

Sunday, September 9, 2018— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 57 Summative Review of Preservation

Introduction

- This class last met on Sunday, May 14, 2017. It has been two years since we started Term 2 on the doctrine of Preservation in September 2016. The reason for the extended break was that I needed to take classes for my secular job in order to maintain my teacher certification with the State of Michigan as well as apply for a corresponding pay increase with my school district. Between September 2017 and June 2018, I took 20 credit hours' worth of classes to accomplish this goal. This of course meant that I was not able to put the time and effort into studying for and preparing these lessons each week.
- With these classes in the rear-view mirror, I am now able to resume the class. Unfortunately, the extended break has made it somewhat difficult to decide how and where to reboot the class. After much consideration and weighing many options, I have decided that the best course of action is to simply take stock of where we have been and then chart a course for where I want to go in Term 3.

Review of Content Found in Terms 1 and 2

- Term 1 began in September 2015 and ran through April 2016. The focus of Term 1 was on understanding basic terminology and the doctrine of inspiration. The following is a summation of what was covered in Term 1:
 - Preliminary Considerations (Lessons 1-5)
 - Understanding Basic Terminology: Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination, Preservation (Lessons 6-10)
 - Theories of Inspiration (Lesson 11)
 - Plenary Verbal Inspiration (Lessons 12-13)
 - Divine Dictation: 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 (Lesson 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 set forth the following list of Biblical presuppositions that would govern this study.
 - 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. (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)
- As stated above, Term 2 on the Doctrine of Preservation began in September 2016 and ended in May 2017. The entire second term of this course was devoted to 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)
- In the next section we will review our summative findings regarding the doctrine of Preservation from Term 2.

Summative Observations Regarding Preservation

- Whatever one believes about preservation, it 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, translate, 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, accessible, 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)

Preservation and Predictive Prophecy

- In Lesson 23 we looked at fulfilled prophecy as one of the greatest internal proofs of the Bible’s inspiration. Meanwhile, in Lesson 34 on Isaiah 30:8 we also discussed the importance of Biblical prophecy as it relates to the doctrine of preservation. In Lesson 34 I stated the following in part:
 - “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 59:21 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.” (Copied from [Lesson 34](#))
- This past summer Nate Kooienga showed me a book titled *God’s Forever Word* by Dr. Jeff Farnham. This book contains a chapter (Chapter 7) about the relationship between preservation and predictive prophecy. Farnham argues that fulfilled prophecy is not just a proof of Bible inspiration but also of preservation. Given that Farnham presents a slightly different take on this topic than we had heretofore studied, I would like to consider some of Farnham’s argumentation as we get started with Term 3.
- Farnham offers the following “spiritual logic” to establish a connection between Bible prophecy and preservation:
 - “The specific wording of a prophecy relates to its inspiration, and that exactness of a fulfillment relates to its preservation. If a prophecy were not inspired, no one would expect its fulfillment or be able to tell if it had been fulfilled: if the prophecy were not preserved, no one living beyond the generation in which the prophecy was originally given could be aware that a particular prophecy awaited fulfillment.

If the Scripture were inspired in its original languages but only to its original recipients, the nonpreservation of Scripture would render all prophecy suspect as soon as it was first handed down or first translated. By virtue of the non-preservation position, any prophecy becomes flawed once it survives beyond the time of its original pronouncement. What such a position fosters is doubt rather than faith and questions rather than answers.” (Farnham, 79)

- Farnham buttresses his point, by referencing Matthew’s use of the phrase “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying. . .” Matthew was inspired to make nearly twenty specific references to prophecies that were fulfilled in either the life or death of Jesus Christ. In doing so, God the Holy Spirit was using Jewish scribal practices to make a divine

argument that Jesus Christ was Israel's Messiah. "The power of such references is that those prophecies still existed in exact, preserved form and the Jews knew of those exact, preserved prophecies." (Farnham, 80) The precision with which these prophetic utterances were fulfilled served to point out the unbelieving mindset of the Jewish leadership which was responsible for the preservation of the prophetic scriptures in the Old Testament.

- "Isaiah's grand fifty-third chapter and David's graphic twenty-second psalm are far more than approximate and temporary descriptions of the offering up of the Son of God for sinners. They are inspired preserved accounts of death by crucifixion. What makes the account even more valuable is that crucifixion was a means of death invented after the writings of David and Isaiah! Certainly, there was time before the crucifixion of Christ centuries later for the language to change and the dialects to differ and the spelling to vary to the point that man could have easily altered the prophecies of David and Isaiah concerning crucifixion until they were unrecognizable. However, those prophecies were preserved throughout those centuries so that when Matthew wrote his Gospel, there was substance to his citation of fulfillment." (Farnham, 80)
- Now if Matthew's specific Old Testament utterances were fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ what about those that are yet to be fulfilled? The words of the Old Testament prophets must be preserved and available or else how will future generations be able to identify the working of God in history. In short, past partial fulfillment ensures present preservation so future fulfillment can be identified.
 - "Thus, the importance of prophecy as it relates to inspiration and preservation is established. Those believing in a perfect Scripture have the joy of trusting in things to come because they believe in things that have come. Those who trust in an unmarred, infallible Bible look forward to the fulfillment of exact prophecies because they look back on the fulfillments of others." (Farnham, 81)
- It is important to note that while Farnham's work makes many good points regarding the connection between preservation and prophecy it is marred by the instance upon verbatim identity of wording as the standard for preservation. In many of the quotes above Farnham speaks of the issue of "exact" wording. This approach fails to distinguish between 1) a different way of saying the same thing and 2) a substantive difference in meaning. The problem is highlighted in the following quotation from the last paragraph of Chapter 7:
 - "How important it is to the subject of inspiration and preservation that both the record of any given prophecy and the record of its fulfillment agree! **Minor word changes** to any given prophecy or fulfillment could render the prophecy unfulfilled, and thus render the Scripture seemingly inaccurate. If, as the multiversionists promote, the dozens of scribal errors really do exist, all prophecy and all fulfillment are in question. If prophecy and fulfillment are indeed in question, we who have hope in Christ have no substantive hope at all but only a mirage on the horizons of our earthly boarders." (Farnham, 86)

- Before moving off this point, a few questions are in order:
 - Is there a difference between “minor word changes” that do not alter the doctrinal content of a prophecy and substantive differences in meaning?
 - Is adopting a standard of no “minor word changes” of any kind is demanding too much?
- As we observed in Term 2, if the New Testament writers state “it is written” yet those exact words are not written, even in a KJB, it would seem that Farnham’s standard is demanding more than he can prove. Consider Paul’s quotation of Isaiah 59:20-21 in Romans 11:26-27 as a case in point:

Isaiah 59:20-21	Romans 11:26-27
20) And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.	26) 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:
21) As for me, this <i>is</i> my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that <i>is</i> 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.	27) For this <i>is</i> my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

- Paul explicitly states, “it is written” in Romans 11:26 yet the text he is quoting from in Isaiah 59 exhibits “minor word changes” even within the KJB. Realizing that preservation does not demand exact identity of wording was the major breakthrough of Term 2 and should not be overlooked or understated as we get rolling with Term 3.
- Therefore, Farnham is correct to point out that close connection between predictive prophecy and preservation. His mistake resides in carrying the correlation too far.

Focus of Term 3

- Term 3 will primarily focus on the following issues:
 - Canonicity
 - Transmission

- In terms of Canonicity, we will consider the following issues in detail.
 - *False views of the Canon.*
 - Scriptural view of the Canon.
- On the matter of Transmission, we will seek to trace the text of preservation from the pen of the apostles in the 1st century till the publication of the Authorized Version in 1611. This will not be an easy task.

Works Cited

Bauder, Kevin T. "An Appeal to Scripture" in *One Bible Only? Examining the Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.

Farnham, Jeff. *God's Forever Word*. Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 2013.

Taylor, Jim. *In Defense of the Textus Receptus*. Cleveland, GA: Old Path Publications, 2016.