

HISTORY & HERITAGE OF THE BIBLE

SESSION FIVE: A CODEX MOMENT

Week	Date	Subject	Hayden	Due
5	Mar 15	A CODEX MOMENT: How the Bible Was Written and Preserved	73-104	Quiz 1

INTRODUCTION

Before we can get to the translation of the Bible, we need to give you a “codex moment” and define how the Bible was written, transmitted and preserved. There are three important things in this section: the process of inspiration, the materials of transmission, and the method of preservation. Let’s start with the driest first, then we’ll get to the juicy parts.

1A MATERIALS OF TRANSMISSION

PROOF TEXT: 1 Corinthians 14:36-38

1 Co 14:36-38 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Don’t be ignorant. We have to understand how inspired words were sometimes caught and put on paper in the act of inscripturation. To do this we go back to the book of beginnings.

Gen 10:8-10 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and **Erech**, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Nimrod built four cities, and the second one was Erech. Erech is the city of Uruk in ancient Sumer, near the Euphrates River in present-day southeast Iraq. The name Iraq comes from the name of this area around Uruk. This is where archaeologists discovered cylindrical seals in the Red Temple that were inscribed with information from about 3400 BC. That might be as early as the time of Enoch. So at least by the time Adam was 600 years old he had learned to write! Then by Abraham’s time, cuneiform (which was wedge shaped writing on clay) was well-known and wide spread. They taught it in all the “sedimentary schools.”

“Ug, where’s your homework?”

“My mother forgot to bake it. Or, I dropped it and it broke. Or, my pet dinosaur ate it!”

Alphabetic writing became common hundreds of years before Moses was born. So the word of God was recorded. Select portions that God intended to preserve were transmitted through time down to today. What were the materials used for transmission? We will explain some of these in detail, because they deal with terms used in the textual criticism of the Bible. This is really the back-story behind what is called manuscript evidence.

1B STONE, 1500 BC

Job 19:24; Ex 34:1; Deut 27:2-3

We see this material of transmission used in the Bible.

Job 19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

Exo 34:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

Deu 27:2-3 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: 3 And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee.

Stones are not the best tools for transmission. You can't carry them around in your pocket. But just like computers went from room-sized machines to something that you carry in your cell phone, the materials used for the transmission of inspired information got smaller and smaller as civilization advanced.

2B WOODEN TABLETS, 800 BC

Isa 30:8; Hab 2:2

Isa 30:8 Now go, write it before them in a **table**, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever:

Hab 2:2 And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon **tables**, that he may run that readeth it.

These tables were wooden tablets. They were still not very compact, but better than dragging a rock around while you witnessed to people. Soulwinning was really tough in those days because the tracts were so heavy. Then the next material of transmission appears on the scene about six centuries before Christ, and it fueled a communications revolution. The history of the New Testament is divided roughly into three periods marked-off by these three materials of transmission: papyrus, vellum and paper.

3B PAPYRUS, 600 BC

Ezek 2:9-3:3

Ezek 2:9-10 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, **a roll of a book** was therein; 10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

Ezek 3:1-3 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this **roll**, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that **roll**. 3 And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this **roll** that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

So we go from rock to roll as thin strips from the center pith of the Papyrus stalk (found in swamps like the Nile Delta) were cut and laid side-by-side. Then another series of strips was laid perpendicular to the first set (the natural gum provided adhesive bonding). They were then dried and rubbed smooth. Sheets were from 9" x 12" to 12" x 15". Several could be pasted together to form a scroll of desired length (usually 20 sheets).

The papyrus, for the most part, was written on only one side and bound together in rolls. The custom was to write in very narrow columns that had no separation of words, accents marks, or punctuation. So, Philippians 1:1-2 would read something like this:

**PAULANDTIMOTHEUSTHESERVANTSOFGODJESUSCHRISTOALLTHESAINTS
INCHRISTJESUSWHICHAREATPHIPIPPWITHTHEBISHOPSANDDEACONS
GRACEBEUNTOYOUANDPEACEFROMGODOURFATHERANDFROMTHELORD
JESUSCHRIST**

You can see from this example that the

Point 1. Early scribes were not concerned with making a readable text but an accurate one.

This desire would have been held over from the attitude of the synagogue Jews toward the Torah. As a technical note, paragraphs were marked with a line in the margin of the text. The Greek word *para* means beside and *graph* is to write. So to write a line beside the text showed a new paragraph starting. A roll was called a *biblos*; several rolls would be called a *tome*. Papyrus was so popular it was used until the 3rd century AD. It was the Big Chief of writing tablets for its day. But papyrus is not very durable for something you want to transmit across continents and down the corridors of time. Most papyrus we still have today is just fragments. So about a century later they developed another material for transmission of written communication that was even more sturdy and impervious to weather.

4B LEATHER (PARCHMENT, OR VELLUM), 500 BC

Zech 5:1-2; Psa 40:7

Zec 5:1-2 Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a **flying roll**. 2 And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a **flying roll**; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

Psa 40:7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in **the volume of the book** it is written of me,

At first, simple tanned animal skins were used. Starting about 200 BC they soaked them in limewater and the hair was removed. This type of leather was called "parchment" (after the city of Pergamon in Asia Minor where the brand was trademarked). Vellum was a particular type of parchment made from calfskin. This became the main material for books from the 4th century AD on, and was the dominant writing material during the Middle Ages, when most of the Biblical manuscripts we have today were produced.

Leather could be used several times by erasing the text. It was then called a *palimpsest* (a term meaning, "rescaped"). Now get this, because it will directly play into manuscript evidence. In about AD 330, Emperor Constantine commissioned 50 "official" Bibles made of vellum. They are very beautiful: golden ink on purple skins. Two of them survive today as the oldest complete manuscripts in existence—but they preserve a corrupted text. Oldest is not best. The reason they survived is because nobody used them, and nobody used them because they were bad copies. One was found in the Vatican library and is called Vaticanus or MS B. The other was dug out of a trash can in a convent on Mt. Sinai and is called Sinaiticus or Aleph. Aleph and B. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Wherever those two MS agreed as to a variant reading in the text, the critics all said the King James text was wrong. Yet I have a copy of those MSS on microfilm, and I would venture to guess that the scribe who copied them may not even have known Greek because of all the nonsense readings they contain. But I must not jump ahead of my story.

5B PAPER, 100 AD

Paper was invented by the Chinese in the 1st century AD, so it is not mentioned in the Bible. It did not come into popular use for Bible transmission until the 9th century. So these are the materials of transmission as far as what the text was written on. What about what you wrote with? There are three kinds of pens. Two are discussed in the Bible.

6B STYLUS

Job 19:24; Jer 17:1; Isa 8:1

Job 19:24 That they were graven with an **iron pen** and lead in the rock for ever!

Jer 17:1 The sin of Judah is written with a **pen of iron**, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;

Isa 8:1 Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a **man's pen** concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.

This was a pen made from bones or iron, with a sharp end for writing and a blunt end for erasing words if you were using wax tablets. There is a second type of pen referenced in the Bible:

7B REED PEN

Jer 8:8; Psa 45:1

Jer 8:8 How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; **the pen of the scribes** is in vain.

Psa 45:1 My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is **the pen of a ready writer**.

A scribe's pen was made from a reed stalk with the end crushed or frayed like a brush. A professional scribe used it with ink on leather or papyrus. What was the difference between a stylus and a pen? You're asking good questions. A stylus was used without ink on a surface (like wet clay or wax) that you could scratch into, and a reed was used with ink.

8B QUILL PEN

The quill pen was made from a feather with a split point, to be used primarily on parchment. Regarding the materials of transmission, the ink used with the reed pen or the quill pen is referred to in the Bible.

9B INK

Jer 36:18

Jer 36:18 Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them **with ink** in the book.

Nonmetallic ink was made from lampblack (which was soot from olive oil lamps), mixed in a solution of gum or oil, for use on parchment. Metallic ink was a compound of gallnuts and vitriol for use on papyrus. Metallic ink was prohibited for Talmudic writing because it was not permanent, and it damaged the writing materials. So the Jews did not use metallic ink for transmitting scriptures. Once you had your pen, your ink, and your writing material, then you sat down to write. What you produced ended up being one of two things: either a codex (that's with a C and a D, gentlemen) or a scroll.

10CB SCROLLS (ROLL, OR VOLUME)

Heb 10:7; Ezra 6:1-2

Heb 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the **volume of the book** it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

Ezra 6:1-2 Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of **the rolls**, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, **a roll**, and therein was a record thus written:

If you were "on a roll," the material could either be papyrus or parchment (so either cornstalks or leather). It was longer than your desk, so it was wound together with a stick, thereby producing a volume (from the Latin *volvere*, meaning, "to turn"). It was used horizontally from right to left (for Hebrew), or from left to right (for Greek). The 66 chapters of Isaiah require a scroll about 23' long. I can show you a copy of the Isaiah Scroll from the caves in Qumram. Because the scroll was not handy for quick references, Christianity was the greatest force causing the switch in writing from the scroll format to the codex format, or book.

11B CODEX (BOOK)

In the first century, vellum was cut into leaves and formed into a book is called a *codex*. The Christians used papyrus or parchment of folded sheets (usually four). The codex form came to dominate Biblical manuscripts (MSS) in the 2nd and 3rd centuries because many or all the books of the Bible could be reproduced in a single volume.

Some vellum manuscripts maintain the same style of writing used in papyrus manuscripts. This style (which consists of all capital letters written without accent marks, punctuation, or separation of words or sentences) is called *uncials*. Later on, around the ninth century, the use of small letters with spacing between words was used. These manuscripts are referred to as *minuscules* or *cursive*.

Manuscripts written on paper cover from about the fourteenth century to the present. Up until this time it was rare to have a complete Bible in one book. Most of the papyrus and vellum manuscripts in existence today are fragments, passages, or maybe a book of the New Testament. It was not until the thirteenth century that whole books containing all or most of the New Testament became common.

So what exactly are the manuscript witnesses that are still in existence? When people talk about “the Greek,” what are they talking about? Zorba? There are four classes of witnesses that textual critics use to try and reconstruct the original autographs of the Greek text. This is the hard evidence they use in the scientific part of textual criticism.

SOURCES FOR A GREEK TEXT

A. Greek manuscripts

These MSS exist as pieces of papyri or uncial or minuscule vellum, sometimes as a complete codex. Last time I checked, there were 5,686 Greek MSS in existence for the NT. By comparison:

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span from original to copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Lucretius	died 53 B.C.		1100 yrs	2	----
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	----
Plato	427-347 BC	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	----
Demosthenes	4th C. B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Herodotus	480-425 BC	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8	----
Thucydides	460-400 BC	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	----

Euripides	480-406 BC	1100 A.D.	1300 yrs	9	----
Aristophanes	450-385 BC	900 A.D.	1200	10	----
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000	10	----
Livy	59BC-AD17	----	???	20	----
Tacitus	c. 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	----
Aristotle	384-322 BC	1100 A.D.	1400	49	----
Sophocles	496-406 BC	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	----
Homer(Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643	95%
New Testament	AD50-100	AD c. 130	less than 100 years	5686	99.5%

B. Ancient versions (translations)

The second source for making a Greek Text comes from ancient versions or

Defn.: Versions are translations into different languages.

Because these versions were translated from something ancient and closer to the original, they are used as a source for establishing a Greek Text even though they are not in Greek. Like the Greek manuscripts, there are a variety of ancient versions and not all of them agree. Among these are the Old Latin versions (both the Old Latin and Jerome's Latin Vulgate), Syrian (including the Old Syriac and the Peshitta), Coptic (which is Egyptian), Gothic (which is early German), Armenian, Ethiopic, and Old Church Slavonic. These show what the non-Greek reading world was using. The oldest version is the Old Syriac dating from the second century. Actually, it originated in Antioch in Acts 11:19. Chronologically, this is closely followed by a translation into the ancient Egyptian language of Coptic, and then the Old Latin versions.

C. Early church fathers, 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2

The third source comes from the quotations of the early Church Fathers.

Defn.: Church Fathers were early church leaders that quoted scripture in their writings.

These are called *Patristic citations*, and go back to the second century. So when the theological writers of the first few centuries quoted scripture, their quotations are examined. We still have a difference in several of the quotations, showing that from the very start there were differences in New Testament texts. Of course, this is something the Bible-believer recognizes because Paul warned,

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. (**2 Cor. 2:17**)

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor **handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (**2 Cor. 4:2**)

There have always been people to corrupt the incorruptible word of God. Like Satan, they question and quote scripture dishonestly for their own gain (Gen. 3:1; Matt. 4:6). This is not to say all early church theologians or manuscripts are corrupt, but it is to say that we cannot trust any one of these sources as the final authority. Instead, we have to depend on the providence of God to preserve his words without error through the priesthood of believers, and then demonstrate where this preserved word is.

D. Lectionaries

Defn.: Lectionaries were books used by the early church that contained lessons and hymns.

There were also citations from passages of scripture. These would show that certain scriptures were in use at a given time, and might substantiate a questioned text. Apocryphal writings would be citations from books contemporary with the New Testament, but not inspired. Often they also quote scripture.

2A PROCESS OF INSPIRATION

Let's get to the good stuff. Those were the materials of transmission, but what about the process of inspiration? What does it mean for us to say the Bible is inspired? What is inspired? Is the King James translation inspired? If we say that the original manuscripts were inspired, and then we say that the King James Bible is inspired, does that mean we believe in double inspiration? Does that mean we are just like the cult groups who say their founder heard a further word from God? Can the originals and the translation both be inspired at the same time? If we say the King James translators were inspired, then what keeps a Jehovah's Witness from saying that his translation is inspired as well?

Thesis: Inspiration is the mechanism God used to get his mind to man without error.

But that is not the typical Bible College approach. In Bible College I took a course called bibliology. Bibliology is the sophisticated term for the study of the Bible itself. What does the Bible say about the Bible? As soon as we walked into class, the very first period, they gave us the Bible College definition.

Inspiration only took place at the point where the pen touched the paper. The words in our Bible are not inspired, only the words of the original languages from the original authors as the pen first touched the parchment were inspired. Neither the copies nor the translations are inspired.

Professor Paul Wagner

The very first thing drilled into our heads was that inspiration took place at the point where the pen touched the paper. What they were trying to say was that inspiration only covered the time when the original author's pen was in actual contact with the parchment. On page 22 of his *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, Charles Ryrie states,

Inspiration may be defined as God's superintending human authors so that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.

It wasn't until after I got out of Bible College that I began to question that definition.

Defn.: The *original autograph* means the first manuscript written in the author's own handwriting.

Inspiration only took place at the point where the pen touched the paper. Who said that? B.B. Warfield said that. Maybe even B.B. King said that. But did God say that? The typical Bible college course on inspiration goes like this.

BIBLE COLLEGE: INSPIRATION

- 1) Here are the contemporary views of inspiration: liberal, neo-orthodox and evangelical
- 2) Here are the traditional views of inspiration: the Greek concept, the Jewish concept, the concept of the church fathers, and the Reformation
- 3) Then they will go into the FACT of inspiration by looking at the etymology (the history of the usage) of the Greek word *theopneustos* (translated *inspiration*) in 2 Tim 3:16 to get to the idea of the original words being inerrant
- 4) Then they go into the PROCESS of inspiration taken from 2 Pet 1:19-21
- 5) Then they go into the EXTENT of inspiration by examining the word *graphe* (translated *scripture*) in 2 Tim 3:16, and throw in other verses to get to the idea of verbal inspiration (it extends to the very words) and plenary inspiration (it covers every part)
- 6) Finally, they look at problems with the doctrine of inspiration like natural inspiration, dynamic inspiration, concept inspiration and partial inspiration, and lament over all the evangelicals who are surrendering the doctrine of an inerrant Bible

Defn.: Inerrancy is the belief that the Bible is not only inspired, but free from any mistake or falsehood, and what is revealed on any subject cannot ultimately be proven false.

Somewhere around my third year in Bible College they kicked some students out of the graduate. Those students no longer believed in the inerrancy of the Bible. The reason they believed the Bible could have errors was because they were taught that inspiration took place at the point where the pen touched the paper. So watch! Whose pen touched the paper in the case of the book of Romans?

Rom 16:22 I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

Paul's pen never touched the paper. He dictated the whole thing to Tertius, his secretary. Tertius had gotten part of his hand cut off while sword-fighting, so now he had to write in shorthand and Paul used him to take dictation. What if Tertius had wax in his ear one day, and Paul says *Akouo* (the Greek word for hearing), but Tertius heard, *Oh-screw-o*? Now the Bible is no longer inerrant. The original autograph wasn't even inspired, because Paul's pen never touched that paper.

So in undergraduate studies students were taught the concept that inspiration is where God took a blank piece of paper, sat some apostle down and said, Write. What came out on the page was perfect, but what was passed-down after that was imperfect, and certainly what was translated into another language could never be perfect. So what about this? If only the originals are inspired, and not one of the original copies exist today, then how can we say what we have today is inspired? See,

Point 2. If you are off on the doctrine of inspiration, then inerrancy does not matter.

Neither does authority or infallibility. If their definition of inspiration is correct then it means you do not have an inspired Bible to start with. Because if inspiration only took place at the point where the pen touched the parchment, then since we do not have the originals, we do not have anything that's inspired. And if you do not have an inspired Bible, then you might as well buy theirs.

What is the Biblical definition? Where do we see it in the Bible? The first time the word inspiration is used is not 2 Tim 3:16. It's all the way back in the first-written book of the Bible—Job. Job was the very first scripture ever, because the book of Job was the very first time God's inspiration was caught on paper and preserved as writing. While there are many mouths in the Bible there is only one speaker—the controlling, governing mind of God. So we can see at the time of its first mention how a matter is viewed by God himself. The Hebrew word for inspiration in Job 32 is the exact Hebrew synonym of the Greek word used by Paul in 2 Tim 3:16.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

There it is; that's the definition. In the only Old Testament use of the word inspiration, the Bible defines it as

Defn.: Inspiration is the act of God in bringing understanding of his mind to man's spirit.

That's the theology. But if you're here and you're not asleep you are asking, What is the process that supports that definition? Where do we see an account of inspiration taking place in the Bible? God knew that we Greek-thinking Gentiles would have a problem with something written through men being able to bear the stamp of God's mind in perfection. God knew that we would want to assume that since frail, sinful man put his hand to it, there must be some error in it. So God took the time within the pages of the Bible to give you a picture of the process of inspiration. How exactly did the revelation of God's word to man take place? How did the Spirit of God superintend over the mouths of the prophets and the pens of the scribes to produce for us, once and for all, the perfect revelation of God's mind for man today?

JER 36:1-4,17-18 And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, JER 36:2 Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. JER 36:3 It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. JER 36:4 Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book.

JER 36:17-18 And they asked Baruch, saying, Tell us now, How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? JER 36:18 Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.

That was the process. It was actually verbal dictation. The Lord made a command to his prophet. That is revelation. Then the prophet, in a supernatural manner of reception, spoke out of his mouth what the Lord put in it. That is inspiration. And since it is in the mouth of two or three witnesses that the truth is established, Peter confirms this definition for us.

2PE 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

They did not speak from their own initiative. Their words carried God's will. Look at the word, *moved*, because it is a nautical term. It was used of a ship carried by a storm. That did not mean the prophet lost his personality. It did not mean he lost his vocabulary. But he was the ship, and he was supernaturally blown-into by the Spirit of God (which is why it's called INspiration). Just to prove the permanence and validity of God's word once it comes out (even when it is messed with by man), keep reading the account in Jeremiah.

JER 36:20-23 And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king. JER 36:21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. JER 36:22 Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. JER 36:23 And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

Your God is big enough to give his word. He is great enough to inspire his original message. But what about all the scribes? What about the intervening thousands of years? What about the copies, and copies of copies since then? After you get through transmission, do you have preservation? Since we know there are variations in the manuscripts, and we know the word of God was being actively corrupted by heretics—and many manuscripts are shorter because words, phrases and verses have been cut out—what do we do with that? The Bible defines this situation also.

JER 36:27-28 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, **JER 36:28** Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

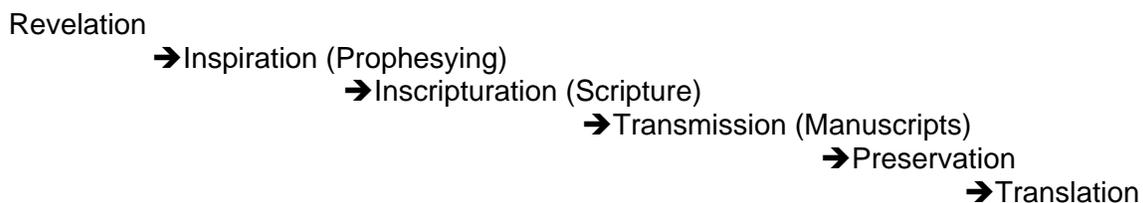
But what about the translations? How can you insure that the words in my language, which cannot possibly correspond exactly to the words of the Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic, are actually and definitely still the words of God for me? What do you do, for example, with words in italics?

Defn.: The italicized words in a King James Bible represent words not in the original language that the translators added to convey the sense of what was being said into English.

They couldn't have been inspired, could they?

JER 36:32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.

No problem for my God. He is big enough. The Holy Spirit as author retains the copyright on his work. That means he is free to revise his work when he chooses.



This is a chain link. It starts with God's revelation to the prophet. It goes from revelation to inspiration as he speaks. It goes from inspiration to inscripturation as the scribe writes it down. It goes from inscripturation to transmission as copies are made and distributed. It goes from transmission to translation as we get it in our language. And it goes from transmission and translation to preservation as the Holy Spirit operates through men and women in history to watch over and protect the word he originally gave. So

Point 3. If it starts with a supernatural revelation, it has to end with a supernatural preservation, otherwise God was not involved in giving it.

3A METHOD OF PRESERVATION

Okay, here are the juicy bits. We know God's word was inspired, and we have seen how it was transmitted once it was inspired. But a question of even greater moment to us today is how it was preserved. How can I know, standing as much as 3500 years after the original writings, that what I have today is what God intended back then? In his book, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, Dr. Alexander Souter defines the study of textual criticism this way.

Textual criticism seeks, by the exercise of knowledge and trained judgment, to restore the very words of some original document which has perished, and survives only in copies complete or incomplete, accurate or inaccurate, ancient or modern. If we possessed the twenty-seven documents now composing our New Testament exactly in the form in which they were dictated or written by their original authors, there would be no textual criticism of the New Testament. The original documents, however, have long perished, and we have to make the best of the copies which have survived, by howsoever many removes they may be distant from their ultimate originals.

—The Text and Canon of the New Testament, 1917; p. 3. Dr. Souter was Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis in Mansfield College, Oxford.

Form a human standpoint his definition looks logical. But Dr. Souter does not look to Divine intervention for the preservation and keeping of Holy Scriptures. He looks only to *knowledge and trained judgment*. So the preservation of the word of God, according to Souter, rests in the hands of learned men. In their book, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Drs. Geisler and Nix also depend on the science of textual criticism to solve the errors that crept into the process of transmission.

Since the Scriptures have undergone some two thousand years of transmission, it is only natural to ask: How much has the Bible suffered in the process? Or, to put it more precisely: Is the twentieth century English Bible an accurate reproduction of the first century Greek Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament? The answer to this question comes from the science of textual criticism,

—Norman Geisler and William Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible; 1968; p. 211

In his attempt to address the KJV Only movement, James R. White compares the issues of textual criticism with errors in sports.

Men make mistakes, even when they are trying really hard. The greatest baseball player still strikes out. The greatest basketball player will miss the clutch free-throw and lose a game once in a while. The best archer will sometimes fire an arrow wide of the target. To err is human...there is not a single handwritten manuscript of the Bible, in Greek or Hebrew, that does not contain, somewhere, an error, an oversight, a mistake. To err is human.

—**The King James Only Controversy; 1995, p. 36**

So he tries to argue from the fact of inadvertent errors to prove that the job of the textual critics are necessary. Dr. Donald A. Carson in his work, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*, carries the thought of copyist error to its earliest point, making the writings that Paul had just finished subject to human errors.

Paul might write a letter to the church in Colossae while sitting under house arrest in Rome...but that letter was soon copied by several within the church, and by a few more in the sister church at nearby Laodicea. Perhaps one of the members on a business trip to Macedonia took a copy with him; and while in Philippi he copied out the Letter to the Philippians at the same time someone in the church at Philippi copied out the Letter to the Colossians. Of course any error that the Colossian businessman inadvertently introduced into his own copy of Paul's letter to the Colossians would get picked up by the Philippians copier.

—**D.A. Carson, The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism, 1979; p. 16**

Well, maybe, but probably not if it were only a spelling error or transposing words, and those are not the things that cause variant readings in the manuscripts. There are 1,438 passages or sets of variant readings in the 4th ed. UBS Greek text, and not because of the type of errors in copying that would occur when you skipped a word or misspelled something. The problems textual critics have with determining the text for your New Testament is places where people deliberately corrupted it. Yet Carson does not consider this or the fact of the Holy Spirit's providential preservation of the text down through the centuries as Satan used his agents to wage his attacks on it. So modern scholarship begins with the knowledge of men and the science of textual criticism and ignores both the Devil's agents doing intentional damage and the Holy Spirit's hand through the priesthood of believers. It is no surprise then that their final conclusion is not certainty, but ambiguity.

Point 4. Modern textual critics are certain they are right, but they are not certain that what they come up with is right.

Hello somebody! Since you missed that let me ask you, what do we say to all that?

It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. (**Ps. 118:8**)

As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him. (**2 Sam. 22:31**)

We cannot trust man because he will lie (Rom. 3:4). The arm of flesh will fail us (2 Chron. 32:8). But we can be assured that God is able and has kept and preserved His words for us, and that we still have these preserved words today. How do we know? You're asking good questions. Because of the doctrine of preservation.

PROOF TEXT: Psa 12:6-7; Isa 40:8, 59:21; Mat 5:18, 24:35; Pro 30:6

DEFN.: *Preservation* means to keep from corruption.

How can I know God's word was successfully preserved—despite what the scholars say—over thousands of years, through thousands of manuscripts and thousands of hands? The simple answer falls into three parts.

Point 5. I know God's word was successfully preserved because I know who God is, I know what God is capable of, and I know what God has said about it.

There is a definite and solid scriptural basis for the doctrine of the preservation of the scriptures, even though almost no systematic theologies discuss it (probably because it conflicts with their philosophy of textual criticism). God says His words are true (John 17:17) and without error (Psalm 119:140). He declares that His words contain infallible proofs of truth (Acts 1:3). He claims to have given us the scriptures by holy and divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 2:21). The Lord of Hosts states that He will keep and preserve His words longer than the existence of either heaven or earth (Psalm 12:6-7; Matt. 5:18; 24:35). In fact, God says the words are themselves **incorruptible** (1 Pet. 1:23). So man was not given the job of preserving God's word alone.

Point 6. The keeping of God's word is the job of the Holy Spirit through the priesthood of believers.

Concerning the words of the Lord, the inspired writer tells us that,

Psa 12:6-7 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

ISA 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

ISA 59:21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Let's go to the New Testament, and the testimony of Jesus.

MAT 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.

MAT 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Point 7. We can only reconstruct the true New Testament text with certainty by observing the priesthood of believers and God's hand in history.

Break it down, Alan! Okay, I will. There are about 5,686 Greek MSS that we still have, and they exist in four types.

TYPES OF MANUSCRIPTS (MSS)

1) Papyri

As the name might suggest, these

Defn.: Papyri are fragments of text transmitted on papyrus.

There are something like 116 of these that still exist. The earliest is probably P52 containing John 18:31-33 on the front and 37-38 on the back, and has been dated to about AD 125 (less than 50 years after the original—woo-woo).

2) Uncials

Defn.: Uncials were manuscripts written in capital letters, which were not connected together, and have no spaces between the words.

This format was used for manuscripts until after the 10th century. There are about 300 of these that still exist. The most important ones are the two oldest, designated by the Hebrew letter Aleph, and the English letter B. I have both of these on microfilm. They are probably two of the fifty copies commissioned by Constantine, copied by Eusebius (a disciple of the early church father named Origen), and distributed across the Empire about AD 331. They are very beautiful, being gold ink on purple vellum, but they are very corrupt, written on and erased several times. It should also be noted that they differ from each other over 3000 times just in the gospels alone. However, wherever these two MSS agree (over against the text of the King James Bible) all the modern versions accept their testimony and throw out our commonly received Bible.

3) Minuscules or cursives

Defn.: Minuscules was a form of cursive writing used mainly for personal correspondence

Beginning in the 9th century, the NT MSS switch to this type of writing. There are about 2,813 of them, which date all the way up to 1622.

Uncial text: ENAPXHHNOΛΟΓΟCΚΑΙΟΛΟΓΟC

Minuscule text: Εν αρχη ην ο λογος, και ο λογος

4) Lectionaries

Lectionaries were scripture readings used by the church in public worship services. There are about 2300 of them. The earliest is from the fifth century; the latest is about 1602.

Point 8. The overwhelming majority (95%) of MSS agree as to the text of the New Testament.

Because this was the text received by believers everywhere as the true word of God, it is commonly referred to as

Defn.: The *Textus Receptus* (Latin for "received text") is the text contained in 95% of the existing MSS, which was received by believers as the true word of God.

It was this type of text that the translators of our Authorized Version used. No modern language version uses the received text. Our conclusion is aptly summarized by Dean Burgon:

I am utterly disinclined to believe, so grossly improbable does it seem—that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose, will prove untrustworthy; and that the one, two, three, four, or five which remain, whose contents were til yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I am utterly unable to believe, in short, that God's promise has so entirely failed, that at the end of 1800 years, much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a wastepaper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodelled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them. Happily, Western Christendom has been content to employ one and the same text for upwards of three hundred years [in 1883].

CONCLUSION

To get our note out of the papyri and back to Bible level before we leave, let me say four final things about inspiration and then I raise up out of here.

THE ACT OF INSPIRATION

1. It was supernatural

When sinful men wrote Holy Scripture, that was a supernatural accomplishment. Just like the virgin birth of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible has absolutely no parallel in human history. God intervened in history by his Spirit to give us his word. How do we know? Because Job 32:8 tells you so. All you have to do is compare that claim to its own consistency and to human reality to conclude that what Job says is true. The Book that resulted reflects the nature of God.

Now if you're not asleep, you're saying, Alan what do you mean? The Bible has two natures just like Christ has two natures. Christ was God, but partook of the nature of man. So he was fully God and fully man when he died for us on the cross. But the Bible, while it was given through human authors, is a product of divine inspiration, and that makes it a divine book, not just a divine message. That means the words were inspired, not just the concepts or ideas. That means it is the very words of God that he wants us to have, without any mixture of error from the human side. Just like the Savior is perfect without any mixture of sin from his human side, so is the scripture.

2. It was sovereign

It is unrepeatable in the sense that God has not continued to inspire his word today. What God did and how he did it was a part of God's power and will. You could not predict when his word would be inspired, and you could not duplicate the inspiration of his word. All you could do was recognize that the Holy Spirit had in deed inspired God's words through human believers.

3. It was progressive

God did not reveal his entire mind the first time that he spoke. The Bible is a progressive revelation. The doctrines of scripture were unfolded in time through God's relationships with men and his actions on earth. They were not complete when they were first given, they were partial and progressive, but

4. It reached a goal and it stopped

Eventually the complete mind of God for man today was received in the transmission. Men were the modems downloading the text from the Holy Spirit to our human spirit—that's inspiration. The hard drive that records the data, we call the Bible—that's inscripturation. That's the important points on inspiration.

2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God,

Now let me give you the conclusion.

Conclusion: If you can identify scripture, you have something that's inspired.

This week we got you from the original writing to the text in the history of the Bible. Next week we take you from text to translation.

NEXT CLASS

Week	Date	Subject	Hayden	Due
	Mar 22	NO CLASS: Easter Break		
6	Mar 29	FROM TEXT TO TRANSLATION	105-134	Quiz 2

GRADING SCALE

A	97-100	4.0	A-	92-96	3.7			
B+	89-91	3.3	B	86-88	3.0	B-	83-85	2.7
C+	80-82	2.3	C	77-79	2.0	C-	74-76	1.7
D+	71-73	1.3	D	68-70	1.0	D-	65-67	0.7
F	-65	0.0						

QUIZ #1

NAME: _____ NUMBER SCORE: _____

	TYPE	QUESTION	ANS	REF
1.	T/F	Just because things are put together doesn't mean they go together	T	p. 45
2.	T/F	The Hebrew language is logical, analytical, and known for clarity of expression	F	p. 47
3.	T/F	The Greek language is poetic, pictorial and paints verbal landscapes	F	p. 47
4.	T/F	Cosmology is the science of making cosmetics	F	p. 49
5.	T/F	The name " <i>biblia</i> " is a Greek word meaning "little books"	T	p. 52
6.	T/F	If the Bible is from God it ought to hang together in harmony	T	p. 53
7.	T/F	One test of a prophet is that the prophet glorified himself	F	p. 57
8.	T/F	The second of a prophet is that he was 100 percent accurate	T	p. 57
9.	T/F	Edgar Cayce was always right, Jeanne Dixon was never wrong, and Nostradamus was accurate and clear, proving that prophecy is not limited to the Bible	F	p. 58
10.	T/F	Over one-quarter of the Bible is prophetic	T	p. 61
11.	T/F	Prophecies fit into two categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical prophecies were written before the event but have already been fulfilled • Futuristic prophecies have not yet happened and still await fulfillment 	T	p. 61
12.	T/F	Israel was intended to be an exclusive race, harboring and hoarding the God of the universe, not a privileged race making God's revelation known to the world	F	p. 70
13.	T/F	The Bible manifests internal harmony in spite of overwhelming diversity and the presence of clear and accurate prophecy	T	p. 71
	M	Matching: 14. The Bible was written by at least ____ different authors 15. The Bible was written over a period of at least _____ years 16. The Bible emerges as a product of ____ continents 17. The Bible was written in ____ languages 18. The English Bible is one story in ____ separate books	LETTER __C__ __D__ __B__ __B__ __A__	A. 66 B. 3 C. 40 D. 1500

-0=A -1=94 A- -2=89 B+ -3=83 B- -4=78 C -5=72 D+ -6=67 D- -7=61 F