

Saturday, May 28, 2011—2011 Great Lakes Grace Bible Conference—The Product of Preservation

*The Bible's own testimony of the authority of inspiration and inerrancy exists in the copies possessed by the Lord himself, as well as Peter, Paul, and others. The Bible does not support the false premise that only the originals are inspired, and the scriptures are still "scripture" when translated (Acts 22:1-2).*

### **Introduction**

- Now that we have outlined the five key points in the viewpoint of faith we are now ready to take what we have learned and apply it to the historical and textual witness and in an attempt to try and locate God's Word in our language.
- In the pervious study I demonstrated how God the Holy Spirit calls the copies possessed by Christ, Peter, Paul, Ethiopian Eunuch, and other Scripture.
- Since the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek where does this knowledge leave us as English speaking people in relation to God's Word?
- In short, do we have a Bible today in our language that carries forward the very words of God contained in the original autographs?
- These are the type of questions we will try and answer in this lesson.

### **What is Textual Criticism?**

- At this point our study gets more complicated and technical because we are forced to leave the confines of the Bible itself, and enter into the realm textual criticism.
- I am going to make every effort to give you enough information to understand the issues involved but at the same time not overwhelm you with unnecessary facts.
- Definition of Textual Criticism: this activity involves the study of Biblical manuscripts, written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, as well as ancient translations into other languages like Latin or Coptic. Its goal is to reconstruct the original text of the Bible from this vast wealth of information.

### **The Preserved Text**

- As we try to locate God's preserved word what should we be looking for? A multiplicity of accurate reliable copies.
- The Majority Text represents the vast majority (90+%) of all Greek MSS (5,000).
- Overtime this majority of manuscripts along with readings from early translations and Patristic Lectionaries came to be known as the Textus Receptus. This is a Latin term which simply means the text that is commonly received among the people.

- The TR is the text that Martin Luther used to make his translation into German in 1522. It was this text, along with the stress of the Reformers on believers possessing the Bible in their own language that drove the Protestant Revolution.
- Eight early translations were made into English. The first was John Wycliffe's translation into English in 1382. While Wycliffe championed the notion of translating the Bible into the vernacular language, Wycliffe based his work on the Latin Vulgate.
- See PowerPoint Slide—*The Preserved Text*

### **The Critical Text**

- Virtually every English Translation that has been made since 1881 has followed the textual theories of Westcott and Hort.
- In 1844, archeologist Constantin von Tischendorf, retrieved a 4<sup>th</sup> century uncial manuscript from a trash can at Saint Catherine's Monastery near Mount Sinai. The discovery of Codex Sinaiticus, promoted textual critics to begin a critical evaluation of the Received Text.
- In 1881, a panel of scholars led by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort sought to revise the Standard English text of the King James Bible. In doing so they replaced the TR with a "new and improved Greek text" based upon their own critical theory of textual criticism.
- Summary of the Westcott and Hort theory:
  - Natural Approach: the New Testament should be treated like any other ancient document.
  - Textual Families: to get around the majority readings of the TR, the family tree method was adopted.
    - Alexandrian text-type: found in early papyri, and the great uncial codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus.
    - Western text-type: found in Greek MSS and in translations into other languages, especially Latin.
    - Byzantine text-type: found in the vast majority of later uncial and minuscule MSS.
  - Older MSS are better because they are closer to the original.
    - Read footnote on Mark 16 and explain what it is saying
  - Shorter MSS are better because over time the readings were embellished and added to.
  - See PowerPoint Slide—*Critical Text Line*

### **Scriptural Evaluation of the Critical Approach**

- Answer to Natural Approach: on the basis of its historical/agricultural accuracy, unique composition, and fulfilled prophecy the viewpoint of faith will not allow a believer to view the Bible like any other book. The Bible is God’s book. God inspired every word of scripture and promised to preserve for eternity that which he inspired.
- Answer to Textual Families Approach: textual families are a humanistic method of skirting the real issue and obscuring the clear testimony of scripture. The Bible teaches the preservation was going to occur through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies.
- Answer to the Older MSS are Better Claim: as a trained historian possessing a Masters Degree in history this approach makes sense for every other book from antiquity except the Bible.
  - II Corinthians 2:17—just because a reading is old proves nothing about its reliability. People were already trying to corrupt the New Testament before it was even finished.
  - II Thessalonians 2:1-2—“letters as from us”
- Answer to Shorter MSS are Better Claim: in light of the Satanic policy of evil against the word of God in Genesis 3 this claim does not hold any water. It is just as easy to subtract words you don’t like as it is add words to the text.
  - In Genesis 3 the word is questioned, subtracted from, added to, watered down, and in the end denied
  - Three times God warns about people corrupting the word of God.
    - Deuteronomy 4:1-2
    - Proverbs 30:5-6
    - Revelation 22:18-19—God wouldn’t warn believers about people who were going to corrupt the word of God if it weren’t possible. This is why preservation is necessary.
- PowerPoint slide comparing the number of Greek MSS.
- Read quotations from White’s book. Page 152, 154.

### **Two Kinds of Bibles**

- This investigation leads to the following conclusion. There are fundamentally only two different kinds of Bibles. Bibles that follow the TR and the majority of the readings and Bibles that follow the humanistic approach advocated by the supporters of the critical text.
- PowerPoint slide.

- Common Misconception most people believe that modern version are simply an updating of the archaic words in the King James Bible. This is not the case, the real issue in version debate is not how to translate individual Greek words into English but rather which set of Greek texts are you going to use to make your translation.
- The reason the King James and Modern Versions are different is because they are translated from an entirely different set of Greek MSS.
- **The modern critical text that forms the basis for nearly all modern versions omits the equivalent of the entire books of 1st and 2nd Peter.**
- **Not all modern versions are the same.** Sometimes the NASB will include a word the NIV doesn't, or the NRSV might omit a phrase the NIV and NASB both retain, etc... but for the most part, the examples below represent nearly all of the popular modern versions.
- This following list illustrates what was done when the text used by Christianity for 1800 years was replaced with a text assembled by Westcott and Hort in the nineteenth century and used as the basis for the English Revised Version, which nearly all modern translations closely follow.
- II Samuel 21:19—"the brother of Goliath"
  - I Samuel 17:48-51—David killed Goliath
- Matthew 5:22—leaves out the phrase "without a cause."
  - Mark 3:5—Jesus gets angry. By leaving out the phrase "without a cause," in Matthew 5:22 modern versions have Jesus Christ condemning himself out of his own mouth.
- Mark 1:1-2—"as it is written the prophets" is changed to "it is written in Isaiah the prophet"
  - Malachi 3:1—is quoted in verse two
  - Isaiah 40:3—is quoted in verse three
  - In this case modern versions have a mistake in them which they acknowledge in their own footnotes. How many mistakes does it take for something to not be perfect anymore? One. Remember God's word reflects God's character.
- Luke 2:33—"the child's father a mother" in modern versions. Is the virgin birth of Christ one of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith?
  - New Living Translation did not get this reading from the so called best MSS. They are not even consistent in the application of their textual theories
- John 1:18—New American Standard reads "the only begotten God" the same as does The Jerusalem Translation of the Jehovah Witnesses.

## The Question of Inerrancy

- First principles are the foundation of knowledge. Without them nothing could be known. First principles undeniably apply to reality. The very denial that first principles apply to reality used first principles in the denial.
- The Principle of Noncontradiction: Being Is Not Nonbeing. Being cannot be nonbeing, for they are direct opposites. And opposites cannot be the same.
- The Principle of Excluded Middle: Either Being or Nonbeing. Since being and nonbeing are opposites (i.e. contradictory), and opposites cannot be the same, nothing can hide in the cracks between being and nonbeing.
- Illustration using the shirts. How many differences do these shirts need to have before they are not the same? One.
- How many differences do we need to demonstrate in English Bibles before we can conclude that they are not the same? One.
- How many mistakes do we need to demonstrate in a so called Bible before we conclude that it is not inerrant? One. Can we rightly call a Bible with a mistake in it the word of God? No.
- Because of the laws of logic it height of lunacy to argue, as many do, that all of these Bibles are the word of God. They cannot all be God's word because they teach opposites and opposites cannot be the same.
- What are the options?
  - One is right and all others that disagree are wrong
  - Or they are all wrong.
- The viewpoint of faith will not allow us to conclude that they are all wrong because God promised to preserve his word from this generation forever.
- In their attempt to defend the inerrancy of Scripture modern evangelical scholarship undermines their own position.
- In October 1978, 300 scholars, pastors, and laymen meet in Chicago, IL to discuss the subject of Biblical inerrancy. The International Conference on Biblical Inerrancy drafted The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, a 19 Article statement of their position along with a detailed explanation of their findings.
- Please consider their statements regarding Transmission and Translation:
  - "Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The

verdict of science however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appear to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is on no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free.” (Geisler, 502)

- “Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the autographa. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit’s constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its means as to render it unable to make its reader “wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. 3:15).” (Geisler, 502)
- The book *Inerrancy*, edited by Norman Geisler contains edited copies of 14 scholarly papers presented at the ICBI in October 1978. Please consider the following quotations from the sixth chapter titled, “The Inerrancy of the Autographa” by Greg L. Bahsen.
  - Page 155-156
  - Page 157
  - Page 161
  - Page 169-170—we don’t have a Bible then since the originals are lost.
  - Page 175—show Psalm 12:6-7 in the new Bibles
  - Page 176
  - Page 185—now they want Preservation after they just denied it.
  - Page 186
- So then how do we know that the King James Bible is correct and modern versions are false? The King James Bible is a literal word for word translation of the Preserved Text.
  - God inspired every word of Scripture.
  - God promised to preserve for all eternity the same words he inspired.
  - God so fit to preserve his word through a multiplicity of accurate reliable copies that are just as authoritative as the originals.
  - The multiplicity of accurate reliable copies are witnessed in the readings of the Textus Receptus.
  - In accordance with God’s emphasis on the words and not the thoughts or the ideas. The King James translators made a faithful and literal word for word translation of the Preserved Text (TR) into English
- The product of preservation is that we can have complete confidence that the King James Bible is God’s Word for English speaking people.