

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 phenomena 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 agreement 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 Ɀ 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 "Ɀ 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 Theophlact (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 others 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 than 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 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.