

Saturday, December 24, 2016—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 41 Preservation the Corollary of Inspiration

Introduction

- In Lesson 30 after discussing the Core Issue of Preservation versus Restoration, we studied how the TEXTUAL FACTS presented in Lesson 28 and 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
- Two weeks ago, in Lesson 39 we concluded that View 1 is false and the Bible does promise preservation as a theological reality. In other words, preservation is the Bible's doctrinal/theological claim for itself.
- Last week in Lesson 40 we considered "Why Preservation Matters" by using Bart Ehrman as a case in point to demonstrate the high cost associated with denying preservation.
- This morning, having duly established that preservation is a Bible doctrine, we want to begin a secondary consideration that will help distinguish between the truthfulness of Views 2 and 3. That consideration is the *extent* or *nature* of preservation.
- After giving much thought to where/how to begin this discussion I have elected to commence with a consideration of whether preservation is the corollary of inspiration. Much has been said in the scholarly literature regarding this question.
- For organizational purposes, we will study this topic by tackling the following points:
 - What is a Corollary?
 - Preservation is the Corollary of Inspiration
 - Problems Created by a Denial of a Corollary
- Lastly, an Appendix at the end has been provided outlining the position of Dr. Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary.

What is a Corollary?

- Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* defines the English word corollary as follows:
 - A conclusion or consequence drawn from premises, or from what is advanced or demonstrated. If it is demonstrated that a triangle which has equal sides, has also equal angles, it follows as a *corollary* that a triangle which has three equal sides, has its three angles equal.
- Google defines a corollary as:
 - *Noun*—a proposition that follows from (and is often appended to) one already proved.
 - direct or natural consequence or result.
 - *Adjective*—forming a proposition that follows from one already proved.
 - associated; supplementary.
- Dr. William W. Combs explains how the term “corollary” is used in the conversation regarding inspiration and preservation.
 - “Webster defines *corollary* as 1) a proposition inferred immediately from a proved proposition with little or no additional proof, (2a) something that incidentally or naturally accompanies or parallels, and (2b) something that incidentally or naturally accompanies or parallels. Thus to say that preservation is the corollary of inspiration means that preservation is a doctrine that can be “inferred immediately” from the “proved position” of inspiration; preservation “naturally follows” or “parallels” inspiration. To say that there is a correlation or parallel between inspiration and preservation does not reveal anything about the exact nature of preservation.” (Combs, 27)
- Edward F. Hills asserts that preservation is the corollary of inspiration in the *King James Version Defended* when he writes:
 - **“If the doctrine of divine inspiration of the Old and New Testament Scripture is a true doctrine, the doctrine of the providential preservation of the Scriptures must also be a true doctrine.** It must be that down through the centuries God has exercised a special providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies, so that trustworthy representatives of the original text have been available to God’s people in every age. **God must have done this, for if He gave the Scriptures to His Church by inspiration as the perfect and final revelation of His will, then it is obvious that He would not allow this revelation to disappear or undergo any alteration of its fundamental character.**” (Hills, 2)

Preservation is the Corollary Inspiration

- While Combs would not agree with Edward F. Hills as to the *extent* of the corollary, he does none the less assert that a corollary exists.
 - “It is perfectly reasonable to assert a corollary between inspiration and preservation without asserting that preservation be in every way equal to inspiration . . .” (Combs, 27)
- Combs quotes John H. Skilton’s essay on “[The Transmission of the Scriptures](#)” to support the notion that, “A right understanding of the corollary suggests that there is no real purpose or value in inspiring a document that is not preserved.” (Combs, 27) Skilton observes:
 - “But we must maintain that the God who gave the Scriptures, who works all things after the counsel of his will, has exercised a remarkable care over his ‘Word, has preserved it in all ages in a state of essential purity, and has enabled it to accomplish the purpose for which he gave it. It is inconceivable that the sovereign God who was pleased to give his Word as a vital and necessary instrument in the salvation of his people would permit his Word to become completely marred in its transmission and unable to accomplish its ordained end. Rather, as surely as that he is God, we would expect to find him exercising a singular care in the preservation of his written revelation.” (Skilton in *TIW*, 143)
- After quoting Skilton, Combs offers the following strong evidence in favor of a corollary between inspiration and preservation.
 - “To illustrate, we might ask, what would be the purpose of producing an authoritative record (inspiration) and letting it perish? Why, for instance, let Paul write an inspired letter to the Romans and then have it perish on the way to Rome? Of course, that did not happen, but could it have happened? If one denies a corollary between inspiration and preservation, Paul’s letter could have perished before it got to Rome.

The purpose of inspiration was to produce γραφή (2 Tim 3:16), a written record, a deposit of divine truth for the readers, not the writer. Without preservation the purpose of inspiration would be invalidated. Since it was clearly God’s intention that Paul’s inspired letter to the Romans be read by the Romans—it could not have perished—there must have been a divine work of preservation at work for at least a few weeks or months until the letter was received by the Romans. This suggests that there is some degree of correlation between inspiration and preservation. And the letter to the Romans was not meant just for the Romans. No Scripture was intended for just the original recipients—“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4). Similarly, Paul warns the Corinthians using the example of Israel’s failure: “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11). If the Old Testament Scriptures (“these things”) were “written,” that is, inspired for the purpose of instructing future

believers (“our instruction”) that purpose for the inspired writings demands their preservation.” (Combs, 27-28)

Problems Created by a Denial of a Corollary

- In the main body of his essay “The Preservation of Scripture”, Dr. W. Edward Glenny of Central Baptist Theological Seminary denies the notion that preservation is the corollary of inspiration.
 - “The first historical problem mentioned above is the assumption that preservation is a necessary corollary of inspiration and that for inspiration to be true God must have preserved the NT text inerrantly. The difficulty with this assumption becomes obvious when it is carried to its logical conclusion.” (Glenny, 77)
- Glenny, like Bart Ehrman, Harry A. Sturz, and Daniel B. Wallace (see Appendix A) before him, denies any corollary between preservation and inspiration on the grounds that there is not “verbatim identically” or exact same wording in the extant manuscript witnesses.
- Glenny’s main concern in denying the corollary in the main body of his essay on preservation is to disprove the notion of “perfect preservation” or the idea that all the words were preserved exactly/identically as they were given under inspiration. As we have seen in previous lessons, this is the standard of preservation advocated for by preservationists Thomas M. Strouse, David Sutton, and Kent Brandenburg.
- By denying any corollary between preservation and inspiration in order to answer the TR/King James position of “perfect preservation,” even Professor Combs believes that Glenny has overstated his case. To prove this, Combs cites footnote thirty six from Glenny’s essay on “The Preservation of Scripture” in which Glenny recants his denial of the corollary found in the main body of the essay. (Combs, 28) Combs writes the following regarding Glenny’s denial of the corollary, “since this denial creates an untenable problem for his doctrine of the canon, Glenny permits the corollary to enter through the back door.” (Combs, 28)
- After denying a corollary in the body of the essay, Glenny states the following in footnote thirty six:
 - “The criteria for determining whether God’s word has been preserved are self-evident, i.e., does it still exist? Our belief in the preservation of God’s Word is different from our belief in the canon in that preservation does not follow directly from inspiration nor are given criteria in Scripture by which we are to determine or prove the preservation of scripture. But there is a similarity between preservation of Scripture and the doctrine of the canon in that, the recognition of the exact books which are to be included in the canon does not follow directly from the biblical teaching on inspiration from the criteria given in Scripture to identify them. These criteria must be applied to the **historical evidence** ... Based on the **historical evidence** we believe certain books are included in the canon just as we believe on the basis of historical evidence that God has preserved His word. My point is that just as we use historical evidence to recognize which books meet the criteria

necessary to be included in the canon, in the same way we use historical evidence to recognize the fact that God has preserved His Word.

An obvious truth is that a document which is to be included in the canon must be preserved. Therefore, since inspiration implies canonicity, in an indirect way inspiration is related to the preservation of the *documents* which are included in the canon. However, the preservation I have addressed and evaluated in this chapter is not the preservation of the *documents* which are in the canon, but rather the perfect preservation of the words of *the text of all of the documents*.” (Glenny, 104-105)

- Please note that Glenny, based upon his doctrine of the Canon is forced to admit at least an *indirect* corollary between inspiration and preservation. Combs points this out in his essay when he states:
 - “Why is it that “a document that is to be included in the canon *must* be preserved”? (emphasis added) Obviously, it is because God wanted the documents he *inspired* to be in the canon, and if he wanted his *inspired* documents to be in the canon, he “must” have preserved them. This line of reasoning ultimately is based on a corollary between inspiration and preservation.” (Combs, 28-29)
- In other words, without the preservation of what was inspired, how is one to know historically what books should be included in the Canon? Furthermore, by so arguing, Glenny is admitting that preservation must be a historical reality while at the same time not believing it to be a theological necessity. Recall that Glenny does not believe that the Bible teaches its own preservation.
- Moreover, Glenny has God preserving the *documents* or the material objects themselves upon which God’s words were written; without at the same time preserving the *words* found on/in those documents. Does this even make any sense at all? How is it that preservation can be a historical reality necessary for determining canonicity yet at the same time not be a theological necessity?

Works Cited

- Combs, William W. “The Preservation of Scripture?” in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. Fall 2000.
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- Hills, Edward F. *The King James Version Defended*. Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956.
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Appendix A

The position of Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary

Introduction

- As we saw in the main body of Lesson 41, Dr. W. Edward Glenny denies a corollary between preservation and inspiration in the main body of his essay “The Preservation of Scripture.” Yet, in footnote thirty six, Glenny allows a corollary in through the back door due to historical considerations and his position on canonicity. Glenny argues for the preservation of the *documents* but not the words written on those documents.
- Dr. Glenny was preceded by Dr. Daniel B. Wallace in denying that the scriptures teach a doctrine of preservation as well as a corollary between preservation and inspiration.
 - “Both Wallace and Glenny put forth two major arguments against preservation. First, preservation is not a necessary corollary of inspiration; that is, while inspiration is a true doctrine, there is nothing in the doctrine itself that demands that what God inspired he was bound to preserve. Second, the biblical texts that are used to support a doctrine of preservation have been misinterpreted and, in fact, do not teach such a doctrine.” (Combs, 8)
- So, we have seen Drs. Wallace and Glenny deny the doctrine of preservation on two grounds: 1) while inspiration is true it does not demand preservation and 2) the Biblical texts used to assert preservation have been misinterpreted and do not assert said doctrine (see Lessons 31-38).

Daniel B. Wallace on the Corollary

- In 1992, Dr. Daniel B. Wallace authored an essay in the *Grace Theological Journal* called “Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism.” In a section titled “The Critique,” Wallace offers his critique of preservationists such as Jasper James Ray, David Otis Fuller, John William Burgon, Wilbur Pickering, Edward F. Hills, and Theodore Letis.
- Wallace’s critique of the doctrine of preservation as enunciated by these men is made along the following three lines of argumentation: 1) a question-begging approach, 2) faulty assumptions, and 3) a non-biblical doctrinal basis. The third point coincides with what we have seen so far in Lessons 31 through 38, that no Biblical text supports the doctrine of preservation, according to Wallace.
- Wallace deals with the question of the corollary between inspiration and preservation under point two, “faulty assumptions.” After quoting the passage above from Edward F. Hills (see page 3), Wallace states the following:
 - “In other words, preservation proceeds from and is a necessary consequence of inspiration. Or, in the words of Jasper James Ray, “the writing of the Word of God by

inspiration is no greater miracle than the miracle of preservation. . .” (Wallace in *GTJ*, 31)

- Wallace then quotes Bart Ehrman to buttress his point. It is important to note that Dr. Glenny, writing in 1997, quotes the same passage from Ehrman as well as providing virtually identical argumentation to what Wallace presented in 1992. Parties doubting this fact are encouraged to compare Wallace’s essay from 1992 (pages 31-33) with Glenny’s piece from 1997 (see pages 77-78). The Ehrman quote reads as follows:
 - “Any claim that God preserved the New Testament text intact, giving His church actual, not theoretical, possession of it, must mean one of three things—either 1) God preserved it in all the extant manuscripts so that none of them contain any textual corruptions, or 2) He preserved it in groups of manuscripts, none of which contain any corruptions, or 3) He preserved it in a solitary manuscript which alone contains no corruptions.” (quoted by Wallace in *GTJ*, 32)
- As follow-up to Ehrman, Wallace writes (also see Glenny page 77):
 - “The problem with these first and second possibilities is that neither one of them is true: no two NT manuscripts agree completely—in fact, there are between six and ten variations per chapter for the closest two manuscripts.

Is it possible that the NT text was preserved intact in a single manuscript? No one argues this particular point, because it is easily demonstrable that every manuscript has scribal errors in it.” (Wallace in *GTJ*, 32)
- Notice once again what the standard is for this discussion. It is none other than “exact sameness.” For Wallace, the lack of “exact sameness” or identical wording across the manuscript witnesses is enough to negate preservation as the corollary of inspiration. Moreover, Wallace is pleased to allow *TR* advocates to take on “exact sameness” as their standard for preservation because he can then point out historically that identical wording does not exist. In this sense pro-*TR* preservations have played into the hands of their critics by overstating the case with respect to preservation.
- Two years later, in June of 1994, Wallace authored an even more aggressive diatribe against *TR* preservations in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. In an article titled “The Majority-Text Theory: History, Methods, and Critique” Wallace addresses the “doctrinal underpinning of the traditional-text theory,” by denouncing those who believe in the “dogma of preservation” as a starting point for discussing the matter.
 - “First, and most importantly, I must speak to the theological a priori. MT advocates need the dogma of preservation at all points where the evidence will not easily yield to their interpretation.” (Wallace in *JETS*, 201)

- Wallace quotes Theodore P. Leits' essay, "In Reply to D.A. Carson's "The King James Version Debate"" to illustrate his point.
 - "When reviewing the defense of the Majority Text, one dominating consideration emerges: a prior commitment to what the Bible has to say concerning itself with regard to inspiration and preservation. For the Majority Text apologists, this is an all-consuming consideration to which everything else must be subordinated. Their arguments, therefore, are not directed to some neutral bar of determination (as if such a thing existed) but are consciously directed to those who also have the same priority." (Leits, 192)
- After quoting Leits, Wallace states the following regarding the corollary between inspiration and preservation.
 - "To them, verbal inspiration necessitates preservation. Pickering tells us that "the doctrine of Divine Preservation of the New Testament depends upon the interpretation of the evidence which recognizes the Traditional Text to be the continuation of the autographa.

In order to make preservation support the MT it must infer accessibility: "God has preserved the text of the New Testament in a very pure form and it has been readily available to His followers in every age throughout 1900 years." Hence the MT position is based on a corollary (accessibility) of a corollary (preservation) of a particular dogmatic stance (verbal inspiration)." (Wallace in *JETS*, 201)

Preservation: Historical not Theological

- Wallace denies the scriptures a doctrine of preservation while at the same time arguing that preservation is a historical reality, not a theological necessary. In other words, Wallace denies that preservation is the corollary of inspiration because the relevant verses do not teach preservation. Yet, at the same time, in the face of agnostic objections against the word of God leveled by Bart Ehrman, Wallace argues for the historical reality of preservation.
- While Wallace denies a doctrine of preservation, he cannot deny the historical reality of the surviving manuscript copies. For Wallace, these copies exist not because of God's promise of preservation but are the product of a mere circumstantial historical reality. In other words, the historical reality is not the result of God's fundamental promise of preservation but circumstantial happenings in the same manner that would affect any other ancient documents.
- Wallace's view maintains that any book of antiquity for which we still possess manuscript copies is preserved because God exercises sovereign control over the universe. This standard would apply equally to secular writings such as Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War* or the Bible. On this view, any ancient document that is extant today owes its present existence to God's preservation. Moreover, on this view there is no difference between the Bible and Caesar's

Commentaries. God is under no obligation to preserve the one over the other. Rather, it just so happens that copies have survived.

- In his book *Myths about the Modern Bible Versions* David W. Cloud states the following about “circumstantial preservation.”
 - “Another popular myth surrounding the modern Bible versions is the idea that while God inspired the Scriptures infallibly, He has preserved the Scriptures only in a more general sense. To put this another way, while inspiration was miraculous, preservation has been merely circumstantial. . . The doctrine of preservation lies at the very heart of the Bible text debate. The Bible cannot be treated as any other book. It is God’s Word. God gave it and God has promised to preserve it. The underlying thesis, though, of modern textual criticism is that the Bible became corrupted through the centuries and it is the task of textual criticism to restore it in original purity. . . The bottom line is that the same Bible that claims to be infallibly inspired also claims to be infallibly preserved. My faith in this is not based on common sense (though it is sensible to believe that if God gave a perfect Bible He would preserve that very Bible). My faith in this matter is based on the promises of a God that cannot lie.” (Cloud, 98-102)

Conclusion

- In summation, Wallace rejects any corollary between inspiration and preservation because he does not believe the scriptures teach their own preservation. That being said, he argues rationally that preservation must be a historical reality or else we would not have any extant copies. The reason Wallace’s position on preservation is so confusing to some is because Wallace is trying to have his cake and eat it to. God did not promise to preserve his word yet He did, circumstantially, in a historical sense.

Works Cited for Appendix A

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- Combs, William W. "The Preservation of Scripture?" in *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*. Fall 2000.
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