

WHICH BIBLE IS THE PRESERVED OF GOD?

By David Otis Fuller

The following is from a message recorded on audio cassette in the 1970s.

In every message of this nature we should begin with Scripture. I am now going to quote one passage from the Old Testament and one passage from the New.

Isaiah 8:19-20--"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Revelation 22:18-19--"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

In this message I will seek to give as clear account of this whole complex question as I can, so that the ordinary layman who is not familiar with this particular area of knowledge can get it without too much trouble. Victor Hugo, the great French novelist, wrote upon one occasion: "Greater than the threat of mighty armies, or the barriers of isolation, is the irresistible force of an idea whose hour has come." You know what Thomas Edison did, don't you? Of course you do. He had an idea that electricity could be put to good use in light, and heat, and power, and look what we have today. That idea really was irresistible once it started on its course. And then there were the Wright brothers, at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, who had an idea that they could fly a heavier than air machine, and they did, and look what we have today. We have a measure of good from that, but an awful measure of bad, too, when we think of the bombs that were dropped from planes, and what's happening today across the world.

Now, let's go back to 1859 when Charles Darwin produced his Origin of the Species. The intellectual world of that day grasped at it and swallowed it whole. Why? Because the carnal mind, or the mind that is at enmity against God, just does not want to retain God in his or her knowledge, but is willing to go to any length to try and banish Him from their minds, and indeed from this world, if it were possible. We know there is not one single shred of evidence to support organic evolution.

THE REVISED VERSION OF 1881

Then in 1881, the Revised Version of the Scriptures was published. Brook Foss Westcott, late Bishop of Durham, and Fenton John Anthony Hort, were both professors at Cambridge University, and without question were two of the most brilliant and erudite scholars of their day, and to this day, nearly a century later. They command the attention and admiration of textual critics, both liberal and conservative. The two together had been working for twenty years on a Greek text of the New Testament. Around 1870 there was a demand made for another version of the Scriptures. Westcott and Hort spearheaded this demand and influenced many scholars and theologians to form a committee for a revised version which appeared in 1881.

The Westcott and Hort text was based upon two of the oldest manuscripts extant, Codex Aleph and Codex Vaticanus. One was found in the wastepaper basket by the great scholar Tischendorf on Mt. Sinai. The other was found in an out of the way place in the Vatican museum with dust over it. The former was discovered around 1859; the later some centuries before that; I believe in the thirteenth century or thereabouts.

These manuscripts are two of the worse in existence. They are filled with contradictions and errors, and they contradict each other. In the Vatican manuscript all of Revelation is missing, as well as all the Pastoral Epistles of Paul, and from the ninth to the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews. They just aren't there. So it was quite a mutilated manuscript. But because they were the oldest, going back to the fourth century, there were those scholars that almost revered them and made much of the fact of these two manuscripts. The theory was that the oldest manuscript was nearest to the original autographs written by the Apostles and others.

But it so happens that this is not the case. The oldest manuscripts have proven to be the worst, because in the early days of Christianity a war was raging between Athanasius and Arius concerning the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot thank God enough that Athanasius won, even though he was banished five times by the emperor, because he was so tenacious and would not let this matter go. And when some of his friends came to him and said, "Athanasius, the world is against you," he drew himself up and uttered those famous words, "Athanasius is against the world." Arius and his followers were Unitarian, and it is clear that many manuscripts in those days were corrupted doctrinally. [Further, the true manuscripts were used and reused to such an extent that they wore out. The very fact that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus exist in excellent condition is evidence that they were rejected and not used.]

Both ideas, evolution and that of the Westcott and Hort theory, have no foundation whatever. They are made up of cobwebs, yet the Westcott and Hort Greek text was founded squarely upon these two manuscripts, with a few others, but in the main Codex Aleph and Codex Vaticanus were the ones that they relied upon the most.

Now this statement will make some of you who listen upset, but I'm going to make it anyway. You and I at the present time are witnessing the most vicious and malicious attack ever made upon the Word of God since the Garden of Eden. And this modern attack began in 1881 with the publication of the Revised Version.

In the ten years that it took the committee in the Jerusalem Chamber in England to produce this Revised Version, Westcott and Hort domineered, engineered, and dominated the whole committee from beginning to end. They issued their Greek text, which had not yet been released for publication, to all of the members and swore them to secrecy that they would not tell anyone what they had done until after the Revised Version was published. And if it had not been for Prebendary Scrivener, who was a scholar as great as Westcott and Hort and who fought tooth and nail against many of the things Westcott and Hort were constantly seeking to insert into the Revised Version from their two oldest texts, we would have had a far worse version of the Bible in the RV than we do now.

The vast majority of the people are confused, and you can't blame them, with a hundred versions of

the Scriptures now extant [in English]. Some of them are good versions, but for the most part they are perversions, vagrant versions, and in some cases, plain bastard Bibles. If you, my friend, think that such a term is too harsh, then will you please let me turn to the read the King James Version in Psalm 22:16--"...they pierced my Lord and Savior, is it not? But what does the NEB say? It says, "...they hacked off my hands and my feet." That is blasphemy and comes straight from the pit of hell, and I don't care who knows it.

Satan has from the very beginning hated two objects more than anything else in this world and universe. One is the Bible, the holy, infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God, and the second is Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. God has spoken once and for all in His Word, and He says in Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God is pure." In Psalm 138:2, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." And in Exodus 34:14 we read these words concerning God Himself: "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, the Father's voice was heard from heaven, and it said in the plainest of terms, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." And what He has said about His Son, He also can and does say about His holy Word. When our Lord Jesus was in the wilderness, being attacked for forty days by Satan, our Lord used the Old Testament, God's holy Word, exclusively when meeting the attacks of Satan. That is exactly what we should do today. If we have a Bible riddled with errors, how in the world can we use it as our final authority? If all versions today have errors in them, including the KJV, then where is the doctrine of inerrancy gone?

INERRANCY WITHOUT PRESERVATION IS SENSELESS

But someone replies, We believe in the inerrancy of the original manuscripts. All right, I agree with you there. But then we ask the question, and it's a good one, too: Was God careless? Or didn't He realize that these errors were creeping in? Or was He impotent that He could not keep His Word even if He wanted to? Look out yonder into space, will you please? Listen to some of the Christian astronomers and scientists who study the stars and all the planets and constellations there in outer space, and they will tell you that God has so created them in such a meticulous fashion that they obey all the laws that He has laid down for His whole vast creation. If God is that careful to keep His universe, do you think He is going to be careless about His sacred, holy Word upon which hangs the destiny of the souls of men, whether for heaven or hell? You know good and well He could not possibly be careless about such a wonderful Book. But if you want to go ahead and believe in a God who has just let his book go and become filled with errors through the mistakes of men, you go ahead, but please count me out as of now.

I gave an illustration of how men are tampering with the Word of God in the New English Bible over against the KJV. Now let me give you another one. In the New American Standard Version, which has been heralded and advertised as the nearest to the originals, we find that in sixteen different places the name of Christ is left out of His title, and in twelve different places the name of the Lord is left out.

We are facing a gigantic, titanic battle that is raging all around us, and my prayer is that the sleeping, snoring, satisfied Christians will become aroused to the need of taking their stand for God's holy Word.

There are two books we have had the privilege of publishing, together over 600 pages, giving

definite, positive proof, documented fully, that the King James Version is the nearest to the original autographs. They are entitled Which Bible and True Or False, and can be secured for [\$9.00 each postpaid from Way of Life Literature]. We are not making any money out of the royalties. I have ordered the publisher to make out the last two royalty checks to the Wealthy Street Baptist Church, and we are using the funds for the purpose of giving them to missionaries and ministers who cannot afford them, so they may have something solid to sink their teeth in and to stand upon when these so-called intellectual critics begin to expound from their ivory towers and look down their long noses at those who refuse to go along with them in their pernicious errors.

I just received recently a letter from a good friend of mine I have known for years. He's one of the best Bible teachers in this country, and if I mentioned his name I know that many of you would know who he was immediately. This is what he says:

"If I knew how to repent in sackcloth and ashes, I would begin immediately for the unpardonable delay in acknowledging receipt of two of the most helpful and timely volumes I have ever owned. [He is referring to Which Bible and True Or False.] I have carried these titles with me all summer and immersed myself in them. I have never underscored books so much as I have done in these. They enhanced my appreciation of the King James Version as the true revelation of God as no other writings. I appreciate so much your sending them to me. As a member of the editorial committee in the production of the Amplified New Testament, we honestly and conscientiously felt it was a mark of intelligence to follow Westcott and Hort. Now, what you have in these books strikes terror to my heart. It proves alarmingly that being conscientiously wrong is a most dangerous state of being. God help us to be more cautious lest we fall into the snare of the archdeceiver."

WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THE KJV?

Now let's ask another question. What is right with the King James Version? I believe with all my heart that there was a time in the early church when God blessed certain men to choose the twenty-seven books which comprise our New Testament, and in this order we have them now. The proof for that is in the Bible. There they are. Twenty-seven books in that particular order. Just so, I believe God was very definitely in the choosing of the forty- seven scholars who came together at the command of King James I around 1605 to produce a new version of the Bible. We are bold enough to say that we don't believe there was ever such a collection of great, I mean truly great, scholars as these who were so chosen.

For instance, there was John Boys. What a scholar he was! At the age of five years old, he could read the Bible in Hebrew, and at the age of fourteen he was a proficient Greek scholar. And for years he spent from four o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock at night at the Cambridge library studying languages. You see, friend, listen, he was nor cursed with television, or telephone, or radio. He had time to think, and to meditate, and to study. He wasn't flitting from this Bible conference to another one, and being "oh'd" and "ah'd" at by an adoring crowd.

Another was Lancelot Andrewes, who was the overall chairman of the committee. He was the greatest linguist of his day. He knew, was familiar with, and spoke nearly twenty languages, including Arabic, Hebrew, and many others. He spent five hours a day in prayer. Not only Lancelot Andrewes and John Boys, but practically all the other men chosen for this monumental work of the King James Version were men of note throughout, not only in their own country, but in other countries as well.

You see, God knows what he is doing. He always does, and He chose that particular time and age when the English language was at its zenith, to use these men for that purpose.

Something else of note should be mentioned here, too. I am sure some of you who hear this message know of William Tyndale. He was one of the greatest of scholars. He was the one who said the time will come when every plow boy in England will be able to read the Bible. William Tyndale was at home in eight languages. He translated all of the New Testament and some parts of the Old Testament. He did such a tremendous job that the King James translators kept well over sixty percent of his translation intact, just as it was, to be used in the King James translation. William Tyndale was hounded like a wild animal by those who hated him and wanted him burned at the stake. Finally King Henry VII, through one of his stooges, caused Tyndale to be betrayed. He was thrown in prison, and finally at Vilvord, just outside of Brussels, Belgium, he was strangled to death by order of the king, and then his body was burned. Now, the last thing he said before he died, was this: "Oh, God, open the eyes of the king of England!" And do you know what? God answered that prayer in less than a year, when all of England had the Bible in the English language. It has been my privilege to stand there at that small monument that was erected some years after in Tyndale's memory.

Another thing we need to note also is that practically every one of the committee of the revisers of the King James Version had been through suffering of one kind or another. Either they themselves had been apprehended and put in jail, or loved ones of theirs had the same thing done to them. Now such men had deep convictions and also a holy reverence for the Word of God which you don't find in modern-day scholars. Many scholars of many versions this day, such as the Revised Standard Version, or the New English Bible, or the Good News for Modern Man, and many others, do not believe that the Bible should be approached in any different way from any other book. They refuse to accept it as the infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God, and Westcott and Hort believed this same thing. Nowhere can you find in their writings a statement that they believed in the verbally, inspired Word of God.

Now let me say here before I go any further, I have never claimed to be a scholar. I do not claim to be one now, and I never expect to claim to be one. But there are two very definite claims that I make without hesitation, or trepidation, or reservation. One is I claim to have studied under some of the greatest scholars this country has ever produced, if not the world. It was my privilege to be a student at Princeton Seminary and to graduate from that institution just before the flood. I mean by that before the flood of modernism. Today Princeton is modernistic in every sense of the world, but not then. There were giants in the earth in those days. Consider Robert Dick Wilson. He was one of the greatest linguists this country has ever seen. He was at home in, and knew, and spoke forty-five languages and dialects. He was a contemporary of the great scholar of Oxford, England, Dr. Driver, who claimed that the book of Daniel was wrong because of certain statements or phrases in it. Dr. Wilson spent years going through some 50,000 manuscripts to prove that Driver was wrong and that Daniel was right.

A second claim is that I can tell a true Christian scholar when I hear him, or read his works, or talk with him. By Christian I mean one who holds to and reverences the Word of God as being THE Word of God, and as being different from any other book that has ever been published because it is the only book that God ever wrote.

And the men of Princeton in my day believed just that. When we went out of their classes, we were strengthened in our faith concerning the Word of God to be just what it is. Today they tear it down, criticize it, emasculate it, make fun of it. May God help such men when they stand before a holy God.

ERASMUS

Some of you have heard the name Desiderius Erasmus. He was born in 1466 and died in 1536. He was known as a Renaissance humanist, born in Rotterdam, Holland, educated by the Brethren of the Common Life. He entered an Augustinian monastery; he was ordained a priest in 1492 and became secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai. Later, after studying four years of theology at the Sorbonne in Paris, he became disgusted with the decadent scholasticism. In 1499 he went to England where he became friends with John Colet and Thomas More. It was Colet that revealed to him his true vocation, the rejuvenation of theology by basing it on scientific, accurate documents, especially the Greek originals of the New Testament and the earliest fathers of the church.

Erasmus could do the work of ten men. He was that brilliant. And such an indefatigable worker. He was courted by kings. The reigning king of England offered him anything in his realm if he would become a citizen of that nation. The king of France did the same thing. Holland made great preparations to advertise him as their own native son.

He refused to take sides when the Reformation storm broke with Luther's 95 Theses, but I honestly believe that Erasmus was saved. He held in the deepest reverence the Word of God. We are told that he had access to Codex Vaticanus and was offered it to be used in his studies. He rejected it because he had found it untrustworthy. He was offered the cardinal's hat by the pope of Rome. This he refused. It is also said that he could have become pope if he had engineered it in the right way and pulled the right strings, but he refused to do this because in his famous book, *In Praise of Folly*, in a very satirical way he exposed the terrible sins of the Roman Catholic Church of that day.

Erasmus was responsible for the *Textus Receptus*, or the *Received Text*, that Greek text upon which the King James Version is founded. He made five editions of it, we are told, and in each one he made small changes that enhanced the meaning of certain phrases, or verses. Then the Elzevir brothers brought out several editions of it, and so did Stephens, and Beza, the successor of Calvin, who brought out nine editions. All in all there were some twenty-one editions of the *Textus Receptus* from Erasmus through Beza, but from the first edition to the last there were no major changes, but merely minor ones, which is another proof of the way in which God kept His Word all through the ages.

As I have said before so say I now again, there are those people who tell us today that there is no version of the Scripture that is without error. Very well, then, where does the doctrine of inerrancy go if there are errors in the Bible? They come back with that statement, Well, we believe that the original autographs were inspired, but not those copies of them. We agree that the originals were inspired, but my question is simply this: If God wrote this Book in the beginning, wasn't He able to keep it intact and pure and without error all through the ages? My answer to that is that He certainly was and He still is so capable. I would remind you again that God is jealous for His Word, just as much as He is jealous for His blessed Son, Jesus Christ.

If someone says to you that all manuscripts and all versions today have errors in them, then ask them in return what kind of a God they worship. A careless or impotent God in my book is a monstrosity. I believe that the King James Version does not have any errors.

Please remember this. You and I are facing, as I have said before, the most vicious and malicious attack upon the Word of God that has ever been made since the garden of Eden, and the modern attack began with the publication of the Revised Version of 1881. This is an unpopular cause at present in Christian circles. I have found this out again and again, and I am going to find it out in the future. But I can say as far as I am concerned it doesn't make any difference what happens to me, but it makes a whale of a difference what happens to the cause of Jesus Christ. And someday you and I, my friend, will have to stand before a holy God and give an account to what we did or did not do in seeking to open the eyes of people to the facts that have been covered up for so long concerning His holy, indestructible, impregnable Word.

The hour is late; the time is short; hell is filling; Christ is coming; and what do we had better do in a hurry. I have told my people, and I am telling you, if you are willing to sweep the television cobwebs out of your brain and put that boob tube down in the basement two, three, or four weeks, or even longer, as far as I am concerned, and sit down and study these books and other material, you will learn firsthand just what the score is. And it will increase your faith immeasurably, even as it has done mine.

I give all the credit to God Himself for having these books published. The material that we have collected for these books, I want to be frank with you, I marvel again and again at how God led me to this source, and to that source, and helped me to put it together. I don't want to take one bit of credit for this. I want to give God all of the glory and the honor, and I am hoping that those who are listening will get the vision of this whole situation, because if we do not have an infallible, inerrant, inspired Book to rest our weary souls upon for time and eternity, then your salvation and mine isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

This is the most important question anybody could ever discuss in Christian circles, far more than your salvation and mine. The reason for that is that the battleground is the Bible. Is it true, or is it not true? Is it without error, or is it filled with error? I maintain that the whole reason why there are nearly one hundred versions in print is because of one main reason: MONEY. And you can spell that with capitals, and you can underscore it, and put it in red, if you want to. May God help us! May God help you listening now to take your stand for what you know is right, and not budge or move for one single minute. You may be laughed at, scorned and scoffed at, and treated with contempt, but so what. If God be for us who can be against us? Those in the past who have done a tremendous work for God have had these same things to face. We need men, we need women, we need young people today with backbone made out of pig iron instead of wet spaghetti.

I want you to keep clearly in mind this, which is a basic essential to understanding something about this complex question, namely, the King James Version is founded squarely on the Textus Receptus, which is in 90-95% agreement with the five thousand extant Greek manuscripts. But the Westcott and Hort text is in disagreement with them just about as much, and is founded upon two of the worst of texts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Thus if you reject or look down upon the KJV, and settle for a mutilated Bible, you go ahead, but count me out. I do not say that you cannot profit from reading other versions. You can. But if they are based on the Westcott and Hort text, they are immediately suspect and you should be mighty careful that you check that version

with the KJV as closely as possible.

Now practically all versions of the Scriptures today, with exception to the King James, are based upon the Westcott and Hort Greek text. So there you are; take your choice. When you see that the King James Version is nearest to the original manuscripts, in spite of what hundreds and thousands of others say, it's going to be an uphill battle and it's going to be a rough. But, then, who are we "to be taken to the skies on flowery beds of ease, while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?"

There is so much at stake just now--the authority, the accuracy, the inerrancy of the holy Word of a holy God. And if ever the Lord needed those of His followers to take a stand for His Word and refuse to budge, it is now. Over one hundred years ago, in 1863, a convocation of the bishops and archbishops of the Church of England was held. They were meeting to protest and censor the heresy of one of their number, Bishop Colenzo, concerning the Word of God. They issued the following statement: "All our hopes for eternity, the very foundation of our faith, our nearest and dearest consolation, are taken away from us if one line of that sacred book, the Bible, be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy."

And this man wants the world to know that he stands squarely with these great scholars of the last century on this all-important subject, the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures. It is true that God can use almost anything or anyone to bring souls to Himself. He used Balaam to utter some of the greatest prophecies, and God also used a dumb animal to rebuke the madness of the prophet (2 Pet. 2:16). And God uses perversions of His Word in the salvation of souls, but this fact does not for one moment warrant us in keeping quiet when the holy Bible is being treated in such a slipshod, untrustworthy manner.

These are desperate days. They are filling with fear and foreboding. The end is in sight. Multitudes of Christians are confused, with nearly a hundred versions, or paraphrases, of God's Holy Word in print. We dare not, if we truly love Him, play with the living Word of the living God. I urge my listener to keep before him the KJV as the one safe, sure standard to go by in measuring other versions.

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