

## God's Method of Preserving His Written Word

With so many Bible versions readily available, it's no wonder that God's people are confused as to which Bible they should be reading from, if there's a right one at all. There's no harm in asking ourselves this question, so long as we're asking in faith. But the reality is that most will make a final decision based on little more than personal preference or opinion – both of which are highly subjective and subject to change.

But this is untenable. It implies that God has left us to figure it out for ourselves without any help or guidance from him. There *is* a way to know. But first and foremost, we need to understand that the Bible is an extension of God's personal nature and character: he is holy, inerrant (without error), and infallible (incapable of error), and so is his Word – so to attack one is to attack the other. The two are inseparable (Ps. 138:2; Jn. 1:1-14). So for this reason, this study (properly) assumes that God's written Word has remained fully intact because God has remained forever faithful in his nature and being. But just as there is a holy God and his Holy Word, there are also false gods and corrupted manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> (Satan always presents a counterfeit – 2 Cor. 11:14).

But to answer the question, God has placed within his Word his method of preserving his written Word to help us answer this question; and so all that remains is for us to familiarize ourselves with the method and then apply it.

### The Method<sup>2</sup>

God's method of preserving his written Word can easily and adequately be taught in only a few short minutes. It isn't plainly stated (in Scripture) but it is plainly taught. Had it been plainly stated, then the enemies of the cross would have sought to remove it, undoubtedly postulating that the "oldest and most reliable manuscripts" didn't contain it. It does have its limitations, however. It won't allow those untrained in Hebrew or Greek to do any translation work. But for the vast majority of Christians, this isn't an issue... nor will it pose any problems in being able to understand what will be presented here, and so the saint may proceed with confidence.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible clearly teaches the perfect preservation of Scripture: Ps. 12:6-7, 138:2; Is. 40:8; Mt. 5:17-19; 24:34; Lu. 16:17; Jn. 10:35 etc. It also teaches of the existence of corrupted texts: 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2. Due to this, there is now a difference between a "bible" and the Word of God. Both terms are often used interchangeably to describe the same thing, but hereafter let a distinction be made. The Bible is the Word of God if it contains the *words* of God. A "Bible" that contains corrupted words from corrupted texts is no longer the pure Word of God – it's just a "bible."

<sup>2</sup> Note: the truths taught here are also equally found when considering the Golden Candlestick as found in the Tabernacle of Moses. Entitled, "The Golden Candlestick & the 66 Books of the Bible", this lesson can be obtained at no cost from this same author.

But where the method *does* take a bit of time is in researching the history of the men and their manuscripts. Some of this will be provided here although this is by no means intended to be an exhaustive study. The intent here is to merely introduce the method and then allow the reader to apply it on their own. Properly done, the answer should become blatantly obvious because there's only one right answer. Two textual families that read so differently can't both be right: a side must be chosen. But for now, God's method of preservation is ample and sure. It will provide the reader with a method of knowing which version of the Bible is the right one **without having to know any Hebrew or Greek** – *if* beheld within a believing frame of reference. The method asks two basic questions. Who authored it? And, who preserved it?

### Who Authored It?

God is the Author of Scripture and he accomplished this as he moved upon men by the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21),<sup>3</sup> and so Scripture is supernatural in origin although it was written by the hands of mortal men; and of the 40 or so men who were involved in its construct, they were all Jewish.

**Rom. 3:1** What advantage then **hath the Jew?** or what profit *is there* of circumcision?  
<sup>2</sup>Much every way: chiefly, **because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.**

Thus, Scripture makes it clear: it was to the Jews, and only the Jews, to whom the Scriptures were given – and this would include both the Old and the New Testaments.<sup>4</sup> It also means that no man from any other tribe or people has ever received written revelation from God.<sup>5</sup> So any written work claiming the God of the Bible as its Author must be rejected if it wasn't written by a Jew because Scripture teaches that it was to the Jews, and only to the Jews, to whom the Scriptures were given. This cannot be stated more plainly.

For example, Joseph Smith claims to have received the *Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ* from an angel of God named Moroni. But Joseph Smith isn't a Jew nor does he claim Jewish ancestry; and so we can immediately discern that the Book of Mormon wasn't inspired by God. Why? Because it was to the Jews, and only to the Jews, to whom the Scriptures were given, and none else.

In another example, Mohammed claims to have received the *Qur'an* by way of an angel of God named Gabriel. But Mohammed isn't a Jew; he's Muslim. And so we can immediately discern that the Qur'an also wasn't inspired by God. Why? Because it was to the Jews, and only to the Jews, to whom the Scriptures were given, and none else.

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<sup>3</sup> From 2 Tim. 3:16, "inspiration" literally means "God-breathed."

<sup>4</sup> Thus teaching that Luke was not a Gentile.

<sup>5</sup> Jewish authorship doesn't guarantee acceptance into the canon of Scripture either; but certainly anything written by a non-Jew does not.

So in having applied God's method, the claims of both these men have been proven false. (It has also exposed them as being false teachers.) Therefore, God's people need not worry or fret or engage in endless debate with them over their doctrine(s), nor should we be intimidated by their popularity or growing numbers. All that's necessary is to believe what the Bible says about itself. Both groups claim to live by God's Word; so in revealing the truth of Romans 3:1-2, they're now forced to make a decision. Selah.

## Who Preserved It?

There are two facets to this question: God's method of preservation as it applies to Old Testament (OT) manuscripts copied during OT times and God's method of preservation as it applies to both Old and New Testament (NT) manuscripts copied during NT times. These aren't in competition nor are they opposed to one another: the New Testament merely represents an expansion of the Old Testament plan.

### *Manuscripts Copied During OT Times*

As the verses below indicate, the responsibility for the preservation and copying of God's Word was given to the Levitical priesthood.<sup>6</sup> This is logical because they were the ones who served as the Bible teachers of their day; and so they had to have had a copy of God's Word in order to properly minister and fulfill their duties (Num. 3; Neh. 8 etc.). Among them were the scribes who probably did most of the copying. Ezra was a scribe (Ezr. 7:6).

**Dt. 17:18** And it shall be, when he [the king] sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, **that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites:**

**Dt. 31:24-26** And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished,<sup>25</sup>That Moses commanded the **Levites**, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying,<sup>26</sup>**Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.**

**Mal. 2:7** For the **priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth**: for he *is* the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

So as the Scriptures were written, they eventually and inevitably found their way into the hands of the Levites who in turn faithfully copied them (Dt. 31:9). Hence, *any manuscript copied or preserved by non-Levitical Jews during OT times must be rejected.*<sup>7</sup> Simple, is it not?

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<sup>6</sup> One exception: the king. He was required to sit and write his own copy when he inherited the throne as a means of instilling humility and fostering trust in the Lord (Dt. 17:14-20).

<sup>7</sup> The Jews never considered the books of the Apocrypha as part of their sacred canon; and so any manuscripts containing these books should also be rejected, such as the Septuagint (LXX). The OT teaches that there would eventually be 66 books found in the Bible and not the 80 (82) when the Apocrypha are included (see n4).

### *Manuscripts Copied During NT Times*

For manuscripts copied during NT times, the Levitical priesthood has been dissolved although the patterns and principles it set forth are still true. The priests today are those who've repented of their sins and acknowledged Jesus as their Savior – Jew or Gentile – and so now it's the NT priesthood of believers who are responsible for preserving and maintaining the written text of God's Word.<sup>8</sup> Hence, *any Old or NT manuscript copied, compiled, or translated by non-Christians during NT times MUST also be rejected.*

Both of these being true, it should be apparent that the autographs (originals) along with their copying and preservation is, and has always been, the sole purview of God's chosen people, and none else: to suggest anything else is to suggest that God's people allow "the fox to guard the henhouse," as it were. It's to suggest that we allow the unsaved, apostate, and unregenerate to safeguard that which is solely reserved for God's people – the notion of which is soundly illogical. This means that anything written by non-Levitical Jews in the OT and anything preserved or translated by non-Christians in the New *must* be rejected.

Pragmatists would argue that God can use anyone and anything he wants. But if true, there'd be no need for the method. This logic is also inherently ecumenical (i.e. Roman Catholic) in that it would require that *equal* consideration be given to all written works claiming Divine inspiration. This ecumenical approach also undermines the biblical premise that Satan is actively involved in the corruption of the written text of God's Word (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2), and so this sort of pragmatism mustn't be entertained. It only leads to sin and confusion, and God is not the Author of it (1 Cor. 14:33).

But herein lies the beginning of yet another problem in the NT church: we're hesitant to expose false prophets and teachers even though God commands it and love requires it.<sup>9</sup> But the Scriptural mandate is clear, only God's people are to be involved in the copying and preservation of his Word and yet there are many who are not (Mt. 7:21-23). We should be investigating those who were involved in this process to see what they believed concerning the person and work of Jesus along with their views on Scripture. By their conversation, are they girding our faith or interjecting doubt like Satan did with Eve in the Garden of Eden? But you apply the method and do so properly. For in so doing the answer as to which version of the Bible is the "right one" and/or the "right one for you" should become readily apparent. Selah.

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<sup>8</sup> Rom. 2:28; Php. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:5 etc.

<sup>9</sup> Dt. 13:1-5, 18:20-22; Eph. 5:11; Tit. 1:10-11; 2 Jn. 10-11 etc.