



WHY WE HOLD
TO THE
KING JAMES
BIBLE

DAVID W. CLOUD

Why We Hold to the King James Bible

Copyright 2006 David W. Cloud

New Edition Enlarged Oct. 2023

ISBN 978-1-58318-341-0



Published by Way of Life Literature
PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061
866-295-4143 (toll free) - fbns@wayoflife.org
www.wayoflife.org

Canada:
Bethel Baptist Church
4212 Campbell St. N., London Ont. N6P 1A6
519-652-2619 (voice) - 519-652-0056 (fax)
info@bethelbaptist.ca

Printed in Canada by
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

Contents

Note to Teachers and Students	4
Student Assignments	5
Introduction	9
We Hold to the KJV I - Because of Divine Preservation	42
We We Hold to the KJV II - Because Modern Textual Criticism Is Heretical	168
We Hold to the KJV III- Because Modern Versions Are a Product of Apostasy	221
We Hold to the KJV IV - Because of the KJV's Superior Doctrine	297
We Hold to the KJV V - Because of Its Unmatched History and Character	329
The History of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament	483
Ruckman Still Rides	504
What about the New King James Version?	515
A Brief Lexicon on the Bible Text/Version Issue	537
A Brief Textual Checklist	543
My Journey from Contemplative to the KJV	550
Transitioning Churches Away from the King James Bible	554
Billy Graham and Modern Bible Versions	570
Timeline of the Bible Text/Version Issue	576
Recommended Materials on the Bible Text-Version Issue	589
Bibliography	592

Note to Teachers and Students

This is the textbook for one of the Way of Life Bible College courses. Each course has a textbook, a syllabus to guide the teacher or individual student through the course, review questions, sectional tests, a final test, and test scoresheets. Many of the courses also feature video classes and PowerPoints.

The 2023 edition of *Why We Hold to the King James Bible* is enlarged and improved with new material and a thorough re-editing.

The 2023 edition has 17 video classes that cover the highlights of the textbook.

It also has a 450-slide PowerPoint on “The Unmatched Heritage of the King James Bible” with photos from prominent museums and extensive on location research at sites pertaining to John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, and the King James translators.

The Way of Life Bible courses are available at the following link - <https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/courses/>

Student Assignments

1. I urge you to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21). Check out the things we teach. I do this with every book, every course, every sermon. Test everything by the Bible itself. Check the statements and quotations to see if they are factual and if the quotations are being kept in context. I have been careful to document every quote, so the quotations can be checked by the student.

2. Memorize the following verses:

Psalm 12:6-7

Psalm 119:89

Psalm 119:160

Psalm 138:2

Matthew 5:18

Matthew 24:35

1 Peter 1:23

3. Write the first three chapters of the Gospel of John by hand, then count the mistakes and see what sort they are.

In a class setting, by comparing all of the copies, it will become evident that normal copying errors can be corrected with relative ease simply by comparing manuscripts. For example, if a word is omitted or misspelled by one student, it will probably be correct in the other copies. Likewise, if a student tried to add or delete something maliciously, this could be detected by comparing all of the copies together.

4. Compare the following verses in the KJV and two modern versions of your choice (not counting the NKJV):

John 1:27

John 3:13

Acts 8:37

Acts 20:28

Romans 14:10

1 Corinthians 15:47

Ephesians 3:9

Colossians 1:14

1 Timothy 3:16

1 Timothy 6:5

Hebrews 1:3

5. Study the textbook with concentration.

Pay attention to the outline of the entire book and the outlines of major sections.

Look for the main points in the lessons.

Try to anticipate the questions that will be asked on the review and on the tests. This will help keep your focus.

Jot down any questions you have and seek to find the answers. The answers to most of the main questions on this issue are found somewhere in this textbook. Another major resource is *The Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, which is available as a free eBook at https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks_bible_version_question_answer_database.php

6. Go through the review questions.

The review questions are designed to draw the student's attention to the most important points of the lessons and to help him remember these points after the course is finished. It also prepares the student for the tests.

The student should first go through the review questions and try to answer them without the textbook. Afterward, he should go back and find the answers using the textbook. Finally, he should check his answers against the review question answer sheet.

7. Take the tests.

If you are taking this course privately, find someone to administer and grade the tests.

The sectional tests are culled from the sectional review questions. This is a further step in focusing the student's attention on the most important points of the course.

The final test is culled from the sectional tests.

8. For additional study on this subject, we recommend the following:

The King James Version Defended (Edward F. Hills)

True or False (edited by David Otis Fuller)

Touch Not the Unclean Thing (David Sorenson)

Sample
Assorted Pages

“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”

Psalm 138:

Introduction

Why the Bible Version Issue Must Be Faced

Section Summary

1. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDATIONAL (“for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name,” Ps. 138:2).
2. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE THERE ARE TWO COMPETING GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS TODAY.
3. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE OF THE ONSLAUGHT OF MODERN VERSIONS IN THE LAST 100 YEARS.
4. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE A GROWING NUMBER OF FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS ARE SUPPORTING THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS.
5. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, ONLY ONE SIDE OF THIS DEBATE IS GIVEN TODAY.
6. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE IT IS AN ISSUE OF AUTHORITY.
7. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE MOST CHURCHES ARE NOT EDUCATED ENOUGH IN THIS ISSUE.

1. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDATIONAL (Ps. 138:2).

Many are saying that the Bible text/version issue is a non-essential, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

Since the Bible is the Word of God, the sole authority for faith and practice, the Bible text/version issue is foundational to the Christian life, home, and church.

Without the Bible, we know nothing for sure about God. We don't have a life manual. We don't know the purpose of life. We don't know where we came from or where we're going. We don't know what death is or what lives beyond death. We know nothing for sure about salvation.

Everything pertaining to the nature of the Bible is absolutely fundamental. Is it divinely inspired? To what extent? Has it been preserved? To what extent? Can we be sure that the Bible we have today is the Bible that was originally written? What is the evidence?

Every redeemed saint should have keen interest in this subject.

2. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE THERE ARE TWO COMPETING GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS TODAY.

This is the most fundamental fact about the Bible version issue, yet it is something that most Christians don't know.

Most think that the main difference between the KJV and the modern English versions is updated language. This is the idea that has been promoted by modern Bible version advertisers.

All of the Reformation Bibles--such as the English KJV, the German Luther, the Spanish Reina-Valera, the French Olivetan--are based on a certain Greek New Testament, whereas all of the modern versions are based on a different Greek New Testament. This accounts for thousands of changes. For example in 1 Timothy 3:16 the word "God" is removed from the modern versions. This is because the word "God" is omitted in the modern critical Greek New Testament whereas it was in the Greek text underlying the Reformation Bibles.

First, there is **the Received Text**.

- It is the New Testament underlying the King James Bible, the German Luther, and the other Reformation Bibles that went to the ends of the earth from the 16th century to the early 20th.
- The Received Text is also called "the Traditional Text," because generally speaking it represents the text commonly used among God's people through the centuries. Even the modern version defenders admit that the Reformation text is the common or traditional text.
- It is called the "majority text" because it represents the vast majority of existing Greek manuscripts.
- It is also called the "Antiochian text" or "Syrian text," because it originates in the region of the church of Antioch.
- The Received Text is published today by the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Dean Burgon Society, and others.

Second, there is the **Critical Greek Text**.

- It is called **the Critical Text** because it is the product of modern textual criticism. This was devised in the 19th century, largely by Unitarians, theological liberals, and others who were opposed to the divine inspiration of Scripture.
- It is also called **the Egyptian Text** and **the Alexandrian Text**, because it is based on Greek manuscripts that originated in Egypt and the Egyptian city of Alexandria.
- It is **the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament** of 1881. B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort were on the committee that produced the English Revised Version.
- Today it is called **the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament** and **the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament**.
- It is shorter than the Reformation Greek New Testament by 2,886 words, which is the equivalent of the omission of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter.
- It omits or questions 45 entire verses - Mt. 12:47; 17:21; 18:11; 21:44; 23:14; Mr. 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Lu. 17:36; 22:43-44; 23:17; Joh. 5:4; 7:53--8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Ro. 16:24; and 1 Jo. 5:7.
- In addition it omits significant portions of 185 other verses (by the count of Everett Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*).
- It weakens the doctrine of Christ's deity (e.g., it omits "who is in heaven" from Joh. 3:13; it omits "God" from 1 Ti. 3:16) and other key doctrines.
- In this course, we will study more about the critical Greek New Testament.

3. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE OF THE ONSLAUGHT OF MODERN VERSIONS IN THE LAST CENTURY.

There have been about 200 English versions since 1890.

Some of the modern English versions since 1901:

- 1901 -- American Standard Version
- 1926 -- Moffat's New Translation
- Concordant Literal Version
- 1935 -- American Translation
- 1949 -- The Bible in English
- 1950 -- New World Translation
- 1952 -- Revised Standard Version
- 1959 -- Berkeley Version in Modern English
- Clarified New Testament
- 1964 -- Anchor Bible
- 1965 -- Amplified Bible
- 1968 -- Barclay's New Testament
- 1969 -- Modern Language Bible
- 1970 -- New American Bible
- New English Bible
- 1971 -- King James II Version
- New America Standard Version
- The Living Bible
- 1972 -- The Bible in Living English
- 1973 -- The Common Bible (RSV)
- 1976 -- Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man)
- The Holy Bible in the Language of Today, An American Translation
- 1978 -- New International Version
- Simple English Bible
- 1979 -- New King James Bible
- 1984 -- New Accurate Translation
- 1985 -- New Jerusalem Bible
- 1986 -- Christian Community Bible
- New Life Version
- 1989 -- Revised English Bible
- Easy to Read Version
- New Revised Standard Version
- 1990 -- Simplified Living Bible
- 1991 -- New Century Version
- 1994 -- Clear Word Bible
- 1995 -- Contemporary English Version
- God's Word Version
- New International Readers Version (NirV)
- New International Version Inclusive Language Edition

1996 -- The Bible for Today's Family
----- The New Living Translation
1998 -- Third Millennial Bible
2000 -- English Jubilee Bible
2001 -- English Standard Bible
----- Easy English Bible
2002 -- Today's New International Version (New Testament)
----- The Message
2004 -- Holman Christian Standard Bible
2005 -- New English Translation
----- Conservative Version
2007 -- Inclusive Bible
2011 -- International Standard Version

It is important to understand that the Bible version issue did not really “heat up” for biblical fundamentalists until the 1970s. There were modern texts and versions prior to this, going back to the 1800s, but they were never widely used among fundamentalists or even among evangelicals. The English Revised Version of 1881 was never popular. The same was true for the American Standard Version of 1901. The Revised Standard Version of 1952 was popular only within liberal denominations. The New American Standard Bible of 1960 had a small following among scholarly evangelicals and a few fundamentalists but it was never widely used. It was not until the publication of the New International Version that a modern version began to be widely used outside of theologically liberal circles.

Faced with the growing popularity of the NIV, many fundamentalists began to look more carefully at the Bible version issue and as a result many books began to appear in defense of the King James Bible. Any time one sees a body of apologetic literature appear in church history, it is because something has happened to challenge the traditional position in some area.

4. The Bible version issue must be faced BECAUSE A GROWING NUMBER OF FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS ARE SUPPORTING THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS.

Most churches today are easy targets to be moved away from the King James Bible. Even pastors and teachers, for the most part, are not well educated in this issue. Most people assume that the major difference between the KJV and the modern versions is updated language and that doesn't seem to be a bad thing.

Bible-believing churches are in the midst of a great battle for truth, and the vast majority aren't properly prepared. The battle has raged for 2,000 years, and it is more intense today than ever. Ephesians 4:13 describes the battle with error, "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The winds of false doctrine are hurricane force today. Note the sleight and cunning craftiness, describing the duplicity of false teachers. Good Bible knowledge and keen spiritual discernment are essential for protection. If we look at the context, we see the victory over error, which is a strong New Testament church. Ephesians 4:11-16 describes the New Testament church as a spiritual body that is well educated and protected. (1) It has the right leaders (Eph. 4:11-12). The pastors, teachers, and evangelists perfect the saints for the work of the ministry. We must have the right men in these positions, and they must be well prepared for this big job. (2) The whole body is growing toward perfection in Christ (Eph. 4:13). This is a zealous, always revived church. (3) Every single member is built up so that he or she can build up the church ("every joint ... every part," Eph. 4:16). (4) Every single member is connected to Christ (Eph. 4:15-16). This is a regenerate church membership.

Biblical Presuppositions

As I approach this issue, I do so with the following biblical presuppositions.

The evolutionist would have me put aside my biblical presuppositions when I study the natural record, and the textual critic would have me put them aside when I study the manuscript record, but I will not put biblical presuppositions aside for any reason.

biblical scholars of that day were “notoriously either tainted with popery or infidelity” (Joseph Charles Philpot, “The Authorized Version of 1611,” *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). That was true then and it is even truer today. Philpot then asked an important rhetorical question, “And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit?” The biblical answer is NO!

Modern textual criticism, which gave us the modern Bible versions, is not founded upon dependency upon faith or the Holy Spirit or any of the aforementioned things. Textual critic George Ladd wrote: “One does not solve a problem of divergent textual readings by prayer or by the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit; but only by an extensive knowledge and skill in the science of textual criticism” (Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism*, 1967, p. 81). This is an unbelieving position. The Bible is a supernatural and spiritual Book and nothing about it can be known apart from the application of spiritual tools.

Though some evangelicals and fundamentalists who use textual criticism might claim that they also are following the Holy Spirit, the principles of textual criticism are contrary to this. David Sorenson observes: “Some proponents of the critical text may claim that the Holy Spirit has led them as well. However, the working editors of the critical text are steeped in rationalistic philosophy and scientific reconstruction of the text. Their entire philosophical base is not inclined to such a Fundamentalist notion of seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit” (*Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 58, f 30).

The Author’s Personal Testimony about the Bible Version Issue

I was not trained formally in the defense of the King James Bible. My research and conviction on this issue came some years after I graduated from Bible college.

I was led to Christ by a Christian man who spent about four days with me in 1973, traveling from Hollywood, Florida, to Mexico via Brownsville, Texas, and back to Daytona Beach, Florida. This

compassionate, persistent soul winner was very patient with my attempts to disprove the Bible and my general profane character. I repented and trusted Christ as only Lord and Saviour in a motel room the night before we parted ways.

This man not only taught me the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, he taught me to trust the Bible 100% as God's infallible Word. We visited a Christian bookstore, and he bought me a large print, plain text King James Bible and a Strong's Concordance. He told me that the answer to every important question in life was found in this Book. He warned me about apostasy and explained a little about it. He warned me that many of the books in that bookstore were doctrinally unsound. He taught me to test everything by Scripture. Because he repeated Acts 17:11 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21 so much those days, I had memorized them before I was even converted.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Thus, the understanding of the doctrine of apostasy and the necessity of testing everything by Scripture was a major part of my Christian worldview from the beginning. The doctrine of apostasy is taught throughout the New Testament (e.g., Acts 20:29-31; 1 Ti. 4:1-5; 2 Ti. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pe. 2:1-2; 1 Jo. 2:18-19; 4:1-6; 2 Jo. 1:7-11; Jude 1:3-4). It is the doctrine that a great number of churches will apostatize or turn away from the true Biblical faith under the influence of false teachers, and the apostasy will increase as the church age progresses. It will culminate in an explosion of apostasy in the last part of the age.

In this course, we will see that the modern Bible versions are a product of apostasy.

As soon as I was saved, I went home to make things right with my parents, to settle down and get a steady job, to find a church, and to start my Christian life. I was immediately passionate about Bible study and wore out my Strong's Concordance the first year.

ridiculed by those who think of themselves as the sole keepers of scholarship.

Please understand that you do not have to prove your position on this issue to the satisfaction of the defender of the modern versions. You only have to prove it to your own satisfaction before God in light of His Word. Further, you are not required to answer every question a critic of your position can ask. No one can answer all of the questions that can be asked on any side of this issue.

Bible Version Mythology: A Conversation with Dr. Thomas Hale

In the summer of 1985, Dr. Tom Hale, a medical doctor working in Nepal, visited our home in Kathmandu and began a discussion about Bible versions. Dr. Hale was involved with a Nepali Bible translation project. He had heard of my studies in Bible text/versions and wanted to know what I could share with him. We had an interesting conversation as I related some of the reasons why the new versions differ from the old Protestant ones, and after he returned to his hospital in central Nepal, we continued our conversation by correspondence. I gave him some books on the subject, including, if I remember correctly, Dr. Edward F. Hills' *Defending the King James Bible*. On July 28, 1985, Dr. Hale wrote the following:

“Thank you very much for your long and thoughtful letter to me about the Greek texts. I greatly appreciate the time you took to answer me, and I have found what you have written to be most informative, and indeed, worrisome. I hadn't realized that the battleground, as it were, is in the area of the Greek texts.”

This level of ignorance is typical. Though the man is a student of the Scriptures and had sat under key evangelical leaders, he had never been taught that a great many of the major differences between the King James Bible and the modern versions are the result of being founded upon different Greek texts.

As time passed, it became evident that Dr. Hale had rejected the Received Text in favor of the modern critical text. A chief factor in

this decision was the counsel he received from Dr. James M. Boice (1938-2000), pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, author of the *Boice Expository Commentary*, and head of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (now disbanded). Dr. Hale wrote to Boice to seek his counsel on the Bible version issue, and Hale sent me a copy of Dr. Boice's letter when he concluded our conversations on the subject. The following statements from this evangelical leader reveal how multitudes of Christians have been led to reject the Bible of their forefathers on the basis of faulty theories:

"There are some in this country and elsewhere who are very zealous for the *textus receptus*, prepared by **the humanistic scholar, Erasmus**, and used as the basis for the King James translation. This has led some, quite unwisely in my judgment, to defend the King James Version as the only true and faithful English text.

"Let me say that the concerns of some of these people are undoubtedly good. They are zealous for the Word of God and very much concerned lest liberal or any other scholarship enter in to pervert it. But unfortunately, the basis on which they are operating is wrong, and I have always tried to do what I could in a gentle way **to lead them to appreciate good, current evangelical scholarship** where the Greek text and the translations are concerned. ...

"**The situation is somewhat complex**, and many people do not understand it as a result of that complexity. ...

"What this boils down to is that, although there are large numbers of manuscripts that support the *textus receptus*, these do not have a weight proportionate to their numbers. In fact, if **one or two very old manuscripts disagree with a reading common to this very large number of European manuscripts, the one or two early manuscripts should perhaps be preferred**. This is what the scholarly editions of the Greek text do. They attempt to apply sound principles of judgment to determine the oldest and best readings which, however, as I have pointed out, are not necessarily the readings of the majority of the manuscripts.

“Now let me say a word about the *textus receptus*. Sometimes people who object to modern English versions of the Bible do so on the basis that one or more of the translators is less than evangelical, perhaps even liberal in theology. They defend the King James on that basis, because all of those translators were godly men. However, in doing that, they overlook the fact that **Erasmus, who produced the Greek text on which the King James Bible is based, was actually a humanist.** He was not supportive of the reformation and took issue with Luther in his book on the *Freedom of the Will*. This is not to say that Erasmus was not a good scholar. He was. He was perhaps the best scholar of his day; but he was a humanist, and if bias is supposed to enter in on that basis, it would presumably have entered into his text and thus have contaminated the KJV. Moreover, **Erasmus did not have very many texts to work with.** ... He was a great scholar; his Greek comes quite close to what was originally written. However, people who defend the *textus receptus* ardently should know these facts. **It is not a Divinely given and specially preserved text of the New Testament.**

“Let me say personally that the English text that I work from most often is the New International Version. It is not perfect, but it is a very good text and may well win a place in the contemporary church similar to the place held by the King James Version for so long. ...

“Of course, all these matters are spelled out in the various textbooks dealing with textual criticism. **I am particularly appreciative of the works of Bruce Metzger,** the best textual scholar I know. But you can find those books yourself. What you were asking for was my own understanding of the situation and problem as an evangelical scholar committed to inerrancy and biblical exposition” (Letter from James M. Boice, Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Dr. Thomas Hale, United Mission to Nepal, Kathmandu, September 13, 1985).

I have quoted lengthy portions of this letter because it presents such a typical defense of the modern versions. Though Dr. Boice’s reasoning sounds plausible, when examined carefully, a great many of his assumptions must be called “myths.” The *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary* defines myth as “a belief or set of

We Hold to the KJV I - Because of Divine Preservation

Why We Hold to the King James Bible

- I. We hold to the King James Bible because of the doctrine of divine preservation, and the doctrine of preservation teaches us that the Greek New Testament underlying the KJV is the preserved Word of God. (In this course we do not deal with the Hebrew Old Testament. For information on that see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* https://www.wayoflife.org/publications/books/faith_vs_modern.php)
- II. We hold to the King James Bible because the theories supporting the Modern Greek text are heretical.
- III. We hold to the King James Bible because the modern texts and versions are the product of end-time apostasy.
- IV. We hold to the King James Bible because of its superior doctrine.
- V. We hold to the King James Bible because of its unmatched history and character.

Section Summary

Introductory Points

A survey of the doctrine of Bible Preservation

The doctrine of preservation authenticates the TR/KJV

Introductory Points

1. I cannot emphasize too strongly how important the doctrine of biblical preservation is to the issue of Bible texts and versions. This doctrine is absolutely foundational to the issue, and in this light we will see how wrongheaded the principles of modern textual criticism are at their very root. I know of only one textbook on modern textual criticism written in the past 75 years by a “qualified” textual critic that is predicated upon divine inspiration and preservation. That exception is Dr. Edward F. Hills’ *The King James Version Defended*, and the field of modern textual criticism at large has given Hills no recognition beyond a cursory dismissal.
2. Consider what the Bible says about faith.

- The Bible warns that “without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please” God (Heb. 11:6) and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Ro. 14:23).
- Faith is based only upon the testimony of the Scriptures. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Ro. 10:17).
- Faith is “the evidence of things NOT SEEN” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is the opposite of seeing (Ro. 8:24). God teaches us to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Co. 5:7) and to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Co. 4:18).

3. Consider some important statements on this by men who understood the necessity of faith:

“FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 1).

“We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. To decide these things we need only a believing heart and the ability to read. Of course, textual scholars will deem all non-academics meddling in what they regard as their exclusive area of work unworthy to tie their bootlaces, still less to steal their clothes! ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. IF WE DO NOT BEGIN WITH THE WORD OF GOD, WE SHALL NEVER END WITH IT!” (David W. Norris, *The Big Picture*).

4. It is important to understand that the doctrine of preservation has never been under attack as it is in these last days and God’s

people have not before seen the need to define this doctrine as clearly as it needs to be defined today.

Doctrine has often been developed throughout church history in reaction to heretical assaults. The doctrine of Christ's deity and the Trinity, for example, were developed during the assaults by Gnostics, Arians, and other heretics of the early centuries, and were further refined during the Unitarian assaults of the 18th and 19th centuries. I am convinced that old commentaries such as Matthew Henry's dealt little with the doctrine of preservation because it was something that was commonly accepted and was not under serious attack. The doctrine of biblical preservation is being more clearly developed and defined today because of the assault of modern textual criticism.

A Survey of the Doctrine of Bible Preservation

Since we cannot please God apart from faith and since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, we must begin our course by examining the Bible's teaching on preservation. Does God promise to preserve Scripture? To what extent does He promise to preserve Scripture? Is this promise taught explicitly and plainly or is it only implied or hinted at? Does the Bible tell us anything about how the Scripture will be preserved?

Please give careful attention to the following, because this survey of the Bible's doctrine of preservation is the most important part of this course. The Bible challenges the believer to "prove all things" (1 Th. 5:21), and that is what we invite each student to do with the following study. Consider our statements prayerfully and test them with the Scriptures and see if we are being faithful to the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 17:18; Romans 3:1-2

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your

God, that it may be there for a witness against thee” (De. 31:24-26).

“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” (De. 17:18).

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Ro. 3:1-2).

1. It was to the Jews that God assigned the task of preserving the Hebrew Old Testament (Ro. 3:1-2). In Romans 3 Paul describes the Old Testament as the very “oracles of God,” and these oracles were committed to the Jews. This refutes every theory of inspiration that claims that the Old Testament Scriptures are anything less than the very infallible words of God. Even though the Jews did not always obey the Scriptures, they held them in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God.

2. In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (De. 31:24-26; 17:18).

3. Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown among the Jews (2 Ch. 15:3), God preserved His Word in spite of man’s failure. The Word of God was never permanently lost (2 Ki. 22:8).

4. There were highpoints to the process of preservation during that era, times of spiritual revival, in which more careful attention was given to the Scriptures and any errors that might have crept in through neglect were corrected. (The same thing has occurred in the church era, as we will see.)

- One of the highpoints in the transmission of the Old Testament text was the revival during the days of King Hezekiah. It was at this time, for example, that men copied out Solomon’s proverbs (Pr. 25:1).

- There were other revivals during the days of Jehoshaphat and Josiah and doubtless these were also times in which the Scriptures were given special attention and the process of canonization and preservation continued.

- After the Babylonian captivity there was a revival within the Jewish priesthood (Ezra 7:10) and the Old Testament Scriptures continued to