

Bibliology (from “biblion” = Doctrine of the Bible)

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Bibliology is the study of the theological doctrine of the Bible. The Bible is God’s Book of revelation. This is a good starting point for our doctrinal summary on Bibliology. I will mention both general and specific revelation under this first heading in our doctrinal study on the Bible. The doctrine of revelation teaches that through general revelation (world and universe) and special revelation (through Scripture), that God has chosen to make Himself known. Revelation is God choosing to reveal to mankind what he otherwise could not know. All knowledge about God is the direct result of His divine intervention and active choice to reveal Himself to mankind (Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

- **General Revelation Summary**

Revelation is truth which man otherwise could not know, unless God unveils it to his mind and heart. Revelation means *from God to man* (man hears that which God wants written). Inspiration means *from man to paper* (man writes that which God wants written). Illumination means *from paper to heart* (man receives that which God has written). God has revealed Himself in creation (Ps. 19:1-6), the conscience (Rom. 1:32; 2:14-15), His gracious care or provision of mankind (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:16-17) and by the verbal communication of His existence throughout human history (Exod. 9:16; Isa. 37:20; Jonah 1:9; Acts 17:24). God’s general revelation of creation and conscience (morals) renders all people responsible before God (Rom. 1:18-19; 2:1-2). This general revelation is a limited reflection of the image of God in man (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9). General revelation is sufficient to show God’s existence and certain aspects of His nature such as His power (Rom. 1:20), goodness (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17), and morality or basic ethical code (Rom. 2:11-15). This universal witness or revelation of God’s existence remains visible even while the nations continue “to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16-17).

Men are therefore accountable before God for rejecting this general revelation (Rom. 1:18-20). Scripture teaches that people can respond to general revelation by rejecting and suppressing it (Rom. 1:18, 21). However, even a person does accept the general revelation (common grace) given to all mankind regarding God’s eternal existence and power, this general revelation by itself is insufficient for salvation. It takes a special revelation of the Gospel message to bring about a

person's salvation (Rom. 1:16, 21; 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:21; 3:5). The requirement for salvation is faith in Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31) and it is impossible to believe on Jesus without knowing Him personally (Rom. 10:14). Only the Word of God can bring about spiritual life (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23) – not the planets and stars.

- **Special Revelation Summary**

God has also revealed Himself in special ways at numerous times throughout human history. God revealed Himself through visions (Gen. 15:1), dreams (Gen. 20:3), direct encounters with Himself (Acts 9), miracles (Exodus 7-12; 8:19; Matt. 15:31), and visible manifestations of Himself when appearing in theophany form during Old Testament times (Exodus 24:10; Isa. 6:1-3). God has historically portrayed Himself as “the angel of the LORD” – perhaps a theophany of the preincarnate Christ (Gen. 16:1-13; 18:1-2; 21:17-19; Exod. 3:2). The climax of God's special revelation of Himself is the visible expression of the person of Jesus Christ in human history (John 1:1, 18; Heb. 1:1-2) and the words and works that He would reveal to mankind (John 12:48; 15:3; 20:30-31). The theme of the Bible is Christ and His redemptive plan (Luke 24:27, 44-45).

Outside of His Son, God's supreme revelation of Himself is found in the 66 books of the Old (deriving its name from the Old Covenant) and New Testament (deriving its meaning from the New Covenant) which contain the words of Jesus and all the prophets. The 66 canonical books are God's special revelation to mankind. Not all of God's special revelation is recorded in Scripture (Rev. 10:4; Jude 14; Deut. 29:29). However, no other revelation bears the special significance of the revelation of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:16-19; 2 Tim. 3:16). This is the only source of special revelation that we have access to today (Rev. 22:18-19). No special revelation has been given since the close of the New Testament. The Bible therefore is God's final authority for faith and practice (Rom. 4:3; Jude 3). There are no authoritative writings outside the Scriptures. The Bible claims authority for itself in the many “thus saith the LORD” statements (Isa. 43:1) and this authority is experienced in connection with our daily lives (1 Cor. 2:13; Isa. 66:2).

From time to time, God has chosen to use miracles as a demonstration of His power over creation (Ex. 9:16; 15:11; John 2:11; 20:30–31) and to certify new revelation (John 14:11; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4). As a result, miracles tend to be

associated with specific periods of time when God has chosen to reveal Himself in new ways.

I do not believe that God speaks to people through visions and dreams today to reveal extra-biblical truth to them. The supernatural gifts of receiving revelatory truth through gifts of knowledge and wisdom, along with apostolic trances, dreams, and visions, are no longer necessary, since the Bible is now completed and canonized (1 Cor. 13:10; Rev. 22:18-19). The historic purposes for the revelatory gifts have run their course since the Bible is now complete and for this reason they have “ceased” (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

- **Inspiration**

Inspiration is the process whereby God breathed out the exact words of Scriptures in the original autographs (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Sam. 23:2; 2 Pet. 1:21). The Scriptures are inspired in the sense that they are the product of God’s breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and therefore the Bible is called the “word of God” (1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:15) and attributes inspiration to every word (John 17:8). While 2 Timothy 3:16 describes God “exhaling” His words (they are God-breathed), 2 Peter 1:21 describes the Spirit directing the authors of Scripture by “moving” them and 2 Samuel 23:2 describes God speaking through a human author. This means their writing was initiated and controlled by God Himself. In a supernatural way, the Holy Spirit led Moses, Isaiah, Matthew, Paul, and the other Bible authors (not Joseph Smith or committee of the New World Translation) to write the message of God to man. Who wrote the Bible and is the author of the Bible? Ultimately, God wrote and authored the Bible since He guided the penman to record the exact words that were to be written down. Behind the writers of sacred Scripture was the providential hand of God. *The Bible is not man's book, it is God's book.*

This is why my faith is based upon the Bible and not the other writings of man, such as the Book of Mormon, the Apocryphal Books, or the Septuagint which were not intended to be part of the inspired record of Scripture. I disagree with those that claim the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament) contains the true readings of the Old Testament which are not found in the preserved Hebrew Masoretic text. Jesus only affirmed the Hebrew Old Testament (Mathew 5:17-18). If there are any quotes from outside sources (Acts 17:28) they are deemed as part

of the inspired record of Scripture but this does not justify their entire writings as being inspired and reliable.

As Bible believers, we should believe in the verbal (every word - Matt. 5:18; 22:31-32; Luke 16:17; Ps. 12:6), plenary (all-inclusive or equal - 2 Tim. 3:16; Num. 23:19; Psa. 12:6; 119:89, 96; Prov. 30:5; Matt. 24:35), unlimited inerrancy (truthful and therefore without error and accurate in every area including doctrines, miracles, historical facts, genealogies, geography, science, dates, accounts of creation, the Flood, and all factual statements – 2 Tim. 2:15) and infallible (incapable of error and therefore trustworthy - Ps. 119:160; Tit. 1:2) inspiration of Scripture as recorded in the 66 books of the Bible.

I reject Liberalism or Modernism which has historically denied the Bible is the Word of God even within the original documents. I also reject the Neo-Orthodoxy view of inspiration (Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr) which says the Bible only becomes the Word of God, as God chooses to speak through it, when people read it or hear preaching. I disavow the Neo-evangelical attitude toward the Bible which reopens the subject of Biblical inspiration and possesses a mood of tolerance toward liberal thinking. I reject the concept inspiration theory (Matt. 5:18) which says only the basic concepts, thoughts, or content of the Bible is inspired. This theory suggests the Bible contains the Word of God but is not the Word of God. I also reject the variable or partial inspiration of the Bible which says only certain parts of the Bible are inspired – the liberal view of inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16). I reject the spiritual-rule only theory of inspiration which says the Bible may be regarded as our infallible rule of faith and practice in all matters of religious, ethical, and spiritual value, but not in other matters such as some historical and scientific statements.

I also reject the dictation or mechanical theory of inspiration (Scripture was merely dictated by God to the authors - Luke 1:1-3; 2 Cor. 10:10-11). This denies the characteristics and styles of the authors. However, it is also clear that the proper object of inspiration is the *words*, not the authors. I reject the natural inspiration theory (the men were inspired like William Shakespeare) which views the men of Scripture as possessing special creativity and a higher order than others as they wrote – making the Bible a product of man’s higher intelligence (2 Pet. 1:20-21). *The man was not inspired; the Scriptures were inspired* (2 Tim. 3:16 – “All scripture is given by the inspiration of God”).

I also reject the *mystical* or *universal* inspiration theory which views that writers of Scripture were no different than other men that are empowered by God to do spiritual responsibilities. These men were uniquely directed by the Spirit of God to write down the very words of God (2 Pet. 1:21). Chafer explains the writing of the Bible in this way: “It is not such a book as man would write if he could, or could write if he would.”

Since the authors sometimes used secretaries, God’s superintendence also extended to their role in recording Scripture (Jer. 36:4; Rom. 16:22; 1 Cor. 16:21). Where Scripture approvingly cites or incorporates other sources (Acts 17:28), this information is also accurate and authoritative, though there may be inaccuracies at other places in the same source. There are a number of cases where Scripture was given by direct dictation (Exod. 34:27-28; Rev. 2-3; 14:13). These instances are clear in the text, and Scripture indicates that this was not the normal process of inspiration. Not everything in the Bible is true (the lies of Satan) but they are accurately recorded and part of God’s Word. Everything in the Bible is given for our learning and profit (Rom. 15:4).

Approximately 40 human authors were sovereignly prepared and guided by the Holy Spirit to write exactly as God intended them, but they also wrote in keeping with their own experiences, vocabularies, and personalities (2 Sam. 23:2; Luke 1:1; 2 Cor. 10:10-11; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). The resulting books were recorded without error of any kind in matters of theology, ethics, history or science (Psa. 12:6; Prov. 30:5; John 10:35). As the Word of God, Scripture is fully authoritative in all matters related to the issues of doctrine and practice (2 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 6:7) – not the Book of Mormon, New World Translation of Scripture, or mystical experiences outside the Bible.

- **Interpretation**

God’s people are responsible to exercise Biblical wisdom as they read and understand God’s Word (Neh. 8:8). I am called upon to “rightly divide the word of the truth” (cut it straight – 2 Tim. 2:15) which means to use proper methods of hermeneutics and study so I can arrive at the correct meanings of the texts of Scripture. Scripture is internally integrated together (Acts 20:27), so that believers can correlate multiple passages and draw good and necessary conclusions to gain

a sufficient understanding of the truth and of their moral responsibilities (Acts 17:11).

The Bible is interpreted in different ways because of the limitation of human understanding (2 Tim. 2:15) and wrong methods of Biblical interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20) - not because the Scriptures are lacking in clarity. The Bible is the truth (John 17:17) and its language which is given by God is able to impart clear information. God means what He says and says what He means.

Some Bible truths are harder to understand or difficult to interpret (2 Pet. 3:16), such as the Trinity, God's election and man's free will, the mystery of suffering, etc. Some of the Bible's teachings and explanations are more difficult and complex than others but none of them are impossible to interpret and understand correctly. However, it should not disturb us if we find matters in the Bible which seem to be somewhat above our understanding. This is because the word of God is infinite and inexhaustible. In studying it we must always be willing to give God credit for knowing things which we can never fully fathom.

Unbelievers can in some sense intellectually understand Scripture (Ezek. 12:2-3) but apart from God's help the truth will remain non-applicable to the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14; Rom. 10:17). This is because the Spirit plays a critical role in *illuminating* human understanding, both for unbelievers and believers alike (John 16:8-11; Eph. 1:18; John 16:13; 14:26; 2 Cor. 3:18). Even though the Bible does not record every truth that God knows (Rev. 10:4) believers can be confident that what is revealed in Scripture is sufficient for all matters of faith and obedience (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This would mean that the primary source for guidance in personal decisions should always be the Word of God (Psa. 119:105, 130; James 1:5-8).

Some of the basic methods of interpretation are stated below.

- ✓ **Literal/Normal**, because of the clear presentation of the facts of Scripture (Deut. 30:11-14; Psa. 119:130).
- ✓ **Historical**, because the events recorded actually occurred in a specific place and time (Dan. 9:1-2; Luke 1:1-5).
- ✓ **Grammatical**, because God wrote the Bible with the understanding that words are important in the way they are connected or relate to one another (2 Tim. 2:15; Neh. 8:8).

- ✓ **Contextual/Theological**, because the best commentary on Scripture is other Scripture (Matt. 22:29-34; John 5:39; Acts 17:11).
- ✓ **Humble**, recognizing that that spiritual understanding depends on the illumination of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13).

* Feeling or personal experience is NOT a valid basis for interpreting the Scriptures.

We must remember that all Scripture is *for* us (Rom. 15:4) but not all Scripture is *to* us. Some passages are written to Jews who were living under the strict outworking of the Mosaic Law. Other passages speak of the Millennium (Isa. 2:4; Joel 3:10, Mic. 4:3) and should not be used to promote a non-defensive, pacifistic movement for today. I reject the allegorical method of interpretation which involves looking beyond the literal, historical, contextual, and grammatical understanding of Bible texts and which tries to find hidden and spiritual meanings behind passages of Scripture. The Bible tells us when something is an allegory (Gal. 4:24). Some rules for proper interpretation would be as follows.

1. Figurative language is present when the statement taken in its normal sense would be impossible (Isa. 55:12; Ps. 57:1; Micah 1:2; Rev. 1:16; 5:6-13; John 1:29; Rev. 11:5; 17:9; 19:15; 20:1).
2. Take the figurative sense if the action is immoral (John 6:53-58).
3. Note if a statement is followed by an explanatory literal statement (Eph. 2:1; 1 Thess. 4:13-16).
4. Sometimes a figure of speech is marked off by a qualifying adjective within the sentence (John 6:32; 1 Peter 2:4) or descriptive words and phrases such as "like," "as," or "as it were" (Rev. 4:6; 18:12; 15:2; 21:21; Isa. 53:6; Dan. 12:3).
5. The prophecies of God's Word all have a literal fulfillment even if the language is symbolic (Dan. 2:31-35; 7:1-7). There is always a literal message of fulfillment behind the figurative. The figurative is a colorful vehicle for presenting a literal truth (Ps. 22:16; Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 5:8).

Scripture certainly uses metaphors and other literary devices (Judg. 9:8-20; Dan. 7:1-8) but there must be sufficient contextual indicators to identify each literary

device. In the absence of such signals, interpreters should assume a literal interpretation. We can rest on the fact that Scripture is intended to reveal truth - not conceal it (1 Cor. 2:10). The literal interpretation of Scripture also necessitates an abiding distinction between Israel and the Church and results in Dispensationalism (2 Tim. 2:15) which is the result of rightly dividing and correctly handling Scripture.

The commitment to literal/normal hermeneutic leads naturally to Dispensationalism. A literal interpretation of Scripture will also lead to the conclusion that the Church is not an extension of Judaism (spiritual Israel). It is a new entity entirely (Eph. 2:15; 5:32). The Bible nowhere states that the Church replaces Israel and that Israel's covenant promises have been revoked and transferred to the Church. The Church is not Israel (1 Cor. 10:32; 1 Cor. 9:4-5). God's promises for His national people (the Jews) will yet be fulfilled in the future (Rom. 11:1-2; 26-27).

- **Dispensations**

- A. Definition

The word "dispensation" appears in the Bible (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25). The basic understanding of the word (economy or stewardship) means that God has chosen to work in *different ways, at different times of history, with different people*, in order to bring His sovereign purposes to pass for mankind. The Bible teaches that God works with man in a progressive way and gives to man different responsibilities throughout the course of human history. Not all the people and programs of God are the same. Dispensationalism stresses that all of history and prophecy can be seen through a dispensational grid (God's administrative work and economy). God's dispensational plan or program for history and prophecy has been called God's plan of the ages which is moving toward an end ("the dispensation of the fulness of times" - Eph. 1:10). Dispensationalism helps us to understand the overall flow of the Bible and God's plan throughout the ages of time. Bible history and prophecy should be viewed through a dispensational approach (making necessary divisions in Scripture) in order to properly interpret and understand the Bible.

In general, the Bible reveals at least seven major dispensations, stewardships, economies, or changes in the outworking of God's programs and purposes throughout history (History). There is a Dispensation of **Innocence** (Adam and Eve before the Fall – Gen. 2), a Dispensation of **Conscience** (what man received after the Fall – Gen. 3), a Dispensation of **Government** (God establishing government over the earth – Gen. 9), a Dispensation of **Promise** (Promise given to Abraham and his descendants – Israel – Gen. 12), a Dispensation of **Law** (Mosaic Law given to Israel as a nation – Ex. 19), a Dispensation of **Grace** which refers to God's new outworking of grace through Christ's actual death (Matt. 27:51) and the formation of the Church with her union with Christ (sometimes referred to as the Church Dispensation - Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:2), and the Dispensation of **Kingdom** (1,000 year reign of Christ which turns into the Eternal Kingdom or eternal state – Eph. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20-21).

B. Aberrant Views

I am not a hyper-dispensationalist which rejects water baptism and the Lord's Supper for the Church Age and which in varying degrees divides the Church into a Kingdom or *Jewish Church* (gospel period and early Acts), *Bride Church* (later Acts), and *Body Church* (epistles). It's very clear that the terms bride and body are nothing more than descriptive terms relating to the same Church that Jesus spoke about and commissioned (Matt. 16:18; 28:19-20), the same Church that was formed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47), and the same Church that Paul defined and doctrinally outlined in the epistles (Eph. 2:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18). There is only one body (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:17; 1 Cor. 12:13) or one Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18) – not two or three. Acts 13:46 and Acts 28:46 were significant *turning points* from the Jews to the Gentiles but they did not mark the *starting point* of the Church (Acts 1:5; 11:15). More on this under Ecclesiology.

I also reject Progressive Dispensationalism which agrees with Covenant/Reformed Theology in various ways. It teaches that when Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father (Heb. 1:3) that He inaugurated the Davidic kingdom in a spiritual way, ruling over His Church, which can be identified as His spiritual kingdom of people today. This system of interpreting the Scriptures teaches that Christ is today sitting on the throne of David in Heaven. PD's teach a confusing "already/not yet" dichotomy. On the one hand they teach that the Davidic kingdom is ALREADY here; but on the other hand they teach that it is NOT YET here and awaits future

fulfillment. This is false according the clear testimony of the Bible which separates the throne Christ sits upon today in Heaven from David's future throne on earth (Rev. 3:21).

Christ presently occupies the throne with the Father in Heaven (Rev. 4:2) but in the future He will return to planet earth and occupy the throne of David (Ps. 122:5; Ezek. 43:7; Luke 1:32-33). Christ's occupancy of the throne of David at a future time is a major emphasis of the book of Revelation from its very beginning to its end (Rev. 1:5, 7; 22:16). God has promised through the prophets that the throne or political rule of David would be restored at the Second Coming of Christ after long centuries of non-existence (Matt. 19:28; 25:31; Lk.1:31-33; Act.15:14-17; Amos 9:1,12). In no way is Christ sitting upon the throne of David today.

Progressive dispensationalists also disagree with the concept that the Church is distinct from Israel and attempt to create a spiritualize Israel (the Church – a new form of Israel) as Reformed Theology does (Rom. 9:4; 1 Cor. 10:32) lessening the uniqueness and mystery period of the Church (Eph. 3). The minimizing and blurring of these distinctions and forming a "complementary hermeneutic" (or compromised hermeneutical shift) in these specific areas brings them dangerously close to Covenant Theology and causes them to reject normative or traditional Dispensationalism.

- **Canonicity**

How did the Bible come to us: (1) Inspiration – the divinely-guided writing of the original manuscripts (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). (2) Preservation – the providential keeping of the origin text from loss and alteration (Ps. 119:152, 160; Isa. 40:8; 59:21; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25). (3) Recognition – the acknowledgment by God's people of the original manuscripts as being divinely inspired (1 Thess. 2:13) (4) Collection – the gathering of the original manuscripts into a Canon called The Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15; 4:13; 1 Cor. 13:10).

A. Old and New Testament

Canonicity is the process whereby believers came to recognize the writings that had been breathed out by God (2 Tim. 3:16). In the Old Testament era the books were immediately recognized as being inspired of God. They were deposited in the

side of the Ark of the Covenant, first in the Tabernacle and then later in the Temple (Deut. 17:18; 31:19, 24-26; 1 Sam. 10:25; 2 Kings 22:8, 2 Chron. 34:14). The priests make copies of the writings (Deut. 17:18).

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, with the following exceptions appearing in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4-7:28; Jeremiah 10:11). Each of the NT books was written primarily in Greek by an apostle or with the involvement of an apostle (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). Jesus Christ and the apostles still spoke Aramaic fluently since they used some Aramaic language when recording the Scriptures (Matt. 27:46; Mark 5:41; 7:34; Rom. 8:15; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 4:6; Rev. 9:11). The early church confirmed the traditional OT canon and recognized the apostolic authority of the NT books. The books of the Bible manifested themselves as God's Word by their powerful work in the hearts of believers and the ultimate confirmation is the self-authenticating power of God's Word (Jer. 23:28-29; John 16:13---14; Rom. 10:7; 1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Thess. 2:13).

Canonicity, or the standards or measures used by the early Church to recognize Scripture, included the authorship or oversight of an apostle, agreement with other known Scripture and acceptance by the rest of the Church (2 Tim. 4:13). The fact that the Biblical canon was settled broadly across the Church demonstrates both the Spirit's oversight and the uniqueness of Scripture. By the end of the first century the New Testament document was written and by the early second century all the New Testament books were confirmed by the early Church.

The OT writers regularly claimed divine authority for their words (Lev. 1:1; Hos. 1:1) and also acknowledge the authority of other OT books (Josh. 1:7-9; 1 Kings 2:3; Dan. 9:2). The NT writers quote from every OT book but one, often explicitly calling them Scripture or attributing to them absolute authority (Luke 1:70; Gal. 3:8; Heb. 1:1-2; Jam. 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). Jesus Himself verified that the OT books were Scripture (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-45) and promised that new revelation would come through the apostles (John 14:26; 16:13). The NT writers also regarded their own writings and other NT books as Scripture (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 2 Pet. 3:16) and authoritative (1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:2; Rev. 1:1-2).

B. Superintendence and Preservation

Although God gave His Word across thousands of years of history, the Bible clearly indicates that the text of Scripture is complete (Prov. 30:6; 1 Cor. 13:10; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18). Anyone who knowingly adds to Scripture to corrupt, deceive, or lead people astray is a false prophet (Deut. 18:20). Extra-biblical writings do not possess authority over Scripture. Scripture also teaches that God will providentially *preserve* His Word (Psa. 119:152, 160; Matt. 24:35) and He has chosen to do so in a remarkable multiplicity of copies carried down through church history. As a result, believers can have confidence that their Bibles are the Word of God and the very words of God (Ps. 12:6) as they accurately reflect the proper Greek manuscripts that have been preserved.

C. Manuscripts and Translations

The Bible nowhere indicates that God would preserve His Word in a single family of manuscripts or in a specific Bible translation. However, we do know there was a common Church Text, a Received Text, which was passed down through the Church centuries and it was duplicated in many Bibles previous to the King James Version and in our present-day King James Bible. I use the King James Version in my studies and ministry (along with visiting speakers in my church) because of the historically accepted manuscripts behind it which are based upon the true Majority Text which has been accepted by the Church down through the centuries. Since no person has ever seen the “originals” we must rely on manuscript evidence that is a reflection of the originals. I follow the Hebrew Masoretic Text and Greek Received Text, including the God-chosen Aramaic text, which have been historically embraced by the greater part of the church through the passing centuries.

I do not accept the Westcott and Hort premise that the two older manuscripts of Siniaticus or Vaticanus (a very small minority of manuscript evidence) are better than the majority of manuscripts (some 5,600) and that the shorter readings override longer or historic readings. James Quorllo states: “The age of the vellum or parchment does not guarantee the accuracy of the text written on it. Perhaps one reason that some very ancient manuscripts were preserved is that they were not used by believers because those believers viewed them as corrupt. By contrast those which were viewed as accurate were literally worn out with use and replaced.”

All text types are trustworthy as they reflect the majority readings as found in the Received Text but not all text types are created equal, such as the Alexandrian or Egyptian manuscripts, which differ from the Traditional Text in many places. Those who embrace the readings found in the minority of manuscripts (which delete many phrases, words, and names) claim to be taking the *eclectic* approach (considering all the manuscript evidence), but in reality they are not being very eclectic, when ignoring the great witness of manuscripts and the historic readings, which do not support their textual conclusions in certain places.

In Bibles other than the King James Version, which reflect the Westcott and Hort text, there are many deletions of words and whole sentences which I believe were to be part of the handed-down sacred text. Important words like "**Lord**", "**Jesus**", "**Christ**", "**blood**", "**repent**", and "**hell**" are omitted many times. References to Jesus as "**Lord**" (the Lordship of Jesus Christ) have been taken away in **thirty-nine places**. The title "**Christ**" has been eliminated in **fifty-two** places. The name of "**Jesus**" has been eliminated in **eighty-seven** places. In all, about **178 references to Jesus by name**, referencing Him as **Lord**, or as **Christ**, have been deleted. Furthermore, **617 words spoken by Jesus Christ** have been deleted. The omitting of 2,886 Greek words in the Critical Text (represented in all other Bible translations except the KJV) is the equivalent, in number of English words involved, of dropping out the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter.

It is my unapologetic belief that we must look to a Received Text base to know that all the words and phrases have been accurately recorded in the Bible and not overlooked and erased by the so-called theory of "the shorter readings" presented by Westcott and Hort, which deletes many phrases and thousands of words that God intended to remain in the Bible. *I can say with confidence that the King James Bible is the inspired Word of God today since it remains true to the Received Text tradition and because it is an accurate reflection of the original manuscripts that have been passed down through the church centuries.*

Believers that use other Bible versions must come to their own conclusions on the way God has chosen to preserve His words in the Greek texts and their Bibles but any person who rejects inspiration, inerrancy and preservation is liberal and should not be considered as fundamental. A person who holds up their Bible and says, "This is NOT God's Word, these are NOT the words of God, the Bible is NOT inspired and inerrant" should not be part of our Christian fellowships, since they are

following historic Modernism and Liberalism, which categorically rejected the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture in the originals and also their present-day Bible. If the Bible which we hold in our hand is not inspired, inerrant, and infallible, then it cannot be trusted, which ultimately places every miracle and doctrine in question. Therefore, the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the Bible is the underlying doctrine that props up all other doctrines as being true, reliable, and accurate.

D. Inspiration and Preservation

Out of respect for the preservation of God's Word (1 Peter 1:24-25) and pure words (Ps. 12:6), I follow the Received Text tradition that is faithfully reflected in the King James Bible. The KJV is a *formal equivalence* translation (following the form of the original languages - carrying over the precise words and phrases of the original Greek Text as much as possible) that flows out of a Received Text base, instead of a *dynamic equivalency* translation, which is more of a free running commentary, without being overly concerned about the words and languages found in the manuscript evidence. It is considered "dynamic" because it gives latitude to change the wording in order to convey the perceived sense by the translator.

A *translation* is a Bible that seeks to follow the original Hebrew and Greek language (word by word). The KJV is the only translation that consistently follows the Masoretic and Greek Received Text base. The literalness of any translation is only as good as the source of the Hebrew and Greek texts that were used for the translation. Of course, you can't find an exact equivalent or likeness to every Greek and Hebrew word and every Greek and Hebrew construction in our English Bible. A translation begins with the language (Hebrew or Greek) and attempts in varying degrees to keep everything as close to the original words as possible. However, a *paraphrase*, such as the Living Bible, The Message, and Amplified Bible is retelling something in a person's own words. It creates more of a commentary on the Scripture, proclaiming one's interpretation of the Bible, and for all practical purposes falls under the same category of "dynamic equivalency."

Preservation refers to the providential keeping of the original text from loss and alteration, throughout the centuries of time, so the words, meaning, and teaching of the Bible cannot be changed (Ps. 33:11; 100:5; 111:7-8; 117:2; 119:89-

90,152,160; Isa. 40:8; Mt. 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25). Of course, it's silly to argue for verbal and plenary inspiration without the preservation of words.

Only the original manuscripts (autographs or masters) were directly inspired by God (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16) which means that no re inspiration (double inspiration) occurred with a certain text type or specific Bible translation (1611 King James English) at any given point in history. Although I reject the theory of *re inspiration* in Bible translations and Greek texts, I also reject the notion that inspiration is lost after the original documents were given. *Inspiration, through the preservation of the sacred text and words, is passed down through the centuries in thousands of manuscript copies (apographs – copies of the originals) that God in His providence has given throughout the history of the Church.* I believe in the inspiration of the originals and the inspiration of the Masoretic and Received texts and all those texts that reflect these traditional and majority texts.

Inspiration must also be applied to the Bible (via “transferred authority”) because it is an accurate recording and reflection of the manuscript evidence. As a result, we can say as Fundamentalists that our Bible is *inerrant* (without error and accurate), *infallible* (incapable of error), and *inspired* (verbally = to every word and plenary = equally and entirely), since it accurately reflects the originals, which have been preserved for us today in thousands of Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Of course, in any translation there is always a need to compare it to the proper Hebrew and Greek texts in order to sometimes get a clearer rendering and understanding of particular words, but this does not affect inspiration and inerrancy, nor does it cause us to doubt God’s Word, since it was handed down to us and preserved throughout the centuries in thousands of manuscripts.

We must remember that Jesus confirmed that inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility should be *applied* to copies of the originals, since He repeatedly quoted and read copies of OT Scriptures (Matt. 21:42; Matt. 22:29; Matt. 26:54, 58; Luke 24:27, 32, 45; John 5:39; 7:38). God’s people down through the centuries have always believed that they possessed God’s Word and words in the copies they read and studied (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:15; Gal. 4:30; James 2:23; 4:5; 2 Pet. 3:16). The copies are holy (2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 1:2), the copies are true (Dan. 10:21), and the copies cannot be broken (Jn. 10:35). The copies are worthy of belief (Jn. 2:22). Paul identifies copies of the originals as Scripture (2 Tim. 3:15) and then links these same copies to original inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16), which is another indication that God

would preserve His word in the Bible that we have today. Therefore, I am a Bible believer and accept preservation on the basis of *fact* (Ps. 119:89; 1 Peter 1:24-25) and *faith* as Jesus did (John 10:35). The Bible stands!

- **Trustworthiness**

There are no problems in the Bible. Alleged problems in the Bible need to be figured out like any arithmetic problem. Apparent contradictions appear to be problems because of the limitations of man's mind (Matt. 22:29). These problems can be worked out by a careful study of God's Word, following the proper rules of hermeneutics (2 Tim. 2:15). Scripture should not be interpreted by what seems to be obscure or unclear passages (this is what the cults do) but by the multitudes of passages that teach clear and unmistakable truth (2 Pet. 1:20). One should interpret the less clear passages of the Bible in light of the clear revelation given in other texts of Scripture and not handle God's Word in a deceitful manner (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2). The Bible does not contradict itself.

The Bible is the Word of God and can be trusted (John 17:17; 1 Tim. 2:15) for many valid reasons. First, there is the matter of *internal* evidence. The Bible itself declares that it is the "word of God" (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Thess. 2:13) and Jesus' own statements confirm this (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35). There is also the matter of prophetic accuracy (fulfilled prophecy). Prophecies written centuries before were accurately fulfilled as predicted. The Bible also possesses historical accuracy in relation to recorded events and places. It is also scientifically accurate in matters that pertain to all true realms of science (1 Tim. 6:20).

Second, there is *external* evidence that the Bible is the Word of God and can be trusted. Think of its indestructibility, archeological evidence, universal influence, life-transforming power, the meticulous care and copying of its words through many centuries, amazing circulation, and the unmatched number of manuscripts that are in close proximity to the original writings. All of this attests to its authenticity.

Forty different authors writing over a period of 1,500 years penned the 66 books of the Bible. Four hundred silent years separated the 39 books of the Old Testament from the 27 of the New Testament. Yet, from Genesis to Revelation, they tell one unfolding story. Together they give consistent answers to the most important

questions we can ask: What is truth? Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? The Bible is the final authority and gives us these answers. The Bible is the Word of God.

We can have complete confidence in the Bible. The Bible is not riddled with scribal errors and contradictions when it is viewed with a believing heart and attitude. The late Dr. Pettingill used to say that it was not necessary to defend a lion, but if you would release the lion he would defend himself. In like manner the Bible needs only to be released, read, preached and taught, and it will defend itself.