

Wednesday, July 24, 2019—Grace School of the Bible Summer Family Bible Conference—The Word For All Ages (Ps. 119:89)

### **Preliminaries**

- Thank Richard for inviting me to speak.
- Announce: 2019 West Michigan Grace Bible Conference
  - October 18-20
  - Pauline Neurotheology: Building Godly Character One Thought at A Time
- Announce: the publication of *J.C. O'Hair and the Origins of the American Grace Movement: 1899 to 1958* ([Click here](#) to order).

### **Introduction**

- *Assignment*: A study of how God has designed for his word to be available and present in all ages, with emphasis on how to locate it today.
- I would like to begin this morning by asking some questions:
  - How many of you believe that that KJB contains all the correct readings?
  - How many of you believe the KJB is God's word for English speaking people?
  - How many of you believe that the KJB is inerrant in that it does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE?
  - How many of you believe that the KJB is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice for an English-speaking Christian?
- I believe all those things as well. Now, turn with me to every verse in your KJB that states that the KJB: 1) contains all the correct readings, 2) is God's word for English speaking people, 3) is inerrant and doesn't report any false information, or 4) is the final authority for English-speaking Christians.
- There is not a verse in the KJB that explicitly states what most of the people in this room say they believe about the KJB. So, in the absence of a specific verse how can we know that we are correct in our convictions regarding our English Bible?
  - Our critics are only too happy to point this out.

- We need to realize that our position on the KJB is derived or arrived at via the consistent application of our Biblical presuppositions to historical and textual facts.
- My goal in this message is to walk you through this thought process so that you can see how one can confidently arrive at the following conclusions regarding the KJB:
  - The KJB contains all the correct readings.
  - The KJB is God's word for English speaking people.
  - The KJB is inerrant in that it does not report information about God, His nature or character, His doctrine, His dispensational dealings with mankind, history, archeology, or science that is FALSE.
- Meeting this goal will fulfill the dictates of my assignment by demonstrating how God's design was for his word to be available and present in all ages, as well as demonstrate how one can scripturally locate it today.
- In order to accomplish this task, we will consider the following points:
  - Governing First Principles
  - Biblical Principles for Identify the Preserved Text
  - Identifying the Preserved Text in History
  - Conclusion

### **Governing First Principles**

- Every worldview begins with a set of governing presuppositions or first principles. These principles characterize, determine, and set forth the circumscribed boundaries by which the given worldview judges and accepts what ideas are true or valid.
- Our study this morning is no different. As a Bible believing Christian, I ought to be looking to God's word to establish my governing presuppositions on how I should think about and approach the scriptures. When we look to God's word to teach us how to think about God's book, we encounter the following Biblical first principles:
  - 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 cannot lie. (Titus 1:2)
- God promised to preserve that which He inspired. (Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:89, 111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25)
- Generally speaking, the first six of these presuppositions are not in dispute among leading Evangelical and Fundamental believers. However, the same could not be said for the sixth principle regarding preservation. Much ink has been spilt debating the doctrine of preservation.
  - Some deny the promise of preservation altogether and claim that the Bible teaches no such doctrine. According to this view, the New Testament text was lost and needs to be reconstructed, using the naturalistic, unbiased, or neutral methodologies of the science of textual criticism.
  - Others maintain that the scriptures do teach their own preservation but that this preservation occurred in all the extant MSS and textual witnesses. Therefore, textual criticism is necessary to sift and weigh the evidence in order to reconstruct the original text.
    - These first two positions disagree about the Biblical promise of preservation but agree that the text needs to be reconstructed via the so-called science of textual criticism.
  - Still others believe that preservation is a Biblical promise that God accomplished by preserving a particular/specific body of MSS.
- In his book *A More Sure Word: Which Bible Can You Trust* Dr. R.B. Ouellette state the following regarding why preservation is such a hotly debated topic:
  - "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 [and word]." (Ouellette, 33)
- So, why is preservation so hotly debated? Because the facts on the ground are not as neat and tidy as we might like to think.
  - Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
  - Fact 2—no two editions of the Hebrew Masoretic Text are *exactly* the same in terms of wording.

- Fact 3—no two Greek manuscripts, even the MSS of the Byzantine majority, are *exactly* the same.
- Fact 4—no two printed editions of the *Textus Receptus* are *exactly* the same.
- Fact 5—no two editions of the King James Bible are *exactly* the same.
- Fact 6—the King James differs from modern versions.
- Fact 7—no two modern versions read *exactly* the same.
- Consider the following summative statement from the pen of Kevin 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)
- Given the Biblical principle that God preserved his word 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 overtake 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 *verbatim identicality* of wording, 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.
- At this point the Bible Believer has a decision to make. Are they going to throw up their hands and join the ranks of naturalistic text critics who approach the Bible as though it were an ordinary book of human origin or are they going to look back to the scriptures which taught them to

believe in preservation in the first place and let the scriptures instruct them how to think about preservation.

- Our job as Bible Believers is not to reconstruct the Biblical text as though it had been lost. Rather our job is to use principles derived from God's word to identify the text God has preserved throughout history.

### **Biblical Principles for Identify the Preserved Text**

- 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: 1) Multiplicity of Copies, 2) Available/Accessible, 3) In Use
- The multiplicity of copies made by the body of Christ furnished the church with a text that was available and accessible so that it could be used by the believers in successive generations. In other words, these three principles work together to furnish us with a triad of concepts that assists the Bible believer with identifying the preserved text in history.
- God's design was to preserve His word in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that were just as authoritative as the originals.
- 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). 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 states, then his mother and his grandmother possessed copies of the word of God from which they instructed Timothy.
  - 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. That is the assertion of God the Holy Spirit.
  - 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.
- Matthew 22:31—they did not have original manuscripts. They had copies of the word of God that they were reading from. 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.
- Proverbs 25:1
- Daniel 9:1-2—Daniel had copies of the book of Jeremiah (Jer. 25::11-12) 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 understood that the words he was reading were right and that they were God's words.
- Luke 4:16-21—in this passage Christ 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 required, Jesus Christ would not be telling the truth in this verse. 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 8:26-30—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 the Lord to join himself unto the Eunuch's chariot, Philip finds him reading the passage above from Isaiah 53. Note that this is same book (Isaiah) that Christ was reading from in Luke 4. There was a copy in Nazareth and a copy on its way to Africa.

- 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 Old Testament scattered all over the known world in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- 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.
- 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.

#### *Verbatim Identicality*

- These passage in Luke 4 and Acts 8 highlight an important point regarding preservation that needs to be considered. Preservation does not require *verbatim identicality* of wording.
- In Luke 4 the Lord Jesus Christ is reading from a manuscript copy of Isaiah 61. A comparison between the two passages in your KJB reveals an important lesson regarding preservation. Not only did preservation occur in a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies but those copies did not need to possess *verbatim* wording in order to be considered scripture. Please consider the following comparison.

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

- These passages (Luke 4 & Isaiah 61) from within the KJB do not exhibit *verbatim identity* of wording 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 *verbatim* 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 Greek Text is because their wording has been changed so much so as to substantively alter the doctrinal content of the Bible.
- 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.

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 <b>brought as a lamb</b> to the slaughter,</p> <p>and as a <b>sheep before her shearers is dumb</b>,</p> <p>so <b>he openeth</b> not his mouth.</p> <p><b>He was taken from prison and from judgment:</b> and who shall declare his generation?</p> <p>For <b>he was cut off out of the land of the living:</b></p> <p>for the transgression of my people was he stricken.</p>	<p>He was <b>led as a sheep</b> to the slaughter;</p> <p>and like a <b>lamb dumb before his shearer</b>,</p> <p>so <b>opened he</b> not his mouth:</p> <p><b>In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:</b> and who shall declare his generation?</p> <p>for <b>his life is taken from the earth.</b></p>

- 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 *verbatim* wording as the standard for preservation is overreaching. God the Holy Spirit does not even demand that in His word.
- These two passages highlight why 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.”

- Moreover, the definition of preservation does not demand *verbatim identicality* for something to be characterized as having been preserved. Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines [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*.**”
- If the substantive doctrinal content of the scriptures is intact, we can say without doubt that they have been preserved. Again, if the Holy Spirit can quote His own work without using *verbatim* words and still call it scripture, then who are we to demand more from the doctrine of preservation than God almighty.

### **Identifying the Preserved Text in History**

- Applying the scriptural principles from the previous point will assist the believer in identifying the preserved text in history:
  - *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 plenteous 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, copy, believe, translate, and preach from. They would not be hidden under a rock, buried in the sand, or in an inaccessible library or monastery.
  - *In Use*—a third Biblical hallmark of the Preserved Text is 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 far away from God’s people who were doing the work of the ministry. 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 in Greek. The *TR* is supported by the vast majority of extant Greek manuscripts (*multiplicity of copies*) as found in the Byzantine Text-type. 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. Its availability, accessibility, and use are seen not only in the

MSS of the Byzantine majority, but also in the early versions, patristic quotations, and Lectionaries; all of which support the readings found in the *TR*.

- In terms of canonicity, the books of the New Testament received *corporate exposure* via the copying process (preservation). The *corporate exposure* furnished by the multiplicity of copies in turn led to the *corporate reception* of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament Canon. It would be a mistake to think that this process was limited to the books of the Bible in terms of its “Table of Contents” without extending to the text or readings found within these books. The doctrinal substance of the Biblical text, not just its “Table of the Contents”, authenticated itself to the body of Christ.
- Throughout the history of the dispensation of grace, the body of Christ had access to and utilized a *pure text* (Psalm 12:6-7) that was in substantive agreement with the *TR* in Greek and the King James Bible in English despite not having been transmitted in a state of *verbatim identity*.
- The authentication and use of this *pure text* by the body of Christ occurred organically through the internal witness of God the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the New Testament prophets, not through the rulings and decrees of church councils and/or actions of an organized state church such as the Roman Catholic Church.
- The KJB is a formal translation of the text the bears the scriptural marks of preservation.
  - First, its underlying Greek text is witnessed by the vast majority of extant textual witness i.e., a multiplicity of copies.
  - Second, the Greek text supporting the KJB was available and accessible throughout the dispensation of grace for the body of Christ to possess, study, copy, and translate.
  - Third, the textual tradition upon which the *TR* is based was utilized for centuries by the body of Christ. It is the text that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation.
- 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 copied and/or used by Bible believing people during the dispensation of grace.
- The Modern Critical text was a 19<sup>th</sup> century creation of textual critics based upon the primary witness of two Greek Codices: Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Σ). These two codices disagree with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone, many of which are substantive. Moreover, they were inaccessible to the body of Christ throughout the dispensation of grace because they were not even known to exist until the 15<sup>th</sup> (B) and 19<sup>th</sup> (Σ) centuries respectively. Lastly, they have no history of ever having been used and/or copied by the body of Christ.
  - “No amount of subjective preference can obscure the fact that they are poor copies, objectively so. They were so bad that no one could stand to use them, and so they

survived physically (but had no ‘children,’ since no one wanted to copy them).  
(Pickering, 2)

- The Critical Text is a Frankenstein text that was cobbled together by text critics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century using an eclectic method. No member of the body of Christ had ever seen such a text; much less used a text like the one printed by Westcott and Hort in 1881. The publication of the Critical Text was the fruit of lower criticism’s application of Enlightenment Rationalism upon the Biblical text.

## Conclusion

- So, a consistent application of our governing first principles points towards the MSS of the Byzantine Majority and the *TR* in Greek and the KJB in English as being the text of preservation. God has truly fulfilled his promise to preserve his word “from this generation for ever.”
- Uninformed critics of the King James position masquerading as scholars would have us believe that our position is of relatively recent origin in the writings of Benjamin G. Wilkinson (1930), J.J. Ray (1954), Peter Ruckman (1964), or David Otis Fuller (1970). While it is true that some arguments that have characterized the pro-King James position in later 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries find their genesis in the writings of these men it is an ahistorical error to hang the origin of our position concerning the KJB on these controversial figures.
- In his 1917 book *The Menace of Modernism* author William B. Riley describes what he calls the “Old Conception” or the state affairs that existed before the Modernists controversy of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Riley, as of 1917 the following components of the “Old Conception” has already been lost:
  - “There are at least three features of the old conception, each of which has now passed away. They are, first, that the Bible was finished in heaven and handed down; second, that the King James Version was absolutely inerrant; third, that its literal acceptance and interpretation was, alone, correct.” (Riley, 9)
- While Riley himself did not believe that the “King James Version was absolutely inerrant” he identifies that there was a time period in history when many English-speaking Christians did believe such a thing.
- In 1885, J.H. Spencer published *A History of Kentucky Baptists from 1769 to 1885*. As the title suggests, this two-volume work chronicles the history of the Baptist denomination in Kentucky for over one hundred years. Pages 507 through 509 give the history of the “Bethlehem Association of Regular Baptists.” The Association was formed on the 17th of November 1838, on which day they drafted and signed a Constitution which stated the following in Article 2d:
  - “We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as translated by King James, to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.” (Spencer, 508)

- Did this group of simple Baptists believe that the English Bible they held in their hand “as translated by King James” was “the Word of God?” Absolutely they did. Given more time and space statements like this one could be multiplied many times over. For now, suffice it to say that throngs of English-speaking Christians held to the firm belief that the Authorized Version was God’s Word in their language for centuries before the advent of the Critical Text, the Revision Version and/or Modern Versions, or presumed champions of the KJB in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Simple and plain folk for nearly three centuries held and clung to their KJBs as their chiefest treasure believing it to be God’s inerrant word in the English language.

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