

LESSON 9

IDENTIFICATION OF GOD'S PRESERVED WORDS (II)

-- Canon, Texts, and Words:
Lost and Found or Preserved and Identified?

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Judeo-Christian Bible comprising the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) Scriptures is usually discussed in terms of its respective canons, texts, and words in the original languages. As seen in our previous discussion,¹ there is no issue with the divine inspiration of the Scriptures in the original writings or autographs. The issue today involves the transmission of the Scriptures from the time they were originally written until the present day. Since the autographs, the original scripts written by the original writers themselves, no longer exist, having long perished, can Bible-believers today say they have in their possession the very same Scriptures or Words that God had originally given by divine inspiration?

Many modern pastors and scholars deny that there exists such an infallible and inerrant Bible today. Although they may believe in the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI), they do not believe in the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of the Holy Scriptures. In their minds, the inspiration of the Scripture is a miracle from God, but the preservation of Scripture is man's work without any special superintendence or intervention by God.² Such a view is held nowadays by those who call themselves "Reformed." The "Reformed" pastors and teachers of today actually speak in a Bibliological tongue that is strange to the ears of the Reformed scholars and Reformation saints. This strange understanding of the Bible that is far removed from the Reformed faith concerns looking at the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible only in terms of (1) its divine inspiration and not divine preservation, and (2) its autographs and not apographs.³

In view of the current fallacious paradigm and ignorant confusion over the nature of the Sacred Scriptures of yesterday and today, it is the intention of this paper to recapture the true Biblical teaching and Reformed thinking of the Scriptures, that (1) the verbally inspired Scriptures are verbally preserved by God and God alone; and (2) the supremely authoritative Scriptures are the extant infallible apographs and not the non-existent autographs. As such (1) the inspired Scriptures were never lost but *always preserved* without any corruption or missing words; (2) the Sacred Scriptures are *always infallible and inerrant*, and *supremely authoritative not only in the days of the Reformation, but also today—Sola Scriptura!*

This paper seeks to identify where and what the infallible and inerrant Scriptures are in terms of their Canon, Texts, and Words.

II. CANON

The word "canonicity" comes from the Greek *kanon* which means "a straight rod," or "a measuring rule." When applied to the Scriptures, it means the standard list of divinely inspired *books*—the Word of God—which serves as the only authoritative basis for the faith and practice of the Church.

A. Old Testament Canon

By the time of Jesus, the OT Canon was already completed and identified. The Jews regarded the 39 books of the *Tanakh* (the Hebrew OT Canon) comprising the (1) *Torah* (Law), the *Nabi'im* (Prophets), and the *Kethubim* (Writings) to be nothing short of the direct utterance of the Most High, absolutely infallible and supremely authoritative. These 39 books were recognised as the divinely inspired books for they came during the period of Biblical revelation—the period between Moses (1450 BC) and Malachi (450 BC).

OLD TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Period
<i>Torah</i> (Law)	Genesis	15 th Century BC
	Exodus	
	Leviticus	
	Numbers	
	Deuteronomy	
<i>Nabi'im</i> (Prophets)	Joshua	15 th – 14 th Century BC
	Judges	14 th – 11 th Century BC
	1 Samuel	12 th – 11 th Century BC
	2 Samuel	11 th – 10 th Century BC
	1 Kings	10 th – 9 th Century BC
	2 Kings	9 th – 6 th Century BC
	Isaiah	8 th – 7 th Century BC
	Jeremiah	7 th – 6 th Century BC
	Ezekiel	6 th Century BC
	Hosea	8 th Century BC
	Joel	9 th Century BC
	Amos	8 th Century BC
	Obadiah	9 th Century BC
	Jonah	8 th Century BC
	Micah	8 th Century BC
	Nahum	7 th Century BC
	Habakkuk	7 th Century BC
	Zephaniah	7 th Century BC
	Haggai	6 th Century BC
	Zechariah	6 th Century BC
Malachi	5 th Century BC	
<i>Kethubim</i> (Writings)	Psalms	11 th – 10 th Century BC
	Job	20 th – 16 th Century BC
	Proverbs	10 th Century BC
	Ruth	13 th – 12 th Century BC
	Song of Solomon	10 th Century BC
	Ecclesiastes	10 th Century BC
	Lamentations	6 th Century BC
	Esther	5 th Century BC
	Daniel	7 th – 6 th Century BC
	Ezra	6 th – 5 th Century BC
Nehemiah	5 th Century BC	

	1 Chronicles	11 th – 10 th Century BC
	2 Chronicles	10 th – 6 th Century BC

The above identification of the OT Canon is given by the Author of the Canon Himself—the Lord Jesus Christ—in Luke 24:44, “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the *law* of Moses, and in the *prophets*, and in the *psalms*, concerning me.”

The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms/Writings make up the 39 books of the OT Canon that Jesus regarded as the very Word of God. Note that there is no mention of the Apocrypha—the 14 books⁴ written during the 400 “silent years” of the inter-testamental period when there was no prophetic voice until John the Baptist came onto the scene. The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) acknowledged the traditional and ecclesiastical view that the apocryphal books were not divinely inspired but merely human books with some historical value, but no spiritual or doctrinal value whatsoever:

“The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the Scripture, and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings” (I:III).

It is a Biblical fact that God had intended a fixed number of 39 divinely inspired OT books to serve as the supremely authoritative Standard of faith and life for the Church. If there is such a divinely ordained set of canonical books for the OT, surely a similar set of canonical books can be expected for the NT.

B. New Testament Canon

The Lord Jesus Christ in fulfilment of the *Tanakh*—the OT Canon—was born of a virgin, lived a sinlessly perfect life, died on the cross for the sins of the world, was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead just as the OT Scriptures had predicted. His life and work on earth marked the beginning of the New Covenant period of a better administration of the Covenant of Grace which called for an NT Canon to regulate the life and faith of New Covenant saints.

At Pentecost, God did not present the Bible to the New Covenant Church as a complete whole. The NT Canon like the OT Canon required a period of time for its inscripturation and completion. This period of divinely inspired inscripturation occurred during the time of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. It began with the Gospel of Matthew in AD 40 and ended with the Revelation of John in AD 90.

Since Jesus gave no explicit word concerning the number of NT books and their specific identities, how did the Church finally arrive at the 27 books? It is a question that needs to be answered especially today when the Church is being attacked by pop-modernism that questions the authenticity and certainty of the 27 books that form our NT Canon. Dan Brown’s bestseller—*The Da Vinci Code*—for instance speaks of the newly discovered Gnostic Gospels of Nag Hammadi as the authentic and authoritative NT books. Brown dismissed the Four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the NT Canon today as fabricated accounts of the life of Christ produced in the time of Emperor Constantine (4th century AD). According to him, these Four Gospels should be rejected and replaced by the Gnostic Gospels.⁵ In other words, the true Gospels were once lost but are now found!

This begs the question of whether the Church has been reading from the wrong Gospels all these centuries. Were the true books about the life of Christ lost very early and now found? Or were the true books the ones that God has preserved from the beginning, and

received by the Church from the time they were written until today? By virtue of God’s promise of the preservation of His words in Psalm 12:6-7, Matthew 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, and 1 Peter 1:23-25, we believe the latter to be true—that the all-powerful Author of the Christian Scriptures has supernaturally and continuously preserved His words throughout the ages, and kept them pure and uncorrupted, available and accessible to His Church, so that His people might appeal to them as their supremely authoritative Canon or rule of faith and practice without any doubt or uncertainty.

Nevertheless, Brown’s pop-modernistic attack on the Scriptures does great damage to the testimony of the Scriptures and of the Church. Ben Witherington III highlighted the serious implications of Brown’s canonical-critical book:

The issue of canon—what books constitute the final authority for Christians—is no small matter. If the critics are correct, then Christianity must indeed be radically reinterpreted, just as they suggest. If they are wrong, traditional Christians have their work cut out for them, because many seekers remain skeptical of claims to biblical authority.⁶

To put it bluntly: No Canon, no Christ; no Canon, no Gospel!

Was the Biblical Canon falsified and the Christian Gospel fabricated? There was in fact no “orthodox” fabrication of the Gospels as posited by Brown but the very opposite. History reveals the unorthodox corruption of the Scriptures by Alexandrian heretics who denied and attacked the full deity of Christ.⁷ It is a fact that shortly after the inspired NT books were completed, spurious books claiming inspiration were also written (eg, Acts of Paul, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Acts of Andrew etc).⁸ The contents of these false books do not fit the nature of divinely inspired writ. They are filled with myths and even blasphemous stories of Christ. The born again and Spirit indwelt believer can tell straightaway that these books are not of God (John 16:13, 1 Cor 2:12-14, 1 John 2:27). The early believers had long rejected them as spurious.

So how was the NT Canon arrived at? The Canon was arrived at by the ecclesiastical consensus of God’s people who were indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The Council of Carthage (397), chaired by the pre-eminent early church father and theologian—Augustine—identified the sacred books by name. There were exactly 27 of them.

NEW TESTAMENT CANON AND BOOKS		
Canon	Books	Date
Gospels	Matthew	AD 40
	Mark	AD 45
	Luke	AD 45-55
	John	AD 70-90
History	Acts	AD 62-64
	Romans	AD 55
	1 Corinthians	AD 54
	2 Corinthians	AD 55
	Galatians	AD 49
	Ephesians	AD 60
	Philippians	AD 60
	Colossians	AD 60
	1 Thessalonians	AD 50-51

Epistles	2 Thessalonians	AD 50-51
	1 Timothy	AD 62
	2 Timothy	AD 63
	Titus	AD 62
	Philemon	AD 60
	Hebrews	AD 60-65
	James	AD 40-44
	1 Peter	AD 63
	2 Peter	AD 63-64
	1 John	AD 80-90
	2 John	AD 80-90
	3 John	AD 80-90
	Jude	AD 60-70
Apocalypse	Revelation	AD 90

The Canon of NT books above was no innovation, but an official statement of what the Church by ecclesiastical consensus had already accepted as inspired Scripture by virtue of its divine origination. The WCF states:

We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (I:V).

The NT Canon is under attack today like never before. Bible-believing Christians ought not to be naïve but to put on the whole armour of God (Eph 6:11-18). We ought to realise that truth is ascertained by spiritual knowledge, and we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

III. TEXTS

The texts of the Holy Scriptures refer to the copies of the Scriptures which come either in handwritten or in printed form.

A. Old Testament Text

The OT Scriptures were first given to Israel—God's chosen nation. Romans 3:1-2 tells us that God had committed to the Jews the safekeeping and copying of the Holy Scriptures. Knowing well the divine nature of the Scriptures, that the words of the sacred pages were the very words of the Almighty God, they copied the Scriptures with great precision and accuracy employing the following rules:

- (1) The parchment must be made from the skin of clean animals; must be prepared by a Jew only, and the skins must be fastened together by strings taken from clean animals.

- (2) Each column must be no less than 48 and no more than 60 lines. The entire copy must be first lined, and if three words were written in it without the line, the copy was worthless.
- (3) The ink must be of no other color than black, and it must be prepared according to a special recipe.
- (4) No word or letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
- (5) He must reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the word for “God,” and must wash his whole body before writing the word “Jehovah,” lest the holy name be contaminated.
- (6) Strict rules were given concerning the forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words, and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
- (7) The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet; if three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.
- (8) Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.⁹

These very strict rules of transcription show how precious the Jews had regarded the inspired words of God, and how precise their copying of these inspired words must have been. Such strict practices in copying “give us strong encouragement to believe that we have the real Old Testament, *the same one* which our Lord had and which was originally given by inspiration of God.”¹⁰

The present confusion in identifying the Hebrew Scriptures is not with the traditional copies which God has kept pure without corruption by His special providence, but with the printed editions of the Hebrew Text which comes in two types: (1) the Hebrew Masoretic Text—Ben Chayyim (1524-25), and (2) the Biblia Hebraica—Kittel (1937) and Stuttgart (1967/77).

The Ben Chayyim Text is the faithful text that follows the traditional and providentially preserved manuscripts. This Hebrew Text underlying the KJV is totally infallible and inerrant. The Ben Chayyim Text is published today by the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS). TBS considers the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text to be the definitive Hebrew Text for today.¹¹

The Kittel and Stuttgart texts, on the other hand, display a critical apparatus that is filled with conjectural emendations that come from modern scholarship. These modern critical texts are the texts that underlie the NASV, NIV, and NKJV. The Kittel and Stuttgart texts contain 20,000-30,000 suggested corrections or changes to the OT Scriptures.¹² Many of these recommended corrections are unwarranted because they come from the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), or the Samaritan Pentateuch which trace their origins to heretical sects (eg, Essenes and Samaritans, cf John 4:22), and dubious translations like the Septuagint (LXX).¹³ The textual-critical apparatuses found in these critical texts cause the Bible student to doubt God’s Word. They cause him to question whether he has indeed all the words of Scripture and whether the words of Scripture can be trusted as being altogether true—the very words of God—verbally inspired and preserved (Matt 5:18)? From personal experience, having practised the textual-critical methods of modern scholarship

at both Bible College and Seminary levels, I can testify that such critical devices in the modern texts not only cast doubt on God’s Word, but also distract from a reverent and faithful study to a prideful and judgmental study of the Holy Scriptures.

In light of the Biblical doctrine of the divine, verbal and plenary preservation of the Scriptures, Bible-believing students would do well to stick to the providentially preserved line of traditional Hebrew manuscripts and text which is the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text—the Text that underlies the time-tested and time-honoured KJV—over against the new and critical line of modernistic texts that are behind all the modern English versions.

B. New Testament Text

The NT Scriptures were written by the Apostles of Jesus Christ under divine inspiration (2 Tim 3:16). The NT Scriptures were then committed to the care of the NT Church comprising born again believers who are loyal to both the Living Word and the Written Word. Just like the OT Scripture, the Lord has also promised to preserve the inspired Greek words of the NT Scripture. Three times Jesus said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33).

The NT autographs in time became apographs for they were copied and circulated to all the NT churches for their meditation, application and edification. As the Church grew, the copies multiplied. There are over 5000 extant NT copies today. These 5000 plus manuscripts are classified under two categories: Byzantine and Alexandrian.¹⁴

	TWO STREAMS OF TEXTS AND VERSIONS	
	Preserved Byzantine/Majority/Received Text	Perverted Alexandrian/Minority/W H Text
Text	Every word preserved	Many words excised
Thrust	Spirit of the 16 th Century Reformation	Spirit of 19 th and 20 th Century Modernism
Translators	Martyrs and Reformers—Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, and KJV men	Money-Makers, Liberals, Ecumenists, and Neo-Evangelicals
Technique	Verbal Equivalence—word for word translation	Dynamic Equivalence—thought for thought interpretation
Translation	Protestant Reformation Bible—the AV/KJV is the best. Vital doctrines fully preserved	Ecumenical and Modern Versions. Vital doctrines (virgin birth, deity of Christ, blood of Christ, Trinity, ecclesiastical separation) attacked

The Byzantine manuscripts come from the region of Byzantium or Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern or Greek Empire (AD 295-1453). The majority of the 5000 plus extant NT copies are Byzantine manuscripts. These manuscripts were faithfully copied and continuously used by the Church. They reflect uniform readings. Although there were minor variations, these were easily rectified by a simple comparison of the manuscripts.¹⁵ The Lord has certainly kept these manuscripts pure and uncorrupted throughout the centuries. The Church recognised them to be the inspired and preserved manuscripts, and received them as the Holy Scriptures. These handwritten copies were finally put into print in the 15th century upon the invention of the printing press. During the Protestant Reformation, the Lord specially raised up Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza to prepare the Byzantine manuscripts for print. The printed Greek text eventually became known as the Textus Receptus—the Text received by all. This is the Greek text that underlies the KJV and all the other Reformation translations.¹⁶

The Alexandrian manuscripts come from Alexandria, Egypt. These manuscripts are in the minority, and they reveal a corrupt hand.¹⁷ The most notorious of these minority manuscripts are the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus. The Codex Sinaiticus was discovered by Tischendorf in St Catherine's monastery in Egypt in 1844 while the Codex Vaticanus was kept in the Vatican library and found in 1481. Both these manuscripts were dated to about 350 AD. Since they were such old manuscripts, and regarded by Westcott and Hort to be closest to the autographs, they were hailed as the best manuscripts in existence. Westcott and Hort then proceeded to revise the Textus Receptus based on their textual-critical theory that the older, harder, and shorter readings of the Alexandrian manuscripts were better. In 1881, they published their new but mutilated text which changed the traditional Received Text in nearly 10,000 places.¹⁸

God did not allow such an attack on His preserved words to go unchallenged. He raised up a most worthy scholar in Dean Burgon to expose the corruptions of the Alexandrian manuscripts on which Westcott and Hort built their revised Greek Text. Burgon, by a diligent study of the primary sources and a careful investigation of the facts, rightly judged the Alexandrian manuscripts to be among the

most scandalously corrupt copies extant: exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of Truth, which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.¹⁹

Since 1881, the corrupt Westcott-Hort text has unfortunately become the standard text for modern translations of the Bible.²⁰ Are the Alexandrian manuscripts so reliable? The Alexandrian manuscripts and the Westcott-Hort text that underlie the modern versions of the English Bible are today being questioned by their very editors—Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland—who wrote, “In the twentieth century the papyri have eroded the dominance of the uncials, and a group of minuscules presently under study promises to diminish it further.”²¹ One such papyrus is the Magdalen GR17 or “Jesus Papyrus” which consists of three fragments containing Matthew 26:7-8, 26:10, 14, 15, 22, 23, 31, 32, 33. It is a very early, first century (AD 60) manuscript. The last four words of Matthew 26:22 (*legein auto hekastos auton*) in the GR17 agree with the Textus Receptus over against the Westcott-Hort and modern critical texts (*legein auto heis hekastos*).²² Another evidence of the antiquity and authenticity of the Textus Receptus comes from the Chester Beatty Papyri which are early 3rd century fragments and they agree with the Traditional or Byzantine Text. Papyrus p75 contains the ascension of Christ (Luke 24:51) which was omitted in the Westcott-Hort Text and modern versions like the NASV.²³ Now, the 26th edition of the critical text of Nestle and Aland has put the ascension verse back into the original text bringing it to conformity with the inspired and preserved Textus Receptus underlying the KJV.²⁴ All such findings confirm Dean Burgon's observation all along—the Alexandrian/Minority/Westcott-Hort texts are the heretically corrupted texts, but the Byzantine/Majority/Received texts are the divinely preserved texts.²⁵

It is tragic that in many Bible Colleges and Seminaries today, the genealogy of the NT apographs follows the textual-critical paradigm invented by Westcott and Hort who had introduced an imaginative transmission history of the NT Text that is vastly different from the Biblical truth of VPP that is taught by the Author of the Scriptures Himself in His forever infallible and inerrant Word (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, John 10:35, 1 Pet 1:23-25). Far Eastern Bible College (FEB), despite fierce local and foreign opposition to her VPP belief, remains steadfast in its defence of God's forever infallible and inerrant

Word. The 100% inspired Word of God are in the 100% preserved words of the Hebrew Masoretic Text (Ben Chayyim), and the Greek Textus Receptus (Stephanus, Beza, Scrivener) underlying the time-tested and time-honoured King James or Authorised Version.²⁶

IV. WORDS

The words of the Scriptures are important (Deut 8:3, Matt 4:4, Luke 4:4). God uses His words to communicate His Truth so that we might know who and what He is and how we might be saved through Him. The Bible clearly tells us that it is God's written words (*pasa graphē*—"All Scripture") that are inspired (2 Tim 3:16), and from these inspired words come all the doctrines that are sufficient and profitable for the spiritual growth and maturity of the believer (2 Tim 3:17). The Bible also clearly says that God Himself will preserve all His inspired words to the jot and tittle without the loss of any word, letter or syllable (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).

A. Old Testament Words

Now if we have the inspired, infallible and inerrant words of God today preserved in the traditional and Reformation Scriptures, then how do we explain the differences or discrepancies found in the Bible especially those found in 1 Samuel 13:1, 2 Chronicles 22:2, and many other places. Can these be due to "scribal errors"?

Since God has preserved His inspired words to the last iota and no words are lost but all kept pure and intact in the original language Scriptures, we must categorically deny that our Bible contains any mistake or error (scribal or otherwise). But it is sad that certain evangelicals and fundamentalists would rather choose to deny the present infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures by considering the "discrepancies" found in 1 Samuel 13:1 and 2 Chronicles 22:2 and other like passages to be *actual* instead of *apparent* discrepancies, and calling them "scribal errors."

A denial of the verbal preservation of the Scriptures will invariably lead one to believe that some words of God have been lost and remain lost leading to a "scribal error" view of the OT Scriptures. For instance, W Edward Glenny denies that God has perfectly preserved His Word so that no words have been lost. He says, "The evidence from the OT text suggests that such is not the case. *We might have lost a few words ...*"²⁷ Based on his "lost words" view of the Bible, he was quick to point out "obvious discrepancies" in the OT like 2 Chronicles 22:2. He pontificates,

In 1 Chronicles 8:26 [sic], the KJV states that Ahaziah was twenty-two when he began to reign; the parallel in 2 Chronicles 22:2 says that he began to reign at the age of forty-two. ... These *obvious discrepancies* in the KJV and the Hebrew manuscripts on which it is based show that *none of them perfectly preserved the inspired autograph*.²⁸

Now, know that 2 Chronicles 22:2 reads "forty-two" in the KJV and RSV. A number of the modern versions like the NASV, NIV, and ESV read "twenty-two" instead. So which is the original, inspired reading: "forty-two" (in KJV, and RSV), or "twenty-two" (in NASV, NIV, and ESV)? In making such a textual decision, we must have a perfect standard, and that infallible and inerrant standard is the inspired and preserved Hebrew Scripture, and not any translation ancient or modern.

It is significant to note that every single Hebrew manuscript reads "forty-two" (*arebba'im wushetha'im*) in 2 Chronicles 22:2. There is no evidence of lost words—every word to

the letter is preserved, and reads precisely as “forty-two” as accurately translated in the KJV and RSV. If every Hebrew manuscript reads “forty-two” in 2 Chronicles 22:2, then on what basis do the NASV, NIV, and ESV change it to “twenty-two”? They change “forty-two” to “twenty-two” on the basis of the Septuagint (LXX) which is a Greek version of the Hebrew Scripture just like the NIV is an English version of it. In other words, they use a version or translation to correct the original Hebrew text! Should not it be the other way round?

Why do they do this? They do this because of their fallacious assumption that (1) God did not preserve His words perfectly, (2) lost words exist in the Hebrew text, and (3) 2 Chronicles 22:2 is an “obvious” discrepancy (cf 2 Kgs 8:26). Thus, Glennly and all such non-VPPists are quick to use a fallible translation (eg, LXX) to correct the infallible Hebrew Text! This is no different from someone using the NIV today to correct any part of the Hebrew Text according to his whim and fancy! But Glennly calls it “conjectural emendation” which sounds scholarly but colloquially it means—“*Suka* only, change!” Can a translation be more inspired than or superior to the original language text? Can a translation or version (whatever the language) be used to correct the Hebrew? Glennly’s method of explaining such “obvious discrepancies” in the Bible is troubling for it displays (1) a sceptical attitude towards the numerical integrity of God’s Word, (2) a critical readiness to deny the present inerrancy of Scripture in historical details, and (3) a lackadaisical approach towards solving difficulties in the Bible by conveniently dismissing such difficulties as “scribal errors.”

A godly approach is one that presupposes the present infallibility and inerrancy of God’s Word not only when it speaks on salvation, but also when it speaks on history, geography or science. “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom 3:4). Such a godly approach to difficult passages is seen in Robert J Sargent who, by comparing (not correcting) Scripture with Scripture, offered two possible solutions to the so-called “problem” or “error” in 2 Chronicles 22:2. Sargent suggested that “forty-two” could be either (1) Ahaziah’s years counted from the beginning of the dynasty founded by Omri, or (2) the year in which Ahaziah was actually seated as king though anointed as one at “twenty-two” (2 Kgs 8:26).²⁹ Whatever the answer may be, the truth and fact is: the inspired and preserved Hebrew reading in 2 Chronicles 22:2 is “forty-two” and not “twenty-two,” and no man has the right to change or correct God’s Word by “conjectural emendation,” taking heed to the serious warning not to add to or subtract from the Holy Scriptures (Rev 22:18-19).

Now, let us look at the next text which is 1 Samuel 13:1 which the KJV translates as, “Saul reigned one year.” But the other versions read quite differently. The NASV has, “Saul was *forty* years old when he began to reign;” the NIV has, “Saul was *thirty* years old when he became king;” and the RSV has, “Saul was ... years old when he began to reign.” Which of the above is correct? The only way whereby we can ascertain the correct reading is to go to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible since day one reads *Ben-shanah Shaoul*, literally, “A son of a year (was) Saul,” or idiomatically, “Saul was a year old.”

Now, the difficulty is: How could Saul be only a year old when he began to reign? Scholars and translators who do not believe in the perfect preservation of the Scriptures say that this is an actual discrepancy in the Hebrew Text which they attribute to a “scribal error.” This is why Michael Harding in a mistitled book—*God’s Word in Our Hands*—wrote,

[I]n 1 Samuel 13:1-2 the Masoretic Text states that Saul was one year of age (*ben-shanah*—literally “son of a year”) ... Some ancient Greek manuscripts ... read

“thirty years” instead of “one year,” ... On account of my theological conviction regarding the inerrancy of the autographa, I believe the original Hebrew text also reads “thirty,” even though *we do not currently possess a Hebrew manuscript with that reading.*³⁰

Harding and those like him fail to apply the logic of faith to the promise of God that He will preserve and has preserved every iota of His inspired words. This leads them to conclude that a word is lost and 2 Chronicles 22:2 contains a “scribal error” even when there is no such error to begin with. They change the text when the text needs no changing. They replace divine words with human words. Instead of attributing error to the translation (LXX, NASV, NIV, RSV), they rather fault the inspired and preserved Hebrew Text and treat it as an actual discrepancy even when there is absolutely none. This has caused many Bible believers to doubt God’s Word: Do we really have God’s infallible and inerrant Word in our hands? Many are indeed stumbled by such allegations of error in the Bible, and are questioning whether they can really trust the Scriptures at all if there is no such thing as a complete and perfect Word of God today.

It must be categorically stated that there is no error at all in the Hebrew Text and no mistake also in the KJV which translated 1 Samuel 13:1 accurately. So how do we explain 1 Samuel 13:1? A faithful explanation is offered by Matthew Poole who wrote,

[Saul] had now reigned one year, from his first election at Mizpeh, in which time these things were done, which are recorded in chap. xi., xii., to wit, peaceably, or righteously. Compare 2 Sam. ii.10.³¹

In other words, the year of Saul was calculated not from the time of his birth but from his *appointment as king*; “Saul was a year old *into his reign.*” This meaning is supported by the Geneva Bible which reads, “*Saul now had beene King one yeere.*” Rest assured, there is no mistake in the Hebrew Text and in the KJV here. God has indeed inspired and preserved His OT words perfectly so that we might have an infallible, inerrant OT Bible in our hands today.

B. New Testament Words

As much as the Lord has preserved His inspired OT words (Matt 5:18), so also has He preserved His inspired NT words (Matt 24:35). Where are His words? The divinely preserved words of God today are found in the pure and preserved Greek Textus Receptus underlying the KJV, and not in the corrupt and heretical Westcott-Hort Greek Text behind the modern versions which not only cast doubts on the authenticity of certain Biblical passages like the last 12 verses of Mark (Mark 16:9-20), and the *pericope de adultera* (John 7:53-8:11), but also scissored out the following verses of Scripture in whole or in part:

SCISSION AND CORRUPTION IN THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXT AND THE MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS		
Entire Verses Deleted		
Matt	17:21	Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
	18:11	For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.
	23:14	Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.
Mark	7:16	If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
	9:44	Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.
	9:46	Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

	11:26	But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.
	15:28	And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.
Luke	17:36	Two <i>men</i> shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.
	23:17	(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)
John	5:4	For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.
Acts	8:37	And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
	15:34	Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.
	24:7	But the chief captain Lysias came <i>upon us</i> , and with great violence took <i>him</i> away out of our hands.
	28:29	And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.
Rom	16:24	The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ <i>be</i> with you all. Amen.
Portions of Verses Deleted or Changed		
Matt	5:22	without a cause
	5:27	by them of old time
	6:13	For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen
	9:35	among the people
	10:3	Lebbaeus, whose surname was
	10:8	raise the dead
	12:35,	of the heart
	13:51	Jesus saith unto them
	15:8	draweth nigh unto me with their mouth
	18:29	at his feet
	19:20	from my youth
	20:7	and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive
	20:16	For many be called, but few chosen
	20:22	and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with
	20:23	and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with
	22:13	take him away, and
	23:3	observe
	25:13	wherein the Son of Man cometh
26:60	false witnesses	
27:35	that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots	
Mark	1:2	Isaiah the prophet
	1:14	of the kingdom
	2:17	to repentance
	3:5	whole as the other
	3:15	to heal sicknesses and
	4:4	of the air

	6:11	Verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city
	6:36	bread, for they have nothing to eat
	7:2	they found fault
	9:29	and fasting
	9:45	into the fire that never shall be quenched
	9:49	and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt
	10:24	for them that trust in riches
	11:10	in the name of the Lord
	12:4	and at him they cast stones
	12:30	This is the first commandment
	12:33	with all the soul
	13:14	spoken of by Daniel the prophet
	14:19	And another said, Is it I?
	14:27	because of me this night
	14:70	and thy speech agreeth thereto
Luke	1:28	blessed art thou among women
	1:29	when she saw him
	1:78	hath visited
	4:4	but by every word of God
	4:8	Get thee behind me, Satan
	4:18	to heal the brokenhearted
	4:41	Christ
	5:38	and both are preserved
	6:10	whole as the other
	6:45	treasure of his heart
	7:10	that had been sick
	7:31	And the Lord said
	8:45	and they that were with him
	8:45	and sayest thou, Who touched me?
	8:54	and he put them all out
	9:54	even as Elias did
	9:55	and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of
	9:56	For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them
	10:35	when he departed
	11:2	Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth
	11:4	but deliver us from evil
	11:11	bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask
	11:29	the prophet
	11:44	scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites
	11:54	that they might accuse him
	17:3	against thee
	17:9	him? I trow not
	19:5	and saw him
	20:23	Why tempt ye me?
	20:30	took her to wife, and he died childless

	22:30	in my kingdom
	22:31	And the Lord said
	22:64	struck him on the face and
	22:68	me, nor let me go
	23:23	and of the chief priests
	23:38	written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew
	24:1	and certain others with them
	24:42	and of an honeycomb
John	3:13	which is in heaven
	3:15	not perish, but
	4:42	the Christ
	5:3	waiting for the moving of the water
	5:16	and sought to slay him
	6:11	to the disciples, and the disciples
	6:22	whereinto his disciples were entered
	6:47	on me
	8:9	being convicted by their own conscience
	8:10	and saw none but the woman
	8:59	through the midst of them, and so passed by
	9:11	the pool of
	10:26	as I said unto you
	11:41	from the place where the dead was laid
	12:1	which had been dead
	17:12	in the world
19:16	and led him away	
Acts	2:23	ye have taken
	7:30	of the Lord
	7:37	him shall ye hear
	9:5	it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks
	10:6	he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do
	10:21	which were sent unto him from Cornelius
	10:32	who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee
	15:24	Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law
	17:5	which believed not
	18:21	I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem
	21:8	that were of Paul's company
	21:25	that they observe no such thing, save only
	22:9	and were afraid
	22:20	unto his death
	24:6	and would have judged according to our law
	24:8	commanding his accusers to come unto thee
	24:15	of the dead
24:26	that he might loose him	
Rom	1:16	of Christ
	3:22	and upon all
	8:1	who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit
	8:26	for us
	9:31	of righteousness

	9:32	of the law
	10:15	preach the gospel of peace
	11:6	But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work
	14:6	and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks
	14:21	or is offended, or is made weak
	15:24	I will come to you
	15:29	of the gospel
1 Cor	5:7	for us
	6:20	and in your spirit, which are God's
	9:18	of Christ
	10:23	for me
	10:28	for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof
	11:24	Take, eat
	11:29	Unworthily
	15:47	the Lord
2 Cor	8:4	that we would receive
	12:11	in glorying
	13:2	I write
Gal	3:1	that ye should not obey the truth
	3:17	in Christ
	4:7	through Christ
Eph	3:9	by Jesus Christ
	3:14	of our Lord Jesus Christ
	4:17	other
	5:30.	of his flesh, and of his bones
Phil	3:16	rule, let us mind the same things
Col	1:2	and the Lord Jesus Christ
	1:14	through his blood
	2:2	and of the Father and
	2:11	of the sins
1 Thess	1:1	from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
2 Thess	2:4	as God
1 Tim	2:7	in Christ
	3:3	not greedy of filthy lucre
	3:16	"who" instead of "God"
	4:12	in spirit
	5:4	good and
	5:16	man or
	6:5	from such withdraw thyself
	6:7	and it is certain
2 Tim	1:11	of the Gentiles
Heb	1:3	by himself
	2:7	and didst set him over the works of thy hands
	3:6	firm unto the end
	8:12	and their sins

	10:9	O God
	10:30	saith the Lord
	11:11	was delivered of a child
	11:13	were persuaded of them
	12:20	or thrust through with a dart
Jas	4:4	adulterers and
1 Pet	1:22	through the Spirit
	4:1	for us
	4:14	on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified
1 John	2:7	from the beginning
	4:3	Christ is come in the flesh
	5:7	in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one
	5:13	and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God
Rev	1:8	the beginning and the ending
	1:11	I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and
	1:11	which are in Asia
	5:14	him that liveth for ever and ever
	11:1	and the angel stood
	11:17	and art to come
	14:12	here are they
	15:2	over his mark
	16:5	O Lord
	16:7	another out of
	16:14	of the earth and
	19:1	the Lord
	21:24	of them which are saved

All the above words are the words God has purely preserved and kept intact in the Greek Textus Receptus on which the KJV is based, but are doubted and deleted in the modern English versions which reflect the corruptions of the Westcott-Hort Text. A total of 2886 words (equivalent to 1-2 Peter) have been scissored out of the KJV by the modern versions.³² Which Bible is true—the “cut up” Bible that is edited by modernists and neo-evangelicals, and based on heretical and corrupt manuscripts, or the “kept pure” Bible that is sourced in the Protestant Reformation and based on divinely preserved and uncorrupted manuscripts? If the Holy Spirit indwells you and grants you discernment, the choice is obvious.

V. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this paper is as follows:

- (1) The Judeo-Christian Canon was never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are the 66 books of the Bible—39 in the OT, and 27 in the NT, no more and no less, fixed and firm, the Apocrypha and Gnostic Gospels having no part whatsoever.
- (2) The OT and NT Texts were never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the OT, and the Greek

Textus Receptus of the NT, and not the critical and corrupt texts of Kittel/Stuttgart, and Westcott-Hort.

- (3) The perfectly inspired words of the Hebrew/Aramaic OT and Greek NT were never lost and found, but always preserved and identified, and they are all the words of the Hebrew Masoretic Text (Ben Chayyim) and the Greek Textus Receptus (Stephanus, Beza, Scrivener) on which the KJV—the Reformation Bible—is based, and not the interpretive or speculative words of any version ancient or modern.

In these end-times, may God’s Church—“the pillar and ground of the truth”—return to the Reformed Bibliology of 16th Century Protestantism, and reject the Deformed Babelology of 20th Century Postmodernism, Neo-Evangelicalism, and Neo-Fundamentalism.

The Written Foundation of our Judeo-Christian Faith is sure and secure for “the Word of our God shall stand forever” (Isa 40:8). Amen!

NOTES

¹ Jeffrey Khoo, “Inspiration, Preservation, and Translations,” a paper presented to the Truth Bible-Presbyterian Church Adults’ Sunday School, March 5, 2006.

² For instance, Princeton Seminary’s Bruce Metzger, in his textbook on New Testament textual criticism entitled, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), discusses the New Testament text in terms of “Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration,” presuming that there is no such thing as a divinely preserved text that is without corruption, and that the restoration of the text is entirely in the hands of textual scholars and their universities, and not at all in God and His Church.

³ Jeffrey Khoo, “Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?” *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19. See also Theodore P Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia: Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 1997).

⁴ The word “apocrypha” comes from the Greek *kryptein* (“to hide”) and speaks of the spurious nature of these 14 books: (1) 1 Esdras, (2) 2 Esdras, (3) Tobit, (4) Judith, (5) Rest of the Chapters of Esther, (6) Wisdom of Solomon, (7) Ecclesiasticus, (8) Baruch, (9) Song of the Three Holy Children, (10) History of Susanna, (11) Bel and the Dragon, (12) Prayer of Manasseh, (13) 1 Maccabees, (14) 2 Maccabees.

⁵ Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 254. See “The Gnostic Society Library” (www.gnosis.org/library.html).

⁶ Ben Witherington III, “Why the ‘Lost Gospels’ Lost Out,” *Christianity Today* (June 2004): 28-32.

⁷ See J W Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, 1998 reprint). On page 13, Burgon wrote, “certain manuscripts ... particularly copies of a Version ... these do, to the present hour, bear traces incontestably of ancient mischief.”

⁸ See *Lost Books of the Bible Being All the Gospels, Epistles, and Other Pieces Now Extant Attributed in the First Four Centuries to Jesus Christ, His Apostles and Their Companions Not Included, by its Compilers, in the Authorized New Testament; and, the Recently Discovered Syriac Mss. of Pilate’s Letters to Tiberius, etc.* (np: Alpha House, 1926).

⁹ H S Miller, *General Biblical Introduction* (Houghton: Word Bearer, 1947), 184-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 185.

¹¹ Trinitarian Bible Society, “Statement of Doctrine of Holy Scripture,” *Quarterly Record* (April-June 2005): 1-15.

¹² See D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority*, 2nd ed (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1996), 20-3.

¹³ J Daniel Hays in his paper, “Reconsidering the Height of Goliath,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 701-14, questioned the height of Goliath (1 Sam 17:4) in the traditional and received Masoretic Text, calling “six cubits and a span” (ie, 9 feet, 9 inches) a “scribal error.” He argued in favour of “four cubits and a span” (ie, 6 feet, 9 inches) as found in the DSS (4QSam), LXX, and Codex Vaticanus. Thus Goliath was not that extraordinarily tall after all, and the Jews and the Christians have been reading the wrong height of Goliath all these centuries and millennia. Such a criticism of the Bible is typical of scholars who are either ignorant or dismissive of the Biblical doctrine of VPP.

¹⁴ Adapted from S H Tow, *Beyond Versions* (Singapore: King James Productions, 1998), 121.

¹⁵ For a defence of the Byzantine Text, see Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Winnipeg: Premier, 1976); and Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). Dr Van Bruggen is Professor of NT at the

Theological College of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (Broederweg, Kampen), and Dr Sturz was Professor of Greek at BIOLA (Bible Institute of Los Angeles). His book was his ThD dissertation at Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, USA.

¹⁶ For a defence of the Traditional or Received Text, see J W Burgon, *Revision Revised* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, reprint 2000); E F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984); and Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*.

¹⁷ For the intentional corruptions of God's Word found in the Alexandrian manuscripts, see J W Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text* (Collingswood: Dean Burgon Society, reprint 1998).

¹⁸ Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, xii.

¹⁹ Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 16.

²⁰ For a critique of modern versions based on the Westcott-Hort Text, see Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: FEBC Press, 2001), 69-100.

²¹ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 102.

²² See Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew D'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996).

²³ See Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 91.

²⁴ Erwin Nestle, Barbara and Kurt Aland, eds, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), 246. See Theodore Letis, "The Strange About-Face of the New American Standard Version," Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, January 9, 2002, in www.holywordcafe.com/bible, accessed on February 11, 2006.

²⁵ See chart on the two streams of NT Greek Texts in Jeffrey Khoo, *KJV: Questions and Answers* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature, 2003), 9.

²⁶ See Jeffrey Khoo, "A Plea for a Perfect Bible," *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003): 1-15.

²⁷ Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), 121 (emphasis mine). See my critique of this book, "The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or "Yea Hath God Said?" *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 114-5 (italics mine).

²⁹ Robert J Sargent, "A Scribal Error in 2 Chronicles 22:2? No!," *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 86-92. See also Chester Kulus, *Those So-Called Errors: Debunking the Liberal, New Evangelical, and Fundamentalist Myth that You Should Not Hear, Receive, and Believe All the Numbers of Scripture* (Newington: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2003), 367-8.

³⁰ James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald, 2003), 361 (italics mine). See my critique of this book, "Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation," *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 82-97.

³¹ Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, (Mclean: MacDonald, nd), 1:542. See also Kulus, *Those So-Called Errors*, 222-5.

³² Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles—the Dark Secret* (Los Osos: Fundamental Evangelistic Association, nd), 25.