

Inspiration, Fundamentalism, and Your Bible

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The Original Manuscripts

I've sat on many ordination councils throughout the years and have heard the standard answer regarding Bible inspiration. When we are discussing Bibliology, the young men being ordained for ministry will often say, "I believe that God has inspired His Word in the original manuscripts." However, I've been noticing that the young men often leave the council of preachers hanging with this statement.

In fact, on one occasion, before we were finished interviewing one young man, I asked, "Do you believe that the Bible you hold in your hand is also the preserved, inspired, and inerrant Word of God? Can you hold it up to your people and say that it is God's Word, God's words, and God's mind regarding doctrine, holiness, and is the absolute standard of truth?" The prospective young preachers always answer the question in the affirmative - "Yes." But why does an ordination council need to ask this question today? Why must we probe to get the answer?

I believe it's because of what many Bible colleges and seminaries are teaching the young men today. I believe it's because of the many books that are being written on the issue of manuscripts that breed confusion in the minds of our younger generation and muddy the waters about inspiration. Yes, the autographs are inspired but the copies of the original documents are also inspired today which we possess, and which are reflected in our Bibles. By the way, no person knows what the originals looked like. We don't possess them today. Our faith and confidence is in the transmission process and God's providence in preserving His inspired Word and words for us. This is a matter of Biblical and historical *facts* but it's also a matter that pertains to *faith*. Facts and faith work together when concluding that God's Word, which we hold in our hands today, is inspired and that we can have complete confidence in it.

Let's continue to be Bible believers! Although we do not claim that any specific text type or Bible translation is inspired in the same manner as the autographs (2 Pet. 1:21), we should NEVER doubt that God has preserved His Word and words for us today and that we can have complete confidence and assurance we have

God's inspired, inerrant, and infallible truth which is found in the Word of God. This is because our Bible reflects the original documents and can be trusted as a worthy replication of the autographs. To reduce inspiration to only the original autographs and not the copies of the autographs breeds confusion in the minds of many people regarding the Bible they possess and use today.

In this study, I want to clear up some things on the matter of Bible preservation, inspiration, and the Bible that we use for our preaching, teaching, learning, and devotional life. As fellow-Fundamentalists, we must band together and reconfirm our belief in the Bible that we have today and stop hiding behind scholarly jargon, statements found in books, and jettisoning our faith in the Bibles we possess today. We might disagree on some of the particulars about manuscript evidence and even on Bible translations, but if we don't believe that God has preserved His Word and words, then we are nothing but a modernist, liberal, and Bible rejecter.

A Fundamentalist Bible Position

All non-liberal, Bible-believing, and fundamental Christians agree that the original manuscripts were inspired and without error. This is why we hear many Christians make the claim that God's Word is preserved, inspired, and inerrant *in the original manuscripts*. This is a common statement in most doctrinal statements and theology books today that deal with the subject of Bibliology. However, where does this leave us today and what do we possess today? Is God's word and truth no longer preserved, inspired, and inerrant? Have the words that God originally gave us been forever lost with the passing away of the originals? Can we no longer make any claim that God's Word is preserved (remains intact and pure), inspired (breathed out by God), inerrant (without error), and infallible (incapable of error)?

I've never heard any fundamentalist stand up, holding his Bible in hand, whether it's the King James Version, American Standard Version, or some other Bible version and say, "This is NOT God's Word. It no longer represents the original manuscripts and is no longer preserved for us today. We can no longer believe that it's inspired, inerrant, infallible, and trustworthy. We can no longer believe what it says." Of course, we would be *apostate* if we did not believe that God has preserved, inspired, and kept His Word and words from radical error and corruption. We might as well close all of our churches and stop being a Christian,

since we could not believe anything that the Bible actually says. And yet, some of the books being written today on the subject of Bible manuscripts and inspiration suggest that the Bibles we possess today are “second rate” when it comes to being inspired and many are redefining inspiration as only applicable to the Bible’s concepts or doctrines but not to its words.

Regardless of what position one holds regarding the family of manuscripts, we must agree, as Bible-believing fundamentalists, that God’s Word is still true. We must believe that the 5,656 manuscript copies and overwhelming similarities between these surviving manuscripts (in spite of a small percentage of variant readings), when brought together, gives us an accurate record of God’s Word, conveys to us that God has preserved His Word and words in a remarkable fashion, and that God’s Word, which we possess today, maintains inspiration, inerrancy, and accuracy, as it reflects the original writings He gave to us.

Many times a position is misunderstood or either misstated without thinking through the theological repercussions and implications of it. While reading through many books on the textual and translation debate, I’ve concluded that various authors, who do believe the Bible and defend it, have made statements that would lead us to believe otherwise, as they attempt to counter an opposing position regarding Bible preservation and inspiration. Through scholarly statements, lengthy discussions, and sometimes misunderstood conclusions, it seems that some fundamentalists may have abandoned their trust in the Bible that they possess today! I don’t think this is often the case, but it is sometimes perceived this way, as various authors seek to champion a certain position regarding Bible manuscripts and preservation.

Let me state it in a simple fashion and cut through the thousands of pages of intricate debate. If our Bible that we possess today is not inspired and it cannot be trusted, then we no longer have any foundation.

Psalm 11:3

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

All Bible-believing Christians realize that we can *trust* the Bible, since we believe that God has preserved and inspired His words and truth, through the overwhelming manuscript evidence that we possess today. Furthermore, we can

also believe that God's Word is still inspired and without error in the Bible translation we hold in our hand and use today, since it reflects worthy and circulating manuscript evidence and tradition, which has been passed down to us thorough the church centuries. To reject inspiration in copies of manuscripts and also in the Bible translation that we have today is to align oneself with old-line liberalism and modernistic beliefs regarding the Bible and inspiration. God has not called us to be a Bible doubter but a Bible believer. Let us remember this.

Bible Translations and Inspiration

We often hastily conclude that the issue of inspiration does not apply to Bible versions in any way. If this were true, then none of us possess the inspired Word of God in the Bible translation that we use. It's true that the translators were not carried along by the Spirit as the original writers of Scripture (2 Pet. 1:21), but it's equally true that we can't use this fact to deny the inspiration of our Bible, which we hold in our hands today. The text was carried along through the ages.

Think of this, the preservation of Scripture has no *practical relevance* if it does not extend and apply to Bible translations. If a Bible translation cannot be equated with the actual Word or words of God, then we must travel to countries all over the world, search for God's truth in museums where manuscript artifacts are stored and compare 5,656 documents every time we choose to translate a verse from the Greek or understand a verse in our Bible translation. Does any professor, preacher, or student of God's Word actually follow such a procedure? No! Nor can we as preachers and laymen! So, let's stop all the talk about not possessing God's inspired Word in the Bible version that we use and study. It makes no sense to conclude that we cannot possess God's inspired Word in our translation. In fact, when you stop and analyze this conclusion, it's downright unbelief.

Again, it's proper to conclude that no translators were inspired, when putting together a specific translation, but it's quite another thing to conclude that our Bible is not inspired. Despite what some neglect to teach (preservation of words in text types), we know from God's *promise* (1 Peter 1:24-25) that He would keep His Word from defilement and destruction. How can something be trusted which is not preserved?

We also observe from personal *history* that God's people would be guided in the truth (John 16:13) and that God's Word would be preserved as a document of truth and absolute standard, as God's people defend its content and doctrine (Jude 3). This defense of Scripture ("the faith" – Jude 3) would not only occur by maintaining what it said through theological debate and preaching, but out of necessity, it would be maintained through the transmission of the text (words) of Scripture and proper textual criticism throughout the church centuries. This would result in God's Word being accurately passed down from one generation to the next and preserved for us today in the manuscripts and Bible version that we use. In other words, this transmission process has occurred so inspired words and doctrinal preaching could be passed down from one generation to the next. The transmission process took place so preachers today can still hold their Bible in hand and say, "Thus saith the Lord."

No matter what side of the issue one falls, regarding manuscripts and translations, as fundamentalists we must avow that we do possess God's Word and words. We must also reconfirm that we can trust God's Word today because it is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible guide for truth, morals, and godly living. May I remind all of us, as fighting fundamentalists, if we conclude we don't possess God's words and truth today in the Bibles that we hold in our hands, this would be an act of heresy!

God's people down through the centuries have always believed that they possessed God's inspired Word in the copies they read and studied (2 Tim. 3:15). How can I preach God's Word, if I don't have God's Word? How can I believe in truth, if I don't have truth? Let's stop hiding behind "the original manuscripts" talk and start reassuring our people that God's Word is not lost and that we can have confidence in the Bible that we preach from and use in our ministry.

In addition, let us stop confusing our sheep with statements that downplay preservation. Yes, we should read and study about manuscript evidence and know about some of the variant readings, but let's stop hiding behind the veil of scholarly talk and reaffirm to ourselves and people that we do possess God's inspired and inerrant Word today and can trust the Bible. Let's preach *maximum certainty* to our people and not create an environment of uncertainty and doubt regarding God's Word.

It's rather disturbing today when I hear some fundamentalists throwing around the lingo of "better manuscripts," "older manuscripts," and the "best manuscripts" when speaking about the inspiration of the Bible. Let's stop hiding behind these manuscript smokescreens which cause the average Christian to doubt that their Bible is God's Word. Even variant readings should never cause us to doubt God's intent to give us His words and His desire for us to possess all the words that He spoke. To only assign inspiration to manuscripts dating from the 4th and 5th centuries (or any set of manuscripts) and not ascribe inspiration to our Bible today is a mockery of God's promise to preserve His Word, and is a departure from historic Christian belief in the preservation of copied Scripture, and the whole process of Bible transmission.

The Scriptures and the Originals

It's sometimes assumed that the Bible usage of the word "Scripture" has only reference to the original autographs; however, virtually each time the word is used it is referring to the *copies* of the Scriptures which people possessed.

"But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth" (Dan. 10:21).

"Did ye never read in the scriptures?" (Matt. 21:42) "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matt. 22:29).

"How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled" (Matt. 26:54)?

"That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matt. 26:56).

"That the scriptures must be fulfilled" (Mark 14:49).

"The scripture was fulfilled, which saith" (Mark 15:28).

"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21).

"He expounded unto them in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

"And while he opened to us the scriptures" (Luke 24:32).

"That they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

"They believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said" (Jn.2:22).

"Search the scriptures" (Jn. 5:39).

"He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said" (Jn. 7:38).

"Hath not the scripture said" (Jn. 7:42).

"The scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35).

"That the scripture may be fulfilled" (Jn. 13:18).

"That the scripture might be fulfilled" (Jn. 17:12; 19:24; 19:36).

"Another scripture saith" (Jn. 19:37).

"They knew not the scriptures" (Jn. 20:9).
 "This scripture must needs have been fulfilled" (Acts 1:16).
 "The place of the scripture which he read" (Acts 8:32).
 "And began at the same scripture and preached" (Acts 8:35).
 "Reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Acts 17:2).
 "They searched the scriptures daily (Acts 17:11).
 "Mighty in the scriptures" (Acts 18:24).
 "Showing by the scriptures" (Acts 18:28).
 "Promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures" (Rom. 1:2).
 "What saith the scripture" (Rom. 4:3)?
 "The scripture saith unto Pharaoh" (Rom. 9:17).
 "The scripture saith" (Rom. 10:11).
 "Wot ye not what the scripture saith" (Rom. 11:2).
 Comfort of the scriptures" (Rom. 15:4).
 Scriptures of the prophets" (Rom. 16:26).
 "Christ died...according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3).
 "He rose again...according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:4).
 "The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify" (Gal. 3:8).
 "The scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22).
 "What saith the scripture" (Gal. 4:30)?
 "The scripture saith" (1 Tim. 5:18).
 "That from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15).
 "The royal law according to the scripture" (James 2:8).
 "The scripture was fulfilled which saith" (James 2:23).
 "Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain?" (James 4:5)
 "It is contained in the scripture" (1 Pet. 2:6).
 "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 3:16).
 "Wrest, as they do the other scriptures" (2 Pet. 3:16).

These verses show clearly that the word "scripture" refers to what the people had access to, what was at hand, what was current, what they could then actually read and hear. In other words, they regarded handed down copies of the originals as Scripture. Therefore, the Biblical usage of the word "scripture" refers primarily to copies rather than the original autographs. The fact that these copies are called "scripture" strongly implies that God's people believed in textual preservation and that the very likeness of the inspired original writings had been passed down to them.

- The copies are holy (II Tim. 3:15; Rom. 1:2).
- The copies are true (Dan. 10:21).
- The copies cannot be broken (Jn. 10:35).
- The copies are worthy of belief (Jn. 2:22).

God's people have always believed that the copies they possessed, read, and studied were the very voice of God. This can be shown by a comparison of the following verses. Consider several of them.

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews...For this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Ex. 9:13-16). "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Rom. 9:17). "Now the LORD had said unto Abram...In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). "And the scripture...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying in thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3:8). "Wherefore she [Sarah] said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Gal. 4:30).

These verses and many others establish the important fact that there is no difference between God speaking through the original Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16) and God speaking through the copies of Scripture. In these Bible references, the Scriptures refer to that which is *current* and *available*; therefore, it follows that our copies are as much the voice of God, as the original documents. To deny this is to deny what all Bible-believing saints have accepted throughout the Old and New Testaments. There was confidence and reassurance that God's Word and words were preserved and true. What is even more convincing is the same Scriptures that were inspired in the past (2 Pet. 1:21) are profitable for us in the present.

2 Timothy 3:16

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

Yes, the original Scriptures were inspired (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16); however, Paul affirms that copies of these original Scriptures would be profitable for readers of future centuries, including Timothy. Why? It's because transmission would keep inspiration intact. Timothy was no doubt raised on copies (2 Tim. 3:15) and yet Paul also calls them Scripture and then links them to original inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16).

In short, profitability has to do with the present Scriptures we possess and love today because they also are inspired. In fact, both past inspiration and present inspiration are joined together in an identical grammatical construction (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul is saying that the work of past inspiration makes the Scriptures profitable in the present since inspiration has been preserved. Past inspiration is inseparably linked to present inspiration and profitability.

Here is my point. As fundamentalists, we should be able to stand up and boldly say without apology, "The Bible I have in my hand today is God's Word and I believe that God has preserved His Word for us today, that it is still inspired and inerrant, and that we can trust the Bible and receive it as God's absolute standard and truth for our lives today."

1 Thessalonians 2:13

"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."

Although we are not apostles handing out and preaching the original inspired documents, we too, must adopt this same attitude and respect toward the copies of Scripture, as other Christians have done in the early days of Christianity, as copies were being disseminated throughout the churches.

In essence, to refuse to ascribe preservation, inspiration, and inerrancy to manuscript copies of God's Word and to even Bible translations, as they reflect God's accurate manuscript records passed down to us throughout the centuries, is to deny something that no other Christian has denied throughout the history of Christianity. In fact, to deny that we don't have God's words and truth today in Hebrew and Greek texts, which reflect the original writings, and in Bible translations that accurately reflect these ancient texts, is to be an infidel!

Second Corinthians 6:15 asks, “what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” It is unbelief, skepticism, and a travesty of God’s Word to deny its inspiration, even in the Bible translation that one uses for ministry. To only assign inspiration to the original manuscripts, or even to the manuscripts that we possess today, while refusing to assign inspiration to our Bible, is not a statement of a scholar, but of a scoundrel, who no longer believes that the common folks have God’s Word. Beware of trying to sound scholarly all the time; you might just sound like an infidel!

Bible Believers!

Beloved, let’s be very careful about talking about “inspiration” in the original manuscripts and send a message that we don’t possess God’s words and truth for us today in the Bible that we love and hold in our hands. Are we still Bible believers or have we become Bible doubters? Fundamentalists must continue to believe in the transmission and providential preservation of Scripture, so they might assign inspiration and inerrancy to Scripture, even to the translation that they use, as it accurately reflects text traditions, which are trustworthy, reliable, and which were in common usage.

We should possess a Bible-believing attitude (not a Bible doubting attitude) toward the Bible that we use today, even if we disagree about certain manuscripts and the particulars about some verses in various translations.

Jack Moorman comments on translations:

“When a translation is being prepared in accordance with the will of God, the life giving breath of God will be felt in that translation ... God's work of preservation does more than keep the Bible from error in its transmission and translation; it gives to the Bible an enduring freshness.”

This conclusion is Bible believing! It honors the Bible that we have in our hands as God’s Word and does not send confusing messages regarding inspiration, inerrancy, and the preservation of God’s Word, as only applying to the original manuscripts.

Let's face the facts. All Bible-believing fundamentalists will conclude that God's Word is not lost in Bible translations or uninspired. To claim that inspiration only applies to past documents of ancient history or to the many piecemeal Greek documents we have today is to jettison the very foundation upon which Fundamentalism is built, which is the Bible. Furthermore, to categorically deny the verbal inspiration of the Bible that we possess today places us in the category of Liberalism and the camp of Neo-orthodoxy, which rejects the inspiration and accuracy of the Bible.

For the love of God's enduring Word, let's stop talking about inspiration, as only being applicable to the "original manuscripts" or "older manuscripts" and start talking about inspiration of the Bible we love and use today. The remarkable agreement among thousands of existing ancient manuscripts confirms that the Bible has been providentially preserved in every generation as a document of truth that accurately reflects the originals. Therefore, we can say that the Bible we have is *inspired* (God-breathed), *inerrant* (free from error), and *infallible* (incapable of error) because it accurately follows the autographs.

God did not rob us of the Bible, or short-change us, as some might suggest by ascribing inspiration to only the "original documents." God has not given to us second-rate or semi-inspired truth that was discovered somewhere in a second-hand bookstore. The Lord has blessed us with the Bible, God's holy Word. Therefore, we should not downplay the accuracy or inspiration of our Bibles today, through scholarly talk, which claims inspiration can only be attributed to the "original manuscripts," "better manuscripts" or "Alexandrian manuscripts."

Instead, we should believe what the Bible says is true, cherish it, honor it, defend it, follow it, and convey these positive messages to one another, our congregations, and children, since we are to be Bible-believing Christians – not merely "original manuscript," "Siniaticus-Vaticanus" or Received/Majority Text Christians.

"The B-I-B-L-E
Yes that's the Book for me,
I stand alone on the Word of God
The B-I-B-L-E."

I'm still singing it! However, some want to change the old children's song and update it for modern times and scholarship.

"The Siniaticus-Vaticanus-Alexandrian"
Yes, these are the manuscripts for me,
I stand alone on the older manuscripts,
"The Siniaticus-Vaticanus-Alexandrian."

Admittedly, these words are a bit hard for the children to sing at Bible School!

Beloved, let's stop parading our prejudices before others and causing God's people to doubt God's Word, which we hold in our hands today. This rebuke goes for both sides; those who follow a Received/Majority Text base and those who follow a more Critical Text base.

Yes, there are differences between the text types that we must address in the preservation/manuscript/translation debate and after knowing the differences take our stand. And yes, there will be some fire and smoke that arises from the debate! So be it. But let's possess a good disposition in the debate and stop calling fellow-fundamentalists heretics and apostates. What all Fundamentalists must do and will do is reaffirm their belief in the verbal-plenary inspiration of the Bible, stop attributing inspiration to only the original manuscripts, stop relating inspiration to only the concepts and doctrines of the Bible and apply inspiration to the very words that they possess in their Bible today. When doing this, fellow Fundamentalists will get back to calling one another Bible believers, even though we might disagree on the particulars regarding manuscript evidence.

Bible Preservation and Doubting Thomas

John Burgon wrote:

"If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scripture were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages."

Let's be honest, when all the smoke and debris of linguistic lingo regarding "better," "older," "more reliable," "Byzantine," "Majority," and "Siniaticus-Vaticanus-Alexandrian" manuscripts clears, we should all come to the same

conclusion as Fundamentalists. We MUST still believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible that we hold in our hands and should NEVER doubt its authenticity and accuracy as a worthy reflection of the original writings.

No fundamental preacher would ever think of standing up before his people, with Bible in hand, and say, "This is NOT God's Word. I CAN'T trust it; I CANNOT be sure about the inspiration of its words and message, since I don't have the 5,656 manuscripts before me, and since I can't travel to the museums all over the world, which house these manuscripts and accurately compare them." Of course, this type of conclusion is unbelieving. It also lacks common sense since the Bibles we possess today are an accurate reflection of these manuscripts.

If we reject applying inspiration to manuscripts and our Bibles, we might as well join the liberal and modernist club! We are no better than the liberals. The alleged scholarly conclusion of many today goes something like this: "Pristine autographs, flawed copies, flawed Bibles, incomplete inspiration and preservation, but no doctrine lost, close enough, no harm done!" I must admit, this is a rather bizarre way to view God's eternal truth. I am not a member of the "Doubting Thomas" club for I am certain that God has preserved His Word, as He promised, in thousands of surviving manuscripts that present the same witness.

Preservation refers to the providential keeping of the original text from loss and alteration, throughout the centuries of time, so the words, meaning, and teaching of the Bible cannot be changed (Ps. 33:11; 100:5; 111:7-8; 117:2; 119:89-90,152,160; Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25). The above verses either directly or indirectly teach preservation. Let me reiterate. A Bible cannot be trusted when its words are not preserved for us. It seems senseless to fight against providential preservation unless one wants to avoid a certain text type or place doubt upon the inspiration of their Bible today.

The New Testament writers refer to the Old Testament texts of Scripture (Matt. 22:29; 26:54, 56; Mk. 12:24; 14:49; Lk. 24:27, 32, 45; Jn. 5:39; 10:35; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:24, 28; Rom. 1:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Cor. 15:4; Gal. 3:22; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:6; 2 Pet. 1:19-20; 3:16) indicating their confidence in the preservation of the words and text of Scripture. These passages provide historical proof that the Old Testament has been preserved unto the New Testament period. Without placing confidence in its accurate transmission, their hope would have been misplaced.

The attitude of the early church was that God would preserve His Word for them and any other attitude was unbelieving and critical of God's promise and intended purpose regarding Scripture. Without the providence or superintendence of God over the copying and maintaining of a Biblical text, we could not have the Scriptures in a completed form today. We would not know what Jesus really taught and said regarding the Gospel and eternal life.

God's providence was seen throughout history and in particular phases of history, we see God working behind the scenes, not recreating inspiration, but directing men to record God's preserved words accurately. The preservation of God's sacred text should be included in the study of Bibliology.

We should all agree that inspiration was a one-time act of God (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16) but preservation was a process God used to protect His Word throughout the ages. The BELIEVING PROPOSITION that God has preserved His Word and Words PROGRESSIVELY and PROVIDENTIALLY throughout the ages involves both *fact* (1 Pet. 1:24-25) and *faith* (John 10:35) as it relates to manuscripts and translations.

Although man was not perfect in recording God's Words through the copying of manuscripts and printing process, God has *providentially* overruled (Isa. 46:10-11) the human element of imperfections, mistakes, and errors (not by eliminating them but maintaining His Words in spite of them). God overruled various glitches and errors in the transmission process to maintain and preserve His original Words (John 16:13). In addition, because these texts have been ACCURATELY RECORDED AND REFLECTED in our Bibles, we can conclude that the Bible is inerrant (without error), infallible (incapable of error), and inspired (verbally = to every word and plenary = equally and entirely).

In spite of the position we might take on Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, as fellow-Fundamentalists, we should advocate MAXIMUM CERTAINTY regarding Bible preservation and inspiration and not become a doubting Thomas in the area of Bible preservation and inspiration, as it relates to our Bibles. God has not left us in the dark regarding His Word. Because of the Biblical statements regarding preservation and the historical records and roots of textual transmission, along with the thousands of Greek manuscripts we do possess, we should accept the

Bible, as His inspired Word for us today. God's Word and words have not been lost through translation. They are accurately reflected in our Bible which has been translated from inspired manuscripts passed down through the transmission process.

Since this is true, we should not relegate God's words and truth to only the original manuscripts that the apostles and early church possessed, to manuscripts uncovered in the sands of Egypt, or to the thousands of other ancient manuscripts of antiquity. What good are the original manuscripts, if we no longer have an accurate reflection and replica of them in the Bible that we possess? What good are the thousands of manuscripts, if they are not reflected in our Bible?

Reinspiration and Inspiration

No reinspiration (double inspiration) has ever occurred with a certain text type or specific Bible translation, such as the 1611 King James English, at any given point in history (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16). Although we reject the theory of *reinspiration* in Bible translations and Greek texts, we also reject the notion that *inspiration* is lost after the original documents were given. Inspiration is passed down through the centuries in thousands of manuscript copies that God in His providence has given to us through the history of the Church. Furthermore, it's these same manuscripts that are reflected in our Bible today. To deny the inspiration of our Bible is to say that our Bibles cannot be trusted, that liberalism was right in denying the inspiration of the Bible, and that God has not preserved His Word and words for us today.

Whose side are you on? We should be on the Lord's side! Draw a line in the sand and stand behind your Bible and preach God's truth with reassurance, commitment, and confidence that inspiration was NOT lost through the centuries but was passed on to us, through the thousands of Greek texts and Bibles, which God in His providence has used to keep and preserve His Word. Any other conclusion is riddled with unbelief and liberal dogma.

“The Bible stands like a rock undaunted
 'Mid the raging storms of time;
Its pages burn with the truth eternal,
 And they glow with a light sublime.

The Bible stands though the hills may tumble,
It will firmly stand when the earth shall crumble;
I will plant my feet on its firm foundation,
For the Bible stands.”

As Fundamentalists, let's stay Fundamental! Let's stop acting like God has short-changed us today and we no longer possess God's inspired Word and words. The inspiration of God's Word is not merely assigned to the original documents; it's also applied to our Bible today, through the process of historical transmission and preservation. God's truth and word is not merely "out there" in the thousands of surviving manuscripts or "back there" (only in the originals); it is in our Bible. And all the Bible-believing, fighting Fundamentalists said, "Amen!"