

CHAPTER THREE

PRESERVATION

By

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“While the Bible clearly teaches the ultimate indestructibility of the verbal revelation of God (Matt 24:35; 1 Pet 1:25), it does not tell how and where the written manuscript lineage of that Word is preserved. We believe that God has providentially preserved His word in the many manuscripts, fragments, versions, translations, and copies of the Scriptures that are available, and **that by diligent study, comparison, and correlation, the original text (words) can be ascertained** (Emphasis added).”¹

One wonders what manipulation those who make statements like that above do with these verses.

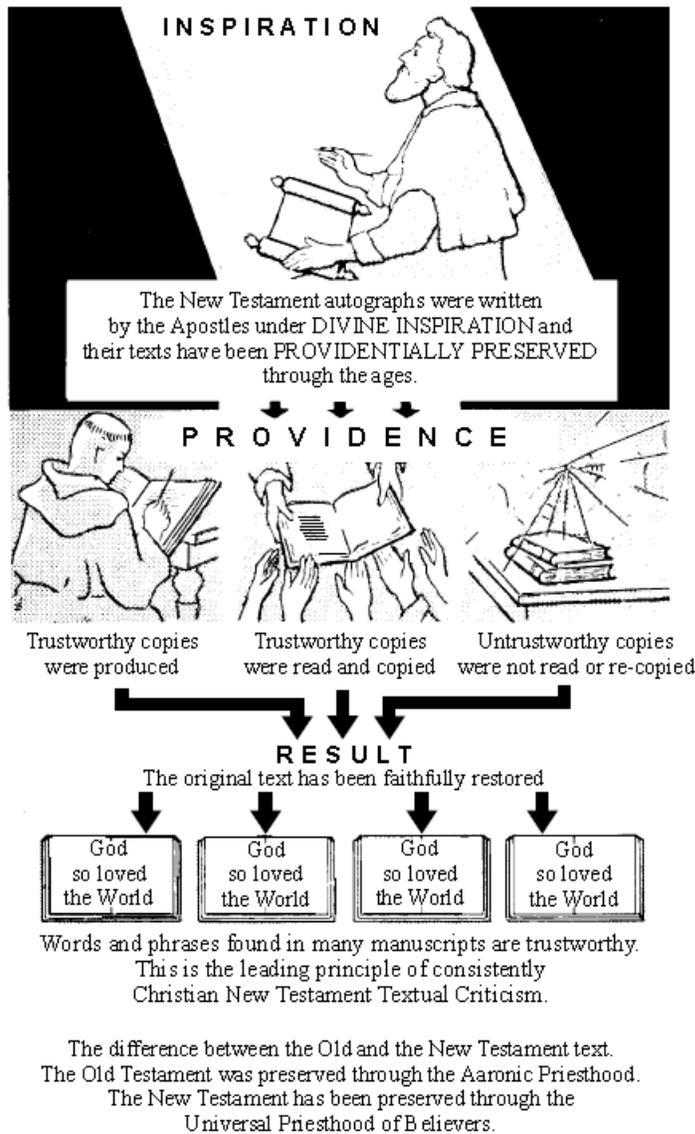
- Psalm 12:6, 7 “*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*”
- Psalm 119:89 “*forever ... thy word is settled in heaven*”
- Psalm 119:160 “*every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever*”
- Psalm 119:152 “*thy testimonies ... thou hast founded them forever*”
- Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.*
- Matthew 5:18 “*one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass*”
- Matthew 24:35 “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*”
- Mark 13:31 “*Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*”
- John 10: 35 “*The scripture cannot be broken.*”
- 1 Peter 1:23 “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*”
- I Peter 1:25 “*But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*”

¹ William W. Combs, THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE, *DBSJ* 5 (Fall 2000): 3–44, p. 11, pdf.

- Revelation 1:3 “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear *the words* of this prophecy, and *keep those things which are written therein...*”

Were the Words of God ever lost and if so can they ever be recovered? Has the Lord provided the present day believer a copy of His original Words and have those Words been brought across accurately into an English Bible? Thus far this paper has dealt with the INSPIRATION and the CORRUPTION that occurred soon after the Scriptures were completed. However, in spite of some men’s intentional corrupting of God’s Word/s God was still in control. The following is an illustration of God’s PRESERVATION of His INSPIRED Word/s.

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(E F Hills, Believing Bible Study, 11.

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² Jeffrey Khoo, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, Far Eastern Bible College Press, page 26

The original manuscripts were never lost but they were worn out through numerous copying so they could be shared among His churches. These copies were copied and those copies were copied. So the question is; did God by His providence preserve His Words via those copies produced from those original God breathed out Words? My answer is, yes, He did. But some will ask the question, where are those Words today? The Baptist Bulletin of June, 2011 says “none of these manuscripts exists today. The Greek and Hebrew manuscripts that we have are various copies produced by scribes through the ages.”³

Yes, that is true and with the true copies there were also corrupt copies. Dr. Floyd Jones wrote in WHICH VERSION IS THE BIBLE that “Corruption of the New Testament text had begun by the time of Paul. The following was preserved for us by the Holy Spirit through Paul in II Corinthians 2:17: “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God...”

It is so very true that Bible corruption, beginning in the Garden of Eden, was out of control as early as the time of Paul. In other words, when the original apostles were here, there were already problems over the purity of the Bible text. This is confirmed and enlarged upon in II Corinthians 4:2: “But we (implied, vs 1) have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully...”⁴

So from the first century on there has been the pure original Words of God handed down in copy after copy and then there were also the corrupt words. The churches knew which were the pure Words of God and consistently used them. Howbeit the corrupters were not satisfied so in the 1800’s two men (Westcott and Hort) devised a system by which they categorized these copies into families or Text-Types. Westcott and Hort also collaborated with others and finally published what is known as the Critical Greek text.

This labeling of the Text – Types by Westcott and Hort puts it thusly as “The **Majority Text** is a group of Greek New Testament manuscripts also described as **Byzantine Text-type**. These manuscripts form the basis for the **Textus Receptus**, a group of printed editions of the Greek New Testament text used by translators of the KJV and NKJV. Many KJV advocates believe the Textus Receptus is the best available Greek text. The **Alexandrian Text-type** is a group of Greek New Testament manuscripts that are older than the Majority Text, dating as early as the second or third century after Christ. Other groups of manuscripts are known as **Caesarean Text-type** and **Western Text-type**.”⁵

Are all of these Text-types the Words of God? Some say “While scholars continue to discuss the merits of various Greek manuscripts, believers can be assured that their English Bible is an accurate translation.

³ <http://baptistbulletin.org/?p=16799>

⁴ FLOYD NOLEN JONES, WHICH VERSION IS THE BIBLE, pdf., pp. 13, 14.

⁵ <http://baptistbulletin.org/?p=16799>

We believe our English translations are the Word of God.”⁶

One might ask then that if there are different families or Text – Types there must be differences in the translations produced from them. **WE MUST REMEMBER THAT IF THEY ARE DIFFERENT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME!**

Well, these differences are not a worry to some, they say “...God verbally inspired the original manuscripts of Scripture without error and without omission, but...He has preserved His Word through manuscripts that have some differences. I do not always know which reading reflects the original wording of a passage, but I do know that all of these readings reflect doctrine taught somewhere in the Bible and that none of these differences change what God's Word teaches. I can trust the Bible in my hands to be the Word of God.”⁷ Note the word SOMEWHERE! This is what I call the middle of the road view of preservation. Another who takes this middle of the road outlook states it this way saying “...the Scriptures have been preserved in the totality of the biblical manuscripts (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)”.⁸

But as Daniel Wallace says “Thus the differences between the New Testament of the King James Version, for example, and that of the New American Standard Version are not just differences in the English; there are also differences in the Greek text behind the English—in fact, over 5,000 differences!”⁹ Now that is a lot of differences and the text underlying the ASV is in constant flux! For instance the Greek text my Greek professor used was the UBS Greek New Testament 2nd Edition. The UBS is now on its 4th revised edition. According to the UBS web site this 4th edition is “is identical with that of the 26th and 27th editions of *Novum Testamentum Graece* by Nestle Aland except for some minor punctuation differences.”¹⁰ This critical text is very fluid to say the least or it would not be forever changing. So will these people who have swallowed and followed the thinking of Westcott and Hort ever find the Words of God? Probably not!

However, the DBS, of which I am a member, gives one confidence in stating that “We believe that the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version (as found in ‘The Greek Text Underlying The

⁶ <http://baptistbulletin.org/?p=16799>

⁷ <http://www.faith.edu/component/preachit/message/the-preservation-of-scripture/read?Itemid=0>

⁸ William W. Combs, THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE, *DBSJ* 5 (Fall 2000): 3–44, pdf, page 6.

⁹ Daniel B. Wallace, INSPIRATION, PRESERVATION, AND NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM, p. 1, pdf.

¹⁰ http://www.ubs-translations.org/cat/biblical_texts/greek_scriptures_and_reference/new_testament/

English Authorized Version of 1611’).”¹¹ Therefore there is only one Greek Text that can be said to be the Word of God and that is the Text underlying the King James Bible!

Furthermore the DBS states that as a society it believes “...that the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the WORD OF GOD!’ while at the same time realizing that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.”¹²

On the Internet there is <http://kingjamesbiblesummit.org/> . Here one will find the following questions:

Why do you use the King James Bible?

Please indicate below which statement most accurately describes your position on the King James.

- It's Comfortable** -- I use it because that's what I am comfortable with (eg., mom and dad used it; the person who led me to the Lord used it; my pastor uses it; it's easier to memorize, etc.)
- Textus Receptus** -- I use it because it's the best translation available from the textus receptus, and the textus receptus is the best Greek manuscript family available. The King James may contain errors in translation.
- Preserved [Word](#)** -- I use it because it is the accurate, preserved Word of God for the English-speaking world. Its words are not inspired, or God-breathed, but it is an accurate translation and most or all errors have been worked out of it over the years since 1611.
- Preserved & Inspired Word** -- I use it because it is the preserved, inspired Word of God for the English-speaking world. It is error-free and

¹¹ http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm

¹² http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm

its words are of divine origin. God moved the minds and hands of the translators just as He did the authors of the original manuscripts, in order to ensure that His Word was accurately preserved. The printing errors and spelling standardization that have been fixed since 1611 do not negate its inspiration.

- More accurate than the Greek** -- I use it because it is the Word of God. It's words are divinely inspired and supersede the Greek, so that we can find additional, new revelation in the English wording of the King James that does not exist in the Greek.

- Other:**

The poll results are found at <http://kingjamesbiblesummit.org/PollResults.php> and they were:

“3 % (19 votes) It's Comfortable -- I use it because that's what I am comfortable with (eg., mom and dad used it; the person who led me to the Lord used it; my pastor uses it; it's easier to memorize, etc.)

5 % (28 votes) Textus Receptus -- I use it because it's the best translation available from the textus receptus, and the textus receptus is the best Greek manuscript family available. The King James may contain errors in translation.

10 % (58 votes) Preserved Word -- I use it because it is the accurate, preserved Word of God for the English-speaking world. Its words are not inspired, or God-breathed, but it is an accurate translation and most or all errors have been worked out of it over the years since 1611.

56 % (311 votes) Preserved & Inspired Word -- I use it because it is the preserved, inspired Word of God for the English-speaking world. It is error-free and its words are of divine origin. God moved the minds and hands of the translators just as He did the authors of the original manuscripts, in order to ensure that His Word was accurately preserved. The printing errors and spelling standardization that have been fixed since 1611 do not negate its inspiration.

5 % (27 votes) More accurate than the Greek -- I use it because it is the Word of God. It's words are divinely inspired and supersede the Greek, so that we can find additional, new revelation in the English wording of the King James that does not exist in the Greek.

20 % (112 votes) Other”

Now from this poll it is seen the majority believed that the King James Bible is both the preserved AND inspired Word! It therefore should be noted that “As the Bible uses it, the term ‘inspiration’ refers to the **writings**, not the **writers** (2 Timothy 3:16-17); the **writers** are spoken of as being ‘holy men of God’ who were ‘moved,’ ‘carried’ or ‘borne’ along by the Holy Spirit (2

Peter 1:21) in such a definite way that their **writings** were supernaturally, plenary, and verbally inspired, free from any error, infallible, and inerrant, as no other **writings** have ever been or ever will be inspired.”¹³ The King James Bible is a TRANSLATION of those inspired preserved original Words of God.

It is of utmost importance to understand that inspiration occurred but once! It is then the PRESERVATION of those inspired Words that we are concerned with. Those of the Dean Burgon Society believe that “...the Texts which are the closest to the original autographs of the Bible are the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text for the Old Testament, and the traditional Greek Text for the New Testament underlying the King James Version (as found in ‘The Greek Text Underlying The English Authorized Version of 1611’).”¹⁴

That Masoretic Hebrew text and the Greek Text underlying the King James Bible are the very preserved Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic Words that God originally breathed out. Therefore “...the King James Version (or Authorized Version) of the English Bible is a true, faithful, and accurate translation of these two providentially preserved Texts, which in our time has no equal among all of the other English Translations. The translators did such a fine job in their translation task that we can without apology hold up the Authorized Version of 1611 and say ‘This is the WORD OF GOD!’ while at the same time realizing that, in some verses, we must go back to the underlying original language Texts for complete clarity, and also compare Scripture with Scripture.”¹⁵

It may also be stated “...that all the verses in the King James Version belong in the Old and the New Testaments because they represent words...in the original texts, although there might be other renderings from the original languages which could also be acceptable to us today. For an exhaustive study of any of the words or verses in the Bible, we urge the student to return directly to the Traditional Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Traditional Received Greek Text rather than to any other translation for help.”¹⁶

So PRESERVATION has to do with the original inspired Words in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic and not the English or any other language into which the Words of God are translated. But it is often stated “I do not know Hebrew or Greek. What do I do then?” The answer; read and study your King James Bible for here you have an ACCURATE and FAITHFUL TRANSLATION of those inspired preserved Words!!! Of course use lexicons, but never at the neglect of studying, meditating, and reading your King James Bible.

As Edward Hills wrote “...God in His mercy did not leave His people to grope after the True New Testament Text. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit He guided them to preserve it during the manuscript period. God brought this to pass through the working of His preserving

¹³ http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/DBS_Society/articles.htm

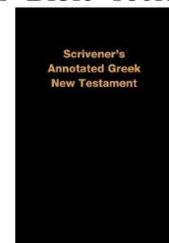
¹⁶ Ibid.

and governing providence. *First*, many trustworthy copies of the original New Testament manuscripts were produced by faithful scribes. *Second*, these trustworthy copies were read and recopied by true believers down through the centuries. *Third*, untrustworthy copies were not so generally read or so frequently recopied. Although they enjoyed some popularity for a time, yet in the long run they were laid aside and consigned to oblivion. Thus as a result of this special providential guidance the True Text won out in the end, and today we may be sure that the text found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts is a trustworthy reproduction of the divinely inspired Original Text. This is the text which was preserved by the God-guided usage of the Greek Church. Critics have called it the Byzantine text, thereby acknowledging that it was the text in use in the Greek Church during the greater part of the Byzantine period (452-1453). It is much better, however, to call this text the Traditional Text. When we call the text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts the Traditional Text, we signify that this is the text which has been handed down by the God-guided tradition of the Church from the time of the Apostles unto the present day.”¹⁷

Here I will quote Dr. Frederick Scrivener who said that our King James Bible is “...not a translation of any one Greek text then in existence...”¹⁸ In producing his Greek New Testament Dr. Scrivener “...reasoned that ‘between 1598 and 1611 no important edition appeared; so that Beza’s fifth and last text of 1598 was more likely than any other to be in the hands of the King James’s revisers, and to be accepted by them as the best standard within their reach,’

Where the English of the *KJV* differed from Beza’s 1598 Greek edition, Dr. Scrivener (in about 162 places) used readings from previous Greek editions of the Received Text. He kept Beza’s 1598 readings in about 59 places where the *KJV* had only Latin support.”¹⁹

One can believe by faith the critical Greek texts produced by the various Bible societies represent the Word of God or one can by faith believe as the Dean Burgon Society believes “...that Scrivener’s Greek Text which underlies our King James Bible is the closest to the original New Testament.”²⁰ Even if one is not proficient in the Greek language of the Bible it is wonderful to be able to hold in one’s hands that volume containing the inspired, preserved original Words of God from which the King James Bible was translated!!!



There is an old sales adage known as the KISS method; Keep it Simple Stupid. So in this discussion on the Greek text; keep it simple. One believes the issue is either **SETTLED** on the fact that we have the Words of God preserved in the text underlying our King James Bible or one

¹⁷ Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p 6, pdf.

¹⁸ D. A. Waite, Jr., *PREFACE to the "DOCTORED" NEW TESTAMENT*, The Bible For Today Press, 900 Park Avenue, Collingswood, NJ 08108, 2003, p viii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *SCRIVENER'S ANNOTATED GREEK NEW TESTAMENT*, Dean Burgon Society Press, Box 354, Collingswood, NJ 08108, 1999, Publisher's Foreword.

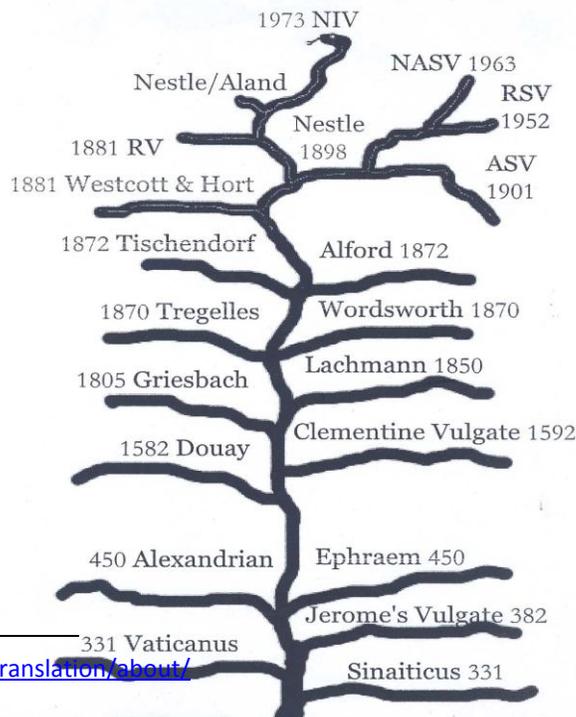
must continue to **SEARCH**; knowing their English Scriptures will continue to change just as their Critical Greek texts have.

Here is an example of how fluid the line of Critical text translated English Bibles are. It basically began in 1881 based on Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament.

CRITICAL GREEK TEXT VERSIONS

1881 Revised Version.	1970 New English Bible (NEB)
1898 American Revised Version.	1971 New American Standard Bible (NAB)
1901 American Standard Version	1978 New International Version (NIV)
1952 Revised Standard Version.	1996 NIV Inclusive Language (NIVI)
1958 Berkeley Version (BV)	2001 English Standard Version (ESV)

These are just a sampling of those versions that have been spawned from the Critical Greek text. This stream flows from 1% of Greek manuscript evidence (fact). So with this 1% the **SEARCH** continues and the ESV is the latest result. The ESV is the flavor of the month for many fundamentalists and "conservative" new evangelicals. The ESV is based "...on the Greek text in the 1993 editions of the Greek New Testament (4th corrected ed.), published by the United Bible Societies (UBS), and *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.), edited by Nestle and Aland."²¹ As can be seen in the diagram below it is in the stream of the Westcott and Hort tradition.²²

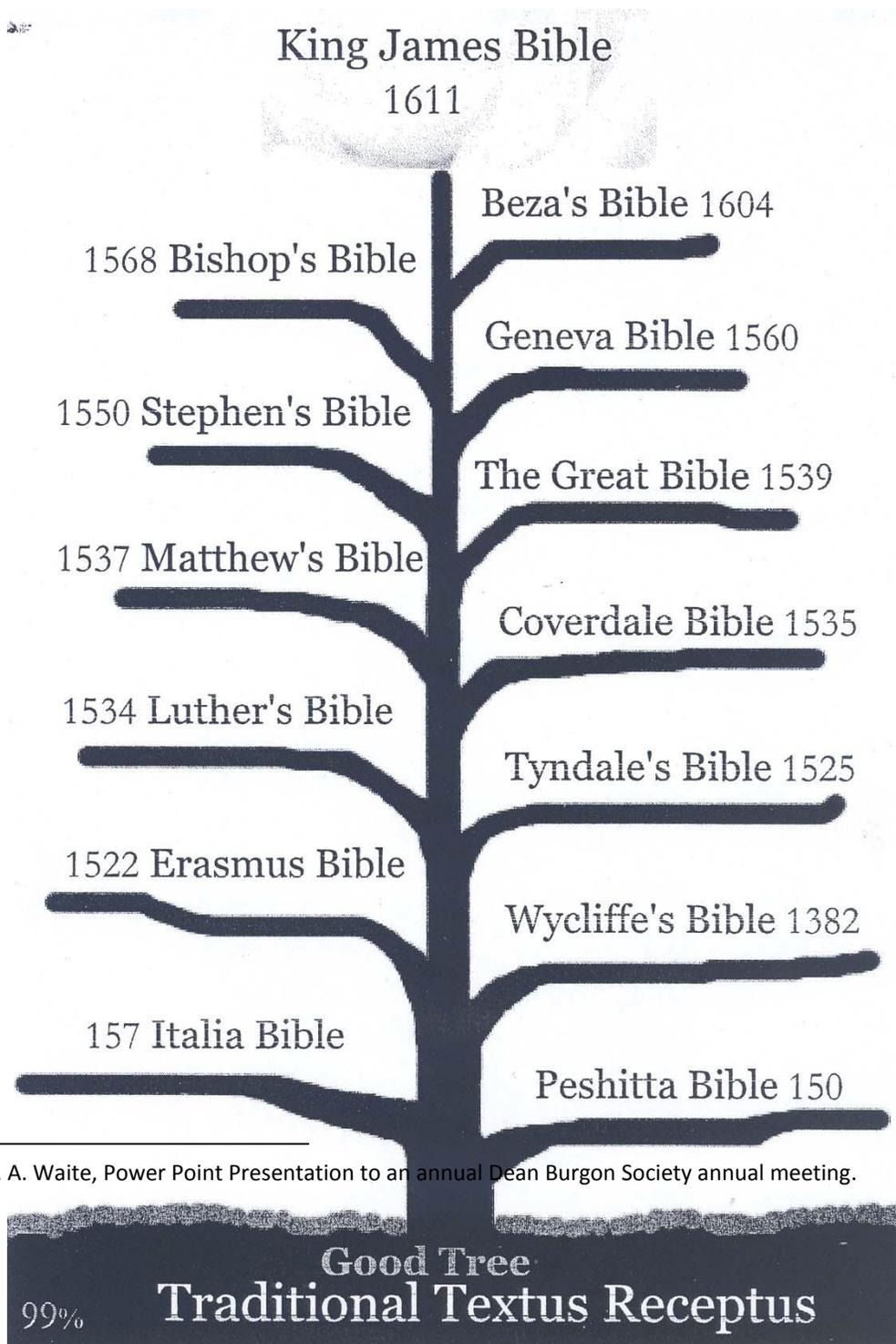


²¹ <http://www.esv.org/esv/translation/about/>

²² D. A. Waite, Power Point Presentation to an annual Dean Burgon Society meeting.

Bad Tree
1% Evidence Corrupt Revised Texts

The King James Bible is in the stream flowing out of 99% of the manuscript evidence (fact) and both have a glorious heritage!²³



²³ D. A. Waite, Power Point Presentation to an annual Dean Burgon Society annual meeting.

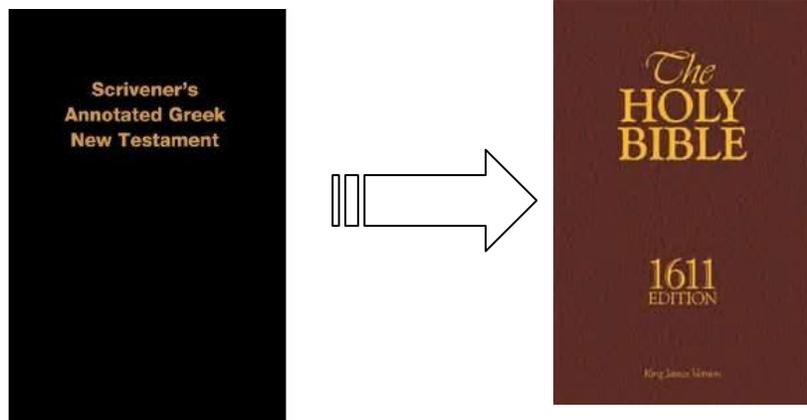
In closing and in seeking to keep it simple, those who are saved by grace through **faith**, walk by **faith** and accept by **faith** and manuscript evidence (**fact**) that the Greek text underlying the King James Bible is the **PRESERVED** and **INSPIRED** Words of the **ORINGINAL INSPIRED** Words of God are **SETTLED** and rest in that assurance. On the other hand those who accept the minority Critical Greek text will continue to **SEARCH** and **SEARCH** and hopefully someday through restoration they will have a settled Bible?

A school that fits into the still **SEARCHING** group and is **the leader** of the fundamentalist searching schools, is the one time bastion of fundamentalism Bob Jones University (BJU). BJU states that they "...believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible in the original manuscripts, and we believe that God has supernaturally preserved every one of His inspired words for us today. However, from the founder to the present administration, we have never taken the position that there can be only one good translation in the English language."²⁴ Therefore pick and choose the version that fits!

BJU, Detroit Baptist Seminary, Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary and others take what may be described as the middle of the road view or the pick and choose position. To these people the Bible is preserved but all the English translations no matter how much they differ between themselves are the Word of God. This position will **never** lead to a **SETTLED** position on an English translation or for that matter any language translation.

May the Lord help some **SEARCHING** reader to prayerfully come to that **SETTLED** position and **SIMPLY** rest in the knowledge that in our hands today we have a faithful and trustworthy translation in the King James Bible from the **PRESERVED AND INSPIRED** Words breathed out from God!

In the next chapter the subject of translating will be considered.



²⁴<http://www.bju.edu/communities/ministries-schools/position-statements/translation.php>