

# Bible, Bible, Who's Got the Bible?

Scripture reveals God as the giver of life.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; Acts 17:24,25

The life that God offers can be found in only one place, His Word. Only in the Bible can we find life.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

That being said, we are now faced with the daunting task of determining which "Bible" is really the Word of God. The shelves of Christian bookstores today are lined with many different *versions* of God's Word. This situation is a Bible marketer's dream come true but poses a serious problem for sincere students of God's Word. Are all Bible versions really the Word of God? If not, how do we identify the proper one? The answers to these questions are very important. In fact, they are some of the most important questions we will ever answer.

## Are all Bibles Alike?

The best way to determine if these various Bible versions are different is simply to compare them. Below we have listed several passages as they appear in both the King James Bible (KJB) and the New International Version (NIV).

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. (Matthew 18:11 KJB)

(Matthew 18:11 NIV)

And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. (Matthew 27:35 KJB)

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. (Matthew 27:35 NIV)

And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 8:37 KJB)

(Acts 8:37 NIV)

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: (Colossians 1:14 KJB)

In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:14 NIV)

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: (Ephesians 3:9 KJB)

And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. (Ephesians 3:9 NIV)

As we consider these verses, it is clear that there are differences in the various Bible versions. In the case of three

of the passages (Matthew 27:35; Colossians 1:14; Ephesians 3:9) we see very significant phrases in the KJB which do not appear in the NIV. In the case of the other two passages (Matthew 18:11 and Acts 8:37) we see that whole verses are in the KJB and are not in the NIV.

The above examples show us clearly that we cannot claim that all the Bible versions are the same. There is definitely more than one Bible on the market today. As we consider these differences, we must ask ourselves if they are significant. Is it important, or even necessary, for us to identify one Bible as God's Word?

The answer to this question becomes clear when we consider the high regard in which God holds His Word and the warnings He gives against tampering with it.

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. Psalms 138:2

Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:1,2)

The above verses leave no doubt that God will not tolerate any alterations to His Word. Because of this, it is important for us to identify which Bible version is really the unaltered Word of God.

Working in opposition to God's plan to keep His Word pure, Satan's plan is to corrupt God's Word. Satan's program of deception in the universe centers on corrupting God's Word and thereby questioning and undermining its authority. Satan started out by questioning God's Word and even in Paul's day was continuing to corrupt it.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Genesis 3:1

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. II Corinthians 2:17

Bible believers today must continually be on guard not to fall into Satan's trap of a corrupted Bible. It is essential for us to determine where the true Word of God is located today. Without God's Word, we are powerless to know and serve God and combat the wiles of Satan.

## Inspiration

Our first step on the road to identifying and locating the uncorrupted Word of God is to understand the process of inspiration. It is through inspiration that God placed His words onto the page through human authors.

The Bible is unlike any other book in the world. It is a book that did not have its origin in the mind of man but rather, in the mind of God. The scriptures were produced by God giving divine truth through human authors.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (II Timothy 3:16)

"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." (II Peter 1:21)

The words of scripture truly are divine in nature. In inspiring His Word, God took infinite Godly thoughts and transferred them into finite human words. The words that are written on the pages of our Bibles are not the words of men, they are the very words of God.

As we consider the process of inspiration, it is important that we understand that inspiration involves the individual words of scripture. God's Word is God's Word because it is God's Words. God chose the individual words that make it His Word. Time and time again we see men speaking or writing *all the words* of God.

And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. (Exodus 19:7)

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, 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. (Jeremiah 36:1,2)

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

Through the process of inspiration we receive "every word" that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The Bible is the Word of God because it contains the words of God. Identifying God's words is the key to identifying God's Word.

### **Preservation**

The next issue that we must consider as we seek to locate and identify the pure Word of God is that of preservation. How can we be sure that the words that God inspired thousands of years ago are still available to us today? Is the inspired Word of God still in existence today?

As we look to the scriptures for answers to these questions, we see that God has given assurances that He will preserve His Word for all eternity.

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever. (Psalms 12: 2, 7)

Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the rime to come for ever and ever: (Isaiah 30:8)

The word that God has inspired will continue to exist until the end of time and beyond.

Just as inspiration extends to the very words of scripture so also the preservation of that inspired scripture extends to the very words. God has promised to preserve the individual words of scripture.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not

pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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. (Matthew 5:17)

These passages show us that God intends to preserve the very words that He inspired into eternity. In fact, the passage in Matthew 5 indicates that God's preservation of scripture extends to the individual letters of scripture. Everything that we see, hear, touch, or experience physically in any way, is temporal in nature, it is quickly passing away. The only exception to this is the incorruptible, eternally abiding, Word of God. It is possible, in fact it is guaranteed, that the Bible that God inspired so long ago still exists today and will continue to exist for all eternity.

Instead of preserving original autographs (the actual pages on which the Bible authors wrote), God chose to preserve His Word through multiplied copies. God's Word was copied and distributed among His people.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: (Deuteronomy 17:18)

"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. (Acts 15:21)

"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans: and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." (Colossians 4:16)

God determined to preserve His Word by placing multiplied thousands of copies into the hands of His people. These copies are as authoritative as the originals. In His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ consistently refers to people reading copies of God's Word and calls them scripture.

"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matthew 21:42)

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." (Matthew 22:29)

The original inspired manuscripts of God's Word were written in the Hebrew and Greek languages. Since the vast majority of people in the world today cannot read ancient Hebrew and Greek, it is necessary for the Bible to be translated into other languages. Are these translations into other languages still to be considered as the authoritative, infallible, inspired Word of God? Is it necessary for us to learn ancient Hebrew and Greek in order to read the true words of God?

A scriptural consideration of the above questions shows us that we need not concern ourselves with trying to learn ancient Greek and Hebrew. God's Word can be translated into other languages and still retain its authority and infallibility. After all, it is God who is responsible for the diversity of languages on the earth. (See Genesis 11:9) It would be a cruel God indeed that would deliberately create a multitude of languages and then limit His Word to only two of those languages. A key element in the preservation of God's Word is to have that word available in the languages of as many people as possible. Translation presents no barrier to the preservation of God's Word.

Time and time again we see the Holy Spirit using the Greek language to quote men who were speaking in Hebrew.

And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive." (Acts 28:25, 26)

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. (Romans 4:6-8)

Notice that in each case cited above the verse says the man said, thus and so, while the man actually said different words in another language. Therefore, we should have no hesitation in saying God said, thus and so, in English when He actually inspired the words in Hebrew or Greek.

If God's Word is not available to a man in a language he can read and understand it is worthless to him. Accurate translations of the original Hebrew and Greek into any other language are every bit as much the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God as those original languages.

### **Two Different Bibles**

Now that we understand the principles of inspiration and preservation, we must apply these principles to the historical information concerning God's Word. In this way we can identify God's Word in the proper way, by applying God's principles, not man's speculations, to the available evidence.

God's process of preservation and Satan's attempts to corrupt the Word of God eventually resulted in the existence of two versions of the Bible. God's preserved version and Satan's corrupted version. God's preserved version became known as the *majority* or *received* text of scripture. This text was identified in this way because it was the text that was in agreement with the vast *majority* of existent Greek manuscripts and because it was *received* by the Body of Christ as the Word of God. Satan's corrupted version was in large measure suppressed by the Body of Christ and was not copied and distributed among God's people, as God's plan for preservation required. As a result the corrupted Word of God became known as the *minority* text. As English became a prominent language, it became necessary to make God's Word available in that language. Remember, translation in no way affects the authority and infallibility of God's Word. The translation of God's Word into English is simply a continuation of the process of preservation.

In the 1500's and early 1600's the Body of Christ at large carried out a process of collecting, translating, and publishing the true Word of God (the received text). This process culminated in the Authorized King James Bible of 1611 which was the product of the translation work of 47 different men who worked for seven years on the project at Cambridge, Oxford, and Westminster Universities. This process was an outgrowth of, and added further fuel to, the great reformation.

The received text of the Bible, which God was preserving through His people, is the Bible of the Protestant Reformation. It is the Bible that produced the great spiritual enlightenment that brought the church out from under the bondage and oppression of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 1582 the Roman Catholic Church, as a counterattack against the reformation, ordered the Jesuits to produce an English translation based on the corrupt minority text which had not been received by the Body of Christ as the Word of God. This corrupted text became the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church and other enemies of the gospel.

For many years the received text of the King James Bible was the standard in Protestantism and produced great spiritual growth in the Body of Christ. During this period the corrupted bible was found primarily in the Roman Catholic Bible and was used to battle against the truth being proclaimed by the true church with the received text.

Satan won a major victory in his efforts to stamp out the Bible of the reformation when, from 1870-1881, a committee met for the supposed purpose of updating and revising the King James Bible translation. Instead of updating the translation, which is a legitimate and necessary process in preserving and distributing God's Word, the committee entirely eliminated the received text in favor of the corrupted minority text. The revision committee changed the Greek text underlying the King James Bible in almost 6,000 places and replaced it with the corrupted Greek text underlying the Roman Catholic Bible of the Jesuit priests. In essence, the revision committee of 1881 changed the Bible of professing Protestantism from God's preserved Bible to Satan's corrupted bible.

Today the received text of God's preserved Word continues to be found in the English language in the Authorized King James Bible. The new so-called bibles, such as the RSV, ASV, NIV, Living Bible, etc., are English translations of Satan's corrupted bible.\*

### **How can we determine which Bible is God's Word?**

We can locate and identify the true Word of God by realizing the scriptural truths of inspiration and preservation. God inspired, and is continuing to preserve, the individual words of scripture. This preservation is accomplished by the production and distribution of multiplied copies of God's Word by His people. This preserved text of the Bible for the English language is found in the Authorized King James Bible.

\*There is one new version that does claim to return to the majority text of the reformation, the so-called *New King James Version*. While this version is much more true to the received text manuscripts than other modern versions, in attempting to update the language for marketing purposes, its editors have produced a much less accurate and reliable translation. Further, it is clear that this work was not done out of any deeply held conviction about the correctness of the text, since the publishers of this version also publish the other new versions based on the corrupted text.

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*“...to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery...”*

### **Grace Alive Church of Glasgow**

Meeting at  
Mountindale Conference Center  
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**Meeting times**  
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Sunday 10:00am and 11:00am  
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*Preaching the message of grace from the rightly divided King James Bible.*

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