**Biblical Authority – Part Two**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE DOCTRINE | THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The credibility of the Bible has to do with the truthfulness of its narrative, its inerrancy. Bible-believing Baptists approach doctrine from the first truth that the Bible is truth. Many unbelievers will not accept this premise, so it becomes necessary to actually prove the Bible for what it claims to be. This question: Is the Bible narrative trustworthy? The test: Compare Bible statements with known facts.

1. **THE PURPOSE OF THE DOCTRINE**

Since the Bible is the authoritative and inspired Word of God, it provides us with four items:

* 1. **An infallible opinion** – *Isaiah 55:8-9*
     1. I am not dependent upon the traditions of men, an experience, or the opinions of men.
     2. When you and I open up the pages of the Word of God and rightly divide it, we can rest assured that we are receiving a holy, infallible, and completely reliable opinion!
     3. Many hundreds of thousands were willing to sacrifice their comforts and to give their lives for the Bible. Why? They had an infallible opinion!
  2. **A perfect direction** – *Proverbs 3:5-6*
     1. Men can mislead you when they give you directions, but the Bible never will! It is always right.
     2. Even when you think that the Bible is wrong, it is still right.
     3. You and I would be better off to follow it than our own thinking.
  3. **A pure salvation** – *John 14:6; Acts 4:12*
     1. In the Bible, we find the plan of salvation pure and undefiled.
     2. We learn exactly what a righteous God expects of us in order for our sins to be forgiven.
* Islam has all these rules and requirements but still it is up to Allah to decided if you did enough- and you will not know until you get there if you made it.
  1. **A preachable message** – *Acts 8:35*
     1. It doesn’t matter what portion of Bible you open, all of it makes for good preaching.
     2. Noah & the ark (*Genesis 6-7*), Abraham & Isaac (*Genesis 22*), the Passover lamb (*Exodus 12*), the serpent in the wilderness (*Numbers 21*), the Suffering Servant (*Isaiah 53*) - All these passages have a message from God for us.

1. **THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE**
   1. **Many Christians use the expression, “I believe in the divine, verbal, plenary, and inerrant inspiration of the original Scriptures.” This is a true statement, to be sure.** 
      1. But… we don’t have the original Scriptures in our possession, and never will! So, making such a statement without qualification can be rather convenient.
      2. Believing in the inspiration of the originals “lets one off the hook” so to speak, and gives license to anyone wishing to “correct” the Bible when it suits their purpose.
      3. How often do we hear or read statements such as:
         1. “That’s what the Bible says… BUT… in the original Greek it really means…”
         2. “A better translation would be…”
         3. “This verse is not found in the most ancient manuscripts…”
      4. Such statements are not forthcoming just from the modernist and neo-orthodox camps. They are issuing all the time from the pulpits and writings within conservative and fundamentalist circles—including fundamental Baptists!
   2. **We need to face some very relevant questions here. For example:**
      1. Is the Bible intended for every man—or just for the scholars? Should we who are not scholars have to rely upon the scholars for a full interpretation?
      2. Do we need to know Hebrew and Greek to fully understand the Bible? If so, why are they difficult languages to master? Would God reveal Himself to man, then veil Himself in such languages? Is God out to make life (and salvation) difficult?
      3. If some verses in the Bible are questionable in their translation, can we really be sure of any? If we correct, criticize, or question just one verse of the Bible, what are we in effect saying about our bible?
      4. Does the average “three years of Bible college” Baptist preacher have the scholastic right to “correct” the Bible on the basis of Hebrew or Greek text?
   3. **It is at this point we must accept the doctrine of the divine preservation of the Scriptures.**

Without this doctrine, coupled with that of divine inspiration, we could never be 100% sure we actually have God’s Word.

* + 1. The doctrine of preservation.
       1. The divine preservation of the Scriptures is just as much a doctrine as that of divine inspiration.
       2. Both doctrines are taught in Scripture and evidenced by internal and external proofs.
          1. In *Psalm 12: 6-7*, we see three things about the preservation of God’s Words.
* The extent of preservation – “words”
* The agent of preservation – “Thou” (God)
* The period of preservation – “forever”
  + - * 1. There are many other passages of Scripture that support the preservation of the Bible. *Psalm 33:11, Psalm 100:5c, Psalm 111:7-8, Psalm 117:2, Psalm 119:89,152,160, Psalm 146:6, Isaiah 40:8b, Isaiah 59:21, Matthew 24:35, Matthew 28:19-20, John 10:35b*
        2. In *John 12:47-48*, we see that the Word is the basis of judgment. The judgment takes place on the last day, after heaven and earth have passed away. *Revelation 20:11-12* The Word of God is still in existence.
        3. *II Timothy 3:15-16* Timothy had the Scriptures; he didn’t have a reliable copy. Timothy didn’t have the original copies. In his day the Old Testament Scriptures were between 450-1500 years old and were copies of copies of copies of copies, etc. The copies Timothy had access to are called Scripture and are said to be inspired. This passage makes nonsense out of any reference to the inspired originals. The original autographs were inspired, yes, but so are the preserved copies. What we are dealing with since the second century is preserved copies! The originals are non-existent
        4. Notice what *I Peter 1:23-25* says about God’s Word.
* It is incorruptible – the promise of continued purity; a pure Bible today.
* It lives forever – the promise of continued effectiveness.
* It abideth forever.
* It endureth forever.
  + 1. The logic of preservation.
       1. Why would God give us the Bible, take meticulous care with the very words of Scripture, then allow their distortion or loss to occur over time?
       2. Would not God, Who through the miracle of inspiration gave us His very words in written form, also be able to keep them through a miracle such as preservation?
    2. The extent of preservation.
       1. Preservation goes beyond the books, chapters, thoughts, concepts, and sense (all of which have been preserved). It extends to the words.
       2. God’s words are still His words when copied or translated. The inspiration of the Bible does not evaporate just because it was translated.

**CONCLUSION:**

We are so blessed to have in our hands the very Word of God that has been preserved for us. We must not take it for granted and must realize God’s love and mercy in giving us His Word.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy = Moses - 1400 B.C.  
Joshua = Joshua - 1350 B.C.  
Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel = Samuel/Nathan/Gad - 1000 - 900 B.C.  
1 Kings, 2 Kings = Jeremiah - 600 B.C.  
1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah = Ezra - 450 B.C.  
Esther = Mordecai - 400 B.C.  
Job = Moses - 1400 B.C.  
Psalms = several different authors, mostly David - 1000 - 400 B.C.  
Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon = Solomon - 900 B.C.  
Isaiah = Isaiah - 700 B.C.  
Jeremiah, Lamentations = Jeremiah - 600 B.C.  
Ezekiel = Ezekiel - 550 B.C.  
Daniel = Daniel - 550 B.C.  
Hosea = Hosea - 750 B.C.  
Joel = Joel - 850 B.C.  
Amos = Amos - 750 B.C.  
Obadiah = Obadiah - 600 B.C.  
Jonah = Jonah - 700 B.C.  
Micah = Micah - 700 B.C.  
Nahum = Nahum - 650 B.C.  
Habakkuk = Habakkuk - 600 B.C.  
Zephaniah = Zephaniah - 650 B.C.  
Haggai = Haggai - 520 B.C.  
Zechariah = Zechariah - 500 B.C.  
Malachi = Malachi - 430 B.C.  
Matthew = Matthew - A.D. 55  
Mark = John Mark - A.D. 50  
Luke = Luke - A.D. 60  
John = John - A.D. 90  
Acts = Luke - A.D. 65  
Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon = Paul - A.D. 50-70  
Hebrews = unknown, mostly likely Paul, Luke, Barnabas, or Apollos - A.D. 65   
James = James - A.D. 45  
1 Peter, 2 Peter = Peter - A.D. 60  
1 John, 2 John, 3 John = John - A.D. 90  
Jude = Jude - A.D. 60  
Revelation = John - A.D. 90