his promise regarding preservation or he did not.
- If God did so act it would be inappropriate and high minded for humans to think they can reconstruct what God promised to preserve.
 - “The hypothesis that God did not preserve His Words, so man needs to restore them, lies at the root of textual criticism. This line of thinking rejects what Scriptures state about preservation, depending instead on the uninspired words of men, both contemporary and historical. . . Any application of the pertinent passages on preservation that does not leave one with the assurance the he has a Bible will all the Words of God cannot be accepted

from a position of faith. The position that all the Words exist somewhere, but are still yet to be found, does not fit into the teaching of Scripture, and, therefore must be rejected.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 262)

- Man’s wisdom works contrary to God’s wisdom as host of scriptures attest.
 - Proverbs 3:5
 - Isaiah 55:8-9
 - I Corinthians 1:27-31; 2:5—what is your faith about God’s word standing in? The wisdom of men or the power of God.
- Kent Brandenburg summarizes the situation as follows:
 - “The basis for perfect preservation is faith; other views are built on human rationalism, “the doctrine of human reason, unaided by Divine revelation, is an adequate or the sole to attainable religious truth.” People who take a view that is “unaided by Divine revelation” are not normally known as Bible-believers, therefore, most people that profess to be Bible-believers do not usually want to consider their positions rationalistic.

Those who espouse the “majority” text view claim to simply determine what words are found in the majority of the manuscripts, and the words that survive that test are essentially deemed to be the text of Scripture. Counting is the sole criterion. This is rationalistic. The proponents of the minority text view use the humanly devised laws of textual criticism, which treat the Bible like uninspired books, in an attempt to ascertain the readings most likely found in the original manuscripts. This view also applies human reason as the sole guide. Neither of these could be considering that God of the Bible, for neither of them provides perfection, and God is perfect. He is perfect, and He is powerful enough to keep something perfect, from the soul of a man to every Word of Scripture. In contrast, the received text position receives what God has supernaturally preserved by faith. Some advocates of the received text do not believe in perfect preservation, basing their position upon Divine providence alone. However, received text people at least depend on Scriptural principles to defend their position. In many cases, the other points of view do their best to argue away as many texts on preservation as possible (cites Combs in the footnote), and contend that faith is an invalid criterion for receiving the perfect text of Scripture (cites Larry D. Pettegrew’s essay in *The Bible Version Debate: The Position of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* in the footnote).” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 263-264)

- Later Brandenburg points out that the position of the “rationalist-preservationist” is nothing more than “conceptual preservation.”

- “Instead of just believing God, men speculate on the percentage of error assumed to exist. The wobbly foundation upon which the rationalist preservationist stands is the assertion that “all of the doctrines alone have been preserved,” which effectually leaves the believer with a conceptual preservation.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 265)
- Since God set forth his doctrine via words written in a book what sense does it make to argue that God could preserve the book but not the words. Yet, as we will see in a future lesson, this is precisely the position of Dr. W. Edward Glenny; God preserved the *documents* but not the words that comprise those documents.

Wallace on the Fideistic Approach

- Wallace excoriates the fideistic approach arguing that the theological *a priori* belief in preservation has “no place in textual criticism.”
 - “The fideistic formula violates all known historical data. Such a dogmatic affirmation results in a procrusteanizing of the data on a massive scale in the name of orthodoxy. For example, the Byzantine text did not become the majority until the ninth century—and even then “majority” must be qualified: There are almost twice as many Latin MSS as there are Greek and, to my knowledge, none of them belongs to the Byzantine text.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 202)
 - “In sum, a theological *a priori* has no place in textual criticism. Since this is the case it is necessary to lay aside fideism in dealing with the evidence. The question, since we are dealing fundamentally with historical inquiry, is not what is possible but what is probable. With the stance of faith of the traditionalists in place, textual criticism become so intertwined with orthodoxy that the evidence cannot objectively be interpreted. But once dogma is evacuated from the discussion, no position can be comfortable merely with what is possible.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 204)
- Notice plainly what Wallace is asserting: 1) the doctrine of preservation has no place in the discipline of textual criticism, 2) the faith approach is a hindrance to dealing with the historical evidence, and 3) only when the doctrine of preservation (dogma) is abandoned can one objectively evaluate the historical data.
- Explaining away the doctrine of preservation is just as central to Wallace’s position as faith is to the preservationist. This is why he must declare that passages such as Isaiah 40:8 and I Peter 1:23-25 do not assert a doctrine of preservation. He must first explain away the verses before he can advance his so-called objective argument.
 - “Traditionalists make the rather facile assumption that when God’s word is mentioned the reference must be to the written text—specifically, the text of the NT. Yet neither the written text nor the NT per se is in view in these passages. The most satisfactory exegesis of all such passages is that they are statements concerning either divine ethical

principles (i.e., more laws that cannot be violated without some kind of consequence) or the promise of fulfilled prophecy.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 202-203)

- Wallace is arguing for a naturalistic approach to textual criticism using rationalistic means. This approach rooted in the notion that the Bible is same as another book and should be approached by the same principles.

Preservation: The Historic Position of the Reformers

- The following doctrinal Confessions of the Reformation Era all allude to the doctrine of preservation.
 - 1646—[*The Westminster Confession of Faith*](#) (Reformed)
 - 1658—[*The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order*](#) (Reformed)
 - 1689—[*The London Baptist Confession*](#) (Baptistic)
 - 1742—[*The Philadelphia Baptist Confession*](#) (Baptistic)
- Given that the wording is virtually identical in all four Confessions, we will limit our quotes to Chapter I Of the Holy Scriptures, Article VIII from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:
 - “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, **by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But, **because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come**, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.”
- All four *Confessions* hold that Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament were “inspired by God” and “kept pure in all ages.” If this is not a belief in preservation I don’t know what is. Moreover, the saints responsible for these *Confessions* assert the need for these pure Hebrew and Greek words to be translated in the “vulgar language of every nation unto which they come.” This is a strong appeal for the accurate and proper translation of the pure Hebrew and Greek words into the vernacular languages of all peoples.

- These *Confessions* demonstrate the historic Protestant belief in the notion of preservation or the idea that God kept his word pure in all ages. This belief was held across denominational traditions (Reformed & Baptist) as well as geographical boundaries (Old & New World).
- It is also important to note that the drafters of these *Confessions* were ascribing these statements to the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Greek *Textus Receptus*, the only Greek text they had available to them. It was the act of translating the *Textus Receptus* into the vernacular languages of Europe that drove the Reformation and touched off the greatest era of Christian mission work the world has ever seen. These are historical FACTS that cannot be disputed.

Conclusion

- Before we go further let me ask you the following series of questions. How many of you believe the following?
 - God created the world in six days?
 - God destroyed the earth through a flood saving only Noah and his family?
 - God confounded the languages of men and scattered them across the face of the earth?
 - God through Moses delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery through the Red Sea?
 - David killed Goliath?
 - Jonah was swallowed by a whale?
 - Jesus Christ was the incarnated, Virgin Born Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and rose again the third day?
 - The resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road.
- Why do you believe these things? Because you believe the Bible.
- So then why when it comes to the issue of textual criticism and the identification of the Biblical text and its translation into English why do so many believers leave the viewpoint of faith in favor of naturalistic textual theories?
- We need to believe what the Bible teaches about itself. We need to remember that the Bible is God's book. Remember from our studies of inspiration in term one, when we deal with the Bible we are dealing with God himself. We need to adopt the viewpoint of faith.

- If God promised to preserve his word, and God cannot lie, and God always fulfills his promises then it would make more sense to believe in preservation than to deny it. In order to adopt a contrary position, one would have to subprime to one of the following suppositions regarding God's foundational nature and character:
 - God didn't mean what He said (Never issued such a promise.).
 - God's word cannot be trusted (Because he can and has lied.).
 - God is unwilling or unable to fulfill his promises.
- From this we conclude that of the following three views, View 1 is false and is to be rejected outright. There is a Doctrine of Preservation; this is Bible claim for itself.
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- In the coming weeks we will begin studying the *nature* and *extent* of preservation by beginning an investigation into whether or not preservation is the corollary of inspiration.
- From this we will endeavor to determine the accuracy of Views 2 and 3.

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Sunday, December 18, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 40 Why Preservation Matters

Introduction

- Since Lesson 30, we have been discussing the following three views of preservation identified by Dr. William Combs in his essay “The Preservation of Scripture.”
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Last week in Lesson 39 we concluded that View 1 is false and that the scriptures do teach/promise their own preservation. This is the Bible’s claim/promise for itself.
- This morning in Lesson 40, before beginning a secondary consideration regarding the *nature* of preservation, I would like to share a study about why preservation matters.

The Perspective of Historical Theology

- Lesson 39 demonstrated that a belief in the promise of preservation was maintained by the Reformers and written into their Creeds and Catechisms. This belief in preservation was exemplified by Reformed and Baptist Statements of Faith in both the Old and New Worlds. Setting the standard was *The Westminster Confession of Faith* from 1646 which states the following in Chapter 1 Article VIII:
 - “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, **by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”
- Louis Gaussen captured the Reformation Era belief in preservation in his seminal 1840 work *Theopneustia (The Divine Inspiration of the Bible)*. Gaussen articulated the prevailing notion that inspiration without preservation is meaningless. Gaussen clearly depicts God as being an active agent in the preservation of scripture. According to Gaussen, preservation was providential, not merely circumstantial or historical.
 - **“The Lord has watched miraculously over his Word. This the facts of the case have demonstrated.**

In constituting as its depositaries, first, the Churches of the Jewish people, and then those of the Christian people, **his providence had by this means to see to the faithful transmission of the oracle of God to us.** . . all these vast labors have so convincingly established the atoning preservation of that text, copied nevertheless so many thousands of times (in Hebrew during thirty-three centuries, and in Greek during eighteen hundred years), that the hopes of the enemies of religion, in this quarter, have been subverted.” (Gaussen, 167-168)

- “When one thinks that the Bible has been copied during thirty centuries, as no book of man has ever been, or ever will be; that it was subject to all the catastrophes and all the captives of Israel; that it was transported seventy years to Babylon; that it has seen itself so often persecuted, or forgotten, or interdicted, or burnt, from the days of the Philistines to those of the Seleucid;--when one thinks that, since the time of Jesus Christ, it had to traverse the first three centuries of the imperial persecutions, when persons found in possession of the holy books were thrown to the wild beasts; next the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries, when false books, false legends, and false decretals, were everywhere multiplied; the 10th century, when so few could read, even among princes; the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries, when the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue was punished with death, and when the books of the ancient fathers were mutilated, when so many ancient traditions were garbled and falsified, even the very acts of the emperor, and those of the councils;--**then we can perceive how necessary it was that the providence of God should have always put forth its mighty power**, in order that, on the one hand, the Church of the Jews should give us, in its integrity, that Word which records its revolts, which predicts its ruin, which describes Jesus Christ; and, on the other, that the Christian Churches (the most powerful of which, and the Roman sect in particular, interdicted the people from reading the sacred books, and substituted in so many ways the traditions of the middle ages from the Word of God) should nevertheless transmit to us, in all their purity, those Scriptures, which condemn all their traditions, their images, their dead languages, their absolutions, their celibacy; which say, that Rome would be the seat of a terrible apostasy, where “the Man of Sin would be sitting as God in the temple of God, waging war against the saints, forbidding to marry, and to use meats which God created; . . .” (Gaussen, 169-170)
- “**This intervention of God’s providence in the preservation of the Old Testament** becomes still more striking in our eyes if we compare the astonishing integrity of the original Hebrew (at the close of so many centuries) with the rapid and profound alteration which the Greek version of the Septuagint has undergone in the days of Jesus Christ (after the lapse of only two hundred years).” (Gaussen, 172-173)
- “**We repeat, these facts, placed in contrast with the astonishing preservation of the Hebrew text** (older than that of the LXX by more than twelve hundred years), **proclaim loudly enough how necessary it was that the mighty hand of God should intervene in the destinies of the sacred book.**” (Gaussen, 174)

- “We desire, however, to give such of our readers as are strangers to sacred criticism, two or three other and still more intelligible means of estimating **that providence which has for thirty centuries watched over our sacred text.**” (Gaussen, 175)
- “Here, then, the thing is evident: such is the real insignificance of the various readings about which so much noise was made at first. **Such has been the astonishing preservation of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament that have been transmitted to us.**” (Gaussen, 186)
- Yet, now in our day, Protestant Theologians have spilt much ink arguing that the Bible never promises its own preservation and that no such doctrine exists. Standard Systematic Theology books are completely silent and devoid of any discussion of preservation in their chapters/discussions of Bibliology (See [Lesson 4](#)). Evangelical scholars have asserted that *a priori* belief in the Biblical promise of preservation has no seat at the table of textual criticism. In fact, it is only when the *dogma* of preservation is jettisoned that true objectivity can be obtained and progress made in evaluating the historical/textual data, according to leading Evangelical scholarship (See comments by Wallace in Lesson 39.).
- How did we get to this place? How did we go from having a belief in the promise of preservation written into the major Creedal statements of the Protestant Reformation to the outright denial of a clear Biblical promise?
- The answer is the crucible of the late 19th century. During the period between 1859 with the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin till the end of the century, Biblical Christianity was turned inside out by a torrent of destructive forces including: 1) Evolution, 2) Liberalism, 3) Modernism, and 4) German Higher Criticism. The net effect of these forces was the reshaping of Protestant Bibliology.
- Important doctrines such as inspiration and inerrancy experienced complete overhauls during the years between 1860 and 1900. Moreover, the entire field of textual criticism was transformed by naturalists who asserted that the Bible was like any other book and should be treated accordingly.

Inspiration

- Throughout church history prior to 1860, Christian theologians conceived of verbal inspiration as having been accomplished through a process of dictation (see Lessons [14](#) & [15](#)).
- During the thirty years between the publication of Gaussen’s *Divine Inspiration* in 1840 and Charles Hodges’ *Systematical Theology* in 1871 the theological landscape had changed drastically. The intervening thirty years saw the publication of *On the Origin of the Species* by Charles Darwin, the growth and influence of German Higher Criticism, and the resulting theological liberalism of the Modernists. In response to the controversy, these men and their contemporaries altered many Protestant doctrines in an attempt to answer their critics. The doctrine of inspiration is one such example.

- It has only been in the last 150 years or so that the notion of Divine Dictation has fallen out of favor among professional theologians. For the majority of the history of the dispensation of grace, Christian thinkers, theologians, and philosophers had no problem with viewing dictation as the means by which inspiration was accomplished.
- It was also during this time period (1860-1900) that the phrase “in the original autographs” was added to doctrinal statements on inspiration (See [Lesson 4](#) for a discussion of the “Originals Only” position.). This language is completely foreign to the doctrinal statements of the Reformation Era. In fact, creedal statements of the Reformation Era clearly extend inspiration between the original languages themselves. There was no notion that translations were incapable of extending the inspired text beyond the original documents or languages. Consider the rest of Chapter I Article VIII from *The Westminster Confession of Faith* as a case in point:
 - **“But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,** that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.”
- In 1840, Louis Gaussen comments on the relationship between inspiration and translation in his seminal work *Theopneustia (The Divine Inspiration of the Bible)*. Gaussen outlines the four forms God’s word passed through via inspiration so that it could be intelligible to human beings:
 - “First, it was from all eternity in the mind of God. Next it was passed by Him into the mind of man. In the third place, under the operation of the Holy Ghost and by a mysterious process, it passed from the prophets’ thoughts, into the types and symbols of an articulate language it took shape in words. Finally, after having undergone this first translation, alike important and inexplicable, men have reproduced and counter-chalked it, by a new translation, in passing from one human language into another human language.” (Gaussen, 154-155)
- Regarding the fourth form of translating from one human language (Hebrew or Greek) into another human language such as French or English, Gaussen writes:
 - “The operation by which the sacred writers express with words the mind of the Holy Ghost, is, we have said, itself a rendering not of words by words, but of divine thoughts by sensible symbols. Now this first translation is an infinitely nice matter, more mysterious and more liable to error (if God puts not his hand to it) than the operation can be afterwards, by which we should render a Greek word of that primitive text, by its equivalent in another language. . . **The divine thought being already incarnated, as it were, in the language of the sacred text, what remains to be done in translation is no longer the giving of it a body, but only the changing of its dress, making it say in French what it had already said in Greek, and modestly substituting for each of its words an equivalent word. Such an operation is comparatively very inferior, very**

immaterial, without mystery, and infinitely less subject to error than the preceding.

It even requires so little spirituality, that it may be performed *to perfection* by a trustworthy pagan who should possess *in perfection* a knowledge of both languages...

The more, then, one reflects on this first consideration, the more immeasurable ought the difference to appear between these two orders of operations; to wit, between the translation of the divine thoughts into the words of human language, and the translation of the same thoughts into the equivalent terms of another language. No longer, therefore, be it said, "What avails it to me, if the one be human, that the other is divine?" (Gaussen, 155-157)

- This is a high view of inspiration that extends the results of inspiration beyond the original autographs alone. It was a rationalistic response to German Higher Critics that caused Christian theologians of the late 19th century to limit inspiration to the autographs only.

Inerrancy

- During the Grace History Project, I taught two Lessons ([63](#) & [64](#)) on the history of the doctrine of inerrancy. Lesson 63 laid out the pre-modern history of the topic by looking at the writings of Irenaeus, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. *The Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter I Article V* states the following regarding infallibility and inerrancy:
 - "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: **yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.**"
- Our investigation of these writings revealed that these men believed the scriptures were inerrant simply because they were the word of God. The belief that the scriptures were infallible was based upon "the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." There was no formal theological doctrine of inerrancy and it was certainly not limited to the original autographs only.
- The Civil War in the United States in the 1860s and changes in science after Charles Darwin published *On the Origin of the Species* in 1859 led many to challenge the idea that the Bible was literally the word of God and factually true in every respect. Arguments about evolution and biblical authority for slavery divided churches and led to a revised view of inerrancy among some factions that claimed only the original manuscripts of the Bible to be without error.

- A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield expressed a new view on inerrancy in the April 1881 edition of the *Presbyterian Review*. The expression “original autograph(s)(ic)” is found six times in the 1881 “Inerrancy” article by A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield.
- “Verbal and inerrant inspiration was claimed not for the Bible as we now find it, but for the books of the Bible as they came from the hands of the authors—the original autographs. This emphasis upon the original manuscripts is another example of the way in which the Princeton doctrine of the Scriptures was refined and tightened in the face of growing critical opposition. A.A. Hodge said nothing of the original autographs in the first (1860) edition of his *Outlines of Theology* but saw fit to introduce it into the 1879 edition. The collaborative article of A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield in the *Princeton Review* (1881) elevated the concept to an especially prominent place in the Princeton doctrine of inspiration. That this concept of the original autographs had been recently added to their apologetic was never mentioned by Warfield and Hodge.” (Sandeen, 127- 128)
- “This new emphasis was introduced just at the time that the number of biblical errors or discrepancies turned up by the critics was growing too large to be ignored. One could no longer dismiss them as had Charles Hodge—as flecks of sandstone in the Parthenon marble. A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield retreated. In the first place, they stated that their theory of inspiration did not cover the preservation of the accuracy of the biblical manuscripts; inerrancy was claimed for the manuscripts only as they came from the hands of their authors. Copyists’ errors could not invalidate the inerrancy of the Bible. Even this much hedging on the part of the Princeton professors has been widely criticized. As we have seen, the Princeton theology of inspiration served to define and describe the way in which God had provided an inerrant source of knowledge concerning Christianity. But what possible good can a nineteenth-century Christian derive from a Bible which, although once inerrant, is now riddled with mistakes through the carelessness of copyists? The Princeton claim to an inerrant Bible was maintained only by resource to lost and completely useless original autographs. Once again, the completely scholastic, theoretical nature of the Princeton mind is illustrated. And once again Princeton is caught propagating a dogma which is flatly contradicted by the Westminster Confession. In that creed, the Scriptures are declared to be authentic not only at the moment of their description but now: “being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical.”” (Sandeen, 128)
- Defenders of an inerrant Bible assumed that the Bible was true as a starting point; however, their defense took shape as a logical syllogism that worked backward toward the rationalists. Since the Bible is true as an assumption, and since only verifiable historical events can be true (thus accepting the premise of the rationalists), then the Bible must contain only actual and verifiable historical events and can contain no error. Thus, inerrancy as a very rationalistic response to the rationalists, was born. (Bratcher)
- The rationalistic doctrine of inerrancy forged at Princeton during the crucible of controversy was picked up by fundamentalists during the later 19th and early 20th centuries and codified into their revised doctrinal statements where it has become the new orthodoxy. Mark well that it was a new understanding of inerrancy that was impacted by the era of controversy between 1860 and 1900.

Textual Criticism

- It was also during the time period in question (1860-1900) that naturalistic textual criticism gained a foothold within Protestant scholarship thereby replacing the traditional Greek text of the Protestant Reformation with a completely new text developed using rationalists' precepts and critical methodology.
- As we saw in [Lesson 28](#), Drs. Westcott and Hort were the chief architects of the critical methodology and authors of the new and improved Greek text. They began their work with the presupposition that the Bible was like any other book and should be treated using the same rules of textual criticism as the writings of Plato, Aristotle, or any other work of antiquity. Moreover, they infer that textual corruption could have entered the text via the hands of the original authors or their amanuensis.
 - “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate. (Westcott and Hort, 73)
 - “Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in. They may be due to the original writer, or his amanuensis if wrote from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers.” (Westcott and Hort, 280-281)
- On this point Hort stands in opposition to modern Evangelical scholarship in that he allows for “corruption” to have entered the text via the “original writer.” Such a position explains why Hort is reluctant to ascribe infallibility to the text in any form. In a letter addressed to J.B. Lightfoot dated May 1, 1860, Hort stated in part:
 - “I am convinced that any view of the Gospels, which distinctly and consistently recognizes for them a natural and historical origin (whether under a special Divine superintendence or not) and assumes that they did not drop down ready-made from heaven, must and will be ‘startling’ to an immense portion of educated English people. But so far, at least, Westcott and I are perfectly agreed, and I confess I had hoped that you (Lightfoot) would assent. . . If you make a decided conviction of the absolute infallibility of the N.T. practically a *sine qua non* for co-operation, I fear I could not join you, even if you were willing to forget your fears about the origin of the Gospels. I am most anxious to find the N.T. infallible, and have a strong sense of the Divine purpose guiding all its parts; but I cannot see how the exact limits of such guidance can be ascertained except by unbiased a posterior criticism. . . (Regarding the question of “Providence” in Biblical Hort writes) Most strongly I recognize it; but I am not prepared to say that it necessarily involves absolute infallibility.” (Hort, 419-421)
- This is the type of textual criticism that Dr. Edward F. Hills is referring to when he talks about the “naturalistic method” in the *King James Version Defended*. He is speaking about an approach to the scriptures that doubts their supernatural origin, doubts their infallibility even in the original autographs, and treats the Bible as though it were any other book. Such was the approach of Drs. Westcott and Hort.

- Later in this class we will study the textual theories of Westcott and Hort in detail. For the time being, understand that their approach to the text was completely different from the approach adopted by the Reformers. Moreover, their methodology is the seedbed for all modern textual criticism. In other words, their work has given rise to the modern eclectic method. Put another way, modern eclecticism is built over the top of the foundation laid by Westcott and Hort. Modern textual critics who follow the eclectic method are the intellectual great grandchildren of Westcott and Hort.

Conclusion

- Thus, was Protestant Bibliology completely reshaped by the forces of science, liberalism, and German Higher Criticism during the latter half of the 19th century. Preservation was abandoned altogether, inspiration and inerrancy were confined to nonexistent original autographs, and textual criticism was reinvented under rationalistic and naturalistic principals.
 - To view a chart summarizing the changes in Protestant Bibliology before & after 1860 [click here](#).
- These core changes to the Protestant view of the Bible have shaped Fundamentalism and later Evangelicalism throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

The Agnosticism of Bart Ehrman: The Logical Conclusion of the Prevailing View

- Dr. Bart Ehrman is a New York Times Bestselling author and professor of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is one of North America's leading scholars in his field, having written and edited thirty books, including three college textbooks. He has also achieved acclaim at the popular level, authoring five *New York Times* bestsellers. Ehrman's work focuses on textual criticism of the New Testament, the historical Jesus, and the development of early Christianity. (Wikipedia Entry)
- In the introduction to his bestselling book *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* from 2005, Dr. Ehrman recounts his personal history. After recounting his early years in a conservative household in Lawrence, Kansas, Ehrman was “born-again” as a sophomore in high school. In 1973, Ehrman entered Moody Bible Institute where he decided to major in Bible and Theology. Naturally this required taking a lot of Bible study and Systematic Theology courses. It was while at Moody the he first encountered the prevailing Evangelical orthodoxy with respect the scripture:
 - “Only one perspective was taught in these courses, subscribed to by all the professors (they had to sign a statement) and by all the students (we did as well): The Bible is the inerrant word of God. It contains no mistakes. It is inspired completely and in its very words— “verbal, plenary inspiration.” All the courses I took presupposed and taught this perspective; any other was taken to be misguided or even heretical. . .

There was an obvious problem, however, with the claim that the Bible was verbally inspired—down to the very words. As we learned at Moody in one of the first courses in the curriculum, we don't actually have the original writings of the New Testament. What we have are copies of these writings, made years later—in most cases, many years later. Moreover, none of these copies is completely accurate, since the scribes who produced them inadvertently and/or intentionally changed them in places. All scribes did this. So rather than actually having the inspired words of the autographs (i.e., the originals) of the Bible, what we have are the error-ridden copies of the autographs. One of the most pressing of all tasks, therefore, was to ascertain what the originals of the Bible said, given the circumstances that 1) they were inspired and 2) we don't have them." (Ehrman, 4-5

- The position described by Ehrman above is the same one I was taught in Bible College. Ehrman has summarized the "Originals Only" position in a nut shell. Ehrman describes an experience very similar to my own; many of his friends at Moody were content to rest on the claim that the autographs were inspired despite the obvious problem that they no longer exist. It was this problem that first interested Ehrman in the field of textual criticism.
 - "For me, though, this was a compelling problem. It was the words of scripture themselves that God had inspired. Surely we have to know what those words were if we want to know how he had communicated to us, since the very words were his words, and having some other words (those inadvertently or intentionally created by scribes) didn't help us much if we wanted to know His words.

This is what got me interested in the manuscripts of the New Testament, already as an eighteen-year-old." (Ehrman, 5)

- After completing his studies at Moody in 1976, Ehrman enrolled in Wheaton College, one of the most prestigious Evangelical institutions of higher learning in the country and the alma mater of Billy Graham. It was at Wheaton that Ehrman began his study of the Greek language thereby increasing his misgiving regarding inspiration.
 - "At the same time, this started making me question my understanding of scripture as the verbally inspired word of God. If the full meaning of the words of scripture can be grasped only by studying them in Greek (and Hebrew), does this mean that most Christians, who don't read ancient languages, will never have complete access to what God wants them to know (this was not the position of Gausson in 1840)? And doesn't this make the doctrine of inspiration a doctrine only for the scholarly elite, who have the intellectual skills and leisure to learn the languages and study the text by reading them in the original? What does it do to say that the words are inspired by God if most people have absolutely no access to these words, but only to more or less clumsy renderings of these words into a language, such as English, that has nothing to do with the original words?

My questions were complicated even more as I began to think increasingly about the manuscripts that conveyed the words. The more I studied Greek, the more I became interested in the manuscripts that preserve the New Testament for us, and in the science of textual criticism, which can supposedly help us reconstruct what the original words of the New Testament were. I kept reverting to my basic question: how does it help us to say that the Bible is the inerrant word of God if in fact we don't have the words God inerrantly inspired, but only the words copied by scribes—sometimes correctly but sometimes (many times!) incorrectly? What good does it to say that the autographs (i.e., the originals) were inspired? We don't have the originals! We have only error-ridden copies, and the vast majority of these are centuries removed from the originals and different from them, evidently, in thousands of ways.” (Ehrman, 6-7)

- These lingering doubts drove Ehrman deeper into his studies of textual criticism in hopes of understanding “what the Bible really was.” As a result, he decided to attend Princeton Theological Seminary and study textual criticism from the world's leading expert, Bruce M. Metzger. Doubts raised via Ehrman's continued study of textual criticism coincided with a difficulty in expounding upon the text of Mark 2:26 regarding the identification of the high priest in opening up the floodgates of agnosticism. Ehrman's professor (not Metzger) wrote at the end of his term paper regarding his exposition of Mark 2:26, “Maybe Mark just made a mistake.” This coupled with his lingering doubts, over a long period of time, were the catalysts that led to Ehrman's complete reevaluation of the doctrine of inspiration and the Bible itself. (Ehrman, 8-10)
- Ultimately, it was a lack of understanding regarding the promise of preservation that caused Ehrman to doubt inspiration. Nowhere in his formal education in Christian Academia did he ever encounter instruction in the doctrine of preservation. Why? Because preservation was discarded in the late 19th century response to German Higher Criticisms.
 - **“If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? In some places, as we will see, we simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately.** It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!

This became a problem for my view of inspiration, **for I came to realize that it would have been no more difficult for God to preserve the words of scripture than it would have been for him to inspire them in the first place.** If he wanted his people to have his words, surely he would have given them to them (and possibly even given them the words in a language they could understand, rather than Greek and Hebrew). **The fact that we don't have the words surely must show, I reasoned, that he did not preserve them for us. And if he didn't perform that miracle, there seemed to be no reason to think that he performed the earlier miracle of inspiring those words.”** (Ehrman, 11)

- Ehrman is simply following the contents of his theological training to its logical conclusion. While I do not agree with Ehrman, I at least can applaud him for being intellectually honest.

Without preservation inspiration is in jeopardy. Notice also that Ehrman is working off the standard of “verbatim identity” or “exact sameness.”

- The following paragraph captures the net effect of all this upon Ehrman’s views on inspiration and the Bible. In the end, Ehrman takes the naturalistic/rationalistic starting point of the current Evangelical Orthodoxy to its logical conclusion; the Bible was not inspired and is a human work that is no different from any other book.
 - “In short, my study of the Greek New Testament, and my investigation into the manuscripts that contain it, led to a radical rethinking of my understanding of what the Bible is. This was a seismic change for me. Before this—starting with my born-again experience in high school, through my fundamentalist days at Moody, and on through my evangelical days at Wheaton—my faith had been based completely on a certain view of the Bible as the fully inspired, inerrant word of God. Now I no longer saw the Bible that way. **The Bible began to appear to me as a very human book.** Just as many scribes had copied, and changed, the texts of scripture, **so too had human authors originally written the texts of scripture. This was a human book from beginning to end.** It was written by different human authors at different times and in different places to address different needs. Many of these authors no doubt felt they were inspired by God to say what they did, but they had their own perspectives, their own beliefs, their own views, their own needs, their own desires, their own understandings, their own theologies; and these perspectives, beliefs, views, needs, desires, understandings, and theologies informed everything they said. In all these ways they differed from one another. Among other things, that meant that Mark did not say the same thing that Luke said because he didn’t mean the same thing as Luke. John is different from Matthew—not the same. Paul is different from Acts. And James is different from Paul. Each author is a human author and needs to be read for what he (assuming they were all men) has to say, not assuming that what he says is the same, or conformable to, or consistent with what every other author has to say. **The Bible, at the end of the day, is a very human book.**” (Ehrman, 11-12)
- In Ehrman we see the next affect the naturalistic/rationalistic approach to scripture first advanced in the late 19th century. It is only by ignoring the obvious questions and inconsistencies that the prevailing Evangelical Orthodoxy is held together. Without the promise of preservation, the system comes crashing down upon the one honest enough to take things to their logical conclusion.
 - To view a Flow Chart of Ehrman’s Error [click here](#).

Conclusion

- As the title of this Lesson suggests (Why Preservation Matters) our goal herein has been to demonstrate the high cost associated with denying the promise of preservation by providing a practical real-life example in Bart Ehrman.

- In his book *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*, William Lane Craig offers the following advice for dealing with a determined skeptic.
 - “Now the determined skeptic can deny any conclusion if he is willing to pay the price of rejecting one of its premises. But what you can do is raise the price of rejecting the conclusion by giving good evidence for the truth of the premises. . . we want to raise the price of denying the conclusion as high as we can. We want to help the unbeliever see what it will cost him intellectually to resist the conclusion. Even if he is willing to pay that price, he may at least come to see why we are not obligated to pay it. . .” (Craig, 25)
- Following Professor Craig’s advice, notice how Ehrman’s denial of inspiration is identical with the position on the Bible enunciated by atheist Richard Dawkins.
 - “To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and ‘improved’ by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries.” (Dawkins, 268)
- Therefore, the promise of preservation matters. Theologically, the promise of preservation protects what God gave by inspiration. Next time we will begin to study the extent of this linkage by considering whether preservation is the corollary of inspiration.

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Saturday, December 24, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 41 Preservation the Corollary of Inspiration

Introduction

- In Lesson 30 after discussing the Core Issue of Preservation versus Restoration, we studied how the TEXTUAL FACTS presented in Lesson 28 and 29 have given birth to the following three views on the doctrine of preservation:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- Two weeks ago, in Lesson 39 we concluded that View 1 is false, and the Bible does promise preservation as a theological reality. In other words, preservation is the Bible's doctrinal/theological claim for itself.
- Last week in Lesson 40 we considered "Why Preservation Matters" by using Bart Ehrman as a case in point to demonstrate the high cost associated with denying preservation.
- This morning, having duly established that preservation is a Bible doctrine, we want to begin a secondary consideration that will help distinguish between the truthfulness of Views 2 and 3. That consideration is the *extent* or *nature* of preservation.
- After giving much thought to where/how to begin this discussion I have elected to commence with a consideration of whether preservation is the corollary of inspiration. Much has been said in the scholarly literature regarding this question.
- For organizational purposes, we will study this topic by tackling the following points:
 - What is a Corollary?
 - Preservation is the Corollary of Inspiration
 - Problems Created by a Denial of a Corollary
- Lastly, an Appendix at the end has been provided outlining the position of Dr. Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary.

What is a Corollary?

- Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines the English word corollary as follows:
 - A conclusion or consequence drawn from premises, or from what is advanced or demonstrated. If it is demonstrated that a triangle which has equal sides, has also equal angles, it follows as a *corollary* that a triangle which has three equal sides, has its three angles equal.
- Google defines a corollary as:
 - *Noun*—a proposition that follows from (and is often appended to) one already proved.
 - direct or natural consequence or result.
 - *Adjective*—forming a proposition that follows from one already proved.
 - associated; supplementary.
- Dr. William W. Combs explains how the term “corollary” is used in the conversation regarding inspiration and preservation.
 - “Webster defines *corollary* as 1) a proposition inferred immediately from a proved proposition with little or no additional proof, (2a) something that incidentally or naturally accompanies or parallels, and (2b) something that incidentally or naturally accompanies or parallels. Thus to say that preservation is the corollary of inspiration means that preservation is a doctrine that can be “inferred immediately” from the “proved position” of inspiration; preservation “naturally follows” or “parallels” inspiration. To say that there is a correlation or parallel between inspiration and preservation does not reveal anything about the exact nature of preservation.” (Combs, 27)
- Edward F. Hills asserts that preservation is the corollary of inspiration in the *King James Version Defended* when he writes:
 - **“If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scripture is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the providential preservation of the Scriptures must also be a true doctrine.** It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God’s people in every age. **God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of His will, then it is obvious that He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.**” (Hills, 2)

Preservation is the Corollary Inspiration

- While Combs would not agree with Edward F. Hills as to the *extent* of the corollary, he does none the less assert that a corollary exists.
 - “It is perfectly reasonable to assert a corollary between inspiration and preservation without asserting that preservation be in every way equal to inspiration . . .” (Combs, 27)
- Combs quotes John H. Skilton’s essay on “[The Transmission of the Scriptures](#)” to support the notion that, “A right understanding of the corollary suggests that there is no real purpose or value in inspiring a document that is not preserved.” (Combs, 27) Skilton observes:
 - “But we must maintain that the God who gave the Scriptures, who works all things after the counsel of his will, has exercised a remarkable care over his ‘Word, has preserved it in all ages in a state of essential purity, and has enabled it to accomplish the purpose for which he gave it. It is inconceivable that the sovereign God who was pleased to give his Word as a vital and necessary instrument in the salvation of his people would permit his Word to become completely marred in its transmission and unable to accomplish its ordained end. Rather, as surely as that he is God, we would expect to find him exercising a singular care in the preservation of his written revelation.” (Skilton in *TIW*, 143)
- After quoting Skilton, Combs offers the following strong evidence in favor of a corollary between inspiration and preservation.
 - “To illustrate, we might ask, what would be the purpose of producing an authoritative record (inspiration) and letting it perish? Why, for instance, let Paul write an inspired letter to the Romans and then have it perish on the way to Rome? Of course, that did not happen, but could it have happened? If one denies a corollary between inspiration and preservation, Paul’s letter could have perished before it got to Rome.

The purpose of inspiration was to produce γραφή (2 Tim 3:16), a written record, a deposit of divine truth for the readers, not the writer. Without preservation the purpose of inspiration would be invalidated. Since it was clearly God’s intention that Paul’s inspired letter to the Romans be read by the Romans—it could not have perished—there must have been a divine work of preservation at work for at least a few weeks or months until the letter was received by the Romans. This suggests that there is some degree of correlation between inspiration and preservation. And the letter to the Romans was not meant just for the Romans. No Scripture was intended for just the original recipients—“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4). Similarly, Paul warns the Corinthians using the example of Israel’s failure: “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11). If the Old Testament Scriptures (“these things”) were “written,” that is, inspired for the purpose of instructing future

believers (“our instruction”) that purpose for the inspired writings demands their preservation.” (Combs, 27-28)

Problems Created by a Denial of a Corollary

- In the main body of his essay “The Preservation of Scripture”, Dr. W. Edward Glenny of Central Baptist Theological Seminary denies the notion that preservation is the corollary of inspiration.
 - “The first historical problem mentioned above is the assumption that preservation is a necessary corollary of inspiration and that for inspiration to be true God must have preserved the NT text inerrantly. The difficulty with this assumption becomes obvious when it is carried to its logical conclusion.” (Glennney, 77)
- Glenny, like Bart Ehrman, Harry A. Sturz, and Daniel B. Wallace (see Appendix A) before him, denies any corollary between preservation and inspiration on the grounds that there is not “verbatim identically” or exact same wording in the extant manuscript witnesses.
- Glenny’s main concern in denying the corollary in the main body of his essay on preservation is to disprove the notion of “perfect preservation” or the idea that all the words were preserved exactly/identically as they were given under inspiration. As we have seen in previous lessons, this is the standard of preservation advocated for by preservationists Thomas M. Strouse, David Sutton, and Kent Brandenburg.
- By denying any corollary between preservation and inspiration in order to answer the TR/King James position of “perfect preservation,” even Professor Combs believes that Glenny has overstated his case. To prove this, Combs cites footnote thirty-six from Glenny’s essay on “The Preservation of Scripture” in which Glenny recants his denial of the corollary found in the main body of the essay. (Combs, 28) Combs writes the following regarding Glenny’s denial of the corollary, “since this denial creates an untenable problem for his doctrine of the canon, Glenny permits the corollary to enter through the back door.” (Combs, 28)
- After denying a corollary in the body of the essay, Glenny states the following in footnote thirty-six:
 - “The criteria for determining whether God’s word has been preserved are self-evident, i.e., does it still exist? Our belief in the preservation of God’s Word is different from our belief in the canon in that preservation does not follow directly from inspiration nor are given criteria in Scripture by which we are to determine or prove the preservation of scripture. But there is a similarity between preservation of Scripture and the doctrine of the canon in that, the recognition of the exact books which are to be included in the canon does not follow directly from the biblical teaching on inspiration from the criteria given in Scripture to identify them. These criteria must be applied to the **historical evidence** ... Based on the **historical evidence** we believe certain books are included in the canon just as we believe on the basis of historical evidence that God has preserved His word. My point is that just as we use historical evidence to recognize which books meet the criteria

necessary to be included in the canon, in the same way we use historical evidence to recognize the fact that God has preserved His Word.

An obvious truth is that a document which is to be included in the canon must be preserved. Therefore, since inspiration implies canonicity, in an indirect way inspiration is related to the preservation of the *documents* which are included in the canon. However, the preservation I have addressed and evaluated in this chapter is not the preservation of the *documents* which are in the canon, but rather the perfect preservation of the words of *the text of all of the documents*.” (Glenny, 104-105)

- Please note that Glenny, based upon his doctrine of the Canon is forced to admit at least an *indirect* corollary between inspiration and preservation. Combs points this out in his essay when he states:
 - “Why is it that “a document that is to be included in the canon *must* be preserved”? (emphasis added) Obviously, it is because God wanted the documents he *inspired* to be in the canon, and if he wanted his *inspired* documents to be in the canon, he “must” have preserved them. This line of reasoning ultimately is based on a corollary between inspiration and preservation.” (Combs, 28-29)
- In other words, without the preservation of what was inspired, how is one to know historically what books should be included in the Canon? Furthermore, by so arguing, Glenny is admitting that preservation must be a historical reality while at the same time not believing it to be a theological necessity. Recall that Glenny does not believe that the Bible teaches its own preservation.
- Moreover, Glenny has God preserving the *documents* or the material objects themselves upon which God’s words were written; without at the same time preserving the *words* found on/in those documents. Does this even make any sense at all? How is it that preservation can be a historical reality necessary for determining canonicity yet at the same time not be a theological necessity?

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Appendix A

The position of Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary

Introduction

- As we saw in the main body of Lesson 41, Dr. W. Edward Glenny denies a corollary between preservation and inspiration in the main body of his essay “The Preservation of Scripture.” Yet, in footnote thirty-six, Glenny allows a corollary in through the back door due to historical considerations and his position on canonicity. Glenny argues for the preservation of the *documents* but not the words written on those documents.
- Dr. Glenny was preceded by Dr. Daniel B. Wallace in denying that the scriptures teach a doctrine of preservation as well as a corollary between preservation and inspiration.
 - “Both Wallace and Glenny put forth two major arguments against preservation. First, preservation is not a necessary corollary of inspiration; that is, while inspiration is a true doctrine, there is nothing in the doctrine itself that demands that what God inspired he was bound to preserve. Second, the biblical texts that are used to support a doctrine of preservation have been misinterpreted and, in fact, do not teach such a doctrine.” (Combs, 8)
- So, we have seen Drs. Wallace and Glenny deny the doctrine of preservation on two grounds: 1) while inspiration is true it does not demand preservation and 2) the Biblical texts used to assert preservation have been misinterpreted and do not assert said doctrine (see Lessons 31-38).

Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary

- In 1992, Dr. Daniel B. Wallace authored an essay in the *Grace Theological Journal* called “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism.” In a section titled “The Critique,” Wallace offers his critique of preservationists such as Jasper James Ray, David Otis Fuller, John William Burgon, Wilbur Pickering, Edward F. Hills, and Theodore Letis.
- Wallace’s critique of the doctrine of preservation as enunciated by these men is made along the following three lines of argumentation: 1) a question-begging approach, 2) faulty assumptions, and 3) a non-biblical doctrinal basis. The third point coincides with what we have seen so far in Lessons 31 through 38, that no Biblical text supports the doctrine of preservation, according to Wallace.
- Wallace deals with the question of the corollary between inspiration and preservation under point two, “faulty assumptions.” After quoting the passage above from Edward F. Hills (see page 3), Wallace states the following:
 - “In other words, preservation proceeds from and is a necessary consequence of inspiration. Or, in the words of Jasper James Ray, “the writing of the Word of God by

inspiration is no greater miracle than the miracle of preservation. . .” (Wallace in *GTJ*, 31)

- Wallace then quotes Bart Ehrman to buttress his point. It is important to note that Dr. Glenny, writing in 1997, quotes the same passage from Ehrman as well as providing virtually identical argumentation to what Wallace presented in 1992. Parties doubting this fact are encouraged to compare Wallace’s essay from 1992 (pages 31-33) with Glenny’s piece from 1997 (see pages 77-78). The Ehrman quote reads as follows:
 - “Any claim that God preserved the New Testament text intact, giving His church actual, not theoretical, possession of it, must mean one of three things—either 1) God preserved it in all the extant manuscripts so that none of them contain any textual corruptions, or 2) He preserved it in groups of manuscripts, none of which contain any corruptions, or 3) He preserved it in a solitary manuscript which alone contains no corruptions.” (quoted by Wallace in *GTJ*, 32)
- As follow-up to Ehrman, Wallace writes (also see Glenny page 77):
 - “The problem with these first and second possibilities is that neither one of them is true: no two NT manuscripts agree completely—in fact, there are between six and ten variations per chapter for the closest two manuscripts.

Is it possible that the NT text was preserved intact in a single manuscript? No one argues this particular point, because it is easily demonstrable that every manuscript has scribal errors in it.” (Wallace in *GTJ*, 32)
- Notice once again what the standard is for this discussion. It is none other than “exact sameness.” For Wallace, the lack of “exact sameness” or identical wording across the manuscript witnesses is enough to negate preservation as the corollary of inspiration. Moreover, Wallace is pleased to allow *TR* advocates to take on “exact sameness” as their standard for preservation because he can then point out historically that identical wording does not exist. In this sense pro-*TR* preservations have played into the hands of their critics by overstating the case with respect to preservation.
- Two years later, in June of 1994, Wallace authored an even more aggressive diatribe against *TR* preservations in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. In an article titled “The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique” Wallace addresses the “doctrinal underpinning of the traditional-text theory,” by denouncing those who believe in the “dogma of preservation” as a starting point for discussing the matter.
 - “First, and most importantly, I must speak to the theological a priori. MT advocates need the dogma of preservation at all points where the evidence will not easily yield to their interpretation.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 201)

- Wallace quotes Theodore P. Leits' essay, "In Reply to D.A. Carson's "The King James Version Debate"" to illustrate his point.
 - "When reviewing the defense of the Majority Text, one dominating consideration emerges: a prior commitment to what the Bible has to say concerning itself with regard to inspiration and preservation. For the Majority Text apologists, this is an all-consuming consideration to which everything else must be subordinated. Their arguments, therefore, are not directed to some neutral bar of determination (as if such a thing existed) but are consciously directed to those who also have the same priority." (Leits, 192)
- After quoting Leits, Wallace states the following regarding the corollary between inspiration and preservation.
 - "To them, verbal inspiration necessitates preservation. Pickering tells us that "the doctrine of Divine Preservation of the New Testament depends upon the interpretation of the evidence which recognizes the Traditional Text to be the continuation of the autographa.

In order to make preservation support the MT it must infer accessibility: "God has preserved the text of the New Testament in a very pure form and it has been readily available to His followers in every age throughout 1900 years." Hence the MT position is based on a corollary (accessibility) of a corollary (preservation) of a particular dogmatic stance (verbal inspiration)." (Wallace in *JETS*, 201)

Preservation: Historical not Theological

- Wallace denies the scriptures a doctrine of preservation while at the same time arguing that preservation is a historical reality, not a theological necessary. In other words, Wallace denies that preservation is the corollary of inspiration because the relevant verses do not teach preservation. Yet, at the same time, in the face of agnostic objections against the word of God leveled by Bart Ehrman, Wallace argues for the historical reality of preservation.
- While Wallace denies a doctrine of preservation, he cannot deny the historical reality of the surviving manuscript copies. For Wallace, these copies exist not because of God's promise of preservation but are the product of a mere circumstantial historical reality. In other words, the historical reality is not the result of God's fundamental promise of preservation but circumstantial happenings in the same manner that would affect any other ancient documents.
- Wallace's view maintains that any book of antiquity for which we still possess manuscript copies is preserved because God exercises sovereign control over the universe. This standard would apply equally to secular writings such as Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War* or the Bible. On this view, any ancient document that is extant today owes its present existence to God's preservation. Moreover, on this view there is no difference between the Bible and Caesar's

Commentaries. God is under no obligation to preserve the one over the other. Rather, it just so happens that copies have survived.

- In his book *Myths about the Modern Bible Versions* David W. Cloud states the following about “circumstantial preservation.”
 - “Another popular myth surrounding the modern Bible versions is the idea that while God inspired the Scriptures infallibly, He has preserved the Scriptures only in a more general sense. To put this another way, while inspiration was miraculous, preservation has been merely circumstantial. . . The doctrine of preservation lies at the very heart of the Bible text debate. The Bible cannot be treated as any other book. It is God’s Word. God gave it and God has promised to preserve it. The underlying thesis, though, of modern textual criticism is that the Bible became corrupted through the centuries and it is the task of textual criticism to restore it in original purity. . . The bottom line is that the same Bible that claims to be infallibly inspired also claims to be infallibly preserved. My faith in this is not based on common sense (though it is sensible to believe that if God gave a perfect Bible He would preserve that very Bible). My faith in this matter is based on the promises of a God that cannot lie.” (Cloud, 98-102)

Conclusion

- In summation, Wallace rejects any corollary between inspiration and preservation because he does not believe the scriptures teach their own preservation. That being said, he argues rationally that preservation must be a historical reality or else we would not have any extant copies. The reason Wallace’s position on preservation is so confusing to some is because Wallace is trying to have his cake and eat it to. God did not promise to preserve his word, yet He did, circumstantially, in a historical sense.

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Sunday, January 1, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 42 Preservation the Corollary of Inspiration, Part 2

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 41 we began our consideration of the *extent* or *nature* of preservation by looking at whether preservation is the corollary of inspiration. We accomplished this through a consideration of the following points:
 - What is a Corollary?
 - Preservation is the Corollary of Inspiration
 - Problems Created by a Denial of a Corollary
- Today we want to conclude our discussion of the corollary by considering the following points:
 - Harry A. Sturz: Preservation but No Corollary
 - The Solution: Dropping the Standard of “Verbatim Identity”
- From here we will move on into a consideration of passages that prove that the standard of “exact sameness” for preservation was overreaching.

Harry A. Sturz: Preservation but No Corollary

- Harry A. Sturz is the author of the 1984 work *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism*. Sturz was a Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Theology Department at Biola University for many years.
- In footnote number 21 of his essay “The Preservation of Scripture”, Dr. William W. Combs informs his readers that Harry Sturz was the former teacher of Daniel B. Wallace. Combs reports that while Sturz denies any corollary between inspiration and preservation, he does argue contrary to Wallace that preservation is promised in scripture. (Combs, 7)
- First, we need to establish that Professor Sturz maintains a belief in the promise of preservation. Regarding the matter he states:
 - “Preservation of the Word of God is promised in Scripture . . . It may very well be that the Scriptures used to attest the promise to preserve God’s Word do involve preservation. . . But while God promised that his Word would be preserved, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will not pass away . . . (Matt. 24:35)” (Sturz, 38)

- Despite maintaining a belief in the promise of preservation (doctrine of preservation), Sturz cautions his readers regarding preservation as the necessary corollary of inspiration. Regarding this matter, he states,
 - “The chief weakness in the Burgon-Hills theory seems to be the foundation upon which the entire structure is built. To present preservation as the necessary corollary of inspiration, then to imply that preservation of the Scripture must be as faithful and precise as the inspiration of the Scripture, appears to be taking a position that is both unscriptural and impossible to demonstrate. Hills insists that;

. . . if the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scriptures is a true doctrine, the doctrine of providential preservation of these Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control. . . God must have done this. . .

It should be pointed out that providential preservation is not a necessary consequence of inspiration. Preservation of the Word of God is promised in Scripture, and inspiration and preservation are related doctrines, but they are distinct from each other, and there is danger in making one the necessary corollary of the other. . . It may very well be that the Scriptures used to attest the promise to preserve God’s Word do involve preservation. The point is that this is a different matter than insisting that God, because He inspired the Scriptures, is ipso facto obligated to preserve them; or further, that He is obligated to preserve them in a particular way.” (Sturz, 38-39)

- It is because of the lack of “exact sameness” or “verbatim identity” in the manuscript copies that Sturz advises caution in confounding preservation with inspiration.
 - “One danger of such a position is that the faith of some has been weakened when they have become aware of variant readings in the manuscripts precisely because they have confounded preservation with inspiration. Though both are biblical doctrines, the Scripture does not link them inexorably.” (Sturz, 38)
- This is a point I have been driving at now for weeks. When one believes in the promise of preservation it is natural to assume that preservation occurred with the same precision as inspiration. Given enough time, one will eventually run into the facts that there are variant readings even in the manuscript tradition supporting the KJB. When one encounters these facts, they are faced with some hard choices: 1) ignore them and pretend like variant readings do not exist and persist in their position unaltered; 2) leave a pro-TR/King James stance in favor of the prevailing orthodoxy; or 3) let the Scriptures teach them how to think about textual variants and amend their pro-TR/King James stance accordingly.
- Even though Sturz does not use my terminology (“exact sameness” or “verbatim identity”), he is arguing caution with respect to the corollary because he knows that even within the Byzantine

text-type (the preferred text of TR/King James advocates) there is not “verbatim identity” of wording.

- “If providential preservation of the Scriptures is tied to inspiration, is placed on a level with inspiration, and is understood to mean that not one jot or tittle shall pass out of the Byzantine text-type, the theory is on shaky ground due to the fact that even the Byzantine text with its high degree of homogeneity is composite (i.e., there are strands within its homogeneity). Through the research of von Soden at least five principal strands have been identified, some of them with an array of subordinates, within the Byzantine text-type. Even if it were agreed for the sake of argument that the Byzantine text were the best text—the text of God’s special providential care—one who holds an orthodox view of inspiration would still be unable to say that the preserved Byzantine text paralleled exactly and in every detail the verbally inspired original. . . It is a mistake to put preservation on the same level of precision of operation as inspiration. . .” (Sturz, 39)
- Sturz goes on to make some additional arguments that we will cover in future lessons. The point for now is this, Sturz believes in the promise of preservation but does not view it as the corollary of inspiration because of the lack of “exact sameness” in the manuscript copies. Despite his honesty on this matter he offers no way of overcoming the problem. He only points out that the defense of the TR/King James offered by Edward F. Hills possesses certain inaccuracies that need to be overcome.

The Solution: Dropping the Standard of “Verbatim Identity”

Please note that from now on I will be using the terms “exact sameness” and “verbatim identity” interchangeably.

- After studying the matter, I have come to believe that dropping the standard of “verbatim identity” for preservation is the solution to the entire problem on both ends of the spectrum.
- I believe in the doctrine of preservation for the same reason I believe in inspiration; it is the Bible’s claim for itself (See Lesson 31-38). My position begins with faith in the promise of God and confidence that He did what He said He would do.
- Given the fact that conservatives believe in plenary verbal inspiration or the inspiration of every word, it is reasonable to assume and perhaps expect that preservation would also be both verbal and plenary. It is, therefore, easy to see why many preservationists have demanded identical wording as their standard for preservation. They view this conclusion as following logically from the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration.
- However, when one looks at the historical data they encounter the FACT that no two Greek manuscripts (even Byzantine); editions of the TR, or printings of the KJB, are exactly the same. This is a source of concern for many given their prior belief in and demand for “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation. Recall the following comment from Sturz above:

- “One danger of such a position is that the faith of some has been weakened when they have become aware of variant readings in the manuscripts precisely because they have confounded preservation with inspiration.” (Sturz, 38)
- Running headfirst into the FACTS, one is forced to make a decision. Are they going to turn away from the doctrine of preservation in favor of a rationalistic/naturalistic explanation of the facts or look to the scriptures to inform their understanding of the *nature* of preservation? Please recall the following statements from [Lesson 5 Overcoming the Problem of Exact Sameness](#).
 - “The “Originals Only” and “King James Inspired” positions are seeking to address the problem of “Exact Sameness.” It is a known fact that there are textual variations in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts supporting the English Bible. One side seeks to deal with the problem by appealing to the nonexistent “Originals” while the other side sees the KJB as a divine act on par with the inspiration of the originals in the first place.

The “Originals Only” position (see [Lesson 4](#)), largely ignores the doctrine of preservation. Meanwhile, many King James defenders want to argue that preservation assures the “exact sameness” of every word as originally written under inspiration. Unfortunately, this type of “exact sameness” or “verbatim” wording understanding of preservation cannot be sustained by a consideration of the historical and textual facts. Even among the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type and utilized by both the Majority Text and the *TR* positions, there is not “exact sameness” or “verbatim” wording across all the manuscripts witnesses.

The manuscripts in the Byzantine Text-Type, while not possessing “exact sameness” or “verbatim” wording across the board, demonstrate an “agreeance” as to doctrinal content of how passages should read.” (Amended from Lesson 5.)

- These FACTS do not overthrow my belief in God’s promise to preserve His word. These facts do not lead me to deny/doubt the clear promise of God.
- Rather, I look back to the scriptures to inform my thinking on the topic. When I do, I realize that my prior insistence upon the standard of “verbatim identity” was excessive and an overstating of the case for preservation to begin with. A careful study of the KJB will confirm this conclusion for anyone who is skeptical of its veracity.
- I can adopt this modified position on preservation based upon faith in God’s written word. After studying the issue, I have come to believe that the challenge of “verbatim identity” is the central problem in the textual/Bible version debate.
- Most King James advocates maintain that it is perfect in every detail. If that is truly the case, they need to let the KJB inform their thinking on the issues of textual variations. Even within the KJB the New Testament does not quote the Old with exact identity.
- Please consider the following table comparing Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:18-19 as a case in point. In Luke 4 Jesus is in the synagogue in Nazareth where He stands up to read and is handed a copy of the book of Isaiah. In other words, Christ is not just making a free quotation of the Old Testament, rather he is reading from a manuscript copy of the book of Isaiah. Jesus then

proceeds to read Isaiah 61 out of the manuscript copy that was handed to him. A side by side comparison reveals that even within the KJB there is not exact identity in wording between the two passages.

Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
<p>“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me;</p> <p>because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;</p> <p>he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to proclaim liberty to the captives,</p> <p>and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;</p> <p>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,</p>	<p>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,</p> <p>because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;</p> <p>he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to preach deliverance to the captives,</p> <p>(and recovering of sight to the blind),</p> <p>to set at liberty them that are bruised,</p> <p>To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.</p>

- These passages from within the KJB do not exhibit “exact sameness” or “verbatim identically” yet the Lord Jesus Christ called the copy He was reading from in Nazareth “scripture.” What this illustrates is that different words can have the same meaning. The words we possess convey the exact same doctrinal content expressed in the originals without necessitating we possess the exact same words. If the Lord Jesus Christ could call what he read in Luke 4 “scripture” yet it does not match Isaiah 61 exactly in my KJB, that tells me that demanding more from the doctrine of preservation than Christ did is not wise. We need to be careful not to demand more from our doctrine than the Bible claims for itself.
- The preceding comparison between Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 highlights the fact that there is a difference between 1) a different way of saying the same thing and 2) a substantive difference in meaning. At the end of the day, the reason King James advocates reject modern versions and their underlying texts is because their wording has been changed so much so as to substantively alter the doctrinal content of the Bible (See examples provided in [Lesson 10](#)). Some, in their zeal, have overstated the case and adopted a standard for preservation that cannot be sustained in light of the historical/textual FACTS.
- Psalms 12:6-7—what the doctrine of preservation assures is exactly what verse 6 states, namely the preservation of a **Pure Text i.e., a text that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE.** In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “fundamental character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “exact sameness.”

- Once one has adjusted their view of preservation to accord with the textual FACTS, by dropping “verbatim identity” as their standard for preservation; there is nothing wrong with viewing the doctrine as a corollary of inspiration. As we saw last week in Lesson 41, an attempt to deny any corollary creates just as many problems as overstating the case.
- In the next Lesson we will consider further examples of why “verbatim identity” is demanding too much for the doctrine of preservation.

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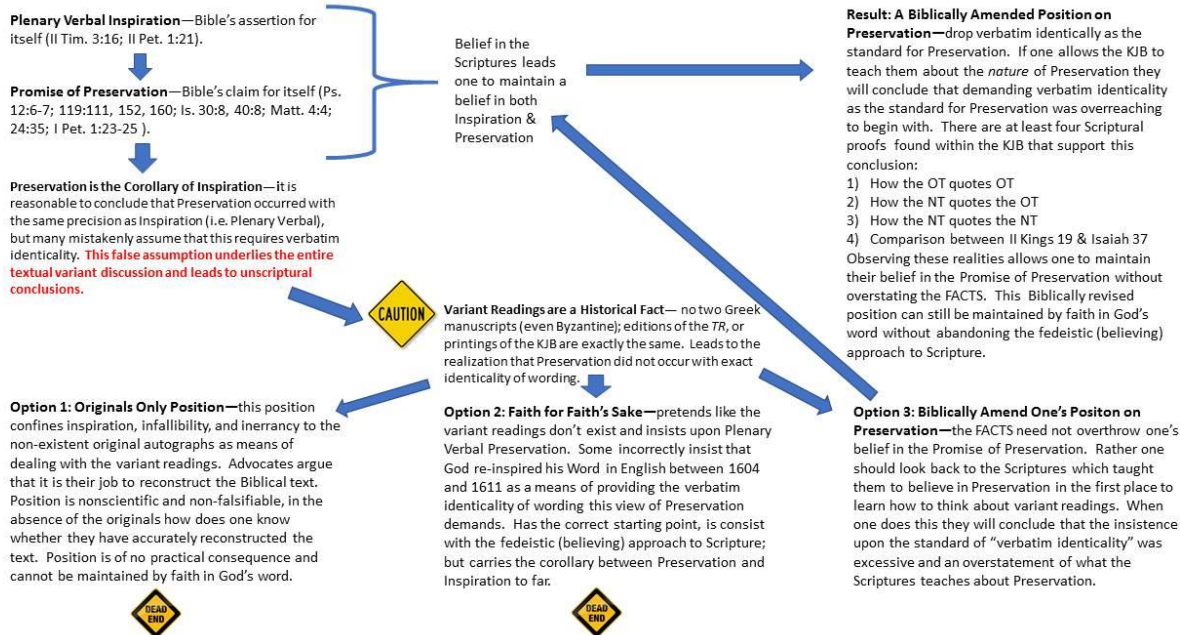
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Appendix A

Chart Outlining the Proper View of the Corollary

Scriptural Model for Dealing with Textual Variants

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- To view a larger version of this chart [click here](#).

Appendix B

Examples of Altered Doctrinal Content between the KJB and Modern Versions

Note: this appendix was created using excerpts from [Lesson 10](#).

Substantive Differences Affecting the Accuracy of the Text

- There is no doubt in my mind that there are substantive differences in meaning that affect the accuracy of the text between the *TR* and the Critical Text and their representative translations into English. Please consider the following examples. For the sake of clarity and consistency we will compare the King James with other literal translations namely, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and the English Standard Version (ESV).

Mark 1:2-3

KJB	NASB	ESV
2) As it is written in the prophets , Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3) The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet : "BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; 3) THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"	2) As it is written in Isaiah the prophet , "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3) the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

- Mark 1:2-3 contains quotations from Malachi 3:1 (Mark 1:2) and Isaiah 40:3 (Mark 1:3) as the KJB accurately reports with the use of “prophets” plural. Meanwhile the modern versions quoted above both read “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet” singular. This is a flat out mistake in the NASB and ESV; one can read Isaiah from now till the rapture and not find the contents of Mark 1:2 in the book of Isaiah.
- This is not a TRANSLATION issue. It is a TEXTUAL issue. The issue here is not how to properly translate individual Greek words into English. The reason the English texts differ is because their underlying Greek texts differ. This is an example of a substantive difference in meaning. They cannot both be correct.
- This is a clear-cut case where modern versions and their underlying Greek text are wrong. They present information that is FALSE. The Old Testament quotation found in Mark 1:2 cannot be found in the book of Isaiah.

Matthew 5:22

KJB	NASB	ESV
But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.	"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty <i>enough to go</i> into the fiery hell.	But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

- The phrase “without a cause” is missing from both the NASB and ESV. The reason the phrase is missing from both modern versions is because the underlying Greek text from which they are translated does not contain the phrase.
- The omission of the phrase “without a cause” seems to be a minor oversight in Matthew 5 but, when cross referenced with Mark 3:5, a theological problem is encountered. In Mark 3:5 Jesus gets angry due to the hardness of the heart exhibited by those in the synagogue. Does Jesus have cause to be angry? Yes. The omission of the phrase, “without a cause” in the Critical Text and its corresponding modern translations in Matthew 5 creates a doctrinal problem in Mark 3 when Jesus gets angry. Practically, the omission of the phrase “without a cause” results in Jesus condemning Himself out of His own mouth.

Luke 2:33

KJB	NASB	ESV
And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him.	And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.	And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

- Once again why do these versions read differently in English? Because their underlying Greek texts are not the same. The *TR* and its subsequent translation into English via the KJB maintain the doctrinal integrity of the virgin birth. Joseph was not the father of Jesus as the modern translations of the Critical Text imply.

Colossians 2:18

KJB	NASB	ESV
Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen , vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,	Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on <i>visions</i> he has seen , inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,	Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

- Here we have a situation where the *TR* and the Critical Text are directly contradictory. This is not just a situation where one text leaves something out that the other one includes. One text, the Critical Text, says that you **have seen** the angels and visions while the other one (the *TR*) says that you **have not**. The reason they contradict in English is because they contradict in Greek.
- Here the principles of *Noncontradiction* and *Excluded Middle* absolutely apply because the two readings are directly contradictory and teach opposites. One reading says you have seen a thing while the other one says that you have not.
- Both of these readings cannot be correct because they possess substantive differences in meaning. One of them has to be right and one of them has to be wrong or they are both wrong. We cannot even entertain the notion that they are both wrong on account of the doctrine of preservation.
- This passage is dealing with the doctrine of *Angelology* during the dispensation of grace. How many believers in our day claim to have guardian angels, seen angels, or heard messages from angels or received visions and revelations based upon their personal experience? Colossians 2:18 is the clearest verse in the Pauline epistles telling you that anyone making such claims does not know what they are talking about and is not to be trusted. More importantly, anyone into such funny business is not holding Christ as the head in the next verse (Colossians 2:19).
- Furthermore, the readings found in the NASB and ESV for Colossians 2:18, create an internal contradiction within the book of Colossians. Colossians 1:16 teaches that the principalities and powers in heavenly places and those beings occupying them are “invisible” i.e., you cannot see them. Now, one chapter later in chapter 2, modern versions have people seeing things that chapter 1 said were invisible.
- I fail to see how this difference does not affect doctrine as it relates to the body of Christ. I have dealt with many Pentecostals who have claimed to have had angelic visitations and have seen into the spirit world based upon the authority of Colossians 2:18 in their modern version.

John 1:18

KJB	NASB
No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son , which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared <i>him</i> .	No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained <i>Him</i> .

- Is Jesus Christ the “only begotten Son” or the “only begotten God” as the NASB states? The wording of the NASB asserts that Jesus Christ is a lesser God created by God Almighty and is not coequal with the Father. Theologically this is very close to what the Jehovah Witnesses believe about Christ i.e., that he was not co-equal with God the Father but is a lesser created being. Once again it seems to me that this reading affects doctrine.

Basic Factual Irregularities

- The examples cited above do not even take into account the scores of omitted verses in the Critical Text or the fundamental lack of agreeance amongst Critical Text translations on even basic textual or historical details. As we studied in Lesson 3, this is not simply a King James versus modern versions problem. Even among modern versions, which subscribe to the same

theories of textual criticism, there are substantive differences in meaning and lack of agreement about even basic facts. See the following examples:

II Samuel 15:7

KJB	NASB	ESV
And it came to pass after forty years , that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.	Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.	And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

Ecclesiastes 8:10

KJB	NASB	ESV
And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this <i>is</i> also vanity.	So then, I have seen the wicked buried, those who used to go in and out from the holy place, and they are soon forgotten in the city where they did thus. This too is futility.	Then I saw the wicked buried. They used to go in and out of the holy place and were praised in the city where they had done such things. This also is vanity.

Luke 10:1

KJB	NASB	ESV
After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.	Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others , and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.	After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.

Matthew 12:47

KJB	NASB	ESV
Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.	Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."	Omitted

Sunday, January 8, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 43 Passages Proving Plenary Preservation is Presumptuous

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 42 we concluded that dropping the standard of “verbatim identity” was the solution for solving the corollary problem.
- To help illustrate this point we compared Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 and noted that Luke’s account of what Christ read in the synagogue in Nazareth does not match exactly with the passage He is reading from in Isaiah 61, even in a KJB.
- I would like to use our time this morning to offer further proof from scripture that demanding “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation is excessive and out of step with how the Bible itself would teach you to think about the matter.
- Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word “verbatim” as follows:
 - VERBA'TIM adv. [L.] Word for word; in the same words; as, to tell a story verbatim as another has related it.
- The goal of this lesson is to show that the testimony of the scriptures does not require verbatim phraseology but simply equivalent meaning. It is possible to say the exact same thing using different words.
 - “At 3:30, I drove to the store.”
 - “I drove to the store at half past three.”
- Consider the following example from II Timothy 2:15.
 - Geneva—“. . . dividing the word of truth aright.”
 - King James—“rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- In both of these examples, the order of words and the words themselves are different but the substance is equivalent. This highlights a point that I have been making since Lesson 5, there is a difference between 1) a different way of saying the same things and 2) a substantive difference in meaning.

- There are four proofs that scripture approves of substantive equivalence and does not require verbatim identity:
- The fact that New Testament quotes of the Old Testament do not match verbatim.
- The fact that Old Testament quotations of the Old Testament do not match verbatim.
- The fact that New Testament quotations of the New Testament do not match verbatim.
- II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 do not match verbatim.

New Testament Quotes of the Old Testament

- In this category I would like to consider the following two categories of passages:
 - “Scripture” Passages
 - “It is written” Passages

“Scripture” Passages

- This category explores instances where a New Testament figure is reading from a manuscript copy of the Old Testament. Yet the manuscript copies that are read from in the New Testament do not match exactly with the Old Testament texts that are being read in the KJB.

Isaiah 61:1-2 & Luke 4:18-19

Isaiah 61:1-2	Luke 4:18-19
<p>The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me;</p> <p>because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;</p> <p>he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to proclaim liberty to the captives,</p> <p>and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;</p> <p>To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,</p>	<p>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,</p> <p>because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;</p> <p>he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,</p> <p>to preach deliverance to the captives,</p> <p>(and recovering of sight to the blind),</p> <p>to set at liberty them that are bruised,</p> <p>To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.</p>

- We have already seen this example in Lessons 5 and 42. The manuscript copy that Christ is reading from in Luke 4 is not an exact match with the King James text of Isaiah 61, the passage

the Lord is reading from. Yet, the Lord Jesus Christ calls the manuscript copy He is reading from scripture. The passages are substantively equivalent despite not possessing verbatim wording.

Isaiah 53:7-8 & Acts 8:32-33

Isaiah 53:7-8	Acts 8:32-33
<p>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth:</p> <p>he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter,</p> <p>and as a <u>sheep</u> before <u>her</u> shearers is dumb,</p> <p>so he openeth not his mouth.</p> <p>He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?</p> <p>For he was cut off out of the land of the living:</p> <p>for the transgression of my people was he stricken.</p>	<p>He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;</p> <p>and like a <u>lamb</u> dumb before <u>his</u> shearer,</p> <p>so opened he not his mouth:</p> <p>In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation?</p> <p>for his life is taken from the earth.</p>

- Acts 8:26-30—the Ethiopian Eunuch is on his way home to Ethiopia from Jerusalem in his chariot reading a manuscript copy of the book of Isaiah. When Philip is prompted by the angel of Lord to join himself unto the Eunuch’s chariot, Philip finds him reading the passage above from Isaiah 53.
- When one compares the text of Acts 8:32-33 with Isaiah 53:7-8 the wording is far from identical yet the doctrinal substance is unaltered despite not possessing verbatim wording.
- Acts 8:32, 35—twice in this passage the Holy Spirit calls the text of verses 32 and 33 scripture despite the lack of verbatim wording with Isaiah 53:7-8 in the KJB. Once again, this proves that demanding exact sameness in wording as the standard for preservation is overreaching. God the Holy Spirit does not even demand that in his word.

“It is written” Passages

- In Lessons 36 and 37 we devoted two lessons to a study of how the phrase “it is written” impacts the doctrine/promise of preservation. In Lesson 37 we considered the impact of the Perfect Tense and Passive Voice upon the doctrine of preservation.

- “The perfect tense, which He utilized, expresses a completed action with a resulting state of being. The result of the action continues from the past through the present and into the future.” (Strouse in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 35)
- “Combining the perfect tense with the passive voice shows that the action of the verb was completed in the past by an agent other than the subject of the verb with the results of the action continuing into the present. The perfect tense, and the perfect passive in particular, is often used in Scripture to teach doctrine and illustrate preservation of truth.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 76)
- After explaining the meaning and significance of both the perfect tense and passive voice and applying it to non-preservation related texts by way of explanation and illustration, Sutton explains the significance with respect to the doctrine of preservation. Every occurrence of “it is written” in the New Testament corresponds with a perfect passive verb in Greek, according to Sutton:
 - “Sixty-three times in the NT the exact phrase “it is written” occurs. The perfect passive verb *gegraptai* underlies fifty-nine of these references, while the other four occasions represent the perfect passive participle *gegramenon*.” (Sutton in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 78)
- In Lesson 36 we noted places where the phrase “it is written” occurred yet there was not verbatim identity in how the New Testament quoted the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 8:3 & Matthew 4:4

Deuteronomy 8:3	Matthew 4:4
<p>... that he might make thee know that</p> <p>man doth not live by bread only,</p> <p>but by every <i>word</i> that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.</p>	<p>But he answered and said, It is written,</p> <p>Man shall not live by bread alone,</p> <p>but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.</p>

- Is Matthew 4:4 in your KJB an exact word for word quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3? No! Does that mean one of these is in error? No! They are both teaching the exact same doctrinal content without using the exact same words.

Matthew 4:4 & Luke 4:4

Matthew 4:4	Luke 4:4
<p>But he answered and said, It is written,</p> <p>Man shall not live by bread alone,</p> <p>but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.</p>	<p>And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written,</p> <p>That man shall not live by bread alone,</p> <p>but by every word of God.</p>

- So not only does Matthew's quotation of Deuteronomy 8:3 not match exactly but the citations of Deuteronomy by both Matthew and Luke, in the same context, do not match each other exactly. Yet no one views these verses as differing substantively in terms of their doctrinal content.
- The same phenomena is observable for the other "it is written" quotations of the Lord Jesus Christ during his temptation.

Deuteronomy 6:16 & Matthew 4:7

Deuteronomy 6:16	Matthew 4:7
Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, . . .	Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Deuteronomy 6:13 & Mathew 4:10

Deuteronomy 6:13	Matthew 4:10
Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.	Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written , Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

- There are literally scores of these types of examples that we could cite. Please consider these few in addition to what we saw in Lesson 36.

Micah 5:2 & Matthew 2:5-6

Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:5-6
But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah , <i>though</i> thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth <u>unto me</u> <i>that is to be</i> ruler in Israel; whose goings forth <i>have been</i> from of old, from everlasting. NIV—" . . . from ancient times." ESV—" . . . from ancient days."	And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, <i>in the land of Juda</i> , art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor , that shall rule my people Israel.

Zechariah 13:7 & Matthew 26:13

Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:13
Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man <i>that is</i> my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.	Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written , I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad .

Psalms 69:25 & Acts 1:20

Psalms 69:25	Acts 1:20
Let their habitation be desolate; <i>and let none dwell in their tents</i> .	For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take .

Isaiah 59:20 & Romans 11:26

Isaiah 59:20	Romans 11:26
And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob , saith the LORD.	And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written , There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer , and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob :

Isaiah 29:14 & I Corinthians 1:19

Isaiah 29:14	I Corinthians 1:19
Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, <i>even</i> a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise <i>men</i> shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent <i>men</i> shall be hid .	For it is written , I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent .

- Many more examples like these could be presented for consideration. In fact, I challenge everyone to look at each occurrence of the phrase “it is written” in the New Testament and compare the associated quotation with its Old Testament counterpart. I have not been able to find one that is completely verbatim, the closest one I could locate is II Corinthians 8:15’s quotation of Exodus 16:18.
- So, in the above examples, which verse is right—the NT or the OT passage? The answer is that they are both right. From this we can make the following observations:

- The NT quotations of the OT are not verbatim and sometimes considerably different.
- The NT quotations specifically say, “it is written,” when those exact words are not in fact written.
- This proves that scripture considers the NT phrasing to be the equivalent of the OT verse even though the words are not verbatim.
- It is thus possible for different phrasings to be equivalent and both be the word of God even though they are not verbatim.

Old Testament Quotes of the Old Testament & New Testament Quotes of the New Testament

- In case one is tempted to argue that the examples cited in this section are illegitimate because the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, they need to mark well that the same phenomena occur within each Testament. The Old Testament does not quote the Old Testament with “verbatim identity.” Likewise, for the New Testament.

Deuteronomy 24:16 & II Chronicles 25:4

Deuteronomy 24:16	II Chronicles 25:4
The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.	But he slew not their children, but <i>did as it is written</i> in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying , The fathers shall not die for the children , neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.

I Timothy 5:18 & Luke 10:7

Luke 10:7	I Timothy 5:18
And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: For the labourer is worthy of his hire . Go not from house to house.	For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer <i>is</i> worthy of his reward .

- I Timothy 5:18 clearly states “the scripture saith” yet when it quotes Luke 10:7 it does not do so with “verbatim identity.”
- In this way the word of God instructs us that demanding “exact sameness” or “verbatim identity” in wording as the standard for preservation was an excessive and unbiblical assumption. This false assumption has caused many to ere to one of the following extremes:

- **Option 1: Originals Only Position**—this position confines inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy to the non-existent original autographs as means of dealing with the variant readings. Advocates argue that it is their job to reconstruct the Biblical text. This position is nonscientific and non-falsifiable. In the absence of the originals how does one know whether they have accurately reconstructed the text. This position is of no practical consequence and cannot be maintained by faith in God’s word.
- **Option 2: Faith for Faith’s Sake**—pretends like the variant readings do not exist and insist upon Plenary Verbal Preservation. Some incorrectly insist that God re-inspired His Word in English between 1604 and 1611 as a means of providing the verbatim identity of wording that this view of Preservation demands. This view has the correct starting point, is consistent with the fideistic (believing) approach to Scripture; but carries the corollary between Preservation and Inspiration too far.
 - [Click here](#) to view our chart of A Scriptural Model for Dealing with Textual Variants

II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37

- II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 represent a different case than we observed in the previous point. In this case both passages are found in the Old Testament and were originally written in Hebrew. Moreover, they portray the exact same event. Yet, they are not identical.
- These chapters are not like the gospels where they are different accounts that provide different perspectives and contain different information. These are nearly identical in content but have different wording. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are different accounts that are written for different purposes. Therefore, when they record the same events they include different details.
 - Differ in length
 - Some have a genealogy, some do not
 - Those that do have a genealogy do not match
 - They record different events

II Kings 19	Isaiah 37
1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard <i>it</i> , that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.	1) And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard <i>it</i> , that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.
2) And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah	2) And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah

the prophet the son of Amoz.	the prophet the son of Amoz.
3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day <i>is</i> a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and <i>there is</i> not strength to bring forth.	3) And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day <i>is</i> a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and <i>there is</i> not strength to bring forth.
4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up <i>thy</i> prayer for the remnant that are left.	4) It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up <i>thy</i> prayer for the remnant that is left.
5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.	5) So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.
6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.	6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.
7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.	7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.
8) So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.	8) So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.
9) And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold , he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,	9) And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it , he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,
10) Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.	10) Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.
11) Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?	11) Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?
12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; <i>as</i> Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which <i>were</i> in Thelasar ?	12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, <i>as</i> Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which <i>were</i> in Telassar ?
13) Where <i>is</i> the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?	13) Where <i>is</i> the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?
14) And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.	14) And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15) And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and	15) And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD,
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said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest <i>between</i> the cherubims, thou art the God, <i>even</i> thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.	saying,
	16) O LORD of hosts , God of Israel, that dwellest <i>between</i> the cherubims, thou <i>art</i> the God, <i>even</i> thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.
16) LORD, bow down thine ear , and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes , and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.	17) Incline thine ear, O LORD , and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD , and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.
17) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands ,	18) Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries ,
18) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they <i>were</i> no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.	19) And have cast their gods into the fire: for they <i>were</i> no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.
19) Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee , save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou <i>art</i> the LORD God , <i>even</i> thou only.	20) Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou <i>art</i> the LORD, <i>even</i> thou only.
20) Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard .	21) Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:
21) This <i>is</i> the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, <i>and</i> laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.	22) This <i>is</i> the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, <i>and</i> laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
22) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted <i>thy</i> voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? <i>even</i> against the Holy <i>One</i> of Israel.	23) Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted <i>thy</i> voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? <i>even</i> against the Holy <i>One</i> of Israel.
23) By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, <i>and</i> the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders , <i>and into</i> the forest of his Carmel.	24) By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, <i>and</i> the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border , <i>and</i> the forest of his Carmel.
24) I have digged and drunk strange waters , and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.	25) I have digged, and drunk water ; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.
25) Hast thou not heard long ago <i>how</i> I have done it, <i>and</i> of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities <i>into</i> ruinous heaps.	26) Hast thou not heard long ago, <i>how</i> I have done it; <i>and</i> of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities <i>into</i> ruinous heaps.
26) Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they	27) Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they

were <i>as</i> the grass of the field, and <i>as</i> the green herb, <i>as</i> the grass on the housetops, and <i>as corn</i> blasted before it be grown up.	were <i>as</i> the grass of the field, and <i>as</i> the green herb, <i>as</i> the grass on the housetops, and <i>as corn</i> blasted before it be grown up.
27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.	28 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.
28) Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.	29) Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.
29) And this <i>shall be</i> a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves , and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.	30) And this <i>shall be</i> a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat <i>this</i> year such as groweth of itself ; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.
30) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.	31) And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:
31) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.	32) For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.
32) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield , nor cast a bank against it.	33) Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields , nor cast a bank against it.
33) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.	34) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
34) For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.	35) For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
35) And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out , and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they <i>were</i> all dead corpses.	36) Then the angel of the LORD went forth , and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they <i>were</i> all dead corpses.
36) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.	37) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.
37) And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.	38) And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

- This comparison between II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 within the KJB yields the following baseline data (Not claiming these statistics are infallible. It is very possible that I miscounted something.):
 - 2 completely identical verses
 - 2 different prepositions
 - 4 different punctuations
 - 4 cases where singular and plural can both be correct
 - 9 different words and phraseologies
 - 12 different spellings
 - 15 different verse divisions
 - 35 different phrasings

Conclusion

- Based upon the textual FACTS observed in this lesson, it would be wrong to require “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation. This standard cannot even be sustained within the King James text. Consequently, it is not helpful or productive for King James advocates to adopt a standard for preservation that cannot even be sustained in the very Bible they are asserting is “perfect.”
- The example set forth in scripture is that God’s word can be expressed in multiple different phrasings that are equivalent. Requiring “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation is demanding more than the Bible claims for itself.
- I believe in “perfect preservation” if by perfect one means the existence of a pure text **that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “fundamental character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “verbatim identity.”**

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Sunday, January 15, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 44 Jot and Tittle Preservation, Matthew 5:17-18

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 42, I demonstrated using Scripture demanding verbatim identically as the standard for preservation was overreaching and not supported by the Biblical data. Based upon the textual FACTS observed in Lesson 42, we concluded that it would be wrong to require “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation. This standard cannot even be sustained within the King James text. Consequently, it is not helpful or productive for King James advocates to adopt a standard for preservation that cannot even be sustained in the very Bible they are asserting is “perfect.”
- In addition, Lesson 43 demonstrated that the testimony of the scriptures does not require verbatim phraseology but simply equivalent meaning. It is possible to say the exact same thing using different words.
 - “At 3:30, I drove to the store.”
 - “I drove to the store at half past three.”
- Consider the following example from II Timothy 2:15.
 - Geneva—“. . . dividing the word of truth aright.”
 - King James—“. . . rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- The following four proofs that scripture approves of substantive equivalence and does not require verbatim identity were offered in Lesson 43.
 - The fact that New Testament quotes of the Old Testament do not match verbatim.
 - The fact that Old Testament quotations of the Old Testament do not match verbatim.
 - The fact that New Testament quotations of the New Testament do not match verbatim.
 - II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 do not match verbatim.
- Our comparison between II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37 within the KJB produced the following baseline data (Not claiming these statistics are infallible. It is very possible that I miscounted something.):
 - 2 completely identical verses

- 2 different prepositions
- 4 different punctuations
- 4 cases where singular and plural can both be correct
- 9 different words and phraseologies
- 12 different spellings
- 15 different verse divisions
- 35 different phrasings
- The lack of identity in both phraseology and punctuation exhibited by this comparison calls into question how King James advocates have traditionally understood Christ's statement in Matthew 5:17-18. The goal of this lesson is to consider the meaning of Matthew 5:17-18 in light of the textual/historical FACTS.
- In order to accomplish this purpose, we will consider the following points:
 - Use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James Only Advocates
 - Use of Matthew 5:17-18 by those critical of the King James Only position

Use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James Only Advocates

- Many King James Only advocates have used Matthew 5:17-18 as a proof text for their belief that preservation occurred with exact identity. In the past, I have used these verses to make the argument for verbatim identity; so, I know whereof I speak.
- Gary C. Webb's chapter titled "Not One Jot or One Tittle Matthew 5:17-18" in *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* stands out as a case in point of this thinking.
- In the introduction, Webb argues that Matthew 5:17-18 establishes the doctrine of verbal plenary preservation or the preservation of "the precise wording of the text of Scripture." Webb states:
 - "The precise wording of the text of Scripture provides the authority of the inspired, inerrant Word of God. When one combines Jesus' promise that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" with His assertion that spiritual greatness belongs to those who keep and teach the "least commandments," His statements demand a doctrine of

verbal and plenary preservation of the text of Scripture.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 41)

- In a section titled “The Apologetic Assertion of Matthew 5:17-20” Webb identifies the “jot” and “tittle” as follows:
 - “Jesus continued His defense with a solemn statement of the plenary infallibility of the law. He indicated the authority of the smallest portion of the teaching of the Old Testament by referring to the smallest portions of the Hebrew text itself. The “jot” refers to the smallest Hebrew consonant. Modern scholars normally define the “tittle” as only referring to a bend or point in the actual Hebrew letters themselves. Jesus asserted that no portion of the teaching of the Old Testament would pass out of existence, lose its authority, or be annulled until every bit of it had its fulfillment. Indeed, he declared that such an occurrence is an absolute impossibility.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 43)
- If Webb would have stopped here I would be inclined to agree with him. Jesus is saying that no detail of the law is going to go unfulfilled. That being said, Webb certainly does not stop there, he goes on to argue that Matthew 5:17-18 means that even the “jots” and “tittles” would be preserved with exact identicality to what was given under inspiration.
- “The Application of the Passage to the Textual Debate: The Demand for the Verbal Preservation of the Text of Scripture” comprises one of the major sections of Webb’s essay. In this section, Webb clearly equates “Verbal Preservation” with exact identicality of wording as the standard for preservation.
 - “Could the changing of one letter in the Hebrew or Greek text change a word and thereby affect the meaning of a command or doctrine? Certainly it could and usually does. What if a Christian, facing severe repercussions, struggles with the issue of complete honesty in a certain situation? The day of importance arrives, and he rises early to meet with his God. His soul agonizes as he opens his New American Standard Version of the Bible to the seventh chapter of John’s Gospel, the place assigned by his daily reading schedule. In that passage, he reads that Jesus lied to his brothers, saying that he would not go to the feast in verse 8, when in fact verse 10 says He did go up later. Suppose to read this about Jesus, he nevertheless believes he has his answer from God. A “proper” interpretation of the text tells him he can lie in some circumstances. That “proper” interpretation would also nullify the sinlessness of Christ and render Him incapable of accomplishing our redemption.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 45-46)
- In this example, Webb is referring to the fact that the NASV follows the Critical Text in John 7:8 in omitting the word “yet” as it reads in the TR and KJB.

John 7:8 (KJB)	John 7:8 (NASV)
Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.	"Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come."

- The problem in verse 8 resides in the fact that in verse 10 in both versions Jesus goes up to the feast.

John 7:10 (KJB)	John 7:10 (NASV)
But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.	But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.

- Notice carefully what is going on here. Webb has correctly identified that the NASV's reading in John 7:8 creates a problem with verse 10 by its dropping of the word "yet." That being said, why is the problem created? Because they are not identical in their wording or because they differ substantively? It is because they differ substantively i.e., the Critical Text's omission of the word "yet" creates a textual difficulty within John 7 for the NASB but, more than that, it asserts something that is *opposite* from the TR/KJB. In other words, both readings cannot be factually correct because they teach opposites. Therefore, Webb's example does not prove what he is arguing for, namely that every "jot" and "tittle" must be preserved with verbatim identically. Rather it proves that preservation excludes substantive differences in meaning.
- According to Webb, a reading must have exact precision in order to be considered the word of God. One wonders what Webb would say about the following pre-King James English translations of the *TR*. The Geneva Bible and the Bishops Bible both contain the word "yet" in John 7:8 but are not exactly identical in the totality of their wording. Yet, they do not differ from each other substantively. In other words, they are substantively equivalent without being exactly identical.

Geneva Bible	Bishops Bible	King James
Go ye vp vnto this feast: I wil not go vp yet vnto this feast: for my time is not yet fulfilled.	Go ye vp vnto this feast: I wyll not go vp yet vnto this feast, for my tyme is not yet full come.	Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.

- Webb clearly argues for the preservation of the "exact wording" as his standard for preservation based upon Matthew 5:17-18.
 - "But, as the Lord indicated, the authority and validity of the least command or any command in Scripture depends upon the exact wording of that command in the Scriptural text. . . Jesus immediately states man's obligation to obey and teach all the commands, even the least of them, which demands that we must have the very jots and tittles that express those commands." (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 47)
- Later in this section, Webb provides an example of doubling down on verbal preservation for faith's sake.
 - "Some scholars and textual critics mock this clear, unbiased, derived doctrine of verbal preservation, claiming that the "evidence" of copies containing errors refutes the Bible

doctrine (Wallace and Glenny would be a case in point.) . . . (Quotes Rom. 3:3-4) . . . The “evidence” claimed by evolutionists does not cause the believer to give up the Bible doctrine of creation. Why? Because he knows that the evolutionist’s humanistic presuppositions have caused him to view and judge the “evidence” wrongly. Likewise, the scholar who follows the humanistic precepts of modern textual criticism makes the same type of error, judging the evidence with rationalistic presuppositions rather than by those in Scripture.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 47)

- While I agree with Webb concerning the “rationalistic presuppositions” of modern textual criticism, his answer is simply to double down on faith for faith’s sake in his understanding of verbal preservation. In doing so, he is demanding verbatim identity of wording as his standard for preservation.
- On page 57 in footnote 59 Webb quotes from Samuel Schnaiter’s “Textual Criticism and the Modern English Version Controversy” in *Biblical Viewpoint* Vol. XVI, No. 1 from 1982. In this quote, Schnaiter states the following regarding Wilbur N. Pickering’s view of preservation.
 - “Pickering shows that he has fallen into the error of equating inspiration with preservation as described above. He also demonstrates that his view of the authority of God’s Word depends on the recovery of the original wording of the New Testament text. And if it is true that his concept of authority is dependent on the preservation of precise wordings, then it is scarcely conceivable that even such a scholar as he has arrived at his conclusions from the evidence as much as from his predisposition. Knowledge that Pickering’s concept of authority depends upon preservation of precise wordings brings into question his entire procedure.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 47)
- Just as modern textual criticism has been built upon a set of rationalistic presuppositions, Schnaiter is pointing out that the verbal plenary position has as well. No one arguing for “the preservation of the precise wordings” can point to which manuscript, TR edition, or edition of the KJB got everything exactly correct. Therefore, this position suffers from the “predisposition” or presupposition that preservation demands verbatim identity of wording. Ruckman knew this, but, instead of looking back to the Bible to inform his beliefs as to the *nature* of preservation, he argued that the King James translators were inspired in the same sense as the Biblical writers as a means of providing the identity of wording demanded by this position.
- Watch how Webb doubles down on his own presupposition in footnote 59 following the above quotation from Schnaiter. Webb states the following in response:
 - “How could a Christian who professes to believe in verbal inspiration make such a statement? Verbal inspiration guarantees “precise wordings,” which are the basis for every Christian doctrine. **If we do not have “precise wordings,” we do not have “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”** (Jude 3). For the Christians, the “predisposition” of a preserved text of Scripture which provides “precise wordings”

should underlie our conclusion on the textual debate just as it does our conclusion on every other issue of faith and practice.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 47)

- This is where Webb’s fedeistic (believing) approach needs to be Biblically adjusted by allowing the Bible to teach him how to think about variant readings. If Webb were honest, he would admit that he cannot sustain this standard within the printed history of the KJB—the very Bible he is arguing reproduced the “precise wordings” of the originals.
- In the “Conclusion” to his essay on Matthew 5:17-18 Dr. Webb writes:
 - “In defending Himself against the possible criticism that He came to “destroy” the teaching of the Old Testament, Jesus gave Christians an absolute assurance in Matthew 5:18-19 of the verbal and plenary preservation of the text of Scripture. His Words demand that Christians concerned about textual criticism return to a position of faith, a position that builds its textual method on the teaching of the Bible. Modern textual criticism does not do this but ignores or discounts Jesus’ **exact assurance**.

Whom then should Christians believe? Did God leave the preservation of the texts of the Old and New Testaments to fallible copyists? Do Christians have only the evidence of history to support the doctrine of preservation? Or did Jesus mean what He taught when He said, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled?” Jesus taught that the authority of God’s Word rested upon the Divine preservation of the text. Belief in this doctrine leads men today to reject modern textual criticism with its invalid texts and to accept the texts (and the methods that produced them) behind the King James Version of the Bible.” (Webb in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 50)

- Webb is clearly using Matthew 5:17-18 to advance the notion that preservation extends to the very “jots” and “tittles” and requires exact identically. Webb’s position is correct in principle regarding the faith approach, but he fails to fully apply his own principle and thereby fails to arrive at a sound and sustainable understanding of preservation. In the end, Webb’s essay is an example of Option 2 Faith for Faith’s Sake from our chart in Lesson 43.

Use of Matthew 5:17-18 in Other King James Only Literature

- Webb is certainly not alone in using Matthew 5:17-18 as a proof text for the notion of verbal plenary preservation or the notion that preservation occurred with exact identically. The following pro-King James authors include the passage in their lists of verses that teach preservation but offer little direct commentary upon the verse.
 - 1975—*Counterfeit or Genuine: Mark 19? John 8?* Edited by David Otis Fuller
 - See the essay “The Preservation of the Scriptures” by Donald L. Brake on pages 182-183.

- 1999—*Forever Settled: A Survey of the Documents and History of the Bible* by Jack A. Moorman
- 2000—*Crowned with Glory: The Bible from Ancient Text to Authorized Version* by Dr. Thomas Holland
- 2007—*The History of Your Bible: Proving the King James to be the Perfectly Preserved Words of God* by Terence D. McLean
- 2013—*Which Bible Would Jesus Use? The Bible Version Controversy Explained and Resolved* by Jack McElroy
- The following authors comment more extensively on how Matthew 5:17-18 relates to or establishes the doctrine of preservation.
 - 1970—*Which Bible?* Edited by David Otis Fuller
 - “The power and providence of God are displayed in the history of the preservation and transmission of His Word, in fulfillment of the promise of the Son of God, “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). Our Lord was not given to exaggeration, and God’s holy Law was not confined to the commands of Sinai but is set forth in all that He inspired His prophets and apostles to write.” (Fuller, 5)
 - 1999—*Myths about the Modern Versions* by David W. Cloud. Regarding Matthew 5:18 and Matthew 24:35 Clouds states the following:
 - “As we see from the above Scriptures, the Lord Jesus Christ is very specific in His teaching about the preservation of Scripture. He teaches that man must have the very words of God, and He promises that His WORDS will not pass away. In Matthew 5:18, He says the very JOTS AND TITTLES of God’s Word will not pass away! That is certainly verbal preservation.” (109)
 - 2003—*In Awe of thy Word: Understanding the King James Bible Its Mystery & History Letter by Letter* by Gail Riplinger
 - This book is an expansion of Riplinger’s earlier book from 1998 titled *The Language of the King James Bible: Discover Its Hidden Built-In Dictionary*. While I have not been able to locate in these volumes the specific use of Matthew 5:17-18, they both demand verbatim identity as the standard of preservation to the very letter and word order.

- In 2011, in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the KJB, Riplinger published an essay titled *Settings of the King James Bible* in which she derided non-British spellings in the English Bible. American printings that changed the spelling of a word like “musick” to “music” were viewed as introducing careless errors into the KJB.
- 2006—*Defending the King James Bible 3rd Ed.* by D.A. Waite
 - “Not “one jot” nor “one tittle”—that is Bible preservation, isn’t it? Now, He’s talking about the Old Testament, and I’m sure by extension we can carry that on to the New Testament as well. . . The Lord Jesus said that not one jot or tittle would pass away until all would be fulfilled. So, the Lord Jesus believed in Bible preservation, didn’t He? There is good evidence that a tittle is the smallest Hebrew vowel which is a dot.” (10-11)
- 2009—*Glistering Truths: Distinctions in Bible Words* by Matthew Verschuur (Bible Protector)
 - “That every jot and tittle in our pure English Bible is necessary for giving the exact sense.” (Title Page)
 - “In fact, the King James Bible has been called the best translation in the world. If we look at this Bible, that is, at the proper edition of it—the Pure Cambridge Edition—we find that every word is right and good. (4)
 - “Let no man presume that he can improve upon our English Bible as it now stands, pure and perfect. No matter what word, to alter it in any way is to violate the Scriptures teaching concerning its own certainty and perfection. . . Certainly the King James Bible has gone through the “purified seven times” process to arrive to where it is at now. But this is not license for further changes, updates or alterations once this process has been completed. . . Rightness and exactness of words can be a matter of life and death. The very spelling of Bible words should be observed with the fear of God. . . In order to give the sense accurately, the exact words and letters and punctuation are required.” (8)
 - “Let us be perfectly clear, changing so much as the word order, spelling or punctuation is destructive.” (13)
 - “That a change as small as a minor point of punctuation is dire, if not obviously, at least puts in jeopardy the doctrine of the reliability of its jots and tittles.” (16)
- The above list does not claim to be exhaustive of every use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James. Only advocates supporting the notion of plenary verbal preservation. Only indexed works were searched, I did not read every line in every work ever written on this topic. That being said, I am

confident that the above sampling is indicative of how Matthew 5:17-18 is used by the majority of King James Only advocates.

Conclusion

- Matthew 5:17-18—these verses are clearly referring to the Old Testament scriptures originally given to the nation of Israel.
- Jewish scribes knew they were duplicating God’s word, so they went to incredible lengths to prevent error from creeping into their work. The whole process of copying the Bible was controlled by strict religious rituals, and the scribes carefully counted every line, word, syllable, and letter to ensure accuracy.
- The earliest surviving copies of the Hebrew Masoretic Text, the text supporting the King James Old Testament date from around 900 A.D. Discovered in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls date from around 150 B.C. roughly one thousand years earlier. When compared with the Masoretic Text for the book of Isaiah, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found to be word for word identical in over 95% of the text. The remaining 5% variation consisted of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. Dr. Randell Price stated the following in his book on the Dead Sea Scrolls:
 - “Once a comparison was made between the text of the *Isaiah Scroll* and the Masoretic Text, it was evident that, **except for minor details (such as spelling)** that **do not affect the meaning of the text**, the two were **almost identical**. Even though the Qumran text was more than six centuries older than the text of the Masoretes, it confirmed the accuracy with which the scribes had carefully preserved and transmitted the biblical text through time.” (Price, 127)
- This is historical confirmation of the Biblical promise of Preservation. Yet, even with its high degree of precision, there is not exact identity. The use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James Only advocates demanding verbatim identity or “jot and tittle” precision as the standard for preservation goes too far and demands more than can be historically proven.
- In the next Lesson, we will look at the use of Matthew 5:17-18 by those critical of the King James Only position.

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Sunday, January 22, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 45 Jot and Tittle Preservation, Matthew 5:17-18 (Part 2)

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 44 we looked at the use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James Only Advocates. In doing so we observed that many King James defenders use Matthew 5 to establish their insistence upon verbatim identically as the standard for preservation.
- In this lesson, we want to look at the use of Matthew 5:17-18 by those critical of the King James Only position.
- In conclusion, I will offer my own thoughts on how these verses should be properly understood.

Use of Matthew 5:17-18 by Those Critical of the King James Only Position

- In Lesson 44 we used Gary C. Webb's essay "Not One Jot or One Tittle Matthew 5:17-18" from *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture* as a means for framing the discussion.
- In like manner, in this lesson, we will use William C. Combs' essay "The Preservation of Scripture" as framework for structuring our study.
- Combs commences his discussion of Matthew 5:17-18 by noting that the passage "is one of the most commonly referenced passages used to support the preservation of Scripture." Moreover, he identifies the "jot" and "tittle" as follows:
 - Jot—"It is universally agreed that the "jot" (ἰῶτα *iota*) refers to the Hebrew (or Aramaic) letter ך (*yôd*), the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet." (Combs, 21)
 - Tittle—"The "tittle" (κεραία *keraiā*) literally means "horn," that is, a "projection" or "hook." This is often been understood to refer to small parts of letters, especially to small strokes distinguishing Hebrew letters." (Combs, 21)
- When taken at face value Combs concedes that the phrase "could be understood to teach an absolutely perfect preservation of the "Law." (21) Combs then cites Richard Flanders' essay "[Does the Bible Promise Its Own Preservation](#)" as a case in point. Flanders wrote:
 - "Some say that this promise refers only to the fulfillment of scripture and not to its preservation. But notice that it says the text of the Bible (to the very letter) will not "pass" in the sense that "heaven and earth" shall one day "pass." The Greek word used here for "pass" is *parelthe*, and it refers to the physical extinction of the thing that shall pass. It can also be translated "perish." Just as God's creation will pass someday, God's Words will never pass! The actual existence of the original text of scripture will continue

eternally, just as the physical existence of heaven and earth will not continue.” (Quoted in Combs, 21)

- Mark well the nature of Flanders’ position. He makes two important assertions: 1) “the text of the Bible (the very letter will not pass” and 2) “the actual existence of the original text of scripture will continue eternally.” How is this accomplished according to Flanders? By preservation of course. If this not a statement arguing for verbatim preservation I am not sure what is.
- Combs is quick to jump on this point in his comments following the Flanders quote.
 - “Flanders’s interpretation is just how Matthew 5:18 is commonly understood from the KJV/TR viewpoint. Cloud explains: “In summary, the Bible promises that God will preserve His Word in pure form, including the most minute details (the jots and tittles [*sic*], the words), and that this would include the whole Scriptures, Old and New Testaments. The biblical doctrine of preservation is verbal, plenary preservation....” Waite describes this as the “inerrant preservation of the Words of the Bible.” But, in fact, these advocates of KJV/TR position do not actually take Matthew 5:18 literally, even though they claim to do so. If not one “jot” or “tittle” is to be changed, then they should insist on using only the 1611 edition of the KJV since “jot” and “tittle” certainly involve spelling, and there have been thousands of spelling changes since 1611.” (Combs, 21-22)
- Combs has just pointed out something the King James Only advocates have not dealt with honestly, in my opinion. If they are going to demand verbatim identity to every “jot and tittle”, which edition of the KJB exactly reproduced the original autographs. As we will see below, even Flanders is forced to hedge on this point later in his essay.
- Now Combs has the King James Only advocates positioned right where he wants them in order to deliver what he thinks is a final deciding FACTUAL blow.
 - “There are two things to be said about the KJV/TR interpretation of Matthew 5:18. First, it is an *incontrovertible fact*, obvious to anyone who has examined the manuscript evidence, that we do not now possess the words of the autographs in an absolutely inerrant state. This assertion is most significant since it flatly contradicts the whole thesis of the KJV/TR position. I will demonstrate the truth of this assertion later in this essay. Second, Jesus is not teaching in this verse the “inerrant preservation of the Words of the Bible.”” (Combs, 22)

Discussing Combs’ Statement on the Use of Matthew 5:17-18 by King James Advocates

- Let us now dissect Combs’ statement. First, Combs is correct, we cannot know for certain what the words of the original were; if one demands verbatim identity as their standard for preservation and inerrancy. Moreover, he is correct that this fact alone causes the King James Only notion that Matthew 5:17-18 is teaching exact identity of wording (the very jots and tittles) as the standard for preservation to suffer damage. Even within the Byzantine Text, the

textual tradition that King James advocates favor as the preserved text line, there is not verbatim identity of wording. The same could be said for the printed editions of the TR as well as the various editions of the KJB itself. In this way, the King James Only position is unscriptural because it demands more for the doctrine of preservation than what the Bible actually asserts.

- Second, what is Combs' standard for speaking about "an absolutely inerrant state?" It is none other than the standard of verbatim identically in wording. While Combs is correct in his criticism of the King James Only position, on the other side of the spectrum he is arguing for the absolute inerrancy of the original autographs that no longer exist and which no one alive has ever seen. What verse of scripture teaches you to believe that God confined His inspired and inerrant word to some non-existent pieces of parchment?
- In this way both sides are making unscriptural assumptions and talking past each other with the issue of exact sameness or verbatim identically being the great mount impassible that divides them. Recall from Lesson 40 that the language "in the original autographs" was added to Protestant doctrinal statements in the latter half of the 19th century as a means of answering the German Higher Critics and Rationalists. In this way, Protestant Christians reworked their position on the Bible based upon terms set by their opponents. This reworked Bibliology became the new orthodoxy in Fundamental and Evangelical circles in the 20th century. In the same way that Protestant scholars in the 19th century overreacted to the forces of liberalism; believers in the 20th century overreacted to the new "Originals Only" orthodoxy by overstating their case in the opposite direction. Therefore, cordial and productive dialogue on this topic has proved elusive. Both sides are separated by the same thing (the false assumption that preservation requires verbatim identity), do not realize it, and are therefore talking past each other.
- The position I am arguing for in this class is both scriptural as well as logical and in line with the historical and textual facts. The scriptures assert their own inspiration and preservation which means we must have more than the non-existent originals. They do not, however, teach verbatim identity as the standard for preservation.
- Above we saw that Combs quoted Richard Flanders' article "[Does the Bible Promise Its Own Preservation](#)" to buttress his point regarding the use of Matthew 5:17-18 by some King James advocates. A deeper look at the Flanders article will prove instructive. Flanders offers the connection between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hebrew Masoretic Text as historical proof of the promise of preservation as well as the existence of the Traditional Hebrew supporting the KJB from before the time of Christ (50 BC). Flanders quotes Drs. Gleason Archer and Randell Price to support his conclusion:
 - Archer—"... the Hebrew University Isaiah Scroll [of the Dead Sea Scrolls] . . . corresponds **almost letter for letter** with the [traditional text] . . . and yet dates from 50 B.C." (Reproduced from Flanders)
 - Price—"Once a comparison was made between the text of the Isaiah Scroll and the Masoretic Text [the traditional Hebrew text], it was evident that, **except for minor**

details (such as spelling) that do not affect the meaning of the text, the two were **almost identical** . . . It confirmed the accuracy with which the scribes had carefully preserved and transmitted the biblical text through time.” (Reproduced from Flanders)

- Please note that Flanders’ quotes do not quite support his position. Above we quoted Flanders as saying the following with respect to Matthew 5:17-18, “But notice that it says the text of the Bible (to the very letter) will not “pass” in the sense that “heaven and earth” shall one day “pass.”” But then later in the same essay, when seeking to furnish historical proof of “jot and tittle” preservation Flanders quotes two scholars who stop short of the exact identity in preservation that Flanders had previously used Matthew 5:17-18 to argue for.
- Next, note the underlined portion of the quote from Price. Price admits that one does not need verbatim identity for the text to convey the exact same meaning without possessing the exact same words.
- Without realizing the inconsistencies in his argumentation, following the quotes by Archer and Price, Flanders goes on to highlight a very interesting point in the opposite direction. Consider what he says about the nature of textual variants:
 - “To my friend, however, and many scholars like him, the most significant find at the Dead Sea in regard to the Bible’s text was the existence of variant texts! The principles of modern textual criticism are based on the assumption that the **exact preservation** of the original text of an ancient document is extremely unlikely.” (Flanders)
- This statement on the part of Flanders highlights precisely why modern textual critics adopt a reconstructionist approach to the text. They do not believe in the promise of preservation on account of the fact that it did not occur with exact identity.
- At this point it might be good to remind everyone regarding the definition of the English word preservation. Noah Webster defined the word as follows in *American Dictionary of English Language*.
 - *Preservation*—the act of preserving or keeping safe; the act of keeping from injury, destruction or decay; as the *preservation* of life or health; the *preservation* of buildings from fire or decay; the *preservation* of grain from insects; the *preservation* of fruit or plants. When a thing is kept entirely from decay, **or nearly in its original state**, we say it is in a high state of *preservation*.
- Even according to the English dictionary, something does not have to be in an exactly identical state or condition in order to qualify as having been preserved.

Combs and Glennly on the Correct Understanding of Matthew 5:17-18

- Having rejected how many King James advocates utilize Matthew 5:17-18 in their argumentation, Combs offers the following alternative.
 - “Matthew 5:18 is first of all an example of hyperbole, “a conscious exaggeration or a type of overstatement in order to increase the effect of what is being said.” In a graphic way, then, this text makes a point similar to Isaiah 40:8—if “not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished,” the “Law” is immutable; it “stands forever.” “No part of the law, not the most insignificant letter, was to be set aside”; “the law is unalterable.” But unlike Isaiah 40:8, this text is more directly tied to Scripture since “Law” in verse 18 is at least a reference to the Torah, more probably the entire OT. But again, this is not to be taken literally, as though Jesus were promising that no Hebrew manuscript could be changed or that no copyist could make an error. This is simply a hyperbolic way of saying that God’s written revelation cannot be changed.

If the Scripture cannot be changed, then it obviously remains valid, with full authority. Thus, the emphasis in Matthew 5:18 is more on the *authority* and *validity* of the OT, not primarily its preservation. As Moo observes: “Probably, then, we should understand v. 18 to be an endorsement of the continuing ‘usefulness’ or authority of the law.” Thus, this verse makes no *direct* affirmation concerning preservation; however, the emphasis on the continuing authority of the Scriptures can *by implication* be used to argue for the preservation of those same Scriptures.” (Combs, 22-23)

- In summation, Combs views the passage as dealing more generally with the authority and validity of the Old Testament than with the exact preservation of every word of scripture.
- W. Edward Glennly writing in 1997, a few years before Combs, took a similar yet somewhat different understanding of Matthew 5:17-18.
 - “Matthew 5:18 is clearly speaking of the fulfillment in Christ of OT ethical (3:15) and prophetic (1:23; 2:15; 4:14; etc.) texts. When Matthew writes in verse 18 “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,” it must be read in light of its context. Verse 17 says, “Think not that I am come to *destroy* the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfill*.” The point of the verse is that Jesus did not come to destroy (or to perpetuate for the matter) the OT Law. He is the one whom all the OT points to (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46) and He came to fulfill all that was prophesied about Him in it. Ryrie comments in his study notes that “The Lord’s point is that every letter of every word in the O.T. is vital and will be fulfilled.” This passage is not speaking about the preservation of the exact words found in the autographa; it is declaring that all the prophecies in the OT which pointed to Christ will be fulfilled down to the smallest detail. In addition, the context makes it clear that Jesus is speaking about the fulfillment of every detail in the OT text. Matthew 5:18 does not

ever refer to the NT text, let alone speak of its perfect supernatural preservation.”
(Glenny in *The Bible Version Debate*, 87)

- In a nut shell Glenny is saying that Matthew 5:17-18 are asserting that even the smallest details of the Old Testament are going to be fulfilled.

Conclusion

- In the past I believed that Matthew 5:17-18 taught jot and tittle preservation. When I taught the series *Final Authority: Locating God's Word in English* here at the church in 2010, I used Matthew 5:17-18 to assert the notion that preservation took place with exact identity. Now in the light of further research and study I would no longer hold to my former position on Matthew 5:17-18. This does not mean, however, that I do not believe in the fundamental promise of preservation.
- Matthew 5:17-18 is simply teaching that no detail of the Law is going to go unfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the perfect fulfillment of the righteous requirements of the law.
- Given that the passage is not asserting that the Old Testament was preserved with exact identity there is no reason to argue by extension that Matthew 5:18-19 is teaching the verbatim preservation of the New Testament. This is a King James Only argument used to buttress their position of perfect or verbal plenary preservation.
- As I said in Lesson 28:
 - God promised to preserve His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 119:111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 4:4; 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.
 - This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.
 - God did not supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
 - Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
 - If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.
- If God intended to preserve His word with verbatim identity, we would have historical/textual evidence that preservation occurred with that level of precision. No such evidence exists.

- This does not mean that one must abandon belief in the promise of preservation in the face of variant readings. Rather, it means that one must amend their understanding of preservation to match what the Bible teaches about the matter.
 - [Click here](#) to view the chart titled Historical Development of Protestant Bibliology. This chart puts into to graphic form the principle ideas expressed in Lessons 41-45.
- To be clear, I do believe in a perfect Bible if, by perfect, one means the following:
 - I believe in “perfect preservation” if, by perfect, one means the existence of a pure text **that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “verbatim identity.”**

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Sunday, January 29, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 46 Final Thoughts on the Corollary and the Extent of Preservation

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 45 we finished our two-part discussion of Matthew 5:17-18 and its impact upon the doctrine of preservation. In conclusion, we observed:
 - Matthew 5:17-18 is simply teaching that no detail of the Law is going to go unfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the perfect fulfillment of the righteous requirements of the law.

Given that the passage is not asserting that the Old Testament was preserved with exact identity, there is no reason to argue by extension that Matthew 5:18-19 is teaching the verbatim preservation of the New Testament. This is a King James Only argument used to buttress their position of perfect or verbal plenary preservation.

If God intended to preserve His word with verbatim identity we would have historical/textual evidence that preservation occurred with that level of precision. No such evidence exists.

This does not mean that one must abandon belief in the promise of preservation in the face of variant readings. Rather, it means that one must amend their understanding of preservation to match what the Bible teachers teach about the matter.

To be clear, I do believe in a perfect Bible if, by perfect, one means the following:

- I believe in “perfect preservation” if, by perfect, one means the existence of a pure text **that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “verbatim identity.”** (Lesson 45)
- In Lessons 41 and 42 we considered whether preservation was the corollary of inspiration. We concluded that a corollary between the two doctrines does exist in a general sense but that there is an inherent danger in overstating the connection. We concluded that the corollary is carried too far when one demands that preservation occurred with verbatim identity. In Lesson 43 we looked at four categories of scriptural proof demonstrating that it was excessive to demand verbatim identity as the standard for preservation in the first place: 1) how the Old Testament quotes the Old Testament, 2) how the New Testament quotes the Old Testament, 3) how the New Testament quotes the New Testament, and 4) II Kings 19 and Isaiah 37.

- Having considered how Matthew 5:17-18 fits into this discussion we are ready to conclude our discussion of the corollary and the extent of preservation. To accomplish this task, we will look at the following points in this lesson:
 - The Argument from Authority
 - Final Thoughts on the Extent of Preservation

The Argument from Authority

- Once again, Dr. William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Seminary raises this point in his essay “The Preservation of Scripture.” Combs states:
 - “Closely tied to the argument for preservation based on a correlation between inspiration and preservation is another corollary between the *authority* of Scripture and preservation.” (Combs, 29)
- Essentially this argument is based upon the notion that for the scriptures to possess any *authority* they must have been preserved in some sense. Combs quotes Harold Stigers essay “Preservation: The Corollary of Inspiration” to illustrate this secondary use of the corollary.
 - “The preservation of the Scriptures is bound up with their authority so that the two are really indissoluble. The former is a most necessary outgrowth of their inspiration.” (Stigers, 217)
- In essence Stigers is arguing that “. . . since the Scriptures are authoritative, an authority that comes from inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16), the Scriptures can have no continuing authority unless they are preserved.” (Combs, 29) In other words, the scriptures possess their authority precisely because they were given by inspiration of God. Likewise, if the words given by inspiration were not preserved the scriptures would not retain their authority. This is a different approach to the corollary than what we have seen thus far in our study of the corollary based upon verbatim identity of wording.
- In his 1973 essay “Autographs, Amanuenses, and Restricted Inspiration” Greg L. Bahnsen states the following regarding “dependable” preservation:
 - “It is certainly legitimate for us to maintain that God in His sovereignty has preserved His Word in dependable form for all generations. To be a Christian *requires* the possession of God’s words as a basis for faith and direction in life...and men in all generations are *responsible* to be Christians.” (Bahnsen, 110)
- Concerning the *authority* of scripture, Dr. Wayne Grudem stated the following in his popular *Systematic Theology*:

- “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.” (Grudem, 73)
- This type of authority is found in the fact that these words were given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16-17). The purposes for which scripture is profitable—namely, doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness—cannot be fulfilled unless the scriptures are preserved. This is where Combs sees the impact of texts such as Matthew 5:17-18 and John 10:35 upon the doctrine of preservation.
 - “This is where Matthew 5:17–18 and John 10:35 also tie into the doctrine of preservation. Since both passages teach a continuing authority for Scripture, as we have demonstrated, they indirectly support a doctrine of preservation. But the same can be said for numerous texts that command the believer’s obedience. If these texts are essential to the believer’s sanctification, and they are, they must have been preserved.” (Combs, 30)
- In this way Combs and others maintain a belief in the promise of preservation in a general sense. Preservation must have occurred or else the scriptures would have no enduring authority. In this way preservation is the corollary of inspiration.

Final Thoughts on the Extent of Preservation

- It is only when one demands that preservation requires the same precision as inspiration i.e., verbatim identity that the corollary runs into trouble. Lessons 42 through 45 were devoted to highlighting this point.
- When discussing the extent of preservation, one must clearly identify what they mean by the words “perfect,” “pure,” and “error.” By perfect most commentators on both sides of the issue mean verbatim identity. Consider the following statements made by Dr. Combs:
 - “How pure have the original words of the biblical writings been preserved? It is an indisputable fact, proven by the manuscripts and versional evidence, that God has not perfectly (that is, without error) preserved the Scriptures throughout their long history of transmission. There is no single manuscript, printed text, or version that can be shown to be error free. This is patently obvious to anyone who is at all familiar with the transmission history of the Scriptures. First, we should note that no two Greek manuscripts of the New Testament agree exactly; these thousands of manuscripts all differ from one another to some degree. No one has ever suggested, even within the KJV/TR camp, that a particular one of these manuscripts is a perfect copy of the autographs—that it is error free. This conclusively demonstrates that God has permitted errors to enter the transmission process, which is the inevitable result of providential preservation.” (Combs, 49-50)

- Mark well that for Combs an “error” constitutes a textual variant of any kind. In this way he is assuming verbatim identity as the standard for preservation. When one Biblically amends their position on preservation (See Lessons 42 and 43) and thereby realizes that preservation did not occur with exact identity; it brings the entire discussion on the extent of preservation into focus. On this amended view of preservation, an “error” would constitute a variant that substantively alters the doctrinal content of the Bible. Variants that constitute a different way of saying the same thing are not “errors” because they are substantively equivalent.
- According to this Biblically adjusted view of preservation, the terms “pure” and “perfect” do not demand exact identity of wording but simply substantively equivalent meaning. I have no problem speaking about “pure” or “perfect” preservation if by perfect one means
 - “the existence of a pure text **that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “verbatim identity.”**
- If preservation did not occur with this level of “perfection” or “purity” then how could the scriptures have any authority as identified in point one.
- Combs is correct to point out that the textual facts do not seem to matter to most King James Only advocates, “So we see that the evidence of manuscripts, texts, and versions means nothing to those in the KJV/TR camp.” (Combs 35) Most are content to double down on faith for faith’s sake in the promise of preservation. After quoting statements regarding the need for faith in God’s word by King James advocates David Cloud and Jack Moorman; Combs states the following:
 - “In one sense Moorman is absolutely correct. What the Bible teaches about its own preservation is to be accepted by faith. But that can be said of everything the Bible teaches—everything the Bible teaches is to be accepted by faith. This argument from faith or “the logic of faith,” as Hills likes to call it, actually boils down to faith in the KJV as the perfectly preserved Word of God, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. This is not faith, at least not in the biblical sense, but pure presumption.

The fundamental fallacy in KJV/TR position can be traced to the faulty premise that the Scriptures themselves teach a perfect and inerrant preservation of the actual words of the autographs. We saw this earlier in Flanders’s statement that “the actual existence of the original text will continue eternally....” It is not enough to hold a Bible in one’s hand, even a King James Bible, and say this is the Word of God; the KJV/TR position insists that one must be able to say that these are the *Words* of God. Anything else, according to Waite, is “an apostate, heretical, modernistic, and liberal position.” (Combs, 36)

- Combs is correct that faith in “the perfectly preserved Word of God” cannot be maintained by faith in God’s word if by “perfect” one means matching the original autographs with exact identity. That is a presumption because the word of God teaches no such doctrine.
- Before we are too hard on the likes of Cloud, Waite, and Moorman it needs to be made clear that the Originals Only position is equally guilty of making unbiblical rationalistic presumptions. There is no verse of scripture that teaches that inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy are confined to the non-existent original autographs alone. Therefore, this position cannot be held by faith in God’s word either. It was a position forged as a rationalistic response to German Higher Criticism and Rationalism during the latter half of the 19th century. It was largely on account of the existence of textual variants that inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy were confined to the original autographs.
- Once again, both positions are forged by taking an equally presumptuous approach to how to account for the lack of verbatim identity in the surviving manuscript copies. Differences in wording are not inherently a problem so long as they do not report information that is false or contradictory. This is where we must recognize the difference between 1) a different way of saying the same thing, and 2) substantive differences in meaning. I know from personal experience that this distinction is lost on many King James Only advocates. For many King James Only advocates such as Waite, any difference of any kind constitutes a situation where one is forced to declare which reading is the word of God.
 - “Thus one cannot honestly, according to Waite, say that the NASB is the Word of God. He complains that if one holds “his King James in his hand and the New American Standard in his hand with 5,604 differences in their Greek texts in the New Testament alone, how can they both be the ‘Word’ of God? ‘Word of God’ could not mean the ‘Words of God’ because of these differences in the Words.”” (Quoted in Combs, 36)
- Waite fails to distinguish between the nature of these differences. I reject the Critical Text and the NASB because many of these 5,604 differences are substantive, not merely different ways of saying the same thing. But mark well that is not what Waite is saying, he is making the categorical statement that any differences of wording of any kind is an attack on the word of God. The problem here is one of consistency. The printed editions of the KJB contain different wording yet Waite is not willing to identify which edition of the KJB got all the words “perfect.”

Concluding Thoughts from Combs

- Professor Combs concludes his section on “The Extent of Preservation” with the following paragraph.
 - “The true situation is this: God has preserved his Word to this day, but because of the means he has chosen to use to accomplish this preservation—providentially, through secondary causation—the words of the autographs have not been inerrantly preserved. Instead, God has chosen to allow for variations to occur—variants within the Hebrew,

Aramaic, and Greek copies of the autographs. God has providentially provided all these copies in order to preserve the Scriptures. So it is proper to say that preservation has taken place in the totality of manuscripts. Because God chose this method of preservation, it was not possible to provide a perfectly pure text with no variations (errors). It was sufficient for God's purpose to preserve his Word in copies of the autographs whose exact wording contains some variation. This level of purity is sufficient for God's purposes." (Combs, 37)

- In the end, Combs is partly right and partly wrong. Combs doubles down in the opposite direction of Waite. He insists that "the words of the autographs have not been inerrant preserved" because he is assuming verbatim identity as his standard for inerrant preservation. Therefore, inerrancy is only applicable to the original autographs. Combs insistence upon exact identity of wording is reiterated in his statement that "it was not possible to provide a perfectly pure text with no variations." For Combs the mere presence of textual variants negates perfect/inerrant preservation because of how he is using those words.
- I also disagree with his conclusion that preservation occurred in the "totality of manuscripts." This is not possible since some of the manuscript copies do possess substantive differences in meaning and some, in some cases, actually teach opposites.
- In contrast, I believe Combs to be correct with respect to the following statements.
 - "God has preserved his Word to this day"
 - "God has chosen to allow for variations to occur"
 - "It was sufficient for God's purpose to preserve his Word in copies of the autographs whose exact wording contains some variation. This level of purity is sufficient for God's purposes."
- Next week we will begin discussing the method of preservation by looking at whether "providential" is an appropriate descriptor to utilize when discussing how preservation occurred.

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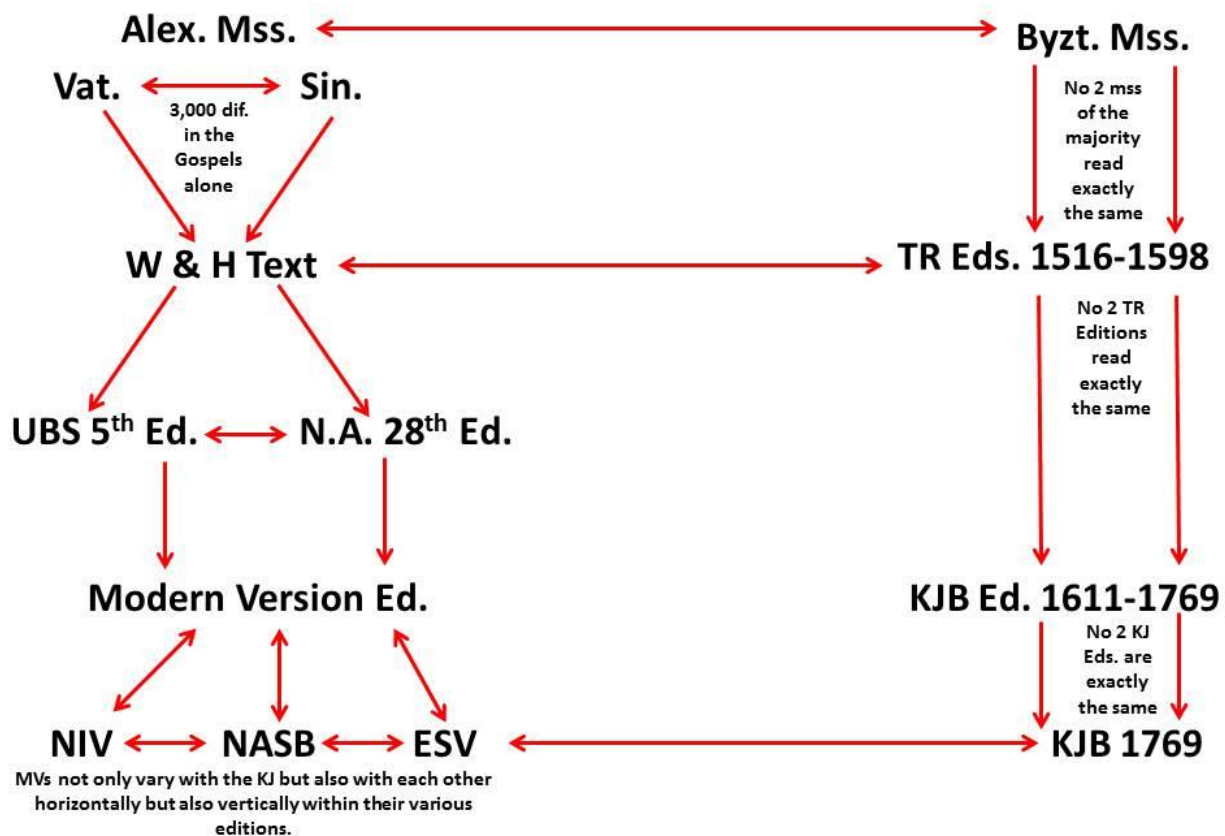
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Sunday, February 5, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 47 The Method of Preservation: Providential or Miraculous

Introduction

- In Lessons 28 and 29 we began the second term of the class with an Introduction to Preservation. After reviewing some key points regarding inspiration from the first term, we took stock of the following facts exhibited on this chart.

Original Autographs



- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)

- In Lesson 29 we used the Book of Jeremiah as a case study to prove that God could preserve His word without preserving the original autographs.
- In Lesson 30, after discussing the Core Issue of Preservation verses Restoration, we studied how the TEXTUAL FACTS presented in Lessons 28 and 29 have given birth to the following three views on the doctrine of preservation:
 - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
 - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
 - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- With these three views in mind, Lessons 31 through 38 were devoted to determining whether or not the scriptures teach their own preservation.
 - Psalm 12:6-7 (Lessons 31 & 32)
 - Psalm 119: 111, 152, 160 (Lesson 33)
 - Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; I Peter 1:23-25 (Lessons 34 & 35)
 - Matthew 4:4 (Lessons 36 & 37)
 - Matthew 24:35 (Lesson 38)
- Lesson 39 brought closure to our study of the relevant passages and concluded that the scriptures do promise their own preservation. This conclusion was arrived at through a consideration of the following four points:
 - Preservation: The Bible's Claim for Itself
 - Preservation: God Keeps His Promises
 - Preservation: The Superiority of the Fideistic Approach
 - Preservation: The Historic Position of the Reformers
- In Lesson 40 we studied “Why Preservation Matters” by looking at how [Protestant Bibliology](#) was revamped during the latter half of the 19th century. Moreover, we considered the [agnosticism of Bart Ehrman](#) as an example of the logical conclusion of the reworked Bibliology and its removal of the promise of preservation.

- More recently, Lessons 41 through 46 covered the corollary between preservation and inspiration as well as the extent of preservation. These lessons presented the notion that preservation did not occur with verbatim identity and that some have carried the corollary too far and used it to make unscriptural assertions regarding preservation.
- In this Lesson we want to begin a consideration of the method of preservation. We will begin this study by looking at whether “providential” is an appropriate descriptor to describe the method of preservation.

Preservation: Miraculous or Providential

- First, as we saw in Lessons 31 through 39 the scriptures do teach their own preservation.
 - Psalm 12:6-7; 119:111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 4:4; 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
- Given that preservation is the Bible’s claim for itself; it must have occurred, or else God would have failed to keep his promise (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2). This means that the Godhead was active in some way, shape, manner, or form to ensure the fulfillment of the fundamental promise of preservation. The question is how does one explain/understand how the Godhead accomplished the preservation of scripture?
- Before there was a textual or King James Only controversy, the Protestant Reformers elected to describe preservation as “providential” in their early doctrinal statements. The following language from Chapter I Article VIII from *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646) was repeated in the *Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order* [of 1658](#), [London Baptist Confession of 1689](#), and [Philadelphia Baptist Confession of 1742](#).
 - “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, **by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.”
- Consequently, there has been a long-standing precedent within Protestantism to not only affirm belief in the promise of preservation but to do so using the term “providence” as a descriptor for how preservation occurred.
- Therefore, one should not be surprised to find Edward F. Hills, a Presbyterian defender of the Traditional Text in the 20th century, using the term “providential” to describe how preservation

occurred. As a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, Hills viewed himself as a defender of the historic position enunciated by the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. We have already observed the following statement from Hills' 1956 work *The King James Version Defended* regarding "providential preservation" in Lesson 8.

- "If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scripture is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the **providential preservation** of the Scriptures must also be a true doctrine. It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a **special providential control** over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God's people in every age. God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of His will, then it is obvious that He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.

Although this doctrine of the **providential preservation** of the Old and New Testament Scriptures has sometimes been misused, nevertheless, it also has been held, either implicitly or explicitly, by all branches of the Christian Church as a necessary consequence of the divine inspiration of these Scriptures." (Hills, 2)

- Elsewhere in *The King James Bible Defended*, when discussing the minor differences that exist in the various editions of the *TR*, Dr. Hills recognizes a difference between what he calls "providential" and "miraculous" preservation.
 - "The texts of the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God's **special providence**. Hence the differences between them were kept to a minimum. But these disagreements were not eliminated altogether, for this would require not merely **providential guidance** but a **miracle**. In short, God chose to preserve the New Testament text **providentially** rather than **miraculously**, and this is why even the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* vary from each other slightly." (Hills, 222-223)
- We have already seen in Lessons 41 through 46 that using "verbatim identity" as the standard for preservation is overreaching. In order to accomplish preservation in a state of "exact sameness" God would have had to supernaturally, i.e. miraculously, overtake the pen of every scribe, copyist, typesetter, and printer who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind ever entered the text. That God did not choose to accomplish preservation in this manner is apparent because there are slight differences even in the manuscripts comprising the Byzantine Text Type not to mention the various editions of the *TR*.
- That being said, the question at hand in Lesson 47 is how does one explain how this was accomplished? Hills looks at the historical data and concludes that preservation could not have been "miraculous" because of the existence of textual variants. These statements by Hills ought to make one wonder how he is using the term "miraculous." The first definition for "miraculous" offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is ". . . not explicable by natural laws; supernatural."

- In recent conversation regarding these matters our beloved Brother David Reid stated the following:
 - “I am not sure that preservation was not miraculous as the term is properly defined. Miraculous means "not explicable by natural laws, supernatural." We critique modern textual theory when it treats the Bible the same as any other book and fails to account for its unique character. Did God inspire His word and then simply leave it to natural human processes with zero involvement by God as to whether and to what extent His word was preserved? The answer has to be no. God did and does something because He has promised to preserve His word, and He is going to make sure that it happens. That something that God does is beyond common human processes and is therefore supernatural, i.e. miraculous.

I think the appropriate analogy is the preservation of the Jews. Personally, I would say that God's preservation of the Jews throughout time has been miraculous even though there has been great loss of life of individual Jews. Something can be miraculous even if man can point to examples where there was not "perfect preservation" as theologians have defined the term. God "failed," so to speak, to prevent the Holocaust and the individual destruction of millions of Jews, but He nonetheless has preserved the Jews because they would no longer exist at all if God had not often acted miraculously as for example in the book of Esther. So, it is with the word of God. God permitted textual variants to occur within the universe of manuscripts, but God nonetheless has acted to preserve His word, otherwise Satan would have destroyed the entire Received Text tradition. It is a miracle that the word of God can be found at all given Satanic and human attempts to destroy it. Preservation wasn't "miraculous" as theologians use the term because they make the unscriptural assumption that miraculous preservation would not allow for the existence of any textual variants. However, using the dictionary definition of the word "miraculous," i.e. not explicable by natural laws, supernatural, it is obvious that God has miraculously preserved his word." (Reid, email dated 1/23/17)

- Hills' use of terminology appears confused because of his insistence that "miraculous" in this case would equate with zero textual variants. That being said, the question remains whether or not it was providential? What does one mean when they use the terminology providential?
- Dr. William W. Combs of Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary addresses this issue in his essay "The Preservation of Scripture." Regarding whether preservation was "miraculous" or "providential" Combs states the following:
 - “As far as the method of preservation is concerned, there are only two options. Scripture must be preserved either directly, by miraculous intervention in the transmission process, and/or indirectly, through secondary causation—"through the actions of human wills," as Sproul reminded us earlier. It is generally agreed that God's normal method of preservation has been indirect, through secondary causation. This method has usually been termed providential, though, as we previously noted, providence simply has to do with God carrying out his design for the universe, regardless of whether that is done directly or indirectly. But in discussions of preservation the term providential is used to signify that though God miraculously inspired his Word, he has normally chosen to preserve it via secondary causation, that is, through ordinary human means. And because preservation has been by ordinary human means, the transmission process has inevitably resulted in the introduction of errors.” (Combs, 30)

- First, note that Combs equates all textual variants with “errors” i.e., he does not distinguish between the nature of the variants: 1) substantively equivalent variants, or 2) substantive differences in meaning. He does this because he is assuming “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation.
- Second, it is important to note how Combs defines “providence.” He defines it as “secondary causation—through the actions of human wills” or “ordinary human means.” In other words, according to Combs, there is nothing supernatural about preservation at all; it is a completely “ordinary” process. God was content to use secondary causation i.e., men copying the text by “ordinary human means” to accomplish the preservation of His word. Once again it is important to note that Combs holds this position because of the existence of variant readings and the fact that the copies do not possess “verbatim identity.”
- Regarding these comments by Combs, Brother Reid stated the following:
 - “Because textual variants exist, Combs concludes that God’s method of preservation must have been providential and used “ordinary human means.” Combs reasons that if God had used miraculous means to preserve His word then there would be no textual variants. But this hardly follows.

God never promised to preserve Shakespeare or Aristotle, so their writings have been preserved through ordinary human means. Whether what we have today is an accurate reflection of what they originally wrote, no one knows. But God has promised to preserve His word, and He therefore obligated himself to ensure that it happened. To think that God took no personal action whatsoever to facilitate preservation while Satan has been actively attempting to corrupt and destroy the word of God since Genesis 3 seems to me the height of naiveté.

As normally defined, miraculous and providential are not direct antonyms. Rather, they have been defined by the participants in this discussion as antonyms because of the shared pernicious assumption that miraculous preservation would prevent textual variants from existing. This seems reminiscent of the Calvinism v. Arminianism debate. Both sides start with a flawed understanding. They then, frame the terms of the discussion while laboring under that misunderstanding and insist that people pick a side. The appropriate response is not to pick a side but to reject both flawed positions. Similarly, the proper response to the miraculous v. providential debate is to choose neither side because the debate has been framed in a manner that is unscriptural, confusing and contrary to the natural meaning of words. Since God didn’t feel the need to put a label on the manner in which He chose to accomplish preservation, it doesn’t seem profitable for man to invent one.” (Reid, email dated 1/23/17)

- It is difficult to see how the preservation of the “precise wording” demanded by many King James Advocates could be accomplished via the ordinary human means of secondary causation. Yet many King James Only (KJO) advocates view the use of “providential” as a means of avoiding some of the more outlandish enunciations of the KJO position. Combs is quick to point this out in the next paragraph.
 - “As we have observed earlier, because advocates of the KJV/TR position commonly claim to believe in providential preservation through ordinary human means, they generally wish to distance themselves from the idea of a miraculous re-inspiration of

manuscripts or versions. However, providential preservation via secondary causation cannot produce the kind of product this position claims to possess—an error-free TR and/or KJV. Speaking of the TR, Waite says:

- It is my own personal conviction and belief, after studying this subject since 1971, that the words of the Received Greek and Masoretic Hebrew texts that underlie the King James Bible are the very words which God has preserved down through the centuries, **being the exact words of the originals themselves**. As such, I believe they are inspired words.

... No matter whether one uses the miraculous language of inspiration to describe preservation, or simply calls it providential, the Bible the KJV/TR position claims to possess—an infallible and inerrant Bible— requires a continuous chain of miracles throughout the transmission process.” (Combs, 31-32)

- Combs is correct if one demands “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation. The only way the text could have traversed the seas of time and history in a state of “exact sameness” is for the Godhead’s involvement in the process of preservation to have been of the sort that no variations of any kind ever entered the text. The fact that there are textual variants in the very Greek manuscripts (Byzantine) that KJO advocates maintain are the most accurate proves that historically this TYPE of miraculous preservation did not occur.
- These points highlight why dropping “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation is such a crucial move. As Brother Reid pointed out above, “the pernicious assumption that perfect preservation would avoid textual variants” has led to extremely poor uses of terminology by those on both sides of preservation/textual debate.
- All this highlights a potential problem with using term “providential” at all as a descriptor for how preservation was accomplished. Most notably, the Bible never uses the term “providential” to describe how preservation would occur.
- Acts 24:2—the word “providence” only occurs one time in your Bible and it is not in a context having anything to do with preservation. The underlying Greek word only occurs one other time in the Greek text supporting the KJB.

- Romans 13:14—“provision”

- According to *Strong’s Concordance* the Greek word rendered as “providence” and “provision” is the word *pronoia* which means: 1) forethought, providential care, and 2) to make provision for a thing.
- The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* defines “providence” as follows:
 1. a. Foresight; anticipation of and preparation for the future; prudent management, government, or guidance.
 - b. Regard for future needs in the management of resources; thrift, frugality.

2. In full *providence of God (also nature, etc.), divine providence*. The foreknowing and protective care of God (or nature, etc.); divine direction, control, or guidance.
 3. That which is provided; a supply, a provision.
 4. The action of providing something; provision, preparation, arrangement. Chiefly in *to make providence*.
 5. a. An act or instance of divine intervention; an event or circumstance which indicates divine dispensation.
 - *special providence*, a particular act of direct divine intervention.
- Notice that the two uses of the Greek word *pronoia* correspond to the following English uses which have nothing to do with “an act or instance of divine intervention.”
 1. a. Foresight; anticipation of and preparation for the future; prudent management, government, or guidance.
 3. That which is provided; a supply, a provision.
 - Based upon the Biblical use of “providence”, one could only call preservation “providential” in that God, in his foresight, provided a mechanism through which preservation would be accomplished namely, the copying process. It says nothing, though, about how that copying process would be conducted.
 - Secondly, things get confused when one uses words that the scriptures do not. The theological uses of “providence” exhibited by definitions 2 and 5.a. certainly imply some sort of direct divine intervention that conjures meanings more along the lines of the “miraculous” than secondary causation by ordinary human means.
 - Note the *OED*’s sub entry under 5.a. for “special providence” or “a particular act of direct divine intervention.” Once again this speaks of a particular “miraculous” act more so than the secondary causation notion of “providence” outlined by Combs above in his essay.
 - With this definition work in mind, notice how confused the second Hills quote actually is. He uses the terminology “special providence” in the middle of arguing for why preservation was not “miraculous.”
 - “The texts of the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* were God-guided. They were set up under the leading of God’s **special providence**. Hence the differences between them were kept to a minimum. But these disagreements were not eliminated altogether, for this would require not merely providential guidance but a miracle. In short, God chose to preserve the New Testament text providentially rather than miraculously, and this is why even the several editions of the *Textus Receptus* vary from each other slightly.” (Hills, 222-223)
 - When one lays aside the "no textual variants" presumption, there is really no difference between “miraculous” and "special providence" as described by Hills?

- In short, it seems that the use of the word “providence” in this theological sense muddies the waters with respect to the methodology of preservation. For these reasons, I recommend that one not use the term as a descriptor for explaining how preservation occurred. There is nothing to be gained from using such a loaded and confused term.
- Even if I cannot explain the exact mechanics and methodology, I know that God must be active in the preservation process somehow. After all, he promised that he would preserve his word. Consider the following words of wisdom from Brother David W. Reid
 - “The Bible tells us what God wants us to know. It doesn’t tell us all the things that God does, which are innumerable (John 21:25), and most significantly, God doesn’t tell us how he does what he does. Often we would like to know how God does certain things so that we can then leverage that mechanism to accomplish what we want without having to rely upon God. However, that knowledge is hid from us. Instead, what we must do is believe what God has chosen to reveal and trust God to administer the details to accomplish the good pleasure of His will, whether we know the details or not (Eph. 1:5, Isa 46:10).”
 - Job 5:9—**Which doeth great things and unsearchable**; marvellous things without number:
 - Job 9:10—**Which doeth great things past finding out**; yea, and wonders without number.
 - Job 33:13—Why dost thou strive against him? **for he giveth not account of any of his matters.**
 - Ecclesiastes 3:11—He hath made every *thing* beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, **so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.**
 - Isaiah 40:28—Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? ***there is no searching of his understanding.***
 - Romans 11:33—O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and **his ways past finding out!**
 - Romans 11:34—**For who hath known the mind of the Lord?** or who hath been his counsellor?

An example may help. In II Kings 6:4-7, God caused an axe head to swim, obviously a miracle. But how did God do that? Did God decrease the density of the axe head temporarily so that it rose to the surface of the water? Or did God increase the density of the water around the axe head so that the axe head floated? Or perhaps God without altering the density of any object created a powerful upward current in the water that caused the axe head to rise? Or perhaps something altogether different occurred. We do not know because scripture is silent on this matter as it so often is in describing the mechanics of how God accomplishes His will. Evidently, God has chosen to reveal to

man the end result of what God has chosen to accomplish while leaving out the details of how it was actually performed. So it would seem with the innumerable unknown acts God has performed throughout history to preserve His word.” (Reid, email dated 1/23/17)

- Generally speaking, during the dispensation of grace, God works in His saints through the written word of God and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - Ephesians 3:20—God’s power is at work in the believer’s inner man during the current dispensation.
 - Philippians 2:13—once again God is at work today during the dispensation of grace but it is primarily an inward work.
 - I Thessalonians 2:13—this working of God is accomplished in the believer’s inner man through “the word of God.”
- It seems that God chose to preserve His word through Bible believing saints. As we will study in future lessons, in Time Past with respect to the Old Testament this was accomplished through the nation of Israel. Today during the dispensation of grace, preservation was accomplished through Bible believing saints who knew they had God’s word, and faithfully copied the text to the best of their ability without the aid of direct supernatural/miraculous intervention.
- At the end of the day here is what can know for sure.
 - God promised to preserve His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 119:111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 4:4; 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the original autographs.
 - This is self-evident because the original autographs no longer exist.
 - God did not supernaturally i.e., miraculously over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text if by miraculous one means exact identity.
 - Differences (textual variants) exist at every level of this discussion.
 - If God intended to preserve His word with verbatim identity (plenary verbal preservation) we would have historical/textual evidence that preservation occurred with that level of verbatim precision.
 - No such evidence exists.
 - If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt?

- I Corinthians 1:25-29; 2:5—I believe that the reason God chose to do it this way is because He wanted us to stand by faith in the power and wisdom of God and not in the wisdom and ability of man.
- This is why I am so excited about the revised understanding of preservation (Reset Button) that we have presented in Lessons 41 through 46. One can maintain it by faith in God’s word alone without need to insert rationalistic suppositions to rescue the enterprise.
- In short, the Bible does not use the term “providential” to describe how preservation was accomplished. Therefore, it is not helpful for us to do so either.

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Sunday, February 12, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 48 The Process of Preservation: The Multiplicity of Copies

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 47 we began a consideration of the *method* of preservation by looking at the question of whether “providential” was an adequate descriptor to describe how preservation occurred.
- We determined that it was better to not use the term for the following reasons: 1) the scriptures themselves never use the term “providential” to describe how preservation occurred, and 2) the meaning and usage of the term is widely varied and therefore has been the source of much confusion.
- That being said, we know that God was/is active in the preservation of His word on account of the fact that He promised He would preserve it. Our inability to describe everything about it does not negate God’s promise or His trustworthiness to see that it was accomplished.
- While we cannot know everything about the process, the scriptures do provide more information about the process of preservation than one might have heretofore realized.
- God’s design was to preserve His word in multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the original autographs. The goal of this lesson is to begin laying out the Biblical case for how preservation was accomplished.

Review of Lessons Learned from the Book of Jeremiah

- In Lesson 29 we used the book of Jeremiah as a means of framing the discussion of preservation as our study of the topic was commencing. To begin our discussion of the method of preservation, I would like to review that information.
- We need to not ascribe more importance to the original autographs than God does. Nor should we demand more from the doctrine of preservation than God does in His word. I want to use the book of Jeremiah to illustrate both of these points.
- Jeremiah 36:1-4—Baruch writes from the mouth of Jeremiah the original manuscript of Jeremiah 1-36 (Original #1).
 - Jeremiah 36:20-24—Jehoiakim and Jehudi destroy the original manuscript of Jeremiah. Note that the text explicitly states in verse 24 that “they were not afraid.” Do they not know that they just destroyed an original autograph?
- Jeremiah 36:27-32—God re-inspires Jeremiah in chapters 1 through 36 and adds “many like words” to what was destroyed in the fire by Jehoiakim (Original #2).

- Jeremiah 45:1—these additional words comprise chapters 45 through 52 at a minimum and possibly chapters 37 through 41 as well.
- Jeremiah 51:61-63—Jeremiah writing at the bidding of God the Holy Spirit tells Seraiah to destroy Original #2 by tying a stone to it and throwing it into the Euphrates River after it is read in Babylon. God almighty orders the destruction of Original #2. Why would God do this? Did God not know that a bunch of Fundamentalists in the 20th and 21st century would be looking for the originals?
- Daniel 9:2—over 70 years later Daniel comes to understand, by reading the book of Jeremiah, that the captivity was supposed to last 70 years. How is that possible if Original #2 was destroyed? Copies were made prior to the captivity. Once the copies were made, God did not care what happened to the original. The original contents of Original #2 were preserved via the copying process. Daniel had access to the inspired word of God through the copy he had in front of him.
- Matthew 2:17-18—contains a quotation from Jeremiah 31:15. First, how did Matthew have access to what Jeremiah said over 470 years (70-year captivity + 400 years of silence) later if God had not preserved His word. So, God secured the contents of the book of Jeremiah despite directing Jeremiah to have Original #2 thrown in the Euphrates River.
 - This seems to suggest that modern attempts to search for, find, and/or reconstruct the originals are out of step with how the Bible would teach you to think about things.
 - *Searching for the Original Bible* by James Price
 - *The Quest for the Original New Testament* by Comfort
- Second, notice that Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18 do not possess identical or verbatim wording i.e., they are not exactly the same even within the KJB. Before reading Matthew 2:18 it is important to note the wording of verse 17:
 - Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, **saying**,
- Verse 18 is not a free quotation of the book of Jeremiah but a precise quotation of Jeremiah 31:15

Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:18
Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, <i>and</i> bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they <i>were</i> not.	In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping <i>for</i> her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

- These facts demonstrate that demanding “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation is excessive and reaches beyond how the Bible would teach you to think about the matter. Necessitating “plenary verbal preservation” or “identical preservation” demands that the words be preserved exactly as they were given under inspiration without any wording differences of any kind. This standard cannot even be sustained within the text of the KJB itself—the very text that King James Only advocates claim is perfect.
- While these two verses (Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18) do not exhibit identical wording, they are “substantively equivalent” with each other i.e., they possess a “doctrinal equivalence.” They say/teach/communicate the exact same doctrinal content without using the exact same individual words. Put a different way, they constitute a different way of saying the same thing, NOT a substantive difference in meaning.
- So, from the example of Jeremiah outlined above, we can conclude the following:
 - The promise of preservation does not require the perpetual existence of the original autographs. According to God the Holy Spirit, faithful copies are a sufficient means of fulfilling the promise of preservation.
 - God the Holy Spirit does not require “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation.

The Apostle Paul on Inspired Copies

- I want to show you some things about II Timothy 3 that we did not consider during the first term when we were studying the doctrine of inspiration.
- II Timothy 3:16—all scripture is given by inspiration of God. It is God-breathed. The words literally came out of the mouth of God. Jesus said, “The words proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4) God dictated the words out. This verse says, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God.”
- II Timothy 3:15—how is it that Timothy knew the “holy scriptures” from his childhood? Did Timothy possess the original autographs for the entire Old Testament? No. What did Timothy and his family possess? Copies. If Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, as the text plainly asserts, then his mother and his grandmother possessed copies of the word of God and taught it to him.
- First, note that God the Holy Spirit calls the copies that Timothy possessed “holy scripture.” This is not my opinion or the opinion of some other man.
- Second, notice that verse 15 comes before verse 16. Verse 16 says that the copies that Timothy was taught from were inspired. Inspiration and preservation go hand in hand in the primary text used to teach inspiration. The scriptures in verse 16 are clearly qualified by the scriptures of verse 15, and it is a reference to copies of the Old Testament. They did not have the original manuscripts, but they had copies. The point here is not that the copies were themselves inspired

directly by God as were the original autographs but that the contents of the inspired originals were carried forward to the copies i.e., the copies were of equal weight and authority as the original autographs themselves, according to God the Holy Spirit.

- In other words, God the Holy Spirit makes no distinction between what was originally breathed out by God and the copies Timothy's family possessed. They are both called scripture by God the Holy Spirit.
- In the context, when Paul said, "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God," that is a reference to a real tangible thing that Timothy could hold in his hands. It was not a reference to some nebulous thing in the past that nobody ever saw at one time. Verse 16 is not a reference to something that Timothy could not find, but it is a reference to copies of the scriptures.
- Always remember that the original autographs were never at any point in history gathered and compiled together into a completed Bible like you have in front of you.
- I have critical commentaries on my bookshelf at home which maintain that II Timothy 3:15 is referring to the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Old Testament allegedly made in 250 B.C. If Paul is referring to the Septuagint in verse 15, then that means he calls a translation of the Old Testament the inspired word of God in verse 16. If this is the position of the scholars, why then do they get so upset when someone holding an English translation says, "This is the inspired word of God?" Do you see what a double standard that is?
- II Timothy 3 is a fantastic passage. One cannot separate the promise of preservation via the copying process from the primary text used to teach inspiration. Inspiration and preservation are inextricably linked. It is unfortunate that the two have been confounded by some and the corollary overstated. Likewise, it has been equally detrimental to the body of Christ to limit inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy to the original autographs alone on account of the presence of variant readings in the manuscript copies.
- The issue of preservation is not merely a philosophical necessity; it is a Biblical fact. It is not a philosophical necessity for me to say that God had to have done it because logic tells me. I believe in preservation because God says that He is going to preserve His word. You need to be aware of a proper estimation of what God's word is – it is the issue of inspiration plus preservation.

Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation

- John 10:34-35— Jesus Christ is referring to the word of God that these people possessed. My point is that they do not have the original autographs. They have copies of the word of God just like you and I have a copy of the word of God today. Jesus Christ says to them, "The copy is what God says to you, and it is what was written down, and it cannot be broken. It is the word of God, and it cannot be destroyed."

- Matthew 22:31— they did not have original manuscripts. They had copies of the word of God. They had copies that they were reading; and Jesus said, “You can pick that copy up, and when you read that thing, you are reading what God said to you.” That tells me that God’s design is to preserve His word in copies. Do not forget that! The process of preservation is going to be preserving the word in a multiplicity of copies – the multiplying of copies of the bible.
- The original manuscripts are not the only issue with God. Do not misunderstand me; they are an issue because God has to write it down to start with. Inspiration has to do with the original manuscripts, and they wrote them down. But, that is not the only issue either in inspiration or in preservation. It is certainly not the only issue with God. God designed to preserve what was written down in the original manuscripts in copies of those original manuscripts, and the copies are the issue with God.
- The original manuscripts are not the only issue. They are lost, and we do not have any of them. In fact, there has never been a time in human history where there was one bible collected together at one time made up of nothing but original manuscripts. So, if you must have original manuscripts, then you are in trouble. God has a more important plan than just trying to preserve one copy of the bible with that one copy being the original manuscript.
- In Grace School of the Bible, Pastor Richard Jordan said the following about the “original manuscripts” and textual criticism’s quest to reconstruct the original text.

- “The original manuscripts are not the issue with God. In fact, the term “original manuscripts” is just a catch phrase developed by scholars to discredit the word of God.

There is a system, an epistemology of thought and teaching, called “textual criticism.” You need to be familiar with that term. Textual criticism is simply a bunch of fellows trying to reconstruct the original text. They are trying to reconstruct and recreate and decide what the original manuscripts looked like. . .

When men try to reconstruct the original text, it results in having no absolute and final authority except for the scholars.

. . . When you hear about the older manuscripts and the original manuscripts, there is really a lot of phoniness about that. The older manuscript issue is a hoax. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia on page 2955 has a very interesting admission. They say that the older manuscripts are not in every case the better reading. That is an interesting admission for the scholars to make because it is exactly true. Just because a manuscript is older that does not mean that it is best. It might just be an old corruption.

In this class, you want to learn that the original manuscripts are not the only issue with God, but rather, he has a plan and a purpose to preserve his word in copies. His plan has never been to preserve the original manuscripts down through history, because that has not happened. In his word, it is very clear that the way he has designed to preserve his word is in a multiplicity of copies.” (Jordan, *MSS 101*—Lesson 10)

- Exodus 32:15-16— God did not even use a man to write these. These are the “original” originals. They were not even written by Moses, but they were written by God Himself. You cannot get much more original than that.

- Exodus 32:17-19—Moses had the “original” originals and destroyed them before anyone even had a chance to read them.
- Exodus 34:1-2, 27-28—God re-inspires original number 2.
- Deuteronomy 10:1-5—Moses brings original number 2 down from the mountain and places it in the ark. Do we still have access to the contents of these tablets of stone? Yes. How? Because we have access to the original tablets? No. Because the contents of those tablets were copied.
- The scenario here with Moses and the giving of the Law is very similar to our example from the book of Jeremiah. In both cases the original was destroyed. In both cases God re-inspired a second original. In both cases original number 2 was either lost or destroyed. Yet, we have access to what God told Moses in the Mount and what God said through the pen of Jeremiah in the absence of the original autographs. How are we granted this access? Through the process of the scriptures being copied.
- You need to understand that God’s design is not to preserve the originals. God’s design is to preserve His word through copies of the originals. It is not that the original has to be preserved in itself, but rather that copies of the original autographs are made that are just as authoritative as the originals.
- We will see that process in the next few lessons in great detail. The issue is not just the original manuscripts, but God has preserved His word in the form that He intends you and me to have it in, and He will do that no matter what – original manuscripts or no original manuscripts. The originals can be destroyed, and it does not affect the effectiveness of the preservation of the word of God for us today.

Sunday, February 26, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 49 The Process of Preservation: The Multiplicity of Copies, Part 2

Introduction

- In Lesson 48 we began looking at the Process of Preservation. In doing so we considered the following points:
 - Reviewed lessons learned from the book of Jeremiah
 - The promise of preservation does not require the perpetual existence of the original autographs. According to God the Holy Spirit, faithful copies are a sufficient means of fulfilling the promise of preservation.
 - God the Holy Spirit does not require “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation.
 - The Apostle Paul on inspired copies
 - II Timothy 3:15-16—God the Holy Spirit makes no distinction between what was originally breathed out by God and the copies Timothy’s family possessed. They are both called scripture by God the Holy Spirit.
 - Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation
 - Began looking at Biblical texts highlighting the fact that the Original Autographs are not nor have ever been the issue with God in preservation.
- Today, in Lesson 49, we want to pick up where we left off two weeks ago and continue looking at the Process of Preservation.

Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation

- Exodus 32:15-16— God did not even use a man to write these. These are the “original” originals. They were not even written by Moses, but they were written by God Himself. You cannot get much more original than that.
- Exodus 32:17-19—Moses had the “original” originals and destroyed them before anyone even had a chance to read them.
- Exodus 34:1-2, 27-28—God re-inspirers original number 2.
- Deuteronomy 10:1-5—Moses brings original number 2 down from the mountain and places it in the ark. Do we still have access to the contents of these tablets of stone? Yes. How? Because we have access to the original tablets? No. Because the contents of those tablets were copied.

- The scenario here with Moses and the giving of the Law is very similar to our example from the book of Jeremiah. In both cases the original was destroyed. In both cases God re-inspired a second original. In both cases original number 2 was either lost or destroyed. Yet, we have access to what God told Moses in the Mount and what God said through the pen of Jeremiah in the absence of the original autographs. How are we granted this access? Through the process of the scriptures being copied.
- You need to understand that God's design is not to preserve the originals. God's design is to preserve His word through copies of the originals. It is not that the original has to be preserved in itself, but rather that copies of the original autographs are made that are just as authoritative as the originals.
- Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26—the ark is called “the ark of the testimony” over and over again in the Bible. The reason it is called “the ark of the testimony” is because the word of God, the testimony of God, was placed in the box.
- Turn to Deuteronomy 17 and let's notice how they make copies of the contents of that box for the people and for the kings. God Almighty wants them to preserve His word. He sets up a mechanism where it is written and preserved in their midst, and they do not just carry it around in the ark. They keep the original autographs in the box for safekeeping, but that is not the only place that the word of God was. They are not just carrying that box around without anybody having access to its contents. They are making copies of what is in that box and people have those copies.
- Deuteronomy 17:14-18—in other words, he goes in there and gets that testimony (that original manuscript) and he is to write himself a copy of the word of God. When he sits on the throne, he is to have his own personal copy of God's word to Israel.
 - II Kings 11:12
- Deuteronomy 17:19-20—the king is to have his own copy of the word of God. It is the copies that are important. If the original manuscripts were all that was important to God, He would have told him to get the original manuscripts, which were available at that time. If the original manuscripts were the issue, He would have said, “Preserve that original manuscript and when the king comes, give them to him.” But, the copies are the issue. God Almighty wants His word copied and distributed.
 - “The copies of those original manuscripts are just as reliable as the originals. They are in no way inferior to the originals. Deuteronomy 17:19,20 makes it very clear that God Almighty will bless the king for following the copy, because the copy is as much the word of God as the original. When he follows the copy, he is keeping all the words of this law. So, the copies are in no way inferior to the original manuscripts. God wanted the copies made and the copies were made.” (Jordan, *MSS 101*)
- Deuteronomy 6:6-9—the common ordinary Israelite had the word of God; and he was required to memorize it, and to learn it, and to teach it to his children. They all had copies. Every Israelite did not have his own personal copy – maybe there was one copy per family. But, the king had his own personal copy.

- Psalm 19:7-9—David is reading copies of the word of God; he is not reading the bible in its original manuscripts. He says that it is perfect; it is sure; it is right; it is pure, true, and righteous altogether. It is pure. That is some testimony for a bunch of copies!
- Proverbs 25:1—God preserved His word in copies, and the copies are just as reliable and authoritative as the originals.
- There are two things that you want to remember.
 - God wants His word copied. He wants copies made of His word. Psalm 68:11 – The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it* (put it out).” They spread it abroad. God wants His word published abroad.
 - God’s design is to preserve His word in copies. The issue is not just that he wants everybody to have it, but that it is the copying process and method and mechanism whereby He will preserve it. These copies are accurate and reliable.
- Daniel 9:1-2—we have already seen that Daniel had copies of the book of Jeremiah while in captivity.
- Daniel 9:11-12—Daniel has the words that God wrote to him through Moses. He has a copy of that Mosaic Law. He has copies of the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. Do you see the importance he puts on it? He said, “And he hath confirmed his words.” Daniel assumed that the very words that he was reading were right and that they were God’s words.
- Zechariah 1:1-2— Zechariah was a companion of Ezra who first went back to the land after the Babylonian Captivity. Zechariah records God’s message to Israel after the Captivity.
- Zechariah 1:5-6—Zechariah is saying, “Your fathers and the prophets are all dead and gone, but my words live forever.” The words do not just live forever, but they are among the people; i.e., the people have them in their possession. Individual Israelites, like Daniel, had copies of what the prophets said, and the copies have the same authority as the original words. Those words and copies take hold of the fathers and these people, and it has happened to them just like the original said it would happen to them. The final absolute authority that is in the originals is maintained in the copies that they have, and the copies are out among the people.
- When God talks about preserving His word, he is not talking about preserving it in heaven in a copy that nobody has access to. He is talking about preserving it in a physical existence in the earth where people can hold it.
- Matthew 24:15-16— we just read about Daniel the prophet in Daniel 9. Daniel the prophet lives in approximately 600 BC (550 BC or something like that). In Matthew 24:15 standing in the shadow of the cross some 483 years later, the Lord Jesus tells Israel that when they see something come to pass that was written down hundreds of years earlier that they need to flee into the wilderness. Jesus Christ is saying, “You can read what Daniel the prophet wrote down in 550 or 600 BC right now when I am here with you in 30 AD.” But, that is not all. There will be some people three and a half years into the tribulation that will also read the same thing, so God Almighty has to preserve His word up until that time for someone to read Daniel 9 and

understand what they are reading. He is talking about preserving His word through time and through history into the future out there in the ages to come.

- Jesus Christ's attitude about it was that God Almighty was going to provide the word of God for people to read, not to hear about, not to understand the content of the message, but to read the words on the page of Daniel 9 in the tribulation period, which has to be out there in the future from today. That is preservation in copies. The word of God is preserved in copies because it says in Matthew 24, "Then let them which be in Judaea flee when they read the thing." He is talking to a whole bunch of people that are reading this. Nobody has the original manuscript of Daniel 9. The only other way to figure that is that somebody will discover the original manuscript during the tribulation, and they will start reading it then. If you believe that, is it not a whole lot easier for you to believe that God will preserve His word in copies?
- Luke 4:21—in this verse Christ is talking about what is written down on the page. He is reading a copy of the book of Isaiah, and he calls it scripture; and he says, "It is fulfilled in your ears." If the original manuscripts were the only issue, Jesus Christ would not be telling the truth in this verse. The contents of the copy Christ held in his hand could be fulfilled in their ears, which means the very words of God are being fulfilled there. The authority, and the accuracy, and the infallibility of the bible extend far past the originals. These issues extend beyond the original autographs into generations of copies, which is why Christ can hold it in His hand and call it "scripture." What is scripture according to the bible definition? The scripture is "God breathed." It is the words God dictated to be written down on a page. According to Christ in Luke 4, the words He just read were scripture. The copy Christ read from was just as accurate and authoritative as the original autographs.
- Acts 8:32, 35—twice in this passage God the Holy Spirit calls the copy of the book of Isaiah that the Eunuch has in his chariot scripture.
- Acts 15:21—notice in Acts 15 that there are copies of the word of God in every city in the territory. Moses is read every Sabbath day in every city in the region. There are copies of the word of God scattered all over the territory, and those copies are scripture. They are considered authoritative by Jesus Christ, and by Philip, and by the Holy Spirit, and by the Apostle Paul.
- Acts 17:2
- Acts 18:2—the scriptures are down in North Africa (Acts 8), Nazareth (Luke 4), Greece (Acts 17), and Asia Minor (Acts 18). These scriptures are spread throughout the Mediterranean world of the 1st century. As Paul travels, he encounters people who possess and know the scriptures. Apollos travels all around, and he is mighty in the scripture. The scriptures are all over that territory, via a multiplicity of copies.
- Daniel 10:20-21—the angel's statement about the scriptures in verse 21 is that they are "the scripture of truth," meaning the writings do not have any errors in them. There is no error in truth i.e., they do not report any information that is false. This is the same terminology; the "scripture" is used throughout the Bible to refer to copies that are in use across historical time periods and geographic settings.
- The modern notion that inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy apply to the original autographs alone is not a scriptural idea. No one who holds this position does so by faith in God's word.

They do so based upon rationalistic presuppositions. Throughout the Bible God the Holy Spirit uses the same word “scripture” (*graphe*) to refer to what was directly given under inspiration and the manuscript copies of the originals.

- God’s purpose and intent was to preserve His word via a multiplicity of accurate and reliable copies that were just as authoritative as the original autographs themselves. In the next Lesson we will study some things about how that process functioned in the Old Testament.

Sunday, March 5, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 50 The Process of Preservation: The People of Preservation in the Old Testament

Introduction

- In Lessons 48 and 49 we observed that God’s design was to preserve His word in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that were just as authoritative as the original autographs. According to God’s word, it was never His design to preserve His word by preserving the original documents.
- Today in Lesson 50 we want to look at the details of how this preservation would occur during the Old Testament. In order to accomplish this task we will be looking at the following three points:
 - Israel: The Institution for Preservation in the Old Testament
 - Importance of the Words “Keep” and “Preserve”
 - The Means of Preservation Within the Nation
 - The Role of Individuals and Families
 - The Role of the Levites and Scribes

Israel: The Institution for Preservation in the Old Testament

- Thus far, we have learned that God has promised to preserve His word. We have seen that the promise of preservation was accomplished through a multiplicity of accurate, reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the originals themselves. In this lesson, we will discuss the people God used in time past to accomplish the preservation of His word.
- God has always had an appointed group of people to copy and preserve His word. When it comes to the preservation of the Old Testament, there was a distinct group of people that were charged with the responsibility of preserving and copying the word of God in time past, specifically, the nation of Israel.
- Romans 3:1-2— according to Paul, the word of God was given to the nation Israel. One of the reasons, purposes, and functions for which God chose the nation of Israel was to have a vehicle through which He could give and preserve His word. In time past God entrusted His word to that nation.
 - Acts 7:38
 - Romans 9:3-5
- In an essay titled “Israel, the Means of Preservation in the Old Testament”, Dr. Kent Brandenburg identifies the nation of Israel as the “institution” whereby God accomplished the preservation of the Old Testament. Regarding the matter, Dr. Brandenbrug states in part:

- “God spoke to mankind in the Old Testament through the leadership of Israel. From the New Testament, there is the clear sense that the Jews considered the Law and the Prophets to be given to them for the keeping. Israel was God’s depository and repository for His Words in the Old Testament.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 105)
- We have seen that God has always taken the initiative with respect to preservation. God gave Moses the commandments, and Moses destroyed them. Then, God Almighty took the initiative to reproduce them by re-inspiring original number two. God is the one who took the initiative in preservation. Preservation is not something that God leaves for man to do because man wants to do it. Rather, it is God’s design, His purpose, and His plan.

Importance of the Words “Keep” and “Preserve”

- Psalm 12:6-7—we already established back in Lessons 31 and 32 that these verses are talking about the preservation of God’s word not the people. Verse 7 contains two Hebrew words that are significant to our discussion this morning in Lesson 50 regarding the process of how preservation occurred.
 - *Shamar*—or “keep” in Psalm 12:7
 - *Natsar*—or “preserve” in Psalm 12:7
- *Shamar*—“is used with the meaning of “to hedge about, guard, protect, attend to, or exercise great care over.” *Shamar* appears in Genesis 3:24 as the activity of the Cherubim in protecting or guarding the Garden of Eden after God had evicted Adam and Eve. Other locations give this same sense of guarding against intruders with reference to gatekeepers (Is. 21:11) or to watchman (Song 5:7). In Genesis 2:15 *shamar* is used for Adam’s activity in taking care of or tending to the things of the Garden of Eden. In this way it is also used for the keeping of a flock (Gen. 30:31) or a house (II Sam. 15:16). In Proverbs 6:24, *shamar* characterizes the guardianship of a young man from the strange woman, in essence, the instruction of a parent protecting his moral purity. Cain in Genesis 4:9 asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” This use of *shamar* applies to the defending or attending to someone for his safekeeping.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 98-99)
- *Natsar*—“has the understanding of “protect, maintain, obey, and preserve.” Proverbs 27:18 clearly uses it in the sense of protecting or preserving an item of agriculture, saying, “Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof; so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.” *Natsar* was used to communicate the function of protecting military or agricultural properties (Job 27:18; Nah. 2:1), and those employed in this activity were called watchmen (Jer. 31:6; II Kin. 17:9; 18:8). In Psalm 141:3 *natsar* decries the ethical maintenance of one’s mouth or vocal mechanism (Prov. 13:3). The same use of *natsar* related to the preservation of one’s heart (Prov. 4:23), tongue (Ps. 34:14), and path of life (Prov. 16:17).” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 98)
- “Both of these words as witnessed in their usage, contain the strong sense of “guarding, protecting, tending, preserving, or maintaining.” Any object toward which these two verbs might direct their action would receive this same essential trust. How these verbs are used with objects other than “words” or some synonym of “words” should be applied to their understanding when they are used with “words” or some synonym of “words.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 99)

- Psalm 119 brings together the use of the Hebrew verbs *shamar* and *natsar* along with a bunch of synonyms for the “words.” As we saw in Lesson 33, throughout Psalm 119 a host of different yet synonymous words are used interchangeably to refer to the scriptures. Please note that the number in parenthesis indicates that number of times that the word or phrase occurs in Psalm 119.
 - Psalm 119:1— “law of the Lord” (24 times)
 - Psalm 119:2— “testimonies” (22 times)
 - Psalm 119:3— “his ways” (6 times)
 - Psalm 119:4— “thy precepts” (21 times)
 - Psalm 119:5— “thy statutes” (22 times)
 - Psalm 119:6— “thy commandments” (21 times)
 - Psalm 119:7— “righteous judgements” (18 times)
 - Psalm 119:9, 11— “thy word” (38 times)
- Virtually every verse in Psalm 119 contains a reference to the words of God. There are 176 verses in the Psalm and 172 of them contain one of the words identified above. As the preeminent chapter regarding the word of God in all of scripture, Psalm 119 combines these synonyms for scripture with the two Hebrew verbs in question. Unless otherwise noted, the verb in each of the following verses is *shamar*.
 - Psalm 119:2 (*natsar*), 4, 5, 8, 17, 22 (*natsar*), 33 (*natsar*), 34 (*natsar*), 55, 56 (*natsar*), 57, 60, 63, 67, 69 (*natsar*), 88, 100 (*natsar*), 101, 106, 115 (*natsar*), 129 (*natsar*), 134, 136, 145 (*natsar*), 146, 158, 167, 168
- Psalm 12:6-7—God has seen to the keeping, guarding, protecting, and preservation of His words because He promised that He would (see also Psalm 146:5-6). God has His part in the preservation process and ensures it. That being said, the way God executes the process is through the cooperation of believing men. Simply stated, what God is keeping He wants men keeping. God ensures the keeping but He uses men to do it. “No one should doubt that God will keep His Words, but this does not take away from the responsibilities that man has in preservation. Repeatedly, God instructs man to keep His Words.”
 - Exodus 15:26; 20:5-6—“keep” = *shamar*
 - Leviticus 18:4-5—“keep” = *shamar*
 - Deuteronomy 4:2; 11:22; 29:9—“keep” = *shamar*
 - Joshua 22:5—“keep” = *shamar*

- I Kings 2:3—“keep” = *shamar*
- II Kings 17:13—“keep” = *shamar*
- I Chronicles 29:19—“keep” = *shamar*
- II Chronicles 34:31—“keep” = *shamar*
- Nehemiah 1:9—“keep” = *shamar*
- Psalm 78:7—“keep” = *shamar*
- Ecclesiastes 12:13—“keep” = *shamar*
- Ezekiel 11:20—“keep” = *shamar*
- Daniel 9:4—“keep” = *shamar*
- Some might argue the word “keep” is essentially a synonym for “do” or “obey”; according to Dr. Kent Brandenburg there are several reasons why that is not true.
 - First is the meaning or usage of *natsar* and *shamar*. These words do not mean “do” or “obey.” They do mean “keep, protect, preserve, or guard.”
 - Second, there are Hebrew words for “do” and “obey.” Deuteronomy 12:1 uses “do” with reference to God’s Word when it says, (quotes verse) . . . There is more to *natsar* and *shamar* than just “doing” or “obeying.”
 - Third, there are several verses which highlight a difference between “keep” and “do” or “obey” in the same verse.
 - Leviticus 25:18—“keep” = *shamar*; “do” = *asah*
 - Deuteronomy 13:4—“keep” = *shamar*; “obey” = *shama*
 - Ezekiel 36:27—“keep” = *shamar*; do = *asah*
 - Ezekiel 37:24—“observe” = *shamar*; “do” = *asah* (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 102-103)
- In summation of this point Dr. Brandenburg writes:
 - “The word “keep” (*natsar* or *shamar*) is not used as a synonym for “do” or “obey.” Instead, it has its own meaning that was used to distinguish a particular activity with reference to His Words.

God’s Words, all and each of them, are kept by more than just doing or obeying them. “Keep” elevates the task beyond solely “obeying” or “doing.” God’s Words are preserved by His people through their believing, preaching, teaching, practicing, and

defending them (in addition, I would say by copying them). Every one of these tasks is taught in God's Word and they are all interrelated. Belief leads to teaching and practice. Teaching leads to belief and practice. Practice leads to belief and teaching. If Scripture is lost because it is not defended, then it cannot be believed, taught, or practiced. God's word is defended by believing, teaching, and practicing it. . . . When Scripture becomes less valued or important because of wrong belief, teaching, and practice, then Scripture will be ignored and lost by the ones responsible for keeping it. Vigilance in keeping (*natsar* and *shamar*) requires more than just doing or obeying; it involves all of the activities that will allow God's Word to be passed down from one generation to the next for the glory of the Lord." (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 103)

The Means of Preservation within the Nation

- The "keeping" or preservation of the scriptures in time past was both a corporate and individual charge. This is observable by noting the use of both singular and plural personal pronouns with "to keep."
 - Psalm 119:17—the individual believer is responsible for the preservation of Scripture.
 - Leviticus 26:3—the entire nation of Israel was also responsible for the preservation of Scripture.
- We see therefore that the job of preserving God's word was both individual and corporate. Individual families played a role in keeping/preserving God's word as did the God ordained religious hierarchy of the nation.

The Role of Individuals and Families

- "Part of the continuation of any aspect of Israel's worship was dependent on the practice of individual families as led by their fathers. Worship at the temple only continued when fathers preserved it by bringing their animals to that location for sacrificial offerings. Passing down God's Word relied upon the diligent transfer to the children. As the nation was God's preserving institution, the family accomplished this task on the most fundamental level." (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 106)
 - Deuteronomy 6:6-9
 - Deuteronomy 11:18-21
- "When parents keep God's Words themselves, and pass them down to their children, then nations also keep and pass them on." (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 106)

The Role of the Levites and Scribes

- Deuteronomy 31:24-26—Moses took the initial section of the word of God when it was completed there, and he put it in the ark for keeping. He committed that text that he began to write to the priest, (the Levites). Those Levites were charged with the responsibility of keeping the book.

- Moses did not put the word in the ark because he no longer wanted it. He was not trying to get rid of it. Neither did Moses put the word in the ark because he knew he would die, and he wanted it kept safe. If Moses was just worried about the fact that he would die, what do you think he would have done with it? Who would he have given it to? He surely would have given it to Joshua because Joshua would be his successor. But, Moses did not give it to Joshua, rather, he put it in the ark, and he committed it to the Levites to take care of. Moses put the word in the ark because God's design was not just that Joshua had the word, but that there would be a group of people selected out and charged with the responsibility of taking care of His word. In time past the Levites were charged with the care and oversight of God's word.
- Deuteronomy 10:1-9— God said to put the word in the ark, and then He raises up an entire group of people to take care of the ark. God sets up an entire tribe of people to do the job of preserving His word. It is important that you see that. The Old Testament is to be preserved by the tribe of Levi, especially the issue of the priesthood. One of their primary functions has to do with preserving the word of God and teaching the word of God. God never designed to preserve His word by writing it and putting it up on a library shelf somewhere, just like they did not put the word in the ark just to put it away.
- Deuteronomy 31:9-12, 19—the idea is that the word is to be copied, and it is to be taught to the people. There is a group of people, an entire tribe in Israel (the Levites), chosen by God and separated from all of their brethren and given the responsibility, among other things, of keeping that book, and copying that book, and preserving that book, and teaching that book to the nation.
- We will continue our discussion of this point in Lesson 51.

Works Cited

Brandenburg, Kent. "Israel, the Means of Preservation in the Old Testament" in *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*. El Sobrante, CA: Pillar & Ground Publishing, 2003.

Sunday, March 12, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 51 The Process of Preservation: The People of Preservation in the Old Testament, Part 2

Introduction

- In this lesson, I want to continue our study of preservation in the Old Testament by finishing what we began last week.
- Last week in Lesson 50 we looked at the Process of Preservation in the Old Testament. In doing so, we observed that the word of God was committed to the nation of Israel in time past. One of the purposes that God had in forming the nation Israel, in raising the nation up, and preserving her throughout time past was to have a vehicle through which He could write and preserve His word.
- In Lesson 50 last week we studied the Hebrew verbs *shamar* (“keep” in Psalm 12:7) and *Natsar* (“preserve” in Psalm 12:7) and how they relate to the fundamental promise of preservation. We observed how these Hebrew verbs are used interchangeably with various synonyms for the “law of the Lord” i.e., God’s word to Israel in Psalm 119 (“law of the Lord” (24 times); “testimonies” (22 times); “his ways” (6 times); “thy precepts” (21 times); “thy statutes” (22 times); “thy commandments” (21 times); “righteous judgements” (18 times); “thy word” (38 times)).
 - Psalm 119:2 (*natsar*), 4, 5, 8, 17, 22 (*natsar*), 33 (*natsar*), 34 (*natsar*), 55, 56 (*natsar*), 57, 60, 63, 67, 69 (*natsar*), 88, 100 (*natsar*), 101, 106, 115 (*natsar*), 129 (*natsar*), 134, 136, 145 (*natsar*), 146, 158, 167, 168 (*natsar*).
- Furthermore, we considered the following three reasons for why the verb “keep” is not a synonym for “do” or “obey.”
 - First is the meaning or usage of *natsar* and *shamar*; these words do not mean “do” or “obey.” They do mean “keep, protect, preserve, or guard.”
 - Second, there are Hebrew words for “do” and “obey.” Deuteronomy 12:1 uses “do” with reference to God’s Word when it says, (quotes verse) . . . There is more to *natsar* and *shamar* than just “doing” or “obeying.”
 - Third, there are several verses which highlight a difference between “keep” and “do” or “obey” in the same verse.
 - Leviticus 25:18—“keep” = *shamar*; “do” = *asah*
 - Deuteronomy 13:4—“keep” = *shamar*; “obey” = *shama*
 - Ezekiel 36:27—“keep” = *shamar*; do = *asah*
 - Ezekiel 37:24—“observe” = *shamar*; “do” = *asah* (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 102-103)

- Since “keep” and “do/obey” are not synonymous, they are not dependent upon each other. Israel’s inability to “obey” the law does not hamper her ability to preserve it. If this were the case, there would not have been copies of the Old Testament available during the earthly ministry of Christ. Yet, throughout the Old Testament Israel demonstrated time again that she was incapable of obeying and fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law.
- Last week when we ran out of time, we had been looking at the means by which preservation would be accomplished within the nation of Israel. In doing so, we had identified the role of individuals and families and had just begun to discuss the role of the Levites and scribes.
- This morning I would like to finish our discussion of preservation in the Old Testament before beginning a study of the New Testament next week.

The Means of Preservation Within the Nation

- The “keeping” or preservation of the scriptures in time past was both a corporate and individual charge. This is observable by noting the use of both singular and plural personal pronouns with “to keep.”
 - Psalm 119:17—the individual believer is responsible for the preservation of Scripture.
 - Leviticus 26:3—the entire nation of Israel was also responsible for the preservation of Scripture.
- We see, therefore, that the job of preserving God’s word was both individual and corporate. Individual families played a role in keeping/preserving God’s word as did the God ordained religious hierarchy of the nation.

The Role of Individuals and Families

- “Part of the continuation of any aspect of Israel’s worship was dependent on the practice of individual families as led by their fathers. Worship at the temple only continued when fathers preserved it by bringing their animals to that location for sacrificial offerings. Passing down God’s Word relied upon the diligent transfer to the children. As the nation was God’s preserving institution, the family accomplished this task on the most fundamental level.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 106)
 - Deuteronomy 6:1-9—this passage highlights both the individual and corporate aspects of preservation.
 - Verses 1-5—are corporate in that they refer to the entire nation and utilize *shamar* twice in verses 2 and 3.
 - Verses 6-9—are individual. It follows therefore, that one way the nation was to keep the statutes was at the local level of the home in verses 6 through 9.
 - Deuteronomy 11:18-22—the individual activity of verses 18 through 21 have a cumulative effect in verse 22; note the “ye.” When each family acted in accordance to verses 18 through 21 the net impact in verse 22 is that the nation kept the law.

“When parents keep God’s Words themselves, and pass them down to their children, then nations also keep and pass them on.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 106)

The Role of the Levites and Scribes

- Deuteronomy 31:24-26—Moses took the initial section of the word of God when it was completed there, and he put it in the ark for keeping. He committed that text that he began to write to the priest (the Levites). Those Levites were charged with the responsibility of keeping the book.
- Moses did not put the word in the ark because he no longer wanted it. He was not trying to get rid of it. Neither did Moses put the word in the ark because he knew he would die, and he wanted it kept safe. If Moses was just worried about the fact that he would die, what do you think he would have done with it? Who would he have given it to? He surely would have given it to Joshua because Joshua would be his successor. But, Moses did not give it to Joshua, rather, he put it in the ark, and he committed it to the Levites to take care of. Moses put the word in the ark because God’s design was not just that Joshua had the word, but that there would be a group of people selected out and charged with the responsibility of taking care of His word. In time past the Levites were charged with the care and oversight of God’s word.
- Deuteronomy 10:1-9— God said to put the word in the ark, and then He raises up an entire group of people to take care of the ark. God sets up an entire tribe of people to do the job of preserving His word. It is important that you see that. The Old Testament is to be preserved by the tribe of Levi, especially the issue of the priesthood. One of their primary functions has to do with preserving the word of God and teaching the word of God. God never designed to preserve His word by writing it and putting it up on a library shelf somewhere, just like they did not put the word in the ark just to put it away.
- Deuteronomy 31:9-12, 19—the idea is that the word is to be copied, and it is to be taught to the people. There is a group of people, an entire tribe in Israel (the Levites), chosen by God and separated from all of their brethren and given the responsibility, among other things, of keeping that book, and copying that book, and preserving that book, and teaching that book to the nation.
- II Chronicles 15:3—the purpose of the priesthood was to teach the people. They taught them doctrine out of the word of God just as they had conducted and presided over the sacrifices. All of those things taught doctrine to the people. Eventually, the priests forgot the doctrine and kept the ritual.
- Malachi 2:4-7—do you see what the function of the priest was? That priest’s lips should keep knowledge. If you wanted knowledge from God, and if you wanted to know what the word of God says, that priest’s job was to preserve that and have it ready for you when you needed it.
- In addition to the Levites, God chose men with Israel as a whole to spearhead the stewardship of the Words of God. These unique individuals were the scribes.
- Micah 3:8-12—people do things for fame, and for money, and for position, and for reputation, and yet they are always real pious to say, “Is not the Lord among us?” That is what these guys

are doing in Micah. These priests became a part of Satan's policy of evil against the word of God. They became a part of Satan's policy of corruption – corrupting the word of God. You can see his policy of corruption in operation there when you see the judges of the people doing it for money, and the priests teaching for money, and the preachers preaching for money, not for the Lord.

- Isaiah 36:22, 37:1-2—notice that Hezekiah had faithful scribes with him.
- Proverbs 25:1—these faithful scribes copied the word of God for King Hezekiah as part of the job.
- Jeremiah 36:12, 21-22—contrast the functioning of Hezekiah's scribes with the conduct and activity of Jehoiakim's scribe Elishama.
- Jeremiah 8:4-9
 - Deuteronomy 28—they should have known what was coming based upon what God told Israel would come upon them in the law.
- These verses highlight the fact that God's promise to preserve and the adversary's attempt to corrupt/destroy the word of God are occurring at the same time.
- Ezra 7:6—Ezra was down in Babylon for seventy years and had the word of God with him in Babylon. Recall from a previous study that Daniel had access to the book of Jeremiah while in captivity in Babylon.
- Ezra 7:10-12, 21, 27—God Almighty had scribes. He had His faithful men to preserve His word, and the job got done.
 - Nehemiah 8:5, 8-9—from these passages we observe that within the nation the scribes were charged with the responsibility of preserving/copying God's word. The scribes would, copy, read, and teach God's word.
- In other words, I am trying to get you to see that God's word was preserved through the dynamic of people handling it, not in one copy sitting on a bookshelf for 500 or 1000 years. That is not the way God preserves His word. He preserves His word by it being in the hands of a certain kind of people, and those people are charged with the responsibility to execute God's purpose.

The Fall of Israel

- When you come to the New Testament, you have a unique problem that you do not have when you are dealing with the Old Testament. Today, living during the dispensation of grace, the nation of Israel has fallen from her favored time past status. Therefore, God is no longer using that nation the same way He did in time past.

- Much of the pro-King James literature suffers from not having the correct dispensational framework from which to evaluate preservation in the New Testament.
- With the fall of Israel, did everything change? What happened with God's design? What happened to His procedure for preserving His word now that the people that He used in time past had been set aside?
- With the fall of Israel, the special group of people God uses to preserve his word changes. But, the process itself does not change. The design stays the same; however, the group of people changes.
- It is important to understand that the process remains the same even though the people God uses to preserve His word changed. Israel fell and God set them aside, yet He did not set aside His design to preserve His word through a multiplicity of copies. The people changed, but the process and design stayed the same.
- We will begin to study these matters next week.

Works Cited

Brandenburg, Kent. "Israel, the Means of Preservation in the Old Testament" in *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*. El Sobrante, CA: Pillar & Ground Publishing, 2003.

Sunday, March 19, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 52 The Process of Preservation: Preservation and the New Testament

- Since Lesson 47 we have been looking at the Method and Process of preservation. The process that we have been discussing, which is clearly laid out in the scripture, demonstrates that God's design was to preserve His word in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies. According to the word of God, these copies were just as authoritative and reliable as the original autographs themselves. These copies were distributed among the people to be read, studied, and memorized.
- In Lessons 50 and 51 we studied how the Process of Preservation occurred in the Old Testament. In order to accomplish this purpose, we considered the following three points:
 - Israel: The Institution for Preservation in the Old Testament
 - Importance of the Words “Keep” and “Preserve”
 - The Means of Preservation Within the Nation
 - The Role of Individuals and Families
 - The Role of the Levites and Scribes
- We concluded Lesson 51 by discussing the fall of Israel and its potential impact upon the doctrine of preservation. In doing so we concluded that with the fall of Israel, the special group of people God used to preserve His word changed, but the process itself did not change. The design stayed the same; however, the group of people changed.
- With this in mind we want to begin a consideration of the Process of Preservation in the New Testament.

Preservation and the New Testament

- When discussing the preservation of the New Testament we are faced with a unique challenge. There are not any scriptures written after the New Testament from which one can demonstrate that the New Testament was preserved.
- One of the ways I demonstrated to you that the Old Testament was preserved was by looking in the New Testament and seeing that they had copies of the Old Testament. It was not just that God said that He was going to preserve His word. If Jesus can go into Nazareth and open up a copy of the book of Isaiah and read from it and call it scripture, then I know the book of Isaiah had been preserved until 30 AD when Jesus read it in Luke 4. But we do not have anything like that for the New Testament. There is no way to go to any later scripture to authoritatively identify the fact that the New Testament has been preserved like you can with the Old Testament. Therefore, you must understand the doctrine of preservation as outlined in the scriptures and stand upon it by faith as a Biblical FACT.
- When we come to the New Testament, we are placed in a position where we must walk by faith and not by sight. We are required to understand the promise of preservation as set forth in

scripture. By this time, you certainly should understand it. If you have studied through your bible, you should certainly understand the doctrine of preservation, and the process involved; the fact that God designed to preserve His word through a process of copying and that He entrusted that task to a particular group of people. When you come to the New Testament, you no longer need that demonstration. You can rest upon the bible FACT that what God can preserve before our dispensation, He can preserve during the dispensation of grace so that we can have it.

- The reason we know that God preserved the New Testament is because we have demonstrated beyond doubt from the word of God that God promised to preserve the Old Testament and observed its historical reality by looking at the New Testament. It follows therefore, that God would do the same for the New Testament.
- In this lesson, by looking at six to eight passages, I want you to see that during the lifetime of Paul and the apostles who wrote the New Testament (Mark and Luke were not apostles, but Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude were apostles), copies of their writings, i.e. the New Testament books, were being made. The New Testament books were collected together and distributed among the saints as they were being written. These books were being studied as scripture during the lifetime of the New Testament apostles. They were authoritatively recognized as scripture. They were not recognized as scripture hundreds of years later by the decrees of some apostate church council, but they were recognized as scripture during the lifetime of the men who wrote the New Testament.
- If you can understand the design that God followed to preserve His word, it is not strange when you come to the New Testament and find that copies of the word of God were readily available, and they were recognized as scripture while the New Testament was still in the process of being written.

1st Century Copies of the New Testament

- II Peter 3:1-2—when we looked at that verse previously, I pointed out to you that Peter’s attitude towards the books that he was writing was that they are just as authoritative as what the Old Testament prophets wrote.
- II Peter 3:15-16—do you see Peter’s estimation of what Paul wrote? Peter said that they take Paul’s epistles and they twist them as they do the other scriptures.
- The Apostle Peter obviously considered the epistles of Paul to be scripture. Notice that Peter had all of Paul’s epistles that were written at that time, according to II Peter 3:16.
- It is interesting that Peter had all of Paul’s epistles, and he had them for some time. It was not just Peter that had Paul’s epistles because folks were studying them to the point that some were already wresting them during the first century.
- By the way, these epistles were not written to Peter, nor were any of Paul’s epistles written to the Jerusalem church. Paul’s epistles were written to the Gentile churches, and then copies were made, and Peter had copies of them down in Palestine. Peter was not the only one that had copies; all of the people to whom Peter is writing possessed copies as well. They were studying them, and they were getting confused doctrinally by not rightly dividing the word of truth.

- When Paul says to rightly divide the word, the saints of the first century had access to the scriptures. Part of what they had access to was the prophetic program and part it was the mystery program (Paul's epistles), and they had to rightly divide it. The scriptures were being written, copied, and placed into the hands of the people. Then those copies were being distributed far and wide, and they were recognized, at that time, as being the word of God. Peter calls the copies of Paul's epistles scripture i.e., of equal authority to the originals. The only way that could happen is just to have a bunch of people with copies of Paul's epistles and copies of the rest of the word of God. They had copies and none of them possessed the original manuscripts. If one thinks that Peter is referring to the original manuscripts then Peter, a circumcision apostle, would have needed to have stolen the Gentile church's epistles in order to have them in his personal possession.
- The subject of verse 16 is "as also in all *his* epistles." People were studying them and twisting them like the other scriptures. "His epistles" in verse 16 are clearly considered to be scripture. Peter has them and the people that Peter is writing to in the Jewish church have them, and they have had them for some time because they had them long enough to have been studying them.
- I Timothy 4:13-16—notice the instructions that Paul gave to Timothy in verse 13 – "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." What is Timothy supposed to read? From what is Timothy supposed to exhort the people? From where does his authority come? Paul is telling Timothy to read the scripture. He is to exhort the people from the scripture. He is to teach them doctrine from the scripture. Paul expects Timothy to have the scripture to teach, and to preach, and to read for these people. When he says in verse 15, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all," Paul is telling Timothy to pay attention to his own personal study. Paul is telling Timothy to be a student.
- I Timothy 5:17—"To labor in the word" is to spend time studying the scriptures. According to this passage, there were people who had been studying the book and teaching it to others. Paul is instructing them to look out among themselves and to take notice of those elder(s) that are studying their bibles and teaching it to the saints. They were already doing this before they received this epistle from Paul, and that is my point. Paul is not telling them to study this epistle (I Timothy) and preach this epistle, but Paul is telling them to look out among themselves and find the men who were already studying the scriptures before Timothy received the epistle. Thus, they have scripture other than I Timothy that they had been studying. Timothy is instructed to give double honor to these men who were laboring in the word.
- I Timothy 5:18—in other words, these people that Paul is writing to have the word of God. Paul quotes Deuteronomy, but he also quotes Luke. Paul says, "The scripture says that." Do you know what Paul is doing? Paul is saying, "Go look it up for yourself." Those people had the book of Deuteronomy, so they could look it up, but they also had access to the book of Luke. They had the Old Testament, and they had portions of the New Testament already. What they did not have was the original autographs.
- Acts 1:1-2—notice the phrase "the former treatise." It is obvious that there is a former book and that its existence is known during the 1st century. The people at Ephesus, where Timothy was pastoring, had copies of the book of Luke. Luke was a traveling companion to the apostle Paul, and he was a close friend of both Paul and Timothy. These people did not have the original manuscript of the book of Luke. Theophilus had the original manuscript of the book of Luke, and these people had copies of the book of Luke. All of this is incidental to what is being taught in the text. The subjects of these passages are something else, but as you read the passages you pick

up on the fact that these people had the New Testament scriptures in their hands. These scriptures were being collected together, copied, disturbed among the people, and were just as authoritative as the original autographs. According to God the Holy Spirit, the copies of the book of Deuteronomy, for example, were just as much “God-breathed” as what Moses placed in the ark at the end of Deuteronomy.

- II Timothy 2:15—as previously mentioned, in order to have the ability to rightly divide the word of truth; they needed to have access to the word of truth in order to rightly divide it. There is not any other reasonable/logical conclusion one can reach. These first century saints must have had the scriptures; they had some books containing the prophetic program and some books containing the kingdom program. Just as you and I today, they had to rightly divide between prophecy and mystery. However, there were some people at that time who were not doing such a good job of rightly dividing the word.
 - II Timothy 1:15—we see here the apostasy from the doctrine that Paul had given already. Hence, Paul exhorts Timothy to study to be approved of God, rightly dividing the word. Paul said, “Do not make the mistakes of mixing the two together like these other men.”
- II Timothy 4:1-2—they are to take the book and preach the word. The reference is obviously not just to the Old Testament, but to Paul’s epistles as well. Paul wants them to preach the doctrine committed to His trust. When Paul says, “Preach the word,” he is not just telling them to go out and preach any part of the bible, especially not after II Timothy 2:15.
 - II Timothy 1:13—I submit to you that Paul’s epistles present to you that “form of sound words” which are to be preached today. Paul’s epistles are what equip the man of God in II Timothy 3:16, 17 “unto all good works.”
- Acts 20:28-32—is Paul talking about the Old Testament? No, Paul is not talking about the Old Testament. The Old Testament is not what we are to teach in this age, and it is not what Paul commends them to teach. The Old Testament is not called “the word of his grace” in the scriptures. The word of his grace is that word that is committed to Paul.
 - Ephesians 3:2—that is what was committed to Paul. Thus, when Paul says, “I commend you to the word of his grace,” he is talking about the word of God that had been written down by him. Paul wrote the book of Galatians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians and the book of Romans by the time Acts 20:1-3 took place. They had a considerable amount of the word of God written down, collected together, and in their hands.
 - Colossians 3:16—the word of Christ is that word that the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven’s glory, committed to him through the apostle Paul. Folks, it has to do with the word of God.
 - Colossians 2:7—Epaphras and these Colossians had copies of the word of God with them, and Epaphras could teach them, and they could go home and study.
 - Ephesians 3:1-4—before this writing, Paul wrote down some things about the mystery. He said, “I wrote them afore, whereby, when you read them.” Well, where had he written them before? He wrote I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, and Romans. Paul said, “When you read those things, you will

understand.” The implication is that these people at Ephesus had copies of those prior books. Now, these people are the same people in Acts 20:32 that he commends to the word of his grace. The elders from the church at Ephesus are the people that we just read about in Acts 20. The implication about the Ephesian church is that they had Paul's prior epistles. They read what he wrote earlier.

- I am simply trying to drive home the fact that these 1st century saints had copies of God's word. The New Testament text was being written down, copied out, collected together, and distributed just like we studied with respect to the Old Testament. Thus, one can have faith that the same process that existed back in the Old Testament, demonstrated in the New Testament to have worked for 1500 or 2000 years, was also at work during the dispensation of grace.
- I Thessalonians 5:27—this is one of the earliest epistles, if not the first then the second epistle that Paul wrote. There is a possibility that Paul wrote the book of Galatians before he wrote Thessalonians. But in the earliest epistles that Paul wrote, he tells them that he expects them to see that this epistle is read and distributed among all the holy brethren. By the way, I Thessalonians 5:27 is quite clear that Paul sees the design of preservation existing in copies of his epistles being made and distributed among the various churches.
- Galatians 1:1-2—the book of Galatians was a circular letter. It was one letter written to a number of different churches in the region of Galatia. Now, you know what would have happened when it got to the church in Lystra before they sent it to the church in Iconium, don't you? You know good and well that someone made a copy of that epistle before passing it along to the next assembly. Paul intended the book to make the rounds and to be a norm and a standard for doctrine in those churches.
- Colossians 4:15-16—Paul wants this epistle read, not just at Colosse, but at the Laodicean church as well. Colossians is one of the prison epistles, and it was one of the last books Paul wrote. Paul's design, from the very beginning to the very end, was that his epistles were to be read obviously by the people he wrote them to, but also in all the other churches too. Paul wants the information, and the doctrine, to get out to everybody everywhere.

Conclusion

- I Corinthians 5:9 – “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.” Where is the epistle that contains that information that Paul wrote? It is obviously prior to this epistle, but this is I Corinthians. Paul is saying that he wrote them a letter before this one. This epistle is I Corinthians in our bible, but Paul is saying that he wrote them a previous letter. If that is not bad enough, Paul says in II Corinthians 1, “I wrote you a letter between I Corinthians and II Corinthians.” Thus, there are at least four letters that you can identify, but only two of them show up in your bible. Therefore, I know that there are many things that the apostle Paul wrote that were not the divinely inspired word of God. But, what was divinely inspired was being collected together and authoritatively identified as such. In the next lesson, we will study how they distinguished between one epistle and another and how they knew which one was the inspired word of God and which one was not. God had a group of people whose function in the church, at that time, was to authoritatively identify which epistles were the word of God. They identified which epistle was not the word of God. They identified the word of God and made authoritative copies of it and made sure it was distributed.

- There is one other thing that I want you to notice. Obviously, these people are collecting and sharing copies of the word of God. They are commanded to do so. In summation, the process of New Testament preservation was the same as the Old Testament process –through copies. God had a special group of people charged with the responsibility of seeing that the task was carried out. I wanted you to see in this lesson that the process was the same in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament. You have to base your faith on the fact that the New Testament has been preserved.

Sunday, April 23, 2017— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 53 The Process of Preservation: The Preservation of the New Testament, Part 2

Introduction

- A few weeks ago, in Lesson 52 we looked at how the process of preservation established in the Old Testament was continued in the New Testament despite the fall of Israel. The process is simply that God will preserve His word through a multiplicity of reliable, accurate copies of the original manuscripts. Copies of copies eventually were handed down to us, and they are reliable and accurate. That is how God has preserved His word.
- We have seen how God preserved His word in time past. He used a special group of people in the Old Testament—the nation Israel. Within the nation of Israel, He had the Levites (the priesthood) as well as scribes to preserve His word. We saw that process demonstrated in the Old Testament beginning with the books that Moses wrote, and then other books were continually added to the Torah.
- In our last lesson we saw that with the fall of Israel the process remained the same. In other words, God is still preserving His word through a multiplicity of copies, rather than just preserving one original manuscript or one copy of the original manuscript.
- But, with the fall of Israel, the following question arises. What about the people? Who are the ones responsible for preserving the New Testament? In the New Testament there was also a special group of people during the days of the apostles, people whose function (one of their functions) it was to identify, copy, and collect together the word of God just as in the Old Testament. These are the folks who accomplished the copying and dissemination of the New Testament documents as we studied in Lesson 52.

Role of the New Testament Prophet

- Ephesians 4:8, 11-12—Paul is talking about Jesus Christ after His ascension, not prior to it. The earthly ministry of Christ takes place, then Christ dies on the cross, He spends the forty days on earth and then He ascends into heaven. The Holy Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost. Then the fall of Israel takes place in Acts 7 with the stoning of Stephan. The apostle Paul gets saved on the road to Damascus in Acts 9. Then the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven's glory, reaches down, and not only saves Paul, but he commits to Paul a new system of knowledge and information – a new realm, a new program called the mystery.
- Paul says that He gave certain gifts to the body of Christ – apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Christ ascended up on high, (and in the passage it is not necessarily His ascension after His resurrection, but is an ascension far above all heavens), which is where Christ is when Paul gets saved. He ascends far above all heavens, and from that position, He gives these offices to the church. The twelve apostles were made apostles before the crucifixion of Christ but there were men that were made apostles after the ascension of Christ; therefore, they are not one of “the twelve apostles.”
- I am trying to point out that there are prophets that were given to the body of Christ. There are prophets that affect the ministry of the body of Christ during its infancy before the full revelation of the mystery was made known to the Apostle Paul.

- Ephesians 2:19-20—the household is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Thus, I know something about apostles and prophets. Apostles and prophets are “foundational” gifts. It is the function of an apostle and a prophet to lay the foundation of the house.
- I Corinthians 3:10—the apostles and the prophets are foundational gifts to the body of Christ. They lay out the foundation upon which the ministry of the rest of the body was built upon. Now, one of the functions of a prophet in the Bible is to be God’s spokesman. That was not a prophet’s only function, but it was one of them. He speaks for God.
- Exodus 4:15-16—Aaron was Moses’ spokesman; he was Moses’ mouthpiece. He spoke Moses’ words.
 - Exodus 7:1—by comparing scripture with scripture, the definition of “a prophet” is “a spokesman.” God puts His words in the prophet’s mouth, who in turn speaks the word of God. One of the functions of a prophet is to identify the word of God.
- Ezekiel 3:17—Ezekiel is to get God’s word, know what it is, and then send it out to the people.
- Jeremiah 15:19—the prophet Jeremiah is God’s mouth piece.
- II Chronicles 36:12—I am just trying to impress upon you the idea that a prophet is a man that speaks God’s word.
- I Corinthians 14:23, 29-32—God Almighty gave His word through these people; He gave revelation and information through these people. These prophets have the capacity to identify what God is saying to the body of Christ. This gift of prophesy was one of the foundational gifts used in the establishing of the body of Christ. Paul was “the apostle of the gentiles” (Romans 11:13) and yet there were a number of other apostles in a secondary sense.
 - Acts 14:14—Barnabas, was an apostle in a secondary sense. Barnabas does not directly receive information from Jesus Christ, but he receives it from Paul, and he is sent out in that sense.
 - Timothy and Silas, along with other men, are identified in the scripture as apostles. Epaphroditus is an apostle and he is identified as such in Philippians 2.
- One of the functions of the prophets given to the body of Christ during its infancy was to identify God’s word. The prophets in those churches were the men in the local churches who actually did the copying of the epistles. When the prophets got a collection of letters together from a bunch of different churches, they would read those letters; and they would say, “This copy is the word of God; this is scripture. But this letter is not scripture.” They would say, “This letter that Paul wrote, I Corinthians, is the second letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, but this is the word of God. The other letter, the first one that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, was just personal correspondence. The third letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians was not scripture; but the fourth one is, and it is II Corinthians, and it is to be in the bible.”

- There had to be somebody in the local assembly who had the capacity to identify what God's word was when that assembly received copies from different places. They were getting all of this information from all over the place and they indicated what was scripture and what was not.
- II Thessalonians 2:1-2—there were phony letters floating around the churches that claimed to be from Paul. Therefore, when those churches received one of those letters, they had to know if it was scripture or not.
- Thus, God Almighty in the founding of the church gave some prophets so they could identify “Thus saith the Lord.” It was not the only function of the prophets, but it was one of their functions. The evangelist, the pastor and teacher, took the copies and did the work of the ministry with them. They did not make the copies, but they used the copies. They preached the word from the copies that they had. But, the prophet's function was to say, “This is God's word.” Then they made accurate, reliable copies of the word and distributed them. The apostles took them out to the various churches.
- I Corinthians 12:28—God put prophets in the church. He put them in the local churches.
- I Corinthians 14:36-37—in other words, are you the only people that received a copy of the word of God? Are you the only people that sent copies of the word of God out? Those people are receiving and sending copies of the word. There were people in the Corinthian church who were suppressing the gift and the function of the prophet, and they were trying to exalt other gifts above it. Thus, the work of the prophet was not getting done, and consequently the word was not getting out. Paul was rebuking them about that. Paul was rebuking these people for their frustration of the function of the prophet.
- I Timothy 6:3
- I am saying to you that “the scriptures of the prophets” are the scriptures that the prophets copied down. Those prophets in those New Testament churches (the Pauline churches) collected the word of God together. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, Peter, I John, II John, III John, Jude, Revelation were the books that these prophets collected together. They said, “These are scripture.” They identified them as what God Almighty said, and they authoritatively said, “These are the scriptures.”
- According to II Peter 3, Peter had all of Paul's epistles. All of those people in Galatia that Peter wrote to had Paul's epistles. They had them because of the functioning and the activity of these prophets, who Christ gave as foundational ministries to the body of Christ to produce that book and to authoritatively identify it.

Preservation after the Prophets: The Role of the Pauline Grace Churches

- God had a process to preserve His word through copies. He had a people to preserve His word. He had a people to identify the word of God, to collect it and to preserve it in the New Testament. But, these prophets died and there are no longer any prophets today. We enjoy the apostle's ministry and the prophet's ministry by having the written word of God. So, who preserves the word of God after the prophets have died out?

- Human viewpoint would say, “The prophets are gone so there are not any more authoritative copies of the word of God.”
- I Timothy 3:14-15—Notice that Paul talks about the “house of God.” That is the local church that Timothy is involved with. It is the church of the living God, which is the body of Christ. The body of Christ is the “pillar and ground of the truth.” Folks, the word of God was committed to local assemblies for them to teach and distribute. This process of preservation works in the body of Christ on the idea of what the Protestants used to call “the priesthood of the believer.” That means that in the Old Testament there was a “priesthood;” but God has done away with the Old Testament priesthood now, and every believer can go to God for himself. In the Old Testament, you needed a priest to go in and represent you, but now, you are a priest, and you can represent yourself.
 - I Peter 2:9—“the priesthood of all believers” is a bad term because they use this verse as a proof text. We understand that, dispensationally, that is not good terminology and yet the truth of the concept is real. You and I function today on a personal basis with God Almighty. We do not need any “go-betweens” or mediators (I Timothy 2:5); we go straight to God Almighty.
- Now, the one thing you want to guard against is this—please remember this! The issue in preservation is not an authoritative church but rather, an authoritative bible. The Roman church will take what I am telling you and say this, “See, since the church has the responsibility of preserving the word of God, therefore, the church has the power to say what is right and what is wrong. The church can tell you what the bible says.”
- I Timothy 3:15—the local assembly is the pillar and ground of the truth. What is the foundation of the truth? In the passage, it is the local assembly. The local assembly is responsible for the maintenance of the truth. Thus, it is the responsibility of the local assemblies, the bible-believing people, to teach and distribute the word of God today. God preserves His word through history in the hands of bible-believing people that study the word of God, and that teach the word of God, and that preach the word of God from a believing viewpoint.
- Regarding the role of the believing church in preserving the scriptures, Dr. David Sorenson states the following in his book *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*:
 - “. . . Some proponents of the critical text position will say that God may have preserved His Word, but He did not say how He would do so. To the contrary, the New Testament does provide insight into how God has promised to preserve His Word . . . (quotes II Timothy 3:15) . . . The Apostle makes it clear that the church is both the foundation as well as the support of the truth.

The word translated pillar refers to an architectural support such as a load-bearing column. One illustration which comes to mind is that of a lighthouse. The structure of the light is that which upholds it and supports it. Is not this a careful illustration of the relationship of the church and the Word of God? The word translated “ground” refers to a foundation. The church is therefore that pillar which supports the truth. The church of Jesus Christ is both the foundation as well as the pillar of support which hold forth the truth. . .

The church, like a lighthouse, shines forth the light of the Word of God upon a dark world. Lighthouses serve two purposes: 1) to warn of danger or 2) to point to safety. The local church does both through the preaching of the Word. It warns of the danger of hell ahead. It also points to safety of heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ. The connection of the local church to the truth of the Word of God should be only too apparent.

However, there very well may be a deeper truth. That is, the church is the structure which God has ordained to uphold the truth of the Word of God through the centuries. The view of the writer is that God has used the believing churches down through the ages as the primary structure by which the New Testament has been preserved. That certainly was true in the first century. The same remains true today. And as we shall see, it has been the case through the course of history. Thus, the contention of this writer is that the church is the pillar and the ground by which the truth of the Word of God has been preserved.” (Sorenson, 58-59)

- The idea that the New Testament text was preserved via “the priesthood of all believers” shows up over and over in pro-King James literature. Those who are King James advocates who also happen to be mid-Acts Pauline Dispensationalists have a unique problem with citing these writings to bolster their position on preservation because they are full of unsound dispensational reasoning and examples. For example, *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scriptures* contains an entire section on “God’s Method of Preservation” containing four essays. The first essay titled “Israel, the Means of Preservation in the Old Testament” by Kent Brandenburg was quite good and was quoted in Lesson 50. The two of the remaining three essays are questionable from a dispensational/doctrinal standpoint.
- The fourth essay titled “Stewards of the Mysteries of God: I Corinthians 4:1-2” is worthy of consideration for any King James advocate who also happens to be a mid-Acts Pauline Dispensationalist. Please consider the following excerpts from Gary La More’s essay along with my commentary:
 - “First of all, in the light of the foolishness of worldly wisdom, Paul wanted his missionary companion, the church at Corinth, and him to be recognized as “ministers of Christ.” He includes his audience, the church, with the use of the plural pronoun “us”. This identifies Paul, his church-planting associates, and the Corinthian church. . . .” (La More *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 123)
 - In the context, I believe Paul is referring to himself, Apollos, and Timothy.
 - “Secondly, Paul wanted the Corinthian church to see himself and themselves as “stewards” of the mysteries of God.” The word “steward” carried with it the idea of a “custodian” of the mysteries of God. A steward was an administrator, a trustee, or an overseer of an estate. . . The word “steward” can also signify “overseer,” “superintendent,” or distributor.” The apostles (Paul particularly) and comrades were responsible to God since they were charged with the task of disseminating the Divine message found in the Word of God. The message therefore is not of apostolic origin, but has God as its source. The Apostles were not responsible for the ultimate truth of it, but only for the fidelity with which they conveyed it.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 124)

- I Timothy 1:11
- Ephesians 3:3—the mystery i.e., the body of truth pertaining to the body of Christ for the dispensation of grace was committed to the trust of the Apostle Paul.
- “The “mysteries of God” and the Word of God are synonymous. The root of the word for “mystery” is *muein* meaning “to close” (the mouth, the lips). When a mystery is made known, instead of the mouth staying closed, it is now opened. What was not known is now known and what was not revealed is now revealed. Mysteries of God are known by special revelation. . . The mystery is disclosed by revelation, so that making it known is revelation. For this reason, mystery is very often used with the term for revelation (Rom 16:25-26; I Cor. 2:10; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 5, 8; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 4:4) . . . In I Corinthians 4:1 the word “mystery” is plural. The plural intimates the Words or passages of scriptures, the various special revelations of God. Each mystery is important, and the faithful steward will put forth due diligence to lose none of them, but to faithfully keep them with the house given the authority by his Master to do so. The Master is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, the house in which the stewards labor in keeping the mysteries.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 124-125)
 - Ephesians 3:2—this message was given to Paul so that he could give it to the body of Christ.
 - Romans 16:26—this message is for “all nations for the obedience of faith.”
 - Acts 20:32—Paul commends the Ephesians elders unto the “word of his grace.”
 - I Timothy 3:15—Timothy is the pastor of the church at Ephesus. It was the job of the Pauline assemblies to “keep” and “preserve” the scriptures during the dispensation of grace.
- “Finally, Paul wanted to be known as a faithful man. Having designated himself as a steward of the mysteries of God in the preceding verse, Paul now sets forth the primary requisite for a steward—he must be “faithful,” true and worthy of trust and confidence (I Tim. 1:12). Since his stewardship involved the mysteries of God, he accurately and aggressively proclaimed these truths.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 125)
 - II Timothy 2:1-2—Paul wants the doctrine passed on from generation to generation. How is that going to happen?
 - II Timothy 4:1-2—by preaching the word. In order for Timothy, and those that follow after him to follow Paul’s instruction, what are they going to need to have? The word of God.
 - The primary job of preserving the word of God during the dispensation of grace is going to fall to Pauline grace believing and preaching assemblies. The very people whom the organized hierarchical sacramental church persecutes as heretics.

- “Since the philosophy of heaven, the message for which the steward is held responsible, is nonsense to the unsaved world (I Cor. 1:18), he should not be interested in trying to please it. In fact, he must not concern himself in the least with what the world thinks of his stewardship. The faithful steward must please his Owner, God. Strong temptation exists for the steward, especially today and particularly on the issue of perfect preservation of God’s Words, to please the academic crowd, which is most likely to reward his subjugation with a false label of scholarship. The seduction is a self-serving lure of intellectual pride. . . God did not commit this stewardship to textual critics. He works the best through stewards in His church who are faithful to His Word and its message. Paul knew that God had preserved His Word: otherwise he would not have written

I Corinthians 4:1-2. The faithful members of the church today, like those members of the Corinthian church, are given the stewardship of the Words of God. This is the message of the Apostle Paul in this text. The members receive the Words, guard the Words, and pass on those very Words to the next generation of local church members.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 126-127)

- This is why what one believes is critically important in any discussion of preservation. In future Lessons we will demonstrate the historical veracity of this point by looking at the role the Paulicians played in the preservation of the New Testament text.

Conclusion

- The word of God is not preserved in a beautifully bound copy of a vellum scroll sitting on a library shelf in the Vatican. The word of God is preserved out there in the hands of soul-winning, bible-believing, bible-preaching people. That is where God’s word is, because God the Holy Spirit in us bears witness to His word. Bible-believing people use God’s word, and the copies of the word of God that they use get worn out. Thus, the necessity for faithful reliable copies to carry God’s word for generation to generation.

Works Cited

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Sunday, April 30, 2017— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 54 The Process of Preservation: Simultaneous Nature of Preservation and Corruption

Introduction

- Since Lesson 48 we have been considering the Process of Preservation. In doing so, we have observed from the scriptures that God’s design was to preserve His work in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the original autographs. God did not elect to fulfill the fundamental promise of preservation via preserving the original autographs. This is self-evident, or we would possess the autographs today. Lessons 48 and 49 were devoted to establishing this understanding.
 - Review of Lessons Learned from the Book of Jeremiah (Lesson 48)
 - The Apostle Paul on Inspired Copies (Lesson 48)
 - Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation (Lessons 48 and 49)
- In Lessons 50 and 51 we studied the people God used in the Old Testament to accomplish the preservation of His word. In order to accomplish this task, we considered the following points:
 - Israel: The Institution for Preservation in the Old Testament (Lesson 50)
 - Importance of the Words “Keep” and “Preserve” (Lesson 50)
 - The Means of Preservation Within the Nation (Lesson 51)
 - The Role of Individuals and Families
 - The Role of the Levites and Scribes
 - The Fall of Israel (Lesson 51)
- At the end of Lesson 51 we discussed the impact of the fall of Israel upon the Process of Preservation. We noted that the Process did not change but those responsible for oversight and execution of the Process did. When Israel fell, the task of preserving the scriptures passed from the nation of Israel to the body of Christ. Lessons 52 and 53 were devoted to looking at the Process of Preservation in the New Testament. In summation, we considered the following points in Lessons 52 and 53:
 - Preservation and the New Testament (Lesson 52)
 - 1st Century Copies of the New Testament (Lesson 52)

- Role of the New Testament Prophets (Lesson 53)
- Preservation after the Prophets: The Role of the Pauline Grace Churches (Lesson 53)
- Now that we have considered the Process of Preservation, it is imperative for us to note that while the process was being executed, corruption of the text was also occurring simultaneously. In this Lesson we want to consider how the forces of preservation and corruption were functioning at the same time.

The Simultaneous Nature of Preservation and Corruption

- In his 2016 publication *In Defense of Textus Receptus: God's Preserved Word to Every Generation*, Dr. Jim Taylor states the following regarding this important matter.
 - “There are two very important facts to remember as we study the doctrine of preservation [A point which we have already studied in detail. See Lessons 31 through 39.]. The first is the fact that God has promised to preserve His Word. But secondly, we should note that there have also been those who would seek to corrupt the scriptures as well. And both of these facts are operating at the same time. And seeing these two forces are happening simultaneously, it is very important to have a good understanding of preservation so that we can come to the proper conclusions.” (Taylor, 47)
- Recall from Lesson 2 that Satan was the first destructive critic of God's word. Genesis 3 outlines the adversary's policy of evil against the word of God. Satan seeks to assail the final authority of God's word through the following five tactics:
 - Tactic 1—Question God's word (Genesis 3:1)
 - Tactic 2—Subtract from God's word (Genesis 3:2)
 - Tactic 3—Add to God's word (Genesis 3:3)
 - Tactic 4—Water down God's word (Genesis 3:3)
 - Tactic 5—Deny God's word (Genesis 3:4)
- Sin, on this planet earth, began with an attack on God's word in Genesis 3. There is a satanic policy of evil against the word of God clearly laid out in the scripture, and the design is simply to destroy the final authority of your Bible. Satan wants to take that word of God and make it less than the final authority.
- Now, how does the adversary seek to accomplish this strategy? Well, if you have a written authority, the tactic is to bring up another authority alongside of it and give it equal weight with the first. Well, then how does one decide which is right? When you have two competing

authorities, who decides which is right? A third authority decides – you do, or somebody else does.

- So, Satan’s attempt is to get rid of that final authority that God has placed in His word by putting up a competing authority. Satan does not want you to have the capacity in your hands to know what God said.

Scriptural Examples of 1st Century Corruption

- The question before us in this lesson is the following; is there any scriptural evidence to suggest that the New Testament text was being corrupted while it was still being written?
- II Corinthians 2:17—“For we are not as many, which **corrupt** the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”
 - First, the verb translated “which corrupt” is in the present tense and the active voice. This means that while Paul was writing II Corinthians (present tense) people were actively engaged in seeking to “corrupt the word of God” (active voice).
 - Second, there is controversy concerning the translation of “corrupt” in the KJB. Many modern versions read some form of “peddle” in verse 17.
 - NIV—“. . . we do not **peddle** the word of God for profit.”
 - ESB—“. . . **peddlers** of God's word . . .”
 - NASV—“. . . **peddling** the word of God . . .”
 - Footnote on verse 17 reads, “Or corrupting.”
 - *Strong’s Concordance* defines the underlying Greek verb *kapēleuō* as follows:
 - to be a retailer, to peddle
 - to make money by selling anything
 - to get sordid gain by dealing in anything, to do a thing for base gain
 - to trade in the word of God
 - to try to get base gain by teaching divine truth
 - to corrupt, to adulterate

- peddlers were in the habit of adulterating their commodities for the sake of gain
- There is no reason to change the King James's rendering of *kapēleuō* as "corrupt." Whether one says "corrupt" or some form of "peddle", the bottom line is the same; the word of God whether written or spoken is being "adulterated" for the sake of gain. Coupled with the present tense and the active voice it is clear that Paul viewed corruption of God's word as a present reality that he was facing in the first century.
- Third, this was not an isolated problem. Paul explicitly states in verse 17 that "many" people were involved in this process. Dr. Jim Tayler states the following regarding the circumstances outlined in II Corinthians 2:17:
 - "It would appear that even in the first century, there were those who were bent on presenting a corrupted message. Presumably, this would be both verbally as well as in written form." (Taylor, 50)
- II Thessalonians 2:1-2—"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, 2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, **nor by letter as from us**, as that the day of Christ is at hand."
 - In his essay, "First Century Textual Attack" Kent Brandenburg states the textual attack exhibited by II Thessalonians 2:2"
 - "The false teachers shook and troubled the Thessalonian believers through three different means, swaying the beliefs of church members and then affecting them emotionally. Firstly, deception came by means of "spirit," supposed prophetic revelation or supernatural communications that were concocted by the deceivers. Secondly, distortion of Scriptural truth came by "word," probably sermons they preached which contained their false teachings. Lastly, deceiving counterfeiters of the Apostle Paul penned bogus letters in his name." (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 133)
 - Not only was Paul dealing with those who sought to "corrupt" to word of God (I Corinthians 2:17) but we learn in II Thessalonians 2:1-2 that he was also dealing with a forgery problem. People had written a false letter to the Thessalonians posing as the Apostle Paul. It is clear from the context, that this letter was filled with false doctrine regarding the timing of the catching up of the saints (rapture) and the resumption of the prophetic program.
 - That this false/forged letter had a psychological impact upon the saints at Thessalonica is evident from verse 2: "That ye be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled." It was troubling for these saints who had rejoiced in the truth of I Thessalonians 4:13-18 to read a spurious letter claiming they had missed the event.

- This passage in II Thessalonians 2 provides tangible evidence of the culture of “corruption” that Paul was speaking about in II Corinthians 2:17. As soon as his epistles began to be circulated in the first century, they were met with opposition from those who opposed Paul’s message and apostleship.
 - “When 2 Thessalonians was written in the middle of the first century, Satan already was using men to purposefully attack Scripture. Certainly this particular attack altered the text even more than changes made to single paragraphs, sentences, or words, by adding to the Scripture an entire epistle. However, it does reveal the existence of textual variants in the first century. Forgers who would add an entire epistle would not scruple to make smaller changes with canonical books.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 133)
- In a footnote (#223), Dr. Brandenburg states the following regarding the textual variations found in the book of I Thessalonians.
 - “A major variation such as the addition of an entire epistle was obviously very damaging to the eschatological belief of the church at Thessalonica. The variations of I Thessalonians in the CT [Critical Text] continue to significantly affect eschatology (1:10; 2:11, 12, 15; 3:2; 4:8, 13; 5:27). Those changes alter eschatological understanding even before 2 Thessalonians.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 133)
- While II Thessalonians 2 does not indicate who these forgers/false teachers were, we have a clue in II Timothy 2. In II Timothy 2:16-18 Paul identifies two men (Hymenaeus and Philetus) who were teaching that the “resurrection is past already” and thereby “overthrow the faith of some.” Ill intended men such as these would not have hesitated to alter legitimate scripture and/or forge scripture in order to accomplish their corrosive purposes, “their word will eat as doth a canker.” We know from history, and will demonstrate in a future Lesson on transmission, that heretics altered the Biblical text in various ways so as to conform it to their heretical teaching.
- This culture of corruption prompted Paul to take steps to ensure the authenticity of his epistles.
 - II Thessalonians 3:17
 - Galatians 6:11
 - Philemon 19
- II Corinthians 4:1-2—“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2) But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, **nor**

handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

- We see from this verse that “there were those who corrupted the scriptures as well as others who mishandled the scriptures.” Given what we have already seen in this section, this deceitful handling of the word of God would have no doubt taken the form of false verbal teaching such as tampering with the text of scripture.
- Galatians, I and II Thessalonians, as well as I and II Corinthians were some of the first epistles written by Paul. Written before Acts 20, these books were drafted between 54 and 60 AD, according to most commentators. These facts established the reality that the adversary was already seeking to corrupt the New Testament text while it was still being written.
- II Corinthians 11:3—what means did the serpent use to beguile Eve? He used “any means” necessary up to and including tampering with God’s word. We see the results of this “any means” strategy in verse 4 where we see that false teachers were presenting a false Christ, by a false spirit, through another gospel.

Implications of Scriptural Observations

- The above Pauline texts established that a culture of corruption with respect to the scriptures existed during the first century while the New Testament was being written. This culture of corruption includes the following minimum components:
 - Corrupting the word of God (II Corinthians 2:17)
 - Forging the word of God (II Thessalonians 2:2)
 - Handling the word of God deceitfully (II Corinthians 4:2)
 - Any means strategy (II Corinthians 11:1-4)
- Please note that all of these components of corruption imply intentionality on the part of the corruptor. Once again, those holding to unsound doctrine would have ample motivation for tampering with the text so as to hide the heretical nature of their teaching.
 - “There are many reasons why men would desire to change God’s words. In many cases, the changes are affected as a result of a desire to adhere to some false teaching. Since the scriptures condemn their heresies, some go so far as to change the scriptures in order that the heresies can go undiscovered.” (Taylor, 52)
- The scriptures anticipate this situation by issuing three strategically placed warnings against tampering with the word of God.

- Deuteronomy 4:1-2
- Proverbs 30:5-6
- Revelation 22:18-19
- The presupposition of Westcott and Hort that the shorter reading is to be preferred over a longer reading is not based upon scripture. According to the word of God, it is just as easy for someone with ill intentions toward the scripture to take away words as it would be for them to add them. The very fact that there are upwards of 3,185 differences in wording between the Critical Text and the Traditional Text (*TR*) implies God's scriptural warnings noted above need to be taken seriously.
- We have already established that God promised to preserve His word. If we do not believe this then any discussion concerning the two texts become a matter of personal preference based upon man's intellect or will. But since we firmly believe that God has made good on His promise and preserved His word, we must conclude that one text or the other has been corrupted. This is not based upon the false standard of "verbatim identity" of wording but upon the fact that the two texts differ substantively from each other i.e., they report contradictory information. They do not agree regarding what verses should and should not be included in scripture.
- Put another way, if we believe that God has preserved what He initially gave by inspiration, then we are forced to conclude that one text or the other is corrupt. Both texts cannot be pure because they differ from each other substantively.
 - "The only other option would be to conclude that our understanding of plenary-verbal inspiration is somehow flawed. And there are those who believe just that way. They contend that even though God promised to preserve each word, He never said that it would all be in the same text. But it is a very confusing and complex position because we are left with nothing to guide us into what is the pure reading and what is corrupt. How is a person to know? Again, rather than having concrete, scripturally based evidence, we are left to our own intellect, opinions, theories, and suppositions. Any variant in readings become subject to human reasoning and choice based upon everything but the promises of God." (Taylor, 56)
- As we have seen above there are numerous reasons why and how the text became corrupted. At this point, the reason why corruption exists is not the real issue. The reality that the two texts differ substantively is plain for all honest observers to see. The facts of the case are in reality simple.
 - God promised to preserve His word.
 - The two texts differ substantively.

- Only one of them can unequivocally qualify as the preserved word of God.

Conclusion

- “Biblical principles and promises are the basis of a Scriptural Bibliology. No verses in Scripture teach a theory that the oldest manuscripts are the best, . . . [the passages considered above] reveal intentional corruption of the New Testament text in the first century. The Scriptures themselves denounce the theory of “oldest is best.” These passages all indicate that the Bible was intentionally changed in the first century.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 135-136)
- “Those who weigh manuscripts using criteria such as age believe that people today should labor at restoring the text of the New Testament to a condition closer to that of the originals. This ongoing process of textual criticism does not represent the Biblical doctrine of the perfect preservation of Scripture. The contention that “oldest is best” is at best a rationalistic speculation. . . The Bible contains no verses espousing the “oldest is best” criterion. Instead, it teaches early and often that textual attack will come from Satan and his human instruments (Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 4:1-11). (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 131)
- “Bible believers maintain a distinctive bias toward what Scripture teaches. Scripture says God will preserve every word. Scripture declares God will use His ordained institution, Israel in the Old Testament and churches in the New Testament, to preserve every word. Knowing that God says this, believers assume He will do what He says. They trust Scriptural criteria and not human reasoning. It might make sense in man’s thinking that old, rarely used manuscripts are superior to newer, often-used ones.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 131-132)
 - The “oldest is best” mantra of the Critical Text position is repeated simplistically as if it is a universal truth. In reality it is not. Oldest is only best if all other things are equal which they hardly ever are. Blind commitment to the mantra does not, however, work for a book claiming to be of divine origin such as the scriptures. A divinely inspired book such as the Bible needs to be approached in the manner stated therein.
- “Pure manuscripts and readings were embraced while others were rejected [This was one of the functions of the New Testament prophet in the early church.]. This behavior stemmed from authoritative warnings concerning tampering with Scripture. The Bible establishes clearly that there were corruptions of first century manuscripts by means of purposeful textual attack. . .” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 132)
- Through the ministry of the New Testament prophets, the Holy Spirit guided the churches to reject corrupt manuscripts and readings as well as to copy and distribute authentic ones. This ministry set the body of Christ on the firmest possible ground once the gift of prophecy ceased. Believers, who had convictions about preservation of scripture, were careful to make their copies

as accurately as possible. Meanwhile, manuscripts that were deemed spurious were either discarded or destroyed along with old/worn out copies of authentic manuscripts.

- “It was not uncommon among Jews to copy an Old Testament manuscript, and after having verified that the copies were accurate, to destroy the original manuscript. Since the Jews made up a segment of the New Testament churches, it is possible that they followed already established practices and did the same thing with the original autographs.” (Taylor, 60)
- All the age of a manuscript can tell us is that it existed. It does not tell us anything about whether or not it was in use in the churches.
- In the next Lesson we will discuss the matter of availability as we begin to wrap up our study of the doctrine of preservation.

Works Cited

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Sunday, May 7, 2017— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 55 The Process of Preservation: The Question of Access and Availability

Introduction

- Last week in Lesson 54 we looked at the simultaneous nature of preservation and corruption. We saw that both were occurring during the first century when the New Testament was being written.
- Since Lesson 48 we have been studying the Process of Preservation. In summation, we have observed the following from scripture:
 - God promised to preserve His word.
 - Preservation was accomplished not by the preservation of the original autographs but through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the originals themselves.
 - In the Old Testament the nation of the Israel was the custodian of the words of God. During the dispensation of grace, the body of Christ and local churches are the pillar and the ground of the truth.
 - In the Old Testament the copying process was overseen by the tribe of Levi. During the early part of the dispensation of grace the office of the New Testament prophet identified, copied, and distributed the scripture. Once the gift of prophecy ceased, the job of preserving/copying the text fell to Bible believing Pauline grace assemblies.
 - Preservation and corruption were occurring at the same time.
- From this we conclude that the word of God is not preserved in a beautifully bound copy of a vellum scroll sitting on a library shelf somewhere. Rather, the word of God is preserved in the open in the hands of soul-winning, bible-believing, bible-preaching people. Bible-believing people use God's word, and the copies of the word of God that they use get worn out. Thus, the necessity for faithful reliable copies to carry God's word from generation to generation.
- This preservation model implies that God's word was available and accessible to God's people not hidden away in the desert sand, under a rock, in a cave, or an inaccessible library.
- Over the next few weeks we will conclude our discussion of preservation for this term by looking at the issues of availability and accessibility.

The Question of Availability and Accessibility

- In this section we will once again use Dr. William W. Combs' essay from the Fall 2000 issue of the *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* titled "The Preservation of Scripture" to frame the

discussion. The pertinent portion is a section titled “Is Public Availability a Necessary Component of Preservation?” that is toward the end of the essay.

- Before proceeding further, it is important to notice the circumscribed limits that Combs has placed upon the discussion.
- Dr. Combs begins this section by noting that many King James/*Textus Receptus* advocates “argue that the doctrine of preservation also includes the idea of public availability of the true text of Scripture.” (Combs, 41) As proof of the notion Combs offers the following quotations from Dr. Edward F. Hills:
 - “It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special, providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text **have been available to God’s people in every age.**” (Hills, 2)
 - “He must have preserved them not secretly in holes and caves but in a public way in the usage of His Church.” (Hills, 86)
- According to Dr. Combs the sentiments expressed by Dr. Hills were first expressed by Dean Burgon in the late 19th century subsequent to the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek Text (W&HT) as well as the Revised Version in 1881. Burgon stated the following in *The Traditional Text of the Gospels* in 1896:
 - “I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God’s promise has so entirely failed, that at the end of 1800 years much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodeled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them.” (Burgon, 12)
- In other words, according to the textual model embraced by Drs. Westcott and Hort, Burgon reasoned that “. . . God kept hidden from the church the true text of the Word of God from sometime around the ninth century until the discoveries of the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus in the nineteenth century.” (Combs, 42)
- While I personally find the reasoning of both Hills and Burgon to be sound given the parameters of the debate, Dr. Combs not surprisingly takes exception to it. Firstly, Combs views the expression “true text” as “loaded language” that “distorts the view of those who do not believe that either the TR or MT is necessarily the closest text to the autographs.” (Combs, 42) Dr. Combs maintains that the TR, MT, and W&HT all accurately convey the message of the autographs. Therefore, the TR, MT, W&HT as well as the more recent editions of the Nestle-Aland Text and the United Bible Societies’ Text can all rightly be called the “true text” because

they “accurately convey the message of the autographs.” According to Combs there are no substantive differences between the various Greek texts listed above that affect doctrine.

- “It has already been argued that doctrinal differences among Christians do not stem from differences in Greek texts or English versions. Many of us simply prefer the more recent editions of the Greek New Testament because we honestly believe that they present a text that is somewhat more accurately representative of the autographs.” (Combs, 42)
- If Combs believes that “more recent editions of the Greek New Testament” are better representatives of the autographs, then he must by default believe that there are verses in the TR/KJB that should not be there. How the presence of extra verses does not affect doctrine is beyond my ability to comprehend. The notion that the debate over the inclusion or exclusion of Mark 16:9-20 does not affect any doctrine is wishful thinking on the part of Combs.
- Consequently, Combs’ first objection to the notion that preservation includes the idea of “public availability” is a moot point. The verses and readings that Combs thinks are the best representation of the originals were not made available to the body of Christ until the late 19th century according to the critical theory. Therefore, the objections to the critical theory and its implications voiced by Burgon and Hills on the grounds of “public availability” still stand.
- Combs’ second objection to the notion that preservation requires “public availability” centers on the fact that scriptures make no such proclamation.
 - “Second, the belief that God must have made the Scriptures publicly available at all times has no basis in Scripture itself or in the transmission history of the text.” (Combs, 42)
- While it is true that there is no single verse in which God explicitly states, “I will preserve my word by making it publicly available;” the totality of verses that we have looked at regarding the Process of Preservation imply not only availability to God’s people but also use by them.
- Combs states the following to buttress his point from above:
 - “In fact, Scripture itself records an instance where part of the Old Testament was not available for a period of probably more than fifty years. When the temple was being repaired in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah (622 B.C.), we read of the finding of “the book of the law” by Hilkiah the high priest (2 Kings 22:8–10; 2 Chr 34:14–18). Though it is not clear whether “the book of the law” is a reference to the entire Pentateuch or just the book of Deuteronomy, it is undeniable from the reaction of Josiah (vv. 11ff.) that there had been general ignorance of the Law for some time (Josiah says “our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book,” v. 13). According to Deuteronomy 31, Moses wrote down the Law and gave it to the Levites to “place it beside the ark of the covenant” (v. 26). It is probable that normal access to the Scriptures was through copies since the ark, and presumably the Law, was placed in the most holy confines of the temple. But during the reign of Manasseh (697–642 B.C.) true Israelite religion was

practically wiped out, and **it may well be** that all copies of the Law were destroyed, thus explaining the general ignorance of the Law until it was discovered during the reign of Josiah.” (Combs, 42-43)

- First, note how Combs inadvertently advocates for the Process of Preservation we have outlined in the class. He acknowledges that original autographs were placed in the Ark of the Covenant in the holy of holies first in the tabernacle and later in the temple. He then states that “normal access to the Scriptures was through copies.” While it is true that under the reign of Manasseh Israel did not fare well spiritually; there is a big difference between “practically wiped out” as Combs acknowledges and entirely wiped out. Therefore, his statement “**it may well be** that all copies of the Law were destroyed” is complete speculation. Does Combs actually believe that the only copy of the book of Law in all of Israel was the one found by Hilkiah the priest during the reign of Josiah? Just because the word of God may have been absent from the priests and the king for a period of time does not mean it was unknown or unavailable to believers within Israel.
- Romans 11:4—the reign of Ahab was another terrible time for the truth of God’s word in Israel’s history. Yet Paul says that as many as 7,000 Israelites had “not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.” It is nothing but pure speculation on the part of Combs that II Kings 22:8–10 and II Chronicles 34:14–18 mean that God’s word was not available to anyone outside of what was found in the temple. In fact, I would argue that it would be contrary to God’s purpose in preservation to allow His word to be diminished to only one available witness.
 - Psalms 68:11

Daniel B. Wallace on Public Accessibility

- Dr. Combs is not the only author to take acceptance with the notion that “accessibility” is critical in the Process of Preservation. In the 1990s Dr. Daniel B. Wallace published a series of essays in scholarly journals in which he challenged the “corollary of accessibility.” (Wallace *The Majority-Text Theory*, 188) In his 1994 essay “The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods and Critique” Wallace argues that “accessibility” is “inferred” by those supporting the Majority Text position.
 - “Hence the MT position is based on a corollary (accessibility) of a corollary (preservation) of a particular dogmatic stance (verbal inspiration).” (Wallace TMTT, 201)
- Wallace’s comments from 1994 were preceded by his 1992 essay titled “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism” in the *Grace Theological Journal*. In this essay Dr. Wallace quotes Dr. Edward F. Hills and offers the following comment in response:
 - “ ‘God must preserve this text, not secretly, not hidden away in a box for hundreds of years or mouldering unnoticed on some library shelf, but openly before the eyes of all men through continued usage in his church.’ (Hills, 31) Preservation is therefore linked to public accessibility.” (Wallace, IPNTTC, 30)

- The same essay contains an entire section titled “Public accessibility of a pure text is a theological necessity.” In this section, Dr. Wallace argues against the notion of “accessibility” on the following general grounds: 1) the majority text was not available until 1982, 2) the *Textus Receptus* differs from the majority text in “almost 2,000 places,” 3) no one had access to anything other than the majority text for 350 years between 1516 and 1881, and 4) the majority text was not readily available in Egypt for the first four centuries. (Wallace, IPNTTC, 30)
 - See Appendix A on page 9 to read this section authored by Dr. Wallace.
- It is important to note that many of Dr. Wallace’s comments are directed at Dr. Wilbur Pickering’s and the Majority Text position. It is also instructive to note that Dr. Wallace points out that “many” of the differences between the Majority Text and the *Textus Receptus* “are theologically significant.” (Wallace, IPNTTC, 30) Yet, we are expected to buy the notion that there are no theological differences at all between the Critical Text and *Textus Receptus*. The double standard is quite glaring.

Conclusion

- Deuteronomy 30:11-14—“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off. 12) It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13) Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14) But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”
- Dr. Kent Brandenburg wrote an entire chapter on this passage for the book *Thou Shalt Keep Them: A Biblical Theology of the Perfect Preservation of Scripture*. Regarding these verses Brandenburg writes in part:
 - “These words, in their context, teach the doctrine of the general availability of all the Words of Scripture for every generation. . . Every generation of Israel needed the Words for the purpose of reviewing, remembering, believing, and practicing them. In Deuteronomy, they were told to remember them fourteen times, and ordered not to forget His Words nine times.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 85-86)
- Verses 11 through 13 are negative and tell the reader what the commandment is not.
 - “Negatively, the commandment is not hidden, nor is it far off. The Hebrew words translated “not hidden” appear in many different ways in the KJB, but together they essentially mean “accessible,” hence, knowable. Words that are hidden might be in a library or buried in some ruin or desert. These qualities (“not hidden,” “nor far off”) certainly give a tangible quality to the commandment, written down and available in writing. Words far off could be those for which there is no available copy. They could be found in a museum in a display box in one location where the only people who could

see it would have to travel a great distance to do so. They could also just reside in heaven, which the text goes on to dismiss as a valid possibility. God-guaranteed access to the Words would not require passing over the sea. The negative section of vv. 11-13 overrules unavailability. Since hearing and doing is dependent on accessibility, the text promises that these Words will not be inaccessible.” (Brandenburg, 88-89)

- In contrast, verse 14 is positive; it states what the word “is.”
 - “Positively, the Word is nigh. It is close. The sufficient proximity of people to the Word is revealed by the further description of “. . . in thy mouth, and in thy heart. . .” in v. 14. The promise is repeated in the New Testament passage mentioned earlier (cf. Romans 10:6-8). “Mouth” and “heart” express the closest proximity. They express intimacy. They leave no room for an argument against the truth of the availability of God’s Words as a possible excuse for unbelief and disobedience. . . The reason for the availability or accessibility is that one “. . . may hear it, and do it” (vv. 12c, 13c), or that one “. . . mayest do it” (v. 14b).” (Brandenburg, 89-90)
- Deuteronomy 30:15-20 express the seriousness of why availability matters.
 - “Life, good, and ability to please God are dependent upon it. The potential consequences of unavailability, cursing and loss of blessing, stress the necessity for availability. The expression of punishment adds to the guarantee that His Words will be accessible. God is holy and just. He is merciful. There is a clear intimation in the blessings and curses that a holy, just, and merciful God will make sure that, with so much dependent on accessibility of His Words, He will make sure that they are available.” (Brandenburg, 90)
- From this we can see that Dr. Brandenburg deduces the following logical syllogism:
 - *Major Premise:* If it is necessary that His Words be available to every generation, then a holy and just God will ensure their availability.
 - *Minor Premise:* It is necessary.
 - *Conclusion:* God’s Words are available to every generation. (Brandenburg, 90)
- It is consistent with the believing viewpoint to maintain a belief that God’s word will be available to every generation.
- II Peter 3:2—“That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:”
 - Peter’s readers cannot be mindful “of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets” unless they were available and accessible to them. The call to remembrance assumes the availability of the Old Testament.

- Jude 17—“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
 - “The words of the Apostles, spoken before Jude wrote, are not part of the written record. . . This not only strongly implies that Jude has the Words of the apostles (the New Testament writings completed at that point in time), but also unequivocally states that believers to which he writes also had these words available.” (La More in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 93-94)
- Dr. Gary E. La More concludes his chapter in *Thou Shalt Keep Them* on the availability of scripture with the following paragraph:
 - “The apostles, in quoting the Old Testament, never questioned whether they had available the true Word of God. The apostles acknowledged that what others had written in the New Testament was also God’s Word. At the time of 2 Peter and Jude, the New Testament authors were not looking to verify what they had of the Old Testament as the true Word of God. Like all believers, they gladly received it. They were not looking for a lost Bible. God in His providence has seen to it that His Word was passed on from one generation to the next. The apostles received as authentic what they read and quoted from the Old Testament prophets as it had been passed on to them. True believers today should do the same thing. The correct and obvious interpretation of these texts and the implied belief of the apostles was that they had every Word God preserved and available to them. Based upon legitimate application of the text, the Lord’s true churches today have available to them not only the Words of the Old Testament prophets but also the Words of the New Testament apostles and other New Testament writers. The teaching of the availability of every Word of Scripture has been and continues to be a strong basis for opposing the attacks on the teaching of the Scripture by the apostles.” (La More, 94)
- For those who pay attention to the details, it is clear that God chose to preserve His word in a manner, i.e. copies, that allowed access to God’s word by the common man. Consequently, the musings of Combs on the subject of “public availability” and preservation appear to be designed to serve the position that he has already determined is the correct one.
- Availability and access to the scriptures are a logical conclusion of the Process of Preservation outlined in scripture. God’s word was preserved through the dynamic of people handling it, not in one copy sitting on a bookshelf for 500 or 1000 years. That is not the way God preserves His word. He preserves His word by it being in the hands of Bible believing people, and those people are charged with the responsibility to execute God’s purpose.

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Appendix A

Public Accessibility of a Pure Text is a Theological Necessity

We have touched on this to some degree already—at least by way of analogy. But the argument is also contradicted by direct evidence. Pickering believes that "God *has* preserved the text of the New Testament in a very pure form and it has been readily available to His followers in every age throughout 1900 years. There are two fundamental problems with this view.

First, assuming that the majority text (as opposed to the TR) is the original, then this pure form of text has become available only since 1982. The *Textus Receptus* differs from it in almost 2,000 places and in fact has several readings which have "never been found in any known Greek manuscript," and scores, perhaps hundreds, of readings which depend on only a handful of very late manuscripts. Many of these passages are theologically significant texts. Yet virtually no one had access to any other text from 1516 to 1881, a period of over 350 years. In light of this, it is difficult to understand what Pickering means when he says that this pure text "has been readily available to [God's] followers in every age throughout 1900 years." Purity, it seems, has to be a relative term—and, if so, it certainly cannot be marshaled as a theological argument.

Second, again, assuming that the majority text is the original, and that it has been readily available to Christians for 1900 years, then it must have been readily available to Christians in Egypt in the first four centuries. But this is demonstrably not true, as we have already shown. Pickering speaks of our early Alexandrian witnesses as "polluted" and as coming from a "sewer pipe." Now if these manuscripts are really that defective, and if this is all Egypt had in the first three or four centuries, then this peculiar doctrine of preservation is in serious jeopardy, for those ancient Egyptian Christians had no access to the pure stream of the majority text. Therefore, if one were to define preservation in terms of the majority text, he would end up with a view which speaks very poorly of God's sovereign care of the text in ancient Egypt.

Wallace, Daniel B. "Inspiration, Preservation, And New Testament Textual Criticism" in *Grace Theological Journal*. 1992.

Sunday, May 14, 2017— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 56 Concluding Thoughts on Preservation

Introduction

- This morning we are going to conclude our nine-month study of the doctrine/promise of preservation. In order to accomplish this task, I would like to review the highlights of our study together as well as offer some concluding thoughts before we take a break for the summer.
- Please note that any [bracketed] text was added by me.

Summative Thoughts on Preservation

- Our job as believers is not to **reconstruct the text** as though it has been lost. Rather our job is to allow the scriptures to be our guide in identifying the text God has preserved from generation to generation.
- In Lesson 2, I set forth the following list of Biblical presuppositions that would govern this study.
 - God exists. (Psalm 14:1)
 - God has magnified His word above His own name. (Psalms 138:2)
 - God's word is eternally settled in heaven. (Psalms 119:89)
 - God, through the process of inspiration, has communicated His word to mankind. (II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21)
 - God's words were written down so that they could be made eternally available to men. (Isaiah 30:8 and I Peter 1:23)
 - God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7)
- The entire second term of this course has been about establishing the validity of the sixth presupposition that "God promised to preserve that which He inspired." In order to accomplish this task we considered the following:
 - *Introduction* to Preservation (Lessons 28-29)
 - *Views* of Preservation (Lesson 30)
 - *Promise* of Preservation (Lessons 31-39)
 - *Importance* of Preservation (Lesson 40)
 - *Extent* of Preservation (Lessons 41-46)

- *Method* of Preservation (Lesson 47)
- *Process* of Preservation (Lessons 48-56)
- The following thoughts regarding why preservation matters are taken from Dr. Jim Taylor's 2016 book *In Defense of the Textus Receptus: God's Preserved Word to Every Generation*.

- "If all we had were the principles of inspiration, we would not have enough information to make a sound choice concerning the Greek (or Hebrew for that matter) texts. Thankfully, the doctrine of inspiration does not stand alone for it has as its companion several other important and relevant truths by which we can make logical, biblically based choices concerning which text is to be preferred above others. Depending on your understanding and application of these two important doctrines, you will be led to definite conclusions concerning the Greek and Hebrew texts.

The whole issue concerning Bible texts, and by extension, translations, hinges on the doctrine of preservation. Either God preserved his word or he did not. If he did not, then it does not matter which textual family you prefer and we cannot be sure if we have the uncorrupted Word of God. If he did not, then God did not keep his promises to preserve his word.

But since we believe that God **most certainly did** preserve his word, then we must now define what exactly we mean by preservation. Did God preserve the exact words that he gave? Or did he merely preserve the ideas or main gist of what he gave? Since we have already clearly stated our belief in verbal-plenary inspiration, we can logically assume that God would preserve his exact words. [I agree with Taylor that God did preserve His words not merely the idea or the gist. As we have seen throughout this term this did not mean "verbatim identity" of wording.] Beyond this, there is ample Scriptural evidence pointing to this very fact!

So how we define "preservation" will determine, in a large part, how we will respond to the subject of textual criticism. This will in turn define our position on the texts themselves which will then also greatly affect how we view translations.

The subject of textual criticism itself is really nothing more than a determination of "if" or "how" to apply the principles of preservation to the extant manuscripts. This is why it is so crucial to have a biblical understanding of this doctrine." (Taylor, 43)

- In the next section Dr. Taylor offers a very common-sense approach to why a "faith-based approach" (fideistic approach) is a necessary Biblical prerequisite to textual criticism.
 - "Many, if not most, modern textual critics have approached the issue of textual criticism from a purely historical or academic perspective. This makes the foundation of their

decisions either personal education or logic. Therefore, many have come to conclusions which may appear to be rational or academically sound, but are not really balanced because, in order to correctly approach any issue concerning the word of God, we must begin with the foundation of faith—what we believe about what the Bible says concerning itself. If there is a contradiction between our belief and the scriptures, then we are to conclude that the biblical principles are right, and all other opinions are wrong. Biblical principles always take precedence over human logic and understanding.

Why must this be our approach? This **MUST** be our approach because the Bible is not like any other book. It claims to be the message from God and therefore is a book to be approached from the aspect of faith. It saddens me to see how some Bible teachers ridicule others for taking a faith-based approach to the textual issue. In one case, a certain textual critic who even supports the *Textus Receptus* from a logical and academic standpoint somewhat ridicules another because his approach is faith-based. But in reality, a faith-based approach does not negate the other. Provided that the academic and logical approach does not violate scripture, it is a valid argument and should be used in stating our case. However, it cannot be the main argument.

Any approach that either rules out or contradicts a faith-based approach to the textual issue must be rejected on the grounds that it is humanistic. . . Let's stop and think about this for moment. Our faith is the whole reason why we discuss the manuscripts at all! If the Bible were simply an ancient book of stories and anecdotes, then word-for-word transmission would cease to be so important.

If the Bible is just another book, then who really cares whether there are differences? Who cares if something was added or something was mistakenly edited out as long as the general ideas of the writer is kept intact? What makes one man's opinions any better than another man's opinions? But if the Bible is truly from God, then it really matters! And we better make sure we have it right!

Much of the disagreement today, tends to be more semantic than concrete. Where two people can both agree in the end result, how they arrived at their conclusions could be, and in many cases are, very different. For example, some refer to the King James Version as "the inspired Word of God," while others would rather say "The Preserved Word of God." Others would simply say that the King James is a faithful and accurate translation. Then there are yet others who would argue that all three statements are simultaneously true.

There are also many different arguments concerning the nature of preservation. Does God preserve his word? Does God preserve his Word in only one manuscript? Does God preserve every word or just the main ideas? Does preservation demand accessibility to what God has given? These questions, and many others boggle our minds day-in and day-out! But these questions have been answered by God himself in his Word.

Additionally, theologians and scholarly men have written abundantly (especially in recent years) upon this very issue.

But we do not follow Dr. So-and-So. We must base our beliefs concerning God's Word on the Word itself. This is a faith-based approach. In the course of this book, history and science will be used to support our conclusions. But ultimately, these are merely supporting evidences that what the Bible says about itself is true. So it all comes down to an issue of faith. Do we believe that God can do and did do what he promised? As we shall see, God has amply promised to preserve his Word and clearly did just that!

As we speak of preservation, what we are really speaking of is the divine safeguarding of the manuscripts, and manuscript evidence. As we study preservation, we are unavoidably drawn into a discussion of the thousands of extant documents, where they came from, who wrote them, how old they are, how readable or trustworthy they are, and so on.

And if you will think about it for a few minutes, the answers to many of these questions will ultimately fall upon decisions of "textual critics." Most of us don't know enough about history, geography, or biblical languages to enter into a discussion of such magnitude. Does this mean my faith in God's Word must now rest in the hands of other men? No, because the promises of preservation are placed in the hands of all men to believe. God keeps his promises. All we need to determine is exactly what God promised, to what does his promise apply, and whether or not we are willing to believe Him!

Bible preservation refers to the biblical doctrine and historical process by which God has kept his word pure from corruption after he gave it by inspiration to man. Therefore, if we are to truly understand the extent of preservation, we must also consider doctrinal and historical principles." (Taylor, 43-45)

Summative Observations Regarding Preservation

- Whatever one believes about preservation must take into account the following FACTS:
 - Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
 - Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
 - Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
 - Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
 - Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
 - Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.

- Summary Statement:
 - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon **exact** preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the *Textus Receptus* contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)
- Given the Biblical data as well as the historical and textual FACTS, the following points are inescapable:
 - God promised to preserve His word.
 - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:89, 111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
 - God did not see fit to preserve His word by preserving the original autographs.
 - This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.
 - God did not supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
 - Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
 - If the standard for preservation is “plenary,” “pristine,” or “verbatim” identity why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.
 - The reason is that God wants people to walk by faith in their view of the Biblical text.
- I believe in “perfect preservation” if, by perfect, one means the existence of a pure text **that does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE. In short, God’s promise to preserve His word assures the existence of a text that has not been altered in its “character” or “doctrinal content” despite not being preserved in a state of “verbatim identity.”**
- Once again, our job as believers is not to **reconstruct the text** as though it has been lost. Rather our job is to allow the scriptures to be our guide in identifying the text God has preserved from generation to generation.

- The following scriptural principles will assist the believer in identifying the preserved text:
 - *Multiplicity of Copies*—God’s design was to preserve His word in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that were just as authoritative as the originals. Therefore, we ought to be able to observe in history a collection of manuscripts that are plentiful and in substantive agreement with each other regarding doctrinal content despite not possessing “verbatim” wording.
 - *Available/Accessible*—the Preserved Text would not only exist in a multiplicity of copies but these copies would be available to God’s people to possess, study, believe, and preach from. They would not be hidden under a rock, in the sand, or in an inaccessible library.
 - *In Use*—a third Biblical mark of the Preserved Text would be use by God’s people for generations. God’s word was preserved through the dynamic of people handling it, not in one copy sitting on a bookshelf for 500 or 1000 years. That is not the way God preserves His word. He preserves His word by it being in the hands of Bible believing people, and those people are charged with the responsibility to execute God’s purpose.
- When these three Biblical principles are applied to the historical and textual FACTS, they point toward the *Textus Receptus (TR)*, the text of the Protestant Reformation, as being the printed form of the Preserved Text. The *TR* is supported by the vast majority of extant Greek manuscripts (*multiplicity of copies*). Moreover, it represents a text that was clearly available, assessable, and in use by Bible believing people throughout the history of the dispensation of grace.
- In stark contrast the Critical Text supporting Modern Versions fails on all three counts to pass the tests of scripture: 1) it has few manuscript witnesses that substantively disagree with each other, 2) its principle manuscripts were not accessible or available to believers throughout the dispensation of grace, and 3) given their lack of availability, they certainly were not used by Bible believing people during the church age.
- “Now, the crux of the matter is based upon the premise that God has divinely preserved every word that he gave. If we do not believe this, then any discussion concerning the two texts becomes a matter of personal preference based upon man’s intellect or will. But since we firmly believe that God has preserved, not just the basic truths, not just the general ideas, not just the basic thoughts, but even the very words themselves, we must conclude that one text or the other has been corrupted.” (Taylor, 56)

Implications of Preservation

- Consider the following implications of preservation outlined by Dr. Taylor:
 - “. . . along with the doctrine of inspiration, the doctrine of preservation becomes an important key to choosing the right text. It is unfortunate that so many good people

misunderstand the doctrine of preservation. And because of this, the terms “preservation,” “preserved,” etc. are often misapplied or simply misused. It is not uncommon to hear good men speak of translations being “preserved.” But in a strict biblical sense, preservation only applies to what God has given by inspiration, and not what has been accomplished by translation. The past 2,000 years have seen many translations come and go—some translations were good, some not so good. But the fact is, none of them were preserved.

Some would argue that the King James Version is over 400 years old so it **MUST** be preserved. I would simply make two observations on this thought. First, the fact that the King James Version is over 400 years old is a testimony to its beauty, accuracy, and influence. No one can take away from that. God’s people would not have used it for so long if they felt it was not trustworthy. So its age becomes a great witness to its superiority as a translation. . .

But let’s not lose sight of the fact that languages are “containers” of that which has been eternally settled in heaven. It does not matter whether the “container” is in the form of a faithful translation, or the original languages themselves—the truth has not lost its identity or power in any way. Insofar as a translation is a faithful and accurate representation of the exact message God gave, it can be called God’s inspired and preserved word.

Yet we must understand that as we make this statement, we are not referring to the containers themselves but to the truth of God within the containers, as revealed to man. What we are discussing is how we choose the container. Or, to put it another way, we are discussing the condition of the container and whether or not it has effectively preserved its contents (the truth) [Daniel 10:21 affirms this notation. The scriptures by definition do not report information that is false.]. Personally, I want to drink my spiritual drink from the container that has **ALL** the truth and **ONLY** the truth. Thus, I stand upon the *Textus Receptus*, and by extension of its faithfulness and accuracy to the *Textus Receptus*, the King James Version.

[Recall from Lesson 40 the words of Louis Gaussen’s seminal 1840 work *Theopneustia* (*The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*) about the word being incarnated in human language through inspiration and translation changing its dress.].

Some would argue that the King James Version has not “come and gone” like so many other translations, which proves it has been inspired or preserved. Although this is true, we should at least be honest enough to admit that if Jesus tarries his coming, English like the Greek language spoken by the whole Roman Empire in the first century could become a dead language. . .

[Therefore] Let’s be reminded of what the biblical definition of preservation is. We define preservation as the act of God whereby He protects His text from any possible

corruption from its very inception forevermore. . . So when we speak of preservation, we are not referring to a translation but to the Greek and Hebrew texts.

[Taylor seems to make contradictory statements in this section of his book. On the one hand he states, “preservation only applies to what God has given by inspiration, and not what has been accomplished by translation.” Later he writes, “insofar as a translation is a faithful and accurate representation of the exact message God gave, it can be called God’s inspired and preserved word.” Then he says, “when we speak of preservation, we are not referring to a translation but to the Greek and Hebrew texts.” While I appreciate Taylor very much for his evenhanded tone, these comments are not helpful and are confusing. I believe that the Process of Preservation includes both original language texts as well as translations thereof. This is the only way that access to God’s word can be assured to every generation. Given the fact that early translations are vital to the *Textus Receptus* position, it seems strange that Dr. Taylor would make seemingly contradictory statements on this matter.]

Biblically, we must limit preservation in the strictest sense to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts because those were the languages and words that God chose to deliver his message to man. As we apply the doctrine of preservation to the Greek manuscripts, several questions must logically and biblically be answered. Namely, “if a text had fallen out of use, does it still meet the criteria of “preservation?” Can we reasonably claim to have the pure Word of God if we do not know what the originals looked like? These questions and others should be answered.

As we seek to keep a balanced view, we should objectively examine both the *Textus Receptus* and the Critical Text with the same criteria.” (Taylor, 57-59)

- In the next term we will turn our attention to these considerations.

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