

# Why We Hold to the KJV

## Part 3 – The Preservation of the Scriptures

**Text:** Psalm 12:6-7

### Introduction:

1. In our last message we considered the Bible's claims regarding inspiration. Now in this message we will consider the Bible's claims concerning its preservation. These two doctrines go hand in hand.
2. "We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. To decide these things we need only a believing heart and the ability to read. Of course, textual scholars will deem all non-academics meddling in what they regard as their exclusive area of work unworthy to tie their bootlaces, still less to steal their clothes! ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. IF WE DO NOT BEGIN WITH THE WORD OF GOD, WE SHALL NEVER END WITH IT!" (David W. Norris, *The Big Picture*).<sup>1</sup>
1. In this sermon we will consider this foundational doctrine of the preservation of the Scriptures. We will consider this under **three** headings:
  - The Proclamation of the Word's Preservation
  - The Perfection of the Word's Preservation
  - The Process of the Word's Preservation

### I. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD'S PRESERVATION

The Bible teaches the doctrine of the Divine preservation of the Scriptures in multiple places. It is not only implied. It is unequivocally stated. Let's take a survey of some of the key Scriptures that teach preservation in both the Old and New Testaments.

**A. Psalm 12:6-7** – These verses provide a blessed contrast to man's vain, deceitful, prideful and sinful words described in the previous verses. In contrast to the empty, unreliable words of sinful man stands the infallible, faithful Word of the Living God. These verses constitute some of the most important statements on the purity and preservation of the Word of God. These verses teach:

#### 1. The Perfection of the Word of God (Vs. 6)

- a. The declaration of the Word's purity (Vs. 6a). God's Word claims to be absolutely and totally pure and it is! That means it is completely without error. It is infallible. Prov. 30:5 "**Every word**

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by D. Cloud, *Faith Vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, p. 30.

**of God is pure:** he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.”

- b. The illustration of the Word’s purity (Vs. 6b). To impress upon the reader the matchless purity of the Scriptures, David uses the illustration of silver that has gone through multiple purifying processes in the furnace. David is not suggesting that like silver, the Word of God had to have corruption removed. He is simply using the purest silver as an illustration of God’s Word. The number seven speaks of the perfection of God’s Word. God’s Word is totally without error!

## 2. The Preservation of the Word of God (Vs. 7)

Question: Do we have the infallible, pure, perfect Word of God today? This next verse answers that question unequivocally. God not only inspired His Word (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), He also preserved it.

- a. The Person of the Word’s preservation (Vs. 7a)

The Preservation of the Word of God is due to the mighty power of God. Notice that David’s faith and focus is in God to keep His own Word.

- i. “Thou shalt keep them, O LORD”
- ii. “thou shalt preserve them”
- iii. God did not inspire His Word and then leave it to man to corrupt and lose it overtime. God has preserved His inspired Word!
- iv. How do we know that we have God’s pure Word in our day? Because God keeps His promises!
- v. Titus 1:2 “In hope of eternal life, which God, **that cannot lie**, promised before the world began;”
- vi. We must come back to **the primacy of faith** in relation to this issue.
- vii. “FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 1).<sup>2</sup>

- b. The Period of the Word’s preservation (Vs. 7b) David had confidence that God’s Word would be preserved forever.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid

- B. Psalm 33:11** – The emphasis of this verse is on the eternity of the Scriptures. “The counsel of the LORD **standeth for ever**, the thoughts of his heart **to all generations**.” The Word of God is eternal and indestructible.
- C. Psalm 100:5** – Again this verse emphasises the eternity of the Word of God. “The preservation of Scripture is associated with God’s goodness and mercy. It is because God loves men that He has given them His infallible Revelation and keeps it for them.”
- D. Psalm 105:8-10** – The term “a thousand generations” clearly refers to eternity. If you assume that a generation is 30 years then “a thousand generations” would be 30,000 years! The world is only about 6,000 years old. So clearly the Psalmist is using this as a metaphor to emphasis the Word of God will stand forever.
- E. Psalm 111:7-8** – The commandments of God are sure and stand fast forever.
- F. Psalm 117:1-2** – The truth of the LORD endures forever.
- G. Psalm 119:89, 152, 160** – These verses emphasis a number of truths regarding the Word of God:
1. The Word of God was settled in the eternal heart and mind of God in heaven before holy men of God were moved by the Holy Ghost to write it down. This is the opposite to the attitude of the sceptics, liberals and textual critics who view the text of Scripture as being very much unconfirmed and unsettled and hence needing constant revision and updating.
  2. God foreknew and foreordained each word of Scripture. Each word was selected in the eternal councils of the Godhead.
  3. David Sorenson writes, “God’s Word is in heaven and there it is on file forever. Just as a publisher has the printing masters of a given book, the master copy of the Word of God is on file in the library of heaven.”<sup>3</sup>
- H. Psalm 146:5-6** – God keeps (preserves) His truth forever. The Creator God is the Preserver of Scripture!
- I. Isaiah 40:8** – The eternity of the Word of God is highlighted in contrast to the grass and flowers which fad away.
- J. Isaiah 59:20-21**<sup>4</sup>
1. This promise pertains to the words of God (2 Tim. 3:16).
  2. The promise applies particularly to the New Testament as Isaiah is describing the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer. Vs. 21 is a reference to the words of God in the mouth of the Messiah.
  3. The means of preservation is described. It is accomplished through the people of God – “my words...shall not depart out of...the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed...” In the New Testament dispensation, it is the believing churches that preserve the Scripture (Matt. 28:19-20). Isaiah foresaw this process and described it as God’s Words being retained in the mouth of God’s

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<sup>3</sup> D. Sorenson, *God’s Perfect Book*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>4</sup> Notes from D. Cloud, *Faith Vs. the Modern Versions*.

believing people from generation to generation. Preservation is also accomplished by the Spirit of God (“My spirit...”).

4. The promise extends from generation to generation forever, thus extending throughout the church age and beyond.

- K. Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4** – Christ quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. It is not merely the Word of God in general by which man lives; it is by “every word” that he lives. If every Word of God is essential for the believer, then it follows logically that God would preserve those words for His people.
- L. Matthew 5:18** – The Lord Jesus was emphatic about the preservation of God’s Word even down to the smallest detail (“jot or tittle”). See also Luke 16:17.
- M. Matthew 24:35** – Christ’s promise covers the Gospels and also the entire New Testament.
- N. Matthew 28:19-20** – the “Great Commission” requires the Lord’s churches to teach believers “...all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” until the end of the age. In order to do this, the “all things” must, of necessity, be preserved until the end of the world.
- O. 1 Peter 1:23-25** – the Bible again claims to be infallible and eternally preserved! The eternity of the Scriptures is stated in three ways:
1. It lives forever.
  2. It abides forever.
  3. It endures forever.
  4. David Cloud writes, “This is a clear promise of the preservation of Scripture. In fact, a stronger statement of the Divine preservation of Scripture could not be made, for we are told that the Word of God is living and incorruptible and eternal. It abides; it endures; it lives. The Bible is incorruptible because it is living, and it is living because of the Spirit of God who breathed it out. The Spirit of God did not breathe out the Scriptures and then abandon them. The Spirit that quickens the Scriptures preserves them. Note that Peter associates the inspiration and preservation of the Old Testament directly with that of the New (Vs. 25). As the New Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11), we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.”
- P. Revelation 22:18-19** – Right in the concluding verses of the Bible, God issues a severe warning against tampering with the words of Scripture. The warning applies directly to the Book of Revelation but must also be applied equally to the rest of the Bible of which Revelation forms the final chapter. There is no doubt the Holy Spirit placed this warning at the end of the Bible, intending it to be read not only as a warning against tampering with the Book of Revelation but also the Bible as a whole. Take note that the warning is against tampering with the very words of Scripture, not just its thoughts, concepts and doctrines.

1. The United Bible Society (3rd edition) NT Greek text has omitted **2544** Greek words. (**2886** if you count Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11), from the Received text (KJV). The Received Text by Robert Stephanus (1550AD) has **140,488** Greek NT words. The Nestle-Aland 26th edition and UBS 3rd edition has **137,602** Greek NT words, 2886 less. This is **2.1%** of the Greek NT words removed & never to be read in modern versions.
2. The NIV removes “**LORD**” 39 times, “**CHRIST**” 52 times, and “**JESUS**” 87 times from the KJV New Testament. This is 178 removals of our Saviour’s name.

## II. THE PERFECTION OF THE WORD’S PRESERVATION

As with the doctrine of inspiration, we believe in verbal plenary preservation. We believe:

### A. The Whole Bible has been Preserved (plenary preservation)

1. Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God **shall stand for ever.**”
2. 1 Peter 1:23-25 “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But **the word of the Lord endureth for ever.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” Reference to Scripture here is singular and not plural. Hence the entirety of the Bible has been preserved (plenary preservation).
3. Psalm 119:89 LAMED. “**For ever, O LORD**, thy word is settled in heaven.”
4. Ecc. 3:14 “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, **it shall be for ever:** nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him.”

### B. The Words of the Bible have been Preserved (verbal preservation)

1. Psalm 12:6-7 “The **words** of the LORD *are* pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. **Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them** from this generation for ever.”
2. Psalm 119:160 “Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning: and **every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.**”
3. Matthew 24:35 “**Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.**” (Also Mark 13:31; Luke 21:23)
4. Matthew 5:18 “**For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.**”
  - a. Luke 16:17 “**And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.**”

- b. Dr. David Sorenson explains the ‘jot’ and the tittle’: “A *jot* refers to the smallest character (i.e., letter) of the Hebrew alphabet (pronounce *yodth* in Hebrew). A *tittle* refers to the small corner or “horn” of Hebrew characters (letters) which distinguish some characters from others. An analogy in English letters might be the difference between an “L” and an “I”. The “L” has a foot on it whereas the “I” does not. Though that is not a precise description, it illustrates the small differences of letters of the alphabet. The point Jesus was making is that until the day that heaven and earth – the creation – pass away, the smallest details of God’s Word will not pass away.”
5. Psalm 19:7-11
- a. Note the various synonyms the Psalmist uses for the written Word of God:
    - the law of the LORD,
    - the testimony of the LORD,
    - the statutes of the LORD,
    - the commandments of the LORD,
    - and the judgments of the LORD.
  - b. Observe the present tense throughout – “The law of the LORD **is** perfect...” etc.
  - c. David Sorenson notes, “Some might object that the word *is* was interpolated by the translators and was not in the original text. That is true. However, this is an elliptical sentence where the verb is clearly implied. Moreover, the flow of the context is clearly present tense. The Law of the Lord continues to this day to convert souls. It continues to make wise the simple. It continues to rejoice the heart. It continues enlightening the eyes. The King James translators precisely and accurately rendered the verse. Therefore, if the Law of the Lord is perfect, as the present tense foretells, it therefore follows that it remains so to this day.”

### III. THE PROCESS OF THE WORD’S PRESERVATION

How did God preserve His Word? What was the mechanism He used to preserve His Word? Who did God use as custodians to preserve His Word?

#### A. The Custodians of the Old Testament – Israel (Rom. 3:1-2)

- 1. The word ‘oracles’ means “utterances” and is another beautiful description of the Word of God. Webster defines ‘oracle as follows: “Among Christians, oracles, in the plural, denotes the communications, revelations or messages delivered by God to

prophets. In this sense it is rarely used in the singular; but we say, the oracles of God, divine oracles, meaning the Scriptures.”

2. God has used His chosen nation in a marvellous way as the primary vehicle for writing down His eternal Word. Most of the “holy men of God” who were moved by the Holy Ghost to pen the words of Scripture were Jews (2 Pet. 1:21). God has also used Israel in an amazing way in the process of preservation, particularly the preservation of the Old Testament.
  - a. In particular it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18).
  - b. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the further scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, it was the scribes called Tannaim (Teachers) who guarded the Old Testament Scriptures. They were followed by the Amoraim (Expositors). Though they did not believe the Bible, they revered it and continued to preserve it from generation to generation.<sup>5</sup>
  - c. Beginning in the sixth century it was the Masoretes who jealously guarded the Hebrew text and passed it down from generation to generation from about 500 to 1000 A.D.
  - d. “The Jews cherished the highest awe and veneration for their sacred writings which they regarded as the “Oracles of God.” They maintained that God had more care of the letters and syllables of the Law than of the stars of heaven, and that upon each tittle of it, mountains of doctrine hung. For this reason, every individual letter was numbered by them and account kept of how often it occurred. In the transcription of an authorized synagogue manuscript, rules were enforced of the minutest character.”<sup>6</sup>
  - e. Some of the Talmudic rules concerning the work of textual transcription were:<sup>7</sup>
    - Parchments must be made from the skins of clean animals only.
    - Parchments must be prepared by Jews only.
    - Parchments must be bound together by strings taken from clean animals only.
    - Each column of writing must have between 48 and 60 lines only. Rolls must have the same number of columns consistently throughout, and each column was to be exactly 30 letters wide.
    - Each column must be lined first, and if three words were writtendown without a line, the whole copy is made worthless and destroyed.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> R. Sargent, *English Bible Manuscript Evidence*, pp.99-100. Citation from Newman, A. H. A Manual of Church History. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: American Baptist Publication Society,1910: Volume 1, p. 112.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 100.

- The fifth Book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line.
- Ink must be black only, and made to a prescribed recipe.
- Scribes must be clothed in full scribal dress.
- No word or letter may be written from memory. The scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and must read and pronounce each word out loud before writing it.
- Pens must be wiped reverently each time the word “God” is written.
- The scribe must wash his whole body before writing the Name of God (Jehovah).
- Strict rules applied covering the use of the pen, shapes of the letters, and spaces between letters, words, and sections.
- Rolls must be checked and revised within 30 days, or the whole roll becomes worthless.
- One mistake condemns the sheet.
- Three mistakes on any page condemns the manuscript.
- Every word and every letter must be counted. If one letter is missing, is added, or touches another — the whole manuscript must be destroyed.
- Between each consonant, a hair’s breadth; between each section, the breadth of nine consonants; between each book, three lines.
- “When a manuscript had been copied with the exactitude prescribed by the Talmud, and had been duly verified, it was accepted as authentic and regarded as being of equal value with any other copy. If all were equally correct, age gave no advantage to a manuscript, on the contrary, age was a positive disadvantage, since a manuscript was liable to become defaced or damaged in the lapse of time.”<sup>8</sup>

**B. The Custodians of the New Testament – the Church (1Tim. 3:14-15; Eph. 3:5; Jude 1:3)**

1. These Scriptures clearly imply that the custodianship of the Word of God since the dawn of the church age has been the New Testament Church.
2. The early years of Christianity were strongly influenced by Jewish custom and tradition and there is evidence that the copying of manuscripts was taken very seriously.
3. We should also expect to find the pure text of Scripture being transmitted down through the centuries primarily by New Testament churches and true believers. We should **not** expect to find the pure Word of God in the Vatican or in a monastery at Mount Sinai! Nor

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp. 100-101. Citation from Kenyon, F. C. Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts. New York, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941: pg. 43.



should we trust unbelieving sceptics and scholars as “authorities” on the text issue. We cannot disconnect an individual’s belief system from his scholarship as it will influence what he does.

4. Jack Moorman wrote, “God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using’. He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers.” (Forever Settled, p. 90)<sup>9</sup>
5. David Sorenson writes, “The fact of the matter is, the vast majority of the editors of the modern Critical Text likely have not been born-again believers. And, if they are unregenerate, they are not a part of a true New Testament church. Hence, the transmission, preservation and purification of the true text of the New Testament has not passed through their hands. It came from another source – believing churches.”<sup>10</sup>
6. Consider several prominent names in the field of modern textual criticism and consider that the vast majority of modern versions are drawn directly from this stream. All modern versions in English are influenced by it!
  - a. Johann Jacob Griesbach (1745-1812) was one of the architects of the principles of modern textual criticism and one of the earliest developers of the critical text. He was a German rationalist and one of the founding fathers of modernistic, liberal theology that has destroyed countless churches to this day. He did not believe in verbal inspiration and his theology was that of unbelief. There is no evidence in his writings that he was born again. Westcott and Hort would become ardent adherents to this man’s polluted principles of textual criticism.<sup>11</sup>
  - b. Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) & Professor Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892) are arguably the two most famous names in the field of modern textual criticism. Both were educated at Cambridge University. Westcott went on to become Bishop of Durham and Hort continued on as a professor at Cambridge. Over a period of 30 years beginning in 1851 these two men produced a major critical text of the New Testament which is the basic essence of the modern Critical Text today. The Critical Text from that day to this is approximately 90% Vaticanus. Both men revered the work of Griesbach. Hort wrote that he and Westcott revered the name of Griesbach “above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament.” Some have tried to portray them as born again, Bible believing Christians but the plain facts say otherwise. “There is voluminous evidence

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<sup>9</sup> Cloud, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> Sorenson, p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

to demonstrate that Westcott and Hort denied, questioned, or doubted virtually every cardinal doctrine of the New Testament. There is hard evidence they both dabbled in the occult, even during the years of the development of their Greek text. They promoted Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution. They voluntarily associated with the most apostate and doctrinally liberal elements of the Church of England. They ridiculed the “evangelicals” of their day. They sneered at D.L. Moody when he came to England. They had a clear affinity for Rome and Mariolatry. Of all the textual editors in the past two hundred years, there can be no question that Westcott and Hort were not born again. They were utterly unregenerate. And yet, from their hands has come the basic essence of the modern Critical Text from whence the almost endless stream of modern versions winds its way to the ocean of compromise and departure from the faith.”<sup>12</sup>

- c. There are many other names we could cite but the point is clear. We should not be expecting the pure text of Scripture to be transmitted to us by such unholy hands! Men who have spent their whole careers attacking the fundamental doctrines of the faith are not to be trusted to handle the Scriptures with integrity.
- d. 2 Corinthians 2:17 “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

**CONCLUSION: You can trust the Word of God as preserved in the King James Bible! It is the pure and preserved Word of God for English speaking peoples!**

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 105-106.