

Pastor Robert Rutta

Our Bible – Inspiration and Preservation

1 Peter 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

We need to have a love for the Bible and for the truths of the Bible.

From time to time I may teach or preach something that you disagree with.

But please understand this: My goal and my intention is **always** to teach faithfully what the Bible teaches. That is my heart.

I will do my best to teach this Book accurately, because I believe that this is the Word of God.

He deserves nothing less.

I. Inspiration

2 Peter 1:20-21

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 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.

God used the Holy Spirit to inspire men to write His words.

The men who wrote these books were not writing their words.

They were writing the very words of God.

- David, Paul, Jeremiah, Isaiah...

These prophecies came not in old time by the will of man.

God claims FULL AUTHORITY for the words of this Book.

II Tim 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

Commonly defined as "God breathed"

God breathed out the words speaking them to the prophets and apostles similar to how we breathe out words when we speak

The scriptures were inspired by God.

They came from Him.

He inspired every word and phrase.

For an example of this we can look at John when he was on Patmos.

Revelation 1:10-11

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

God told him to write the things that he would see into a book.

At various times in Revelation God tells John not to write certain things for various reasons. God was in full control of what was being written.

When we speak of inspiration, we need to be clear. The **writers** were not inspired, but rather their **writings** were.

- **Verbal inspiration** ...each word

The Scriptures do not just 'contain' the Words of God; rather they ARE the Words of God, each word.

Pr 30:5 Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Matthew 5:17-18

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
18 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.

The reason we don't like people playing with the Bible and rewriting it is because **every word** is important.

- **Plenary inspiration** ...the whole Bible is equally inspired '...all scripture is given by inspiration'

Plenary means that all parts of the Bible are equally authoritative. This includes such things as the genealogies of the Old Testament. All parts of the Bible are of divine origin.

Luke 16:17

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

When I hold the Bible I know that I am holding God's Word.

One statement that you will sometimes hear is that the Bible **contains** the Word of God.

Is that true or false?

Yes, it is true but it is not a clear enough statement.

It opens the door for falsehood.

If it only contains the Word, then it can also contain man's ideas or even error.

(That is the belief of the Mormon or the liberal theologian.)

We must be clear that the Bible not only CONTAINS the Word of God, but the Bible IS the Word of God.

This is verbal, plenary inspiration. ("all scripture")

The belief that the Bible CONTAINS God's Word undermines the very trustworthiness of God's Word. It undermines the faith of Christians and is a dangerous and false teaching.

How can we know which parts are true?

We would just be guessing.

WHAT DID JESUS CHRIST BELIEVE ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES?

Christ taught that the Old Testament is perfect to the letter. "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 (Mt. 5:17-18).

Christ taught that the Old Testament characters, events, and miracles are true and historical. Some of the O.T. people and events Christ referred to are as follows:

- a. The creation (Mk. 13:19)
- b. Adam and Eve (Mt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-7)
- c. Cain and Abel (Mt. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51)
- d. Noah and the flood (Mt. 24:37-39)
- e. Abraham (Jn. 8:39-40)
- f. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Lk. 17:28-29)
- g. Lot's wife turning to salt (Lk. 17:32)
- h. Moses and the burning bush (Mk. 12:26)
- i. Manna from heaven (Jn. 6:31-32)
- j. The brazen serpent (Jn. 3:14-15)
- k. Jonah and the whale (Mt. 12:39-41; Lk. 11:29-32)
- l. Nineveh repenting at Jonah's preaching (Lk. 11:32)
- m. The queen of Sheba visiting Solomon (Lk. 11:31)

II. Preservation

The Bible is clear that God has inspired His Word.
We also need to understand that God has preserved His Word for us.

The Bible is worthless to me if it was **inspired** (originally) but not **preserved**.

A proper understanding of preservation will also explain why we use the KJV instead of other versions.

Ps 12:6-7

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

God promises that He will preserve His Word "from this generation for ever."

Matthew 5:18

18 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 24:35

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

Isaiah 40:8

8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Isaiah 59:20-21

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, **and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.**

God has promised to preserve His Word.
That means that His Word has not been lost or corrupted and will always be available to us.

We have His promise.

When God inspired His Word and gave it to the prophets to write down it was perfect.
When did God start preserving His Word?

- As soon as it was written down.

When Paul wrote to Timothy the words were inspired.
Timothy took the letter and made copies.
At that point the Holy Spirit began preserving an accurate record of His words.
Through the years accurate copies were made, which have preserved it for us.

Have non-accurate copies been made?

Yes, starting in the second century (if not before) there were people who didn't like what the Bible said and changed the words.

If that was done, would that be a trustworthy copy? NO

What is the key ingredient that decides whether someone would change the words in the Bible or not?

1 Thessalonians 2:13

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, **ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

If we believe that God inspired His Word and that the words are of God, then we will realize that we do not have the right to touch them or change them.

If we simply see them as the words of men, then we see it as ok to change them.

That is why we spent last week talking about the inspiration of the Scriptures.

These words are from God.

Throughout history there have been two types of people that have dealt with the Bible – some viewed it as the Words of God and some saw them simply as men's words.

First let's take a quick look at the preservation of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament was copied by hand by the scribes.

Because they saw these as God's words they used extreme care in copying them.

They established a series of rules that had to be followed in order to eliminate the possibility of scribal error.

They were so meticulous in their work that it bordered on superstition.

Any copy which was found faulty or damaged was to be destroyed.

When a new copy had been made, and its accuracy tested, the old manuscript (especially if it had been in any way damaged) was destroyed.

This practice accounts for the disappearance of all the early manuscripts, but it is also a guarantee of the accuracy of those that survive.

1. The parchments were to be made from the skins of clean animals only, prepared only by a Jew and bound together by strings taken from clean animals only.
2. Each roll of writing must have between 48 and 60 lines only. The rolls must have the same number of columns consistently throughout and each column was to be exactly 30 letters wide.
3. Each column must be lined first; if three words were written down without a line the whole copy is made worthless and destroyed.
4. The ink used must be black and made from a special recipe.

5. The scribes must be clothed in full scribal dress.
6. No word or letter could be written from memory. The scribe must have an authentic copy in front of him and must read and pronounce out loud each word before writing it.
7. The scribe must reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the name for "God" (Elohim) and he must wash his whole body before writing the name "Jehovah" (LORD) lest the Holy Name be contaminated.
8. Strict rules apply dealing with the use of the pen, shapes of the letters, and spaces between the letters, words, and sections.
9. Rolls must be checked and approved within 30 days or the whole roll becomes worthless.
10. One mistake condemns the sheet and three mistakes on any page condemns the manuscript.
11. Every word and letter must be counted. If one letter is missing, is added, or touches another then the whole manuscript must be destroyed.

We may think these rules are extreme but they illustrate to us how sacred the Holy Word of the Old Testament was to its guardians, the Jews.

Dr. A. H. Newman sums up the attitude of the Jewish scribe towards the Holy Scriptures: "The Jews cherished the highest awe and veneration for their sacred writings which they regarded as the 'oracles of God'.

They maintained that God had taken more care of the letters and syllables of the Law than of the stars of heaven, and that upon each tittle of it, mountains of doctrine hung.

For this reason every individual letter was numbered by them and account kept of how often it occurred. In the transcription of an authorized synagogue manuscript, rules were enforced of the minutest character." (A Manual of Church History; Vol. 1; p. 580)

From the years 500-1000AD a family of Jewish scholars took up the task of copying the Old Testament scriptures – the Masoretes .

These scribes not only followed the rules observed by the Old Testament era scribes but they also added others as an extra safeguard.

Can you imagine numbering the verses of every book of the Old Testament?

How about numbering the words of every book?

The Masoretes numbered every letter of every word of every book. They also counted how many times each letter of the alphabet occurred in each verse and listed every verse that contained all the letters of the alphabet.

As if that were not enough, they also determined the middle word and middle letter of each book as a final check.

As we look at the Old Testament, we can trust that the Masoretic Text is accurate.

Preservation of the New Testament

There are over 5000 surviving manuscripts and fragments of parchments from the early centuries of church history.

These manuscripts consist of everything from small fragments with only a few verses on them to complete books.

They are written on papyrus, parchment and paper.

All of these manuscripts can be grouped into two families of texts.

They both claim to represent the original autographs the closest but, in truth, only one of the texts is pure.
One is correct and the other is corrupt.

Our job is simple. We must divide these manuscripts into their respective families and determine which family produces the correct Greek text.

There are several ways to analyze these text families;
I choose geographical origin.
It tends to revolve around two cities; **Antioch and Alexandria.**

Each of these cities had very different views of the Bible.

In Antioch, they followed the example of the Hebrew scribes and loved the Book and wanted no changes.
In Alexandria, they had no problem making changes to the Book.

Alexandria

Alexandria was a literary and scientific center of the ancient world. The city housed a famous university and a library of more than half a million books.

Naturally, every religion and philosophy found a home in this city.

There are several men that play a major role in developing the nature of Alexandrian thought.

The most predominant of these was a man named Origen.

A strange fellow indeed:

Origen possessed only one coat and no shoes, castrated himself and slept on the bare floor.

Origen's beliefs:

He taught that the Father created the Son, that the Holy Spirit was created by and subordinate to the Son, the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins, and infant baptism.

He denied the physical resurrection and believed that the stars and planets have souls.

He also taught the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures.

(This meant that he didn't believe in literal interpretation. It was all allegorical and meant whatever you want it to mean.)

Origen corrected the New Testament text by a process called "conjectural emendation".

That sounds scholarly but it simply means you change the text to what you think it ought to be.

Origen is quoted on the subject of allegorizing Scripture as saying, "The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they were written."

He influenced Jerome who wrote the Latin Vulgate, the Bible of the Catholic church.

The text that Origen and his students produced is called the Alexandrian Text.

The two most famous Greek manuscripts in this family are the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus.

In both of these manuscripts, there are hundreds of omissions words or verses.

They also disagree with each other over 3000 times in the Gospels alone. Over 7000 in all of New Testament.

Sinaiticus has letters, words or entire sentences repeated twice by carelessness. Sometimes 10-40 words are just dropped.

Sometimes a sentence or clause was omitted because it happened to end with the same words as a preceding clause. (at least 115 times)

On almost every page are revisions, by at least 10 different people, over many years.

Antioch (Traditional Text)

This was this part of the world that most of the New Testament books were written and where the greatest revivals and missionary work took place within the early church.

Antioch is represented by men like Paul and Barnabas.

The text that Antioch produced is known by several names including the Byzantine Text, the Imperial Text, the Reformation Text, the Majority Text, and the Traditional Text.

Throughout history there have been faithful Christians who loved the Word of God.

These were people outside of the Catholic church and were persecuted and killed by Catholicism.

They used the Bibles from the line of Antioch.

They took every effort to keep them pure and unchanged.

Of all the ancient manuscripts, 98-99% agree with each other and are from this family.

Manuscripts found in many different countries all agree.

(Sometimes I say 95% just to allow make sure there is no exaggeration, but the number is closer to 99%.)

Which would you trust more, the 98-99% of scriptures that agree with each other OR the 2% that do not agree with the 99% and are written sloppily – and do not even agree with each other?

I know which one that I can trust.

The KJV is of the family of the Antioch or Traditional Text.

Before the KJV, several English Bibles had been printed, each translated from the Greek of the Traditional Text.

For the most part they were good and accurate and they agree with each other.

They were usually the work of one man doing the translating – doing the best that they could do.

The KJV was translated by a group of around 50 of the highest scholars available, all working together.

The quality of their united work – checking and rechecking each other's work – was of a level that could never be reached by one man.

God's Word was preserved, unchanged – as it should be.

In 1881, the Anglican Church decided to retranslate the KJV.

The version they created was called the Revised Version.

The excuse was to remove and update archaic words.

But they were deceptive.

Instead of using the Greek text that the KJV came from, they used a NEW Greek text that was made up from mostly the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus being joined together. (Two that didn't agree with each other were mixed to make a completely new Greek text to then translate into English.)

This new Greek text was created by two men of very questionable pasts and doctrines: Westcott and Hort.

Illus

Imagine that you were wanted to read one of Shakespeare's plays.

You checked and found that virtually every copy had exactly the same words.

Imagine that you found two copies that had lots of lines crossed out and words changed.

You can see at least 10 different examples of handwriting.

You compare these two copies and they are completely different from each other.

What would you do if you wanted an accurate copy of the book?

Of course you would take the two that don't agree with each other, take some from one and some from the other, and ignore the vast majority of copies that agree with each other.

You say, that is silly!

Yes, but that is what you are getting if you read an NIV or NASV or any bible other than a KJV.

EVERY version of the Bible that has been produced since then has come from the Westcott and Hort Greek text. (Alexandrian)

There is one ONE version of the Bible in English that comes from the Traditional text:

- the one that never changed throughout history
- the one with over 5000 ancient manuscripts that agree
- the one that the martyrs died for

And that is the KJV.

That is why we use only the KJV.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Word and preserved the Word.