

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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Bibliology II

Preservation, Canonicity, Synoptic Gospels

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Preservation of Scripture

Westminster Confession

“The Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, being immediately inspired by God and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in ages, are therefore authentic; so in all controversies of religion, the church is to finally appeal to them.”

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Preservation of Scripture

Providential Nature of Preservation

- ✓ Note that “proof texts” for preservation are often take out of context (Ps 12:6; 119:89, 152; Is 40:8; Matt 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:23–25)
- ✓ These verses do not promise miraculous preservation—they promise all Scripture is the Word of God and will be fulfilled
- ✓ God providentially used men to preserve Scripture (Jer 36:28; Deut 17:18)

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Preservation of Scripture

How is the Bible Preserved Today?

Hebrew-Aramaic Old Testament

- ✓ One Hebrew-Aramaic manuscript—Leningrad Codex (AD 1008)

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Old Testament



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Preservation of Scripture

How is the Bible Preserved Today?

Hebrew-Aramaic Old Testament

- ✓ Based off of one Hebrew-Aramaic manuscript—Leningrad Codex (AD 1008)
- ✓ Thousands of years of faithful oral and written tradition
- ✓ Qumran scroll discovery of 1940's
- ✓ Exile of Israel and Judah benefitted the preservation of Scripture

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Preservation of Scripture

God used the exile to preserve His Word in multiple languages so that upon comprehensive research, the original text can be determined.

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Preservation of Scripture

How is the Bible Preserved Today?

Greek New Testament

- ✓ Based off of analysis of thousands of Greek manuscripts (~5,600)

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Old Testament



New Testament



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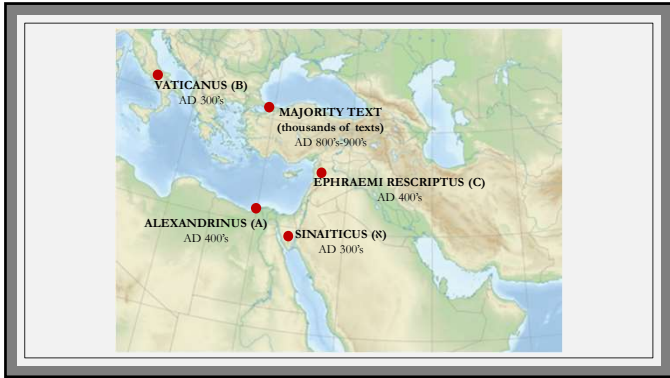
Preservation of Scripture

How is the Bible Preserved Today?

Greek New Testament

- ✓ Based off of analysis of thousands of Greek manuscripts (~5,600)
- ✓ No single manuscript mirrors your NT in your hands, but your NT is probably more accurately the original text than any manuscript we possess.
- ✓ 95% of NT variants are insignificant
- ✓ No serious doctrinal issues hinge on variants

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Preservation of Scripture

How is the Bible Preserved Today?
Greek New Testament

- ✓ Art/Science of Textual Criticism (determining the best reading) has been refined and sharpened
- ✓ Why do we not have the original autographs?
 - ❖ Man's tendency to worship relics
 - ❖ Impossible to stamp out God's Word

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Preservation of Scripture

God used the dispersion of the early church in innumerable locations to preserve His word.

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Preservation of Scripture

Some OT words which have been lost from our modern copies ...

- ✓ 1 Samuel 13:1—"Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign, and he reigned [thirty] two years over Israel."
We don't know exactly what these words are.
- ✓ Also 2 Samuel 8:4
- ✓ Does this shake our confidence? No. Scripture says that copies of the originals are the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; John 5:39).
- ✓ God has preserved His Word by dispersing it across the globe. It cannot be destroyed.

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Preservation of Scripture

Why Did God Allow Corruption?

- ✓ Like Proverbs and parables, wisdom is available for those who seek it, but not available for those who don't.

Conclusion:

The providence of God ensures that His people can work hard to know His Word with precision.

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Canonicity of Scripture

Canonicity Defined

- ✓ Which books are the Bible books
- ✓ "Canon" = rod or reed used to measure = the standard—The "canon" is the books of the Bible accepted as Scripture (66)
- ✓ Oral proclamation from a true prophet was also inspired, but not part of the canon.

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Canonicity of Scripture

The Need for the Canon

- ✓ The apostles were Christ's formal representatives (John 20)
- ✓ As apostles died, important that their teaching be preserved (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15)
- ✓ Written apostolic witness became increasingly crucial
- ✓ God preserved apostolic writings through local churches, pastors, copyists, church councils

God determined what books belonged in the canon. Man simply observed and affirmed them.

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Canonicity of Scripture

Existence of the Canon

- ✓ The process of recognition did not **establish** the canon—it simply vindicated what had long since been established
- ✓ The key point: The canon was not **created** by men, it was **recognized** by men through the witness of the Holy Spirit

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Canonicity of Scripture

Recognition of the Canon

- ✓ Recognition of OT Canon—fifth century B.C. in the time of Ezra
- ✓ Scriptures accepted by Israel are the same as the Christian OT
- ✓ The Apocrypha (intertestamental books)
 - ❖ They don't claim authority
 - ❖ Jewish authors didn't consider them God's words
 - ❖ Jesus and NT authors didn't consider them Scripture
 - ❖ Some teachings contradict Scripture
 - ❖ Strays from the Bible's intertextual hermeneutic

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Canonicity of Scripture

Canon always is affirmed by God's people by means of the culture that immediately receives the book. If the Jews who received the book could not accept it, then it is disqualified from being in the canon.

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Canonicity of Scripture

Recognition of the Canon

- ✓ *Competency Principle:* Only God can witness to Himself (Heb 6:13)
- ✓ *Chronological Principle:* God limited the canon by announcing the close of OT and NT (Mal 4:4–6; Rev 22:18)
- ✓ *Credential Principle:* God produced canonical books through an authenticated prophet or apostle (1 Thess 2:13)
- ✓ *Consistency Principle:* total harmony with previous revelation (Acts 17:11)
- ✓ *Conviction Principle:* the Holy Spirit persuades Christians of the authenticity of a book
- ✓ *Context Principle:* The local context of God's people must have validated the book

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The Synoptic Gospels

Definition

- ✓ Matthew, Mark, and Luke
- ✓ 230 places of "triple tradition"
- ✓ Apparent difficulty: slightly different versions of events—the so-called "Synoptic Problem"
- ✓ To solve the "problem," critics came up with Source Criticism—that each author must have had a source that was consulted

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The Synoptic Gospels

Source Criticism

- ✓ Two-Source Theory—18th Century
 - ❖ Markan Priority—Mark written first
 - ❖ Imaginary “Q” document (“Quelle”— source)
 - ❖ Matthew and Luke have material NOT in Mark so they must have used Q
- ✓ Four-Source Theory
 - ❖ Adds that Matthews used “M” and Luke used “L”
- ✓ Many commentaries on the gospels hold to Source Criticism—be careful

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The Synoptic Gospels

Problems with Source Criticism

- ✓ Assumes existence of imaginary documents
- ✓ Ignores church unanimity—Matthew was written first
- ✓ Assumes so-called contradictions must be explained away
- ✓ Assumes a low view of Scripture
- ✓ Ignores inspiration of the Holy Spirit
- ✓ Ignores idea of gospel harmonization
- ✓ Ignores that all three gospels are eye-witness accounts

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The Synoptic Gospels

Problems with Source Criticism

- ✓ Often assumes that Matthew didn't actually write Matthew, etc.
- ✓ Ignores oral tradition
- ✓ MAJOR implications of use of secondary sources:
 - ❖ We don't have the ACTUAL words of Jesus
 - ❖ We don't have the ACTUAL theology of Jesus
 - ❖ All we have is a second-hand account
- ✓ Goal of Source Criticism is to examine the history behind the gospels rather than considering the gospels historical

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The Synoptic Gospels

Why We Can Trust the Synoptic Gospels

- ✓ Inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20–21; 2 Tim 3:15–17)
- ✓ They can be harmonized
- ✓ Written independently of one another
- ✓ Differences are good—they didn't just copy each other
- ✓ Eyewitness accounts
- ✓ God preserved what He desired to preserve
- ✓ Each gospel contains different emphases
- ✓ Must be trustworthy to be worth relying upon
- ✓ Cannot deny the life-changing power of the gospels to save
