

Saturday, May 28, 2011—2011 Great Lakes Grace Bible Conference—The People and Process of Preservation

*A study of how God will fulfill that promise. We then can hold a conviction based on faith, because we see in His word a basis to evaluate events and evidence. We know where to look for His word.*

### **The Logic of Faith**

- *Point One:* Thy Word of God is unlike any other Book, is of divine origin and possess Final Authority
  - II Timothy 3:16—the Bible’s claim for itself is that it was given by inspiration of God
  - We saw that the entire Bible, every word of Scripture was given by inspiration.
  - God placed his eternally settled up words into the mouth and pen of human authors who recorded God’s vary words.
  - God’s design in Inspiration was to make the living and the written word equal
- *Point Two:* God has promised to preserve forever the same words he inspired.
  - Psalm 12:6-7—the doctrine of Preservation teaches that the vary words God inspired are the same words he is going to preserve. The doctrines of Inspiration and Preservation go hand in hand; you can’t have one without the other.
  - If God went to the trouble to perfectly inspire his word only to allow errors and mistakes to creep into the text it would be inconstant with His nature and character.
  - If God has not preserved His words as He said that He would (Psalms 12:6-7), then He has done two things He has never done before. First, he has wasted His own time. Second, God did not do that which He promised he would which would make him a liar.
  - It is always to be remembered that the Bible is a spiritual book which God exerted supernatural force to conceive, and it is reasonable to assume that he could exert that same supernatural force to preserve.
- *Point Three:* Preservation is necessary because Satan is actively seeking to undermine the final authority of God’s written word.
  - Genesis 3 outlines Satan’s policy of evil against the word of God.
    - Step One: cause doubt to arise by questioning what God said (Genesis 3:1)
    - Step Two: doubt causes Eve to subtract from God’s word (Genesis 3:2)
    - Step Three: doubt causes Eve to add to and water down God’s word (Genesis 3:3)
    - Step Four: Satan flat-out denies and contradicts what God said (Genesis 3:4)

- It is Satan's policy of evil to destroy the final authority of the Word of God. He does so by creating a competing authority to the truth of God. Thus forcing you to decide and become your own authority.

### **The Process of Preservation**

- II Timothy 3:15—did Timothy's family possess an original copy for every book of the Bible? No, they had copies.
- What does the Holy Spirit through Paul call the copies that Timothy possessed? Scripture
- Remember that verse sixteen says that all Scripture was given by inspiration of God. So the copies that Timothy possessed in verse 15 are called Scripture. In other words, they are just as authoritative as the original manuscripts.
- How can the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul make such a claim? Because of the doctrine of Preservation. All of this speaks to the process God used to accomplish the Preservation of his very words.
- Matthew 22:29-32—Christ had a copy of the scripture (*grafe*, that which is written down) and says that it is the word of God.
- It is God's design to preserve his word through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that are just authoritative as the originals.
- Exodus 31:18—now here is an original manuscript
- Exodus 32:15-19—Moses destroys the manuscript
- Exodus 34:27-28—God does not get mad a Moses for destroying the original he simply makes a copy.
- Jeremiah 36:1-7, 22-24, 27-28
- Proverbs 25:1
- Daniel 9:2—Daniel is in Babylon studying copies of the book of Jeremiah.
- Daniel 9:11-13—Daniel also possesses copies of the Law of Moses.
- Daniel 10:20-21—what is an angel? Messenger of God. Notice what this messenger of God says about the copies that Daniel had. He calls them the “scripture of truth.” Is there error in the truth? No. In order for the Angles statement to be correct, the copies that Daniel had must be inerrant, infallible, and just as much the word of God as the original manuscripts.
- Luke 4:16-21—the synagogue in Nazareth possessed a copy of the prophet Isaiah. What does Jesus call this copy of Isaiah? Scripture. If there is anyone who knew what they are talking about it would have been Christ.

- Acts 8:26-38—the Ethiopian Eunuch possessed a copy of the same book Christ read from in Luke 4.
- Notice again in verses 32 and 35 that God the Holy Spirit calls the copies the Eunuch possessed Scripture.
- II Timothy 3:15-16—Paul tells Timothy that he possessed copies of the Holy Scriptures. Do you understand that Paul is calling the copies that Timothy possessed in verse 15 inspired in verse 16?
- God’s design in Preservation is that the copies would be just as accurate and authoritative as the originals.

### **The People of Preservation**

- God always over saw the copying process of the word of God. He did so by establishing a group of men whose job it was to guard the word of God.
- Romans 3:1-2—one of the reasons God created the nation of Israel is so that they could watch over God’s word. The oracles of God were committed or entrusted to the nation of Israel.
- Deuteronomy 31:24-28—the tribe of Levi was given the responsibility to teach Israel the word of God.
- Deuteronomy 10:2-8—Moses places the Ten Commandments into the Ark. In verse eight, who was given the responsibility of taking care of the Ark? The Levites
- Deuteronomy 31:9-13—the Levites were given the responsibility of copying and teaching the Word.
- Malachi 2:4-7—the Levites were the ones who knew God’s word.
- Ezra 7:6-7—Ezra was a member of the tribe of Levi. He was a ready scribe and an expert in the Law of Moses. He was part of the group of People who God had established for the handling of the Word of God.
- Ezra 7:10-11—Ezra made copies of the Word of God.
- Ezra 7:27-28—God’s hand was on Ezra to ensure that the copying was done right.
- Proverbs 25:1
- Isaiah 36:22-37:2
- Jeremiah 8:8-9—the scribes were responsible for copying the Word of God.

- My point is that God did not simply allow his word to be handled and copied by anyone. In the Old Testament he established a specific group of men whose job it was to take care of the Word of God.
- Scribes knew they were duplicating God’s word, so they went to incredible lengths to prevent error from creeping into their work. The whole process of copying the Bible was controlled by strict religious rituals, and the scribes carefully counted every line, word, syllable, and letter to ensure accuracy.
- Massoratic Text dates around 900 A.D. discovered in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls date around 150 B.C. 1,000 years earlier. When compared with the Massoratic text the Dead Sea Scrolls were word for word identical in over 95% of the text. The 5% variation consisted of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.
- This is historical confirmation of the Biblical doctrine of Preservation, not just of the thoughts but of the very words themselves.
- When God set the nation of Israel aside the people who were responsible for the protection and preservation of the God’s Word changed. When Israel fell the job of Preservation passed from the scribes of the tribe of Levi into the hands of the New Testament prophets.
- Ephesians 4:11—we know that during the infancy stage of the Body of Christ, before the Word of God was complete the gift of prophecy functioned in the Body of Christ.
- Exodus 7:1—one of the functions of a prophet in the Word of God is to be God’s spokes person. A prophet also communicated God’s Word to his audience. “thus saith the Lord.”
  - Foretelling—means to predict the future.
  - Forth telling—means to deliver a message.
- I Corinthians 14:27-33—one of the functions of the gift of prophecy served for the body of Christ was to help identify what was God’s word from what was not. This one reason why once the word of God was complete the gift of prophecy passed away.
- II Thessalonians 2:1-2—the gift of prophecy was critical during the early church because it helped distinguish between scripture and false epistles.
- II Peter 3:15-16—Paul’s own epistles were being copied and sent all over the land.
- Colossians 4:15-16—the Word of God was being copied and shared between all the churches of 1st century.
- New Testament prophets followed by Bible believing Christians who knew they were handling the word of God continued the copying process.