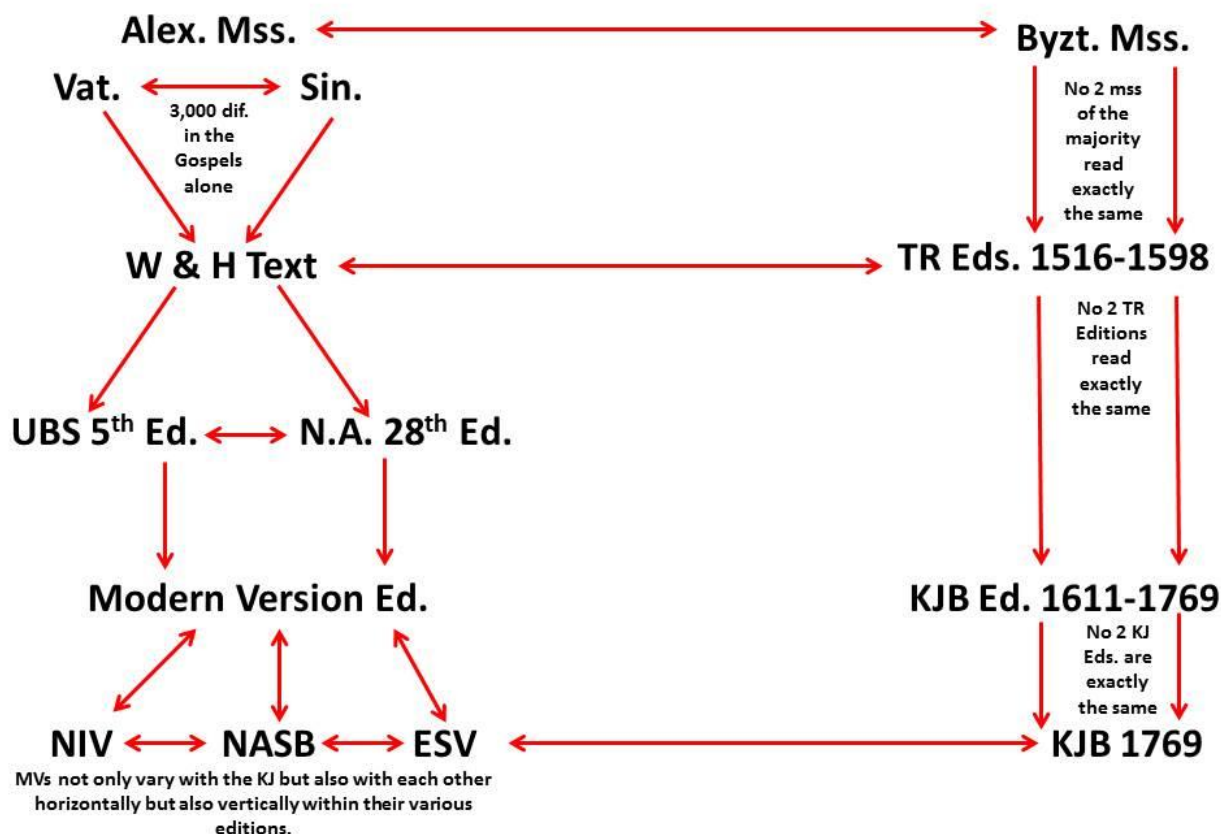


Sunday, December 11, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*  
 Lesson 39 Preservation: Faith in the Promise of God

### **Review: What Have We Seen So Far?**

- In Lesson 28 & 29 we began the second term of the class with an Introduction to Preservation. After reviewing some key points regarding inspiration from the first term we took stock of the following facts.
  - Fact 1—the original autographs are not extant i.e., they no longer exist.
  - Fact 2—no two Greek manuscripts are exactly the same.
    - Alexandrian manuscripts ⌵ (Codex Sinaiticus) and B (Codex Vaticanus), the two so-called oldest and best, differ with each other in over 3,000 places in the gospels alone.
    - The manuscripts comprising the Alexandrian Text Type differ from those comprising the Byzantine Text Type.
    - No two Byzantine manuscripts read exactly the same.
  - Fact 3—no two printed editions of the Greek New Testament are exactly the same.
    - Editions of the TR are not exactly the same.
    - The TR differs from the Critical Text
    - Critical Text editions are not exactly the same.
      - United Bible Society
      - Nestle-Aland
  - Fact 4—no two editions of the King James Bible are exactly the same.
  - Fact 5—the King James differs from modern versions.
  - Fact 6—no two modern versions read exactly the same.

## Original Autographs



- Summary Statement:
  - “If the preservation of the Word of God depends upon exact preservation of the words of the original documents, then the situation is dire. No two manuscripts contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Masoretic Text contain exactly the same words. No two editions of the Textus Receptus contain exactly the same words. No two modifications of the King James Version contain exactly the same words and the Bible nowhere tells us which edition, if any, does contain the exact words of the originals. These are not speculations, these are plain facts.” (Bauder, 155)
- In Lesson 29 we used the Book of Jeremiah as a case study to prove that God could preserve his word without preserving the original autographs.
  - Jeremiah 51:61-63—Jeremiah writing at the bidding of God the Holy Spirit tells Seraiah to destroy Original #2 by tying a stone to it and throwing it into the Euphrates River after it is read in Babylon. God almighty orders the destruction of Original #2. Why would God do this? Didn’t God know that a bunch of Fundamentalists in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century would be looking for the originals?

- Daniel 9:2—over 70 years later Daniel comes to understand, by reading the book of Jeremiah, that the captivity was supposed to last 70 years. How is that possible if Original #2 was destroyed? Copies were made prior to the captivity. Once the copies were made, God did not care what happened to the original. The original contents of Original #2 were preserved via the copying process. Daniel had access to the inspired word of God through the copy he had in front of him.
- Matthew 2:17-18—contains a quotation from Jeremiah 31:15. First, how did Matthew have access to what Jeremiah said over 470 years (70 year captivity + 400 years of silence) later if God had not preserved His word. So God secured the contents of the book of Jeremiah despite directing Jeremiah to have Original #2 thrown in the Euphrates River.
- In Lesson 30 after discussing the Core Issue of Preservation verses Restoration we studied how the TEXTUAL FACTS presented in Lesson 28 & 29 have given birth to the following three views on the doctrine of preservation:
  - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
  - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
  - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- With these three views in mind, Lesson 31 through 38 were devoted to determining whether or not the scriptures teach their own preservation.
  - Psalm 12:6-7 (Lessons 31 & 32)
  - Psalm 119: 111, 152, 160 (Lesson 33)
  - Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; I Peter 1:23-25 (Lessons 34 & 35)
  - Matthew 4:4 (Lessons 36 & 37)
  - Matthew 24:35 (Lesson 38)

### **Introduction**

- In this Lesson we want to conclude our consideration of the fundamental promise of preservation. In order to accomplish this task we will consider the following four points:
  - Preservation: The Bible's Claim For Itself
  - Preservation: God Keeps His Promises

- Preservation: The Superiority of the Fideistic Approach
- Preservation: The Historic Position of the Reformers

### **Preservation: The Bible's Claim For Itself**

- After studying the relevant passages as well as the scholarly comments made thereupon, I unequivocally maintain that preservation is the Bible's claim for itself. In other words, the Bible does assert and establish a doctrine of preservation.
- Even Dr. William W. Combs, a supporter of View 3 concludes that the Bible does establish a doctrine of preservation. Combs also concludes that the position of advanced by Wallace and Glenn (View 1) to "discount the force of these passages on preservation is unconvincing."
  - "It has been demonstrated that many of the verses commonly claimed by those in the KJV/TR camp to directly prove a doctrine of preservation have been misinterpreted and misapplied. On the other hand, at least two verses Psalms 119:152 and 160, would seem to suggest a more direct promise of preservation, with Isaiah 40:8 and Matthew 24:35 supplying more indirect support. In addition Matthew 5:18 and John 10:35 also strongly imply a doctrine of preservation with their emphasis on the continuing authority of Scripture—an argument that will be explored shortly. The attempt by Wallace and Glenn to discount the force of these passages for preservation is unconvincing." (Combs, 26)
- That being said, Combs does not agree with View 2 either, he disagrees with the KJV/TR camp regarding the *method* and *extent* of preservation.
  - "Thus we conclude that some of the verses discussed above do teach a doctrine of preservation, some more directly and other more indirectly. However, they do not support the view of preservation that is put forth by the KJV/TR camp—that God has perfectly preserved the Bible to our day. Instead, they only suggest a general promise of preservation without specifying how (what method) or to what extent (how pure) God has chosen to preserve his Word." (Combs, 26)
- Questions regarding the *method* and *extent* of preservation will be addressed in further Lessons.
- Given the scope of our discussion so far, following points are inescapable:
  - God **did** promise to persevere His word.
    - Psalms 12:6-7; 105:5; 119:111, 152, 160; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Matthew 4:4, 24:35; I Peter 1:23-25
  - God **did not** see fit to preserve His word by preserving the originals.

- This is self-evident because the originals no longer exist.
- God **did not** supernaturally over-take the pen of every scribe, copyist, or typesetter who ever handled the text to ensure that no differences of any kind entered the text.
- Differences exist at every level of this discussion.
- If the standard for preservation is “plenary” or “pristine” identity, i.e., “exact sameness” why did God not just preserve the originals and thereby remove all doubt.

### **Preservation: God Keeps His Promises**

- Given the fact that God has indeed promised to preserve his word, the belief in preservation is really a question of faith in the promises of God. The following scriptures demonstrate that God keeps his word and is incapable of lying.
  - I Kings 8:24—“God promised and fulfilled with His hand. He promised the temple. It was built by Solomon who praised God for His faithfulness in keeping His promises.” (Waite, 15)
  - Romans 4:20-21—“Here, the capability of God is exalted, as well as the fact that God keep His promises. Though both Abraham and Sarah had passed the age of being parents, God told Abraham that he would have a son by Sarah. He was “*fully persuaded*” to believe “*the promise of God.*”” (Waite, 15)
  - Titus 1:2—“Here is a promise-keeping God, One who has not lied, One who *cannot lie*, and One Who keeps His promises.” (Waite, 15)
  - Hebrews 10:23—“Yes, God is *faithful* and He keeps His promises.” (Waite, 15)

### **Preservation: The Superiority of the Fideistic Approach**

- God’s fundamental promise of preservation coupled with His inability to lie as well as His faithfulness to accomplish His promises, serve as the basis for the Fideistic Approach to Textual Criticism. Either God kept his promise regarding preservation or he did not.
- If God did so act it would be inappropriate and high minded for humans to think they can reconstruct what God promised to preserve.
  - “The hypothesis that God did not preserve His Words, so man needs to restore them, lies at the root of textual criticism. This line of thinking rejects what Scriptures state about preservation, depending instead on the uninspired words of men, both contemporary and historical. . . Any application of the pertinent passages on preservation that does not leave one with the assurance that he has a Bible with all the Words of God cannot be accepted

from a position of faith. The position that all the Words exist somewhere, but are still yet to be found, does not fit into the teaching of Scripture, and, therefore must be rejected.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 262)

- Man’s wisdom works contrary to God’s wisdom as host of scriptures attest.
  - Proverbs 3:5
  - Isaiah 55:8-9
  - I Corinthians 1:27-31; 2:5—what is your faith about God’s word standing in? The wisdom of men or the power of God.
- Kent Brandenburg summarizes the situation as follows:
  - “The basis for perfect preservation is faith; other views are built on human rationalism, “the doctrine of human reason, unaided by Divine revelation, is an adequate or the sole to attainable religious truth.” People who take a view that is “unaided by Divine revelation” are not normally known as Bible-believers, therefore, most people that profess to be Bible-believers do not usually want to consider their positions rationalistic.

Those who espouse the “majority” text view claim to simply determine what words are found in the majority of the manuscripts, and the words that survive that test are essentially deemed to be the text of Scripture. Counting is the sole criterion. This is rationalistic. The proponents of the minority text view use the humanely devised laws of textual criticism, which treat the Bible like uninspired books, in an attempt to ascertain the readings most likely found in the original manuscripts. This view also applies human reason as the sole guide. Neither of these could be considering that God of the Bible, for neither of them provides perfection, and God is perfect. He is perfect, and He is powerful enough to keep something perfect, from the soul of a man to every Word of Scripture. In contrast, the received text position receives what God has supernaturally preserved by faith. Some advocates of the received text do not believe in perfect preservation, basing their position upon Divine providence alone. However, received text people at least depend on Scriptural principles to defend their position. In many cases, the other points of view do their best to argue away as many texts on preservation as possible (cites Combs in the footnote), and contend that faith is an invalid criterion for receiving the perfect text of Scripture (cites Larry D. Pettegrew’s essay in *The Bible Version Debate: The Position of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* in the footnote).” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 263-264)

- Later Brandenburg points out that the position of the “rationalist-preservationist” is nothing more than “conceptual preservation.”

- “Instead of just believing God, men speculate on the percentage of error assumed to exist. The wobbly foundation upon which the rationalist preservationist stands is the assertion that “all of the doctrines alone have been preserved,” which effectually leaves the believer with a conceptual preservation.” (Brandenburg in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, 265)
- Since God set forth his doctrine via words written in a book what sense does it make to argue that God could preserve the book but not the words. Yet, as we will see in a future lesson, this is precisely the position of Dr. W. Edward Glenny; God preserved the *documents* but not the words that comprise those documents.

### *Wallace on the Fideistic Approach*

- Wallace excoriates the fideistic approach arguing that the theological *a priori* belief in preservation has “no place in textual criticism.”
  - “The fideistic formula violates all known historical data. Such a dogmatic affirmation results in a procrusteanizing of the data on a massive scale in the name of orthodoxy. For example, the Byzantine text did not become the majority until the ninth century—and even then “majority” must be qualified: There are almost twice as many Latin MSS as there are Greek and, to my knowledge, none of them belongs to the Byzantine text.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 202)
  - “In sum, a theological *a priori* has no place in textual criticism. Since this is the case it is necessary to lay aside fideism in dealing with the evidence. The question, since we are dealing fundamentally with historical inquiry, is not what is possible but what is probable. With the stance of faith of the traditionalists in place, textual criticism become so intertwined with orthodoxy that the evidence cannot objectively be interpreted. But once dogma is evacuated from the discussion, no position can be comfortable merely with what is possible.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 204)
- Notice plainly what Wallace is asserting: 1) the doctrine of preservation has no place in the discipline of textual criticism, 2) the faith approach is a hindrance to dealing with the historical evidence, and 3) only when the doctrine of preservation (dogma) is abandoned can one objectively evaluate the historical data.
- Explaining away the doctrine of preservation is just as central to Wallace’s position as faith is to the preservationist. This is why he must declare that passages such as Isaiah 40:8 and I Peter 1:23-25 do not assert a doctrine of preservation. He must first explain away the verses before he can advance his so-called objective argument.
  - “Traditionalists make the rather facile assumption that when God’s word is mentioned the reference must be to the written text—specifically, the text of the NT. Yet neither the written text nor the NT per se is in view in these passages. The most satisfactory exegesis of all such passages is that they are statements concerning either divine ethical

principles (i.e., more laws that cannot be violated without some kind of consequence) or the promise of fulfilled prophecy.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 202-203)

- Wallace is arguing for a naturalistic approach to textual criticism using rationalistic means. This approach rooted in the notion that the Bible is same as another book and should be approached by the same principles.

### **Preservation: The Historic Position of the Reformers**

- The following doctrinal Confessions of the Reformation Era all allude to the doctrine of preservation.
  - 1646—[\*The Westminster Confession of Faith\*](#) (Reformed)
  - 1658—[\*The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order\*](#) (Reformed)
  - 1689—[\*The London Baptist Confession\*](#) (Baptistic)
  - 1742—[\*The Philadelphia Baptist Confession\*](#) (Baptistic)
- Given that the wording is virtually identical in all four Confessions, we will limit our quotes to Chapter I Of the Holy Scriptures, Article VIII from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*:
  - “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, **by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages**, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But, **because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come**, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.”
- All four *Confessions* hold that Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament were “inspired by God” and “kept pure in all ages.” If this is not a belief in preservation I don’t know what is. Moreover, the saints responsible for these *Confessions* assert the need for these pure Hebrew and Greek words to be translated in the “vulgar language of every nation unto which they come.” This is a strong appeal for the accurate and proper translation of the pure Hebrew and Greek words into the vernacular languages of all peoples.



- These *Confessions* demonstrate the historic Protestant belief in the notion of preservation or the idea that God kept his word pure in all ages. This belief was held across denominational traditions (Reformed & Baptist) as well as geographical boundaries (Old & New World).
- It is also important to note that the drafters of these *Confessions* were ascribing these statements to the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Greek *Textus Receptus*, the only Greek text they had available to them. It was the act of translating the *Textus Receptus* into the vernacular languages of Europe that drove the Reformation and touched off the greatest era of Christian mission work the world has ever seen. These are historical FACTS that cannot be disputed.

### **Conclusion**

- Before we go further let me ask you the following series of questions. How many of you believe the following?
  - God created the world in six days?
  - God destroyed the earth through a flood saving only Noah and his family?
  - God confounded the languages of men and scattered them across the face of the earth?
  - God through Moses delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery through the Red Sea?
  - David killed Goliath?
  - Jonah was swallowed by a whale?
  - Jesus Christ was the incarnated, Virgin Born Son of God who died on the cross for our sins and rose again the third day?
  - The resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road.
- Why do you believe these things? Because you believe the Bible.
- So then why when it comes to the issue of textual criticism and the identification of the Biblical text and its translation into English why do so many believers leave the viewpoint of faith in favor of naturalistic textual theories?
- We need to believe what the Bible teaches about itself. We need to remember that the Bible is God's book. Remember from our studies of inspiration in term one, when we deal with the Bible we are dealing with God himself. We need to adopt the viewpoint of faith.
- If God promised to preserve his word, and God cannot lie, and God always fulfills his promises then it would make more sense to believe in preservation than to deny it. In order to adopt a contrary position one would have to subprime to one of the following suppositions regarding God's foundational nature and character:
  - God didn't mean what He said (Never issued such a promise.).
  - God's word cannot be trusted (Because he can and has lied.).

- God is unwilling or unable to fulfill his promises.
- From this we conclude that of the following three views, View 1 is false and is to be rejected outright. There is a Doctrine of Preservation; this is Bible claim for itself.
  - View 1—Denial of a Doctrine of Preservation
  - View 2—Preservation in the KJV/TR/MT Tradition
  - View 3—Preservation in the Totality of Manuscripts
- In the coming weeks we will begin studying the *nature* and *extent* of preservation by beginning an investigation into whether or not preservation is the corollary of inspiration.
- From this we will endeavor to determine the accuracy of Views 2 and 3.

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