

Sunday, February 26, 2017—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 49 The Process of Preservation: The Multiplicity of Copies, Part 2

Introduction

- In Lesson 48 we began looking at the Process of Preservation. In doing so we considered the following points:
 - Reviewed lessons learned from the book of Jeremiah
 - The promise of preservation does not require the perpetual existence of the original autographs. According to God the Holy Spirit, faithful copies are a sufficient means of fulfilling the promise of preservation.
 - God the Holy Spirit does not require “verbatim identity” as the standard for preservation.
 - The Apostle Paul on inspired copies
 - II Timothy 3:15-16—God the Holy Spirit makes no distinction between what was originally breathed out by God and the copies Timothy’s family possessed. They are both called scripture by God the Holy Spirit.
 - Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation
 - Began looking at Biblical texts highlighting the fact that the Original Autographs are not nor have ever been the issue with God in preservation.
- Today, in Lesson 49, we want to pick up where we left off two weeks ago and continue looking at the Process of Preservation.

Authoritative Copies: The Process of Preservation

- Exodus 32:15-16— God did not even use a man to write these. These are the “original” originals. They were not even written by Moses but they were written by God Himself. You cannot get much more original than that.
- Exodus 32:17-19—Moses had the “original” originals and destroyed them before anyone even had a chance to read them.
- Exodus 34:1-2, 27-28—God re-inspirers original number 2.
- Deuteronomy 10:1-5—Moses brings original number 2 down from the mountain and places it in the ark. Do we still have access to the contents of these tablets of stone? Yes. How? Because we have access to the original tablets? No. Because the contents of those tablets were copied.

- The scenario here with Moses and the giving of the Law is very similar to our example from the book of Jeremiah. In both cases the original was destroyed. In both cases God re-inspired a second original. In both cases original number 2 was either lost or destroyed. Yet, we have access to what God told Moses in the Mount and what God said through the pen of Jeremiah in the absence of the original autographs. How are we granted this access? Through the process of the scriptures being copied.
- You need to understand that God’s design is not to preserve the originals. God’s design is to preserve His word through copies of the originals. It is not that the original has to be preserved in itself, but rather that copies of the original autographs are made that are just as authoritative as the originals.
- Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26—the ark is called “the ark of the testimony” over and over again in the Bible. The reason it is called “the ark of the testimony” is because the word of God, the testimony of God, was placed in the box.
- Turn to Deuteronomy 17 and let’s notice how they make copies of the contents of that box for the people and for the kings. God Almighty wants them to preserve His word. He sets up a mechanism where it is written and preserved in their midst, and they do not just carry it around in the ark. They keep the original autographs in the box for safekeeping, but that is not the only place that the word of God was. They are not just carrying that box around without anybody having access to its contents. They are making copies of what is in that box and people have those copies.
- Deuteronomy 17:14-18—in other words, he goes in there and gets that testimony (that original manuscript) and he is to write himself a copy of the word of God. When he sits on the throne, he is to have his own personal copy of God’s word to Israel.
 - II Kings 11:12
- Deuteronomy 17:19-20—the king is to have his own copy of the word of God. It is the copies that are important. If the original manuscripts were all that was important to God, He would have told him to get the original manuscripts, which were available at that time. If the original manuscripts were the issue, He would have said, “Preserve that original manuscript and when the king comes, give them to him.” But, the copies are the issue. God Almighty wants His word copied and distributed.
 - “The copies of those original manuscripts are just as reliable as the originals. They are in no way inferior to the originals. Deuteronomy 17:19,20 makes it very clear that God Almighty will bless the king for following the copy, because the copy is as much the word of God as the original. When he follows the copy, he is keeping all the words of this law. So, the copies are in no way inferior to the original manuscripts. God wanted the copies made and the copies were made.” (Jordan, *MSS 101*)
- Deuteronomy 6:6-9— the common ordinary Israelite had the word of God; and he was required to memorize it, and to learn it, and to teach it to his children. They all had copies. Every Israelite did not have his own personal copy – maybe there was one copy per family. But, the king had his own personal copy.

- Psalm 19:7-9—David is reading copies of the word of God; he is not reading the bible in its original manuscripts. He says that it is perfect; it is sure; it is right; it is pure, true, and righteous altogether. It is pure. That is some testimony for a bunch of copies!
- Proverbs 25:1—God preserved His word in copies, and the copies are just as reliable and authoritative as the originals.
- There are two things that you want to remember.
 - God wants His word copied. He wants copies made of His word. Psalm 68:11 – The Lord gave the word: great *was* the company of those that published *it* (put it out).” They spread it abroad. God wants His word published abroad.
 - God’s design is to preserve His word in copies. The issue is not just that he wants everybody to have it, but that it is the copying process and method and mechanism whereby He will preserve it. These copies are accurate and reliable.
- Daniel 9:1-2—we have already seen that Daniel had copies of the book of Jeremiah while in captivity.
- Daniel 9:11-12—Daniel has the words that God wrote to him through Moses. He has a copy of that Mosaic Law. He has copies of the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy. Do you see the importance he puts on it? He said, “And he hath confirmed his words.” Daniel assumed that the very words that he was reading were right and that they were God’s words.
- Zechariah 1:1-2— Zechariah was a companion of Ezra who first went back to the land after the Babylonian Captivity. Zechariah records God’s message to Israel after the Captivity.
- Zechariah 1:5-6—Zechariah is saying, “Your fathers and the prophets are all dead and gone, but my words live forever.” The words do not just live forever, but they are among the people; i.e., the people have them in their possession. Individual Israelites, like Daniel, had copies of what the prophets said, and the copies have the same authority as the original words. Those words and copies take hold of the fathers and these people, and it has happened to them just like the original said it would happen to them. The final absolute authority that is in the originals is maintained in the copies that they have, and the copies are out among the people.
- When God talks about preserving His word, he is not talking about preserving it in heaven in a copy that nobody has access to. He is talking about preserving it in a physical existence in the earth where people can hold it.
- Matthew 24:15-16— we just read about Daniel the prophet in Daniel 9. Daniel the prophet lives in approximately 600 BC (550 BC or something like that). In Matthew 24:15 standing in the shadow of the cross some 483 years later, the Lord Jesus tells Israel that when they see something come to pass that was written down hundreds of years earlier that they need to flee into the wilderness. Jesus Christ is saying, “You can read what Daniel the prophet wrote down in 550 or 600 BC right now when I am here with you in 30 AD.” But, that is not all. There will be some people three and a half years into the tribulation that will also read the same thing, so God Almighty has to preserve His word up until that time for someone to read Daniel 9 and

understand what they are reading. He is talking about preserving His word through time and through history into the future out there in the ages to come.

- Jesus Christ’s attitude about it was that God Almighty was going to provide the word of God for people to read, not to hear about, not to understand the content of the message, but to read the words on the page of Daniel 9 in the tribulation period, which has to be out there in the future from today. That is preservation in copies. The word of God is preserved in copies because it says in Matthew 24, “Then let them which be in Judaea flee when they read the thing.” He is talking to a whole bunch of people that are reading this. Nobody has the original manuscript of Daniel 9. The only other way to figure that is that somebody will discover the original manuscript during the tribulation, and they will start reading it then. If you believe that, is it not a whole lot easier for you to believe that God will preserve His word in copies?
- Luke 4:21—in this verse Christ is talking about what is written down on the page. He is reading a copy of the book of Isaiah, and he calls it scripture; and he says, “It is fulfilled in your ears.” If the original manuscripts were the only issue, Jesus Christ would not be telling the truth in this verse. The contents of the copy Christ held in his hand could be fulfilled in their ears, which means the very words of God are being fulfilled there. The authority, and the accuracy, and the infallibility of the bible extend far past the originals. These issues extend beyond the original autographs into generations of copies, which is why Christ can hold it in His hand and call it “scripture.” What is scripture according to the bible definition? The scripture is “God breathed.” It is the words God dictated to be written down on a page. According to Christ in Luke 4, the words He just read were scripture. The copy Christ read from was just as accurate and authoritative as the original autographs.
- Acts 8:32, 35—twice in this passage God the Holy Spirit calls the copy of the book of Isaiah that the Eunuch has in his chariot scripture.
- Acts 15:21—notice in Acts 15 that there are copies of the word of God in every city in the territory. Moses is read every Sabbath day in every city in the region. There are copies of the word of God scattered all over the territory, and those copies are scripture. They are considered authoritative by Jesus Christ, and by Philip, and by the Holy Spirit, and by the Apostle Paul.
- Acts 17:2
- Acts 18:2—the scriptures are down in North Africa (Acts 8), Nazareth (Luke 4), Greece (Acts 17), and Asia Minor (Acts 18). These scriptures are spread throughout the Mediterranean world of the 1st century. As Paul travels, he encounters people who possess and know the scriptures. Apollos travels all around, and he is mighty in the scripture. The scriptures are all over that territory, via a multiplicity of copies.
- Daniel 10:20-21—the angel’s statement about the scriptures in verse 21 is that they are “the scripture of truth,” meaning the writings do not have any errors in them. There is no error in truth i.e., they do not report any information that is false. This is the same terminology; the “scripture” is used throughout the Bible to refer to copies that are in use across historical time periods and geographic settings.
- The modern notion that inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy apply to the original autographs alone is not a scriptural idea. No one who holds this position does so by faith in God’s word.

They do so based upon rationalistic presuppositions. Throughout the Bible God the Holy Spirit uses the same word “scripture” (*graphe*) to refer to what was directly given under inspiration and the manuscript copies of the originals.

- God’s purpose and intent was to preserve His word via a multiplicity of accurate and reliable copies that were just as authoritative as the original autographs themselves. In the next Lesson we will study some things about how that process functioned in the Old Testament.