

## #21 THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE

30 PRACTICAL DOCTRINES YOU NEED TO KNOW | DR. RANDY WHITE

### HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE

- 2 Peter 1:21 is key to understanding the origin of Scripture (the immediate subject of the verse being prophecy).
  - No Scripture is **by the will of man**.
  - Scripture came from **holy men**
    - Peter uses the same word translated “saints,” thus a reference to faithful Jewish men.
    - The *Saints* were instruments used of God, but the *source* was God Himself through the **Holy Ghost**.
    - Note that liberal critics of the Word teach that the Bible was written hundreds of years after the events by editors of oral tradition.
- Acts 1:16 is a perfect example of the truth of 2 Peter 1:21.
- Romans 3:1-2 tells us how the Hebrew Scriptures were entrusted to the Jewish people.
- Numbers 8:8 – The Jewish Talmud argues that the **read** out of the original manuscript of the **book of the Law**, and **gave the sense** meant to speak of the order and division of the words of the text and **caused them to understand** was a reference to the pronunciation of the words (which were without vowel markings found in modern Hebrew).
- The *scribes* (like Ezra) were *sopherim*, from the Hebrew *sopher*, which means “to count.” These men *counted* the Hebrew text meticulously so that it would not be altered in any way.
- The scribes developed the *massorah*, a “fence to the Scriptures.” The *massorah* is a set of marginal notes and tabulations that are not meant for explanation but preservation of Scripture.
- The *massorah* contained-
  - A count of each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and how many were contained in each scroll.
  - Five letters required a *dagesh* when these letters were at the beginning of a word, and a *raphe* when they were in the middle of a word. Thus the second letter of the alphabet (one of the 5 included in the rule) was written as כּ or as כֹ depending on where it came in the word.
  - Certain letters were given a certain number of *taagin* (crowns), and the count for the letters with a certain number of crowns was checked for accuracy. These were purely ornamental and given to safeguard the text from corruption. Jesus referred to these in Matthew 5:18, translated **tittle**.

Beth (= B) with 3 Taagin



- Certain words were spelled differently on a few occasions, to ensure that no scribe assumed an *error* but knew that this was a safeguard.
- The scribe knew the count of certain phrases such as “House of Israel” versus “Sons of Israel,” etc.
- In spite of all this, modern commentators quickly speak of “corruption” that has come into texts of which they disagree.
- See *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 93 for more detail.

- The Greek Scriptures were *from above* (Luke 1:3)

### HOW WE GOT THE ENGLISH BIBLE – A BRIEF HISTORY

- The Hebrew and Greek were translated to Latin by Jerome in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Many of our current misunderstandings of Scripture came from this Catholic translation which was the *de facto* Bible for 1,000 years.
- Wycliff translated the Latin to English in 1382-85. He coined the word *Passover* which is still used today.
- Tyndale translated the Hebrew/Greek to English in 1525, the first mass-produced Bible.
- The Geneva Bible of 1557 was the Bible of the Pilgrims and English speaking Protestants.
- The Authorized Version of 1611 is the most influential book of all time.

### HOW HAS THE BIBLE BEEN PRESERVED FOR TODAY?

- Psalm 12:6-7 promise preservation of God’s Word.
- The *manner* of preservation is not revealed but does not require miraculous intervention. The work of the *massorah* is a prime example.
- The “Received Text” is the text of the original languages that has been historically *received* as valid by the church.
  - If textual documents were “lost” it is because the church discarded them.
  - If textual documents were “kept” it is because the church used them, usually week after week or day after day.
  - The argument of scholars that “older texts are better texts” is pure fallacy.
  - All new translations except the NKJV are based on texts which the church had previously rejected / discarded for various reasons.
- There is no “Double Inspiration” in which translators were/are/have been inspired to inerrancy. A *high view* of Scripture is one that uses the original languages to discern the full meaning and nuance of the original words.