

Forming A Doctrine On Preservation

By: Samuel Barrett

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Theology I

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Introduction and Thesis

Despite there being numerous biblical passages on the topic, few have ever developed a doctrine of preservation of Scripture. The Bible is our source for learning about God and being able to enter into a relationship with him, without scripture there is no way to know who God is - which would affect our theology since God is often described as being a relational being. This should make it clear as to why the topic of preservation of Scripture is of much importance. What we will see, however, is not only does the textual data suggest the Bible to be preserved, but the textual data available to us matches exactly what the Bible says about preservation as well.

1)

Identification, Unification, and Analysis of the Biblical Data

a) Identification

The following verses are relevant to our study on the doctrine of preservation. All verses are taken from the New American Standard Bible :

1 Kings 11:41

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon and whatever he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

1 Kings 14:19,29

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel...Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

Joshua 10:13

So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day.

Deuteronomy 8:3

He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Isaiah 8:20

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever.

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

Deuteronomy 4:2

You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32

Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

Matthew 5:18

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished

Revelation 22:18,19

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

b) Unification

There are two groupings of the above texts:

i - Promises of preservation (Matt 5:18; 24:35; Isa 40:8)

ii - Method of preservation (Deut 4:2, 8:3, 12:32, Joshua 1:8, 10:13, Isa 8:20, 1 kings 11:41, 14:19,29)

c) Analysis

It is obvious that the Scriptures are claiming, to some extent, the preservation of God's word. The question is how are the Scriptures to be preserved (method) and to what extent they are preserved. E.g. is it word for word preservation? Does it only focus upon preserving the general message of the text? If so, is God concerned with preserving the general message of a particular topic? The general message each book individually? The general message of the entire Bible? Etc.

Scripture makes it clear that the method of preservation of God's word was to be done through written texts (Josh 1:8; Isa 8:20, Deut 8:3) hence why we have the Bible in the first place. As far as the extent of preservation, there seems to be a general consensus that preservation of content is what is being focused on, not word for word preservation. For

example, in Deuteronomy 4:2, and 12:32 we see God saying not to add or subtract from what he is commanding as a whole, he does not say that every single letter of every word is to be preserved, but ‘the word which I am commanding you’ (Deut 4:2). In Revelation 22:18,19 we also see the words being emphasized as a whole (though in this text the importance of the book of Revelation is stressed), thus in both the Old and New Testaments, the content of the book is of utmost importance, not just the words on the paper but the meaning God is trying to convey through those words. With this in mind, it is no wonder why we see verses referencing other ancient works of history such as the Acts of Solomon (1 King 11:41) the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel/Judah (14:19,29) and the book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13). This is described primarily as the Lukan model of inspiration (Cf. Luke 1:1-4) we could also attribute this to preservation as the information is being preserved and compiled, usually information pertaining to God and his interaction with His creation. In other words, what was preserved was a record of God’s interaction with man, both in what he has said and has done, whether done by authors who were directly inspired by God or by authors who compiled information from other sources.

Matthew 5:18 seems to contradict these texts however, as this verse has Jesus recorded as saying that not even the tiniest thing will pass from the law, even the very stroke. In context, Jesus is simply reaffirming the Law’s relevance and importance - that everything in the law is to be taken seriously. This was in response to the potential charge that Jesus was attempting to overthrow the Scriptures (vv 17), to which he simply affirmed their importance in its entirety. Matthew 5:18 is not concerning the method of preservation, but is a promise of preservation - that the law will not pass away until **all** is fulfilled.

To summarize: The Bible claims that God has preserved the content of the Scriptures by having it being written down without any additions or deletions to the text intentionally being made in order that the message and information that God has provided will endure forever.

2)

Putting Things Into Perspective - Differing Views on Preservation

Unfortunately, few people have studied the topic of preservation from a biblical standpoint, thus unfortunately we will only be able to look at a few differing views, meaning that this list will be short. We will take a look at some positions concerning preservation, namely Bart Ehrman's view (who represent the agnostic/atheist view of preservation), and the radical King James Only view on preservation.

a) Bart Ehrman

Although not considering preservation to be a doctrine, Bart Ehrman does recognize both the necessity of preservation as well as how it affects other doctrines such as inspiration. He states that we might as well not even consider the Bible to be inspired if it is not preserved.¹ Bart Ehrman does not seem to think that the Bible is preserved accurately. "There are more differences in our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament".² Bart also says that "94

percent of our surviving manuscripts were produced 700 years or more after the originals”.³

Ehrman concludes his thoughts on the matter stating that “we will probably never know”⁴ what was said in the biblical text. To summarize Bart’s view: The Scriptures are most-likely not preserved.

b) King James Onlyism

There is a spectrum to King James Only views (referred to as KJVO from now on). Some simply think the Greek and Hebrew used to translate the King James Version are better, some think the King James Version is simply a better translation altogether. Some KJVO advocates claim that the KJV to be God’s re-inspired word of God into the English language, and that the King James Version is a perfect translation.⁵ It is the latter group we will be addressing as it is this group that has made Preservation out to be a doctrine. Representing this group is Sam Gipp who holds to these views.

KJVO advocates, including Sam Gipp, claims that Psalms 12:6,7 from the KJV are prophetic of God promising to preserve His words. Sam Gipp believes that this was accomplished in 1611 with the King James Translation.⁶

3)

The Textual Data

Now that we have analyzed the texts concerning preservation and the differing views about the topic, we will turn our attention to what we find in the manuscripts (i.e. textual data) and not only investigate whether the Bible's claims of preservation is true for both Old and New Testaments, we will also challenge the viewpoint of Bart and Sam and the groups they represent.

a)

The New Testament

We will cover the New Testament first since it is a newer text and is not as complex as the situation regarding the Old Testament. In other words, we will start with the New Testament for clarity and because it has already been well studied.

i - Transmission

Early on, the New Testament was copied freely by many people, allowing it to spread rapidly.⁷ Later on, developments of a more controlled process was done via monasticism.

“Monks had to keep their parchment leaves neat and clean, on penalty of 130 penances”.⁸

Whether done by professional scribe or not, because it was done by humans, there is bound to be room for error in the copying process. Some of these errors or ‘changes’ are unintentional, some are more intentional.

α Unintentional Changes

Unintentional changes occur when a scribe accidentally alters a text. One scenario can be faulty eyesight. For example, a scribe could have been copying later in the day using a candle for a light source, allowing the scribe to mistake a few letters or words for different words. Another example of this is when a scribe mistakes shorthand. For example, in some manuscripts ΘΣ (theta sigma) is short for θεος (God). In certain instances, a scribe would mistake the Theta for an Omicron accidentally changing the text to ΟΣ (he).⁹ So, instead of reading ‘God’ the text reads ‘he’ e.g. see 1 Tim 3:16. It did not help that there were no spacing out words either.¹⁰

Two other scenarios include omissions and faulty judgement. A scribe can also omit words from a text due to similar endings of words. Sometimes there would be glosses in the margin, and the scribe would add them to scripture thinking it was a textual correction to the manuscript.¹¹

β Intentional Changes

Sometimes a scribe would try to correct what he thought to be an error to the text. One example would be correcting Greek grammar in the text, usually because they did not know about the semitisms in certain portions of Scripture.¹²

There were also scribes attempting to harmonize certain portions of scripture. “Scribes adapted many elements in the text to other details in the same verse, in the immediate or similar context, in the same book, and in parallel sections elsewhere in scripture. This phenomenon is termed harmonizing”.¹³ It should be stated that harmonizing a text in no way implies that the text was contradictory at all. Consider the Lord’s prayer for example:

The Lord’s Prayer*

Matthew 6:9-13	Luke 11:2-4
<p>‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10 ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11 ‘Give us this day our daily bread. 12 ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’]</p>	<p>‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 ‘Give us each day our daily bread. 4 ‘And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’”</p>

*The Bold represents parts in Matthew wherein Scribes later added these parts to their copy of Luke

There is no contradiction between Matthew and Luke, Matthew seems to have more content on the Lord's prayer. When the Scribes copied parts of Matthew's version and insert them into their copies of Luke's Gospel this would be considered harmonizing. In a way, it neither adds nor takes away from the text, though it is an alteration nonetheless. Due to the textual data however we were able to recover the original text of Luke. More on that later however.

These are some of the types of changes that were made throughout the transmission of the New Testament up until the printing press was invented by Guternberg in 1440 C.E. Next we will see how these changes affected the text.

ii Textual Data

It is true that we have more variants in the New Testament than we have words as Bart Ehrman claims. We have 130,000 words in the Greek New Testament (of which 5,437 words are drawn from)¹⁴ with a total of around 300,000-400,000 variants total.¹⁵ It is also true that most of our New Testament manuscripts are centuries removed from the autographs (originals). However, this is only part of the story. We have around 5,500 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament alone (some fragmentary, some more complete). This comes out to be 2.5 million pages of texts of the Greek alone. We have around 20,000 manuscripts in total if you include Latin Manuscripts and Coptic.¹⁶ We also have over 1 million patristic quotations of the

New Testament from which we can reproduce a New Testament.¹⁷ It must also be stated that we have “124 manuscripts within 300 years of the composition of the New Testament” from which the New Testament can be reproduced “multiple times”.¹⁸

This wealth of textual data is almost enough to crush any doubt as to the New Testament’s preservation. We have only scraped the surface. We will now look at the nature of the variants produced.

There are four different types of variants

- “1. Spelling differences and nonsense errors
2. Minor differences that do not affect translation or that involve synonyms
3. Differences that affect the meaning of the text but are not viable
4. Differences that both affect the meaning of the text and are viable”¹⁹

Less than 1% of all New Testament variants fall into category 4.²⁰ That means that over 99% of the New Testament’s variants are minor and are not not viable. We can ignore the first two categories, and instead we will focus on the latter two. An example of a variant that affects the meaning of the text but is not viable is found in 1 Thess 2:9. Some manuscripts read “Gospel of God” while others refer to it as “Gospel of Christ”.²¹ This is not viable as in both instances it is referring to the same divine person.

Category 4 variants are the only types of variants that cast doubt upon the text. It must be restated that these occur less than 1% of the time. The best example of this type of variant can be found in Revelation 13:18.

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.

Our earliest manuscript on revelation 13 that contains the Mark of the beast (P115 - 3rd century) says the Mark of the Beast is 616. 616 is also found in the 5th Century in Codex C and in manuscript 2344 (12th century) we have another variant - 665!²⁵ What are we to make of this? Has God allowed the wrong number of the beast to be inserted into the Bible and become the dominant reading for two millennia? If 616 is the original reading then virtually every single theory, sermon, and guess of who the beast was is nullified.²²

This type of variant requires one to make a decision, each one of these variants contradict each other, and is focused on perhaps one of the most important topics within scripture.

If God has preserved his word he should be able to make the true rendering clear. In this particular instance he has. St. Irenaeus who lived during the time of when P115 would've been produced, cites an older manuscript that has the Mark of the Beast as 666, but also explains how the variant originated - which was through a misunderstanding of the Greek numbering system.²³ 666 thus seems to be the original rendering - and despite variants it was the true rendering that became dominant and was preserved throughout time. The 4th category of variants are not only few and far in between in the new testament but are essentially non-debatable as far as what the original reading was (the original reading in this case being the one that stayed the popular

reading). In other words, the few variants that truly affect the text demonstrate to us that God did not allow these types of variants to catch on, allowing only what He revealed to be transmitted through time, not a corrupted version of that information (though whether Christians truly obeyed what He revealed is a different story).

iii) The New Testament Canon

The idea of their being a canon began extremely early even though people did not acknowledge it specifically as a canon at first.²⁴ In the Second Century people had a general idea of what was included in the canon i.e. what books were to be considered 'official'. It was the gnostics who confused many by proclaiming to have secret knowledge and even went as far as to make their own books like the Gospel of Peter. It was because of this that the Church addressed this issue,²⁵ with all 27 books of the New Testament being universally recognized by the early 4th century.²⁶ This early recognition is most-likely due to the fact that authors put their names on the manuscript, usually on the end, allowing the New Testament literature when it first come out to be easily identified.²⁷ In any case, in the earliest centuries the Church was unanimous in recognizing what was written and by whom they were written by.²⁸

Summary:

The New Testament spread rapidly, giving is a plethora of manuscript evidence. Over 99% of the variants produced during transmission have not affected the message of the New Testament, the less than 1% that have affected the message of the New Testament do not prevent us from finding what was originally said. In fact, it was what was originally said that

God allowed to be the dominant reading throughout history, not allowing the variants that truly changed what God was trying to convey to catch on. Considering this, it seems that the New Testament was remarkably preserved.

b)

The Old Testament

When asking if a text is preserved the Old Testament is a different scenario than the New Testament. We are dealing with manuscripts that are still over a thousand years away from the time of the originals (the Torah being written around 1400 BCE). We will again look at the transmission of the text (or at least what we know of it) and then the textual data itself.

i Transmission

Here is what we know so far about the transmission of the Old Testament throughout time.

- The Qumran scrolls (200 BCE) show us the Scribes used word division, making it less likely for Scribes to omit words or phrases.²⁹
- The very act and methods of preserving a text can be traced back to “the third quarter of the second millennium B.C.” i.e. the 1250s BCE.³⁰
 - It should be stated that this is not too far off from the time that the Torah and perhaps the book of Joshua were made (1400 BCE, approximately 150 years

earlier). This suggests that the methods of preservation were applied to even the earliest book written in Scripture. It is for this reason that I have to disagree with Tov's outlook by stating that the text wasn't treated with reverence until the soferim and Masoretes³¹ to which Tov then goes on to contradict himself later by saying "it is not easy to provide convincing proof of errors".³² The fact is that from the beginning of its composition the Old Testament seems to have been subjected to methods of preservation, the historical accuracy of the Old Testament alone should be enough to give the text more credit than most give it.

- Jewish culture used written sources as the preferred method of preservation.
 - Vasholz makes an interesting case for this. Essentially, because there are references to small details that only occur once, the likelihood of retrieving said data by a written source is "heightened".³³ On the subject of whether Oral or Textual transmission was used I completely agree with Vasholz here.³⁴

This is what we know specifically about the transmission of the Old Testament. It should be noted that the same problems with transmission that occurred in the New Testament i.e. unintentional changes, intentional changes, harmonizations, etc. also occurred in the transmission of the Old Testament.

ii Textual Data

Disputes of the Old Testament text arise when we compare the Hebrew text to the manuscripts at Qumran and ancient translations.³⁵ To decide these disputes the most

“contextually appropriate” reading is to be chosen. Quite obviously this process is a bit subjective,³⁶ however the methods of textual criticism are reliable nonetheless.³⁷ When we analyze the variants (of which most also fall into the first 3 categories of variants i.e. are not viable)³⁸ of the approximately 10,000 Old Testament manuscripts³⁹ we have one can only conclude that “we have an excellent copy of the text preserved in the masoretic text” though it should be stated that “The Masoretic Text of Samuel-Kings is notorious for its difficulties. But the point being stressed here is the overall quality of the text”.⁴⁰ Considering that most variants are not viable should give the reader more confidence in the text, even for the text of Samuel-Kings. Difficulties do not mean the text is unpreserved as textual critics are obsessed with getting as close as they can to the original wording of the text itself.⁴¹ The content of the entire Old Testament is unaffected by these variants, as we have seen this is what the Bible has claimed of itself, and is indeed what we see in the textual data. The overall historical accuracy of the Old Testament is good indication of its preservation anyhow.⁴²

iii) The Canon

The Torah seems to have been the first work established as canon, especially since all other books seem to be founded upon it (E.g. Joshua 1:8 & Judges 21:25 focus on the standard of the Torah, and the Kings of Israel are judged as wicked or good kings mainly in light of the Torah as the standard). It then makes sense to conclude that the Torah and all other books confirmed to be Scripture via the Torah are the standard by which we test other books as to whether it is part of the Canon.

It is interesting that there is no indication of a missing book in the canon in the sense of a book being completely lost to time. Infact, most do not have an issue with the books currently in

the Old Testament; rather some make the claim of the apocrypha is part of Scripture. Whether the apocrypha is part of the canon or not we may still conclude the Canon to be preserved due to the fact that in both cases, whether the apocrypha is to be considered inspired or not, we would still have the books that belong in the Canon (though there is a good case to be made against the Apocrypha being in the canon).^{43,44} Ultimately, it seems the Old Testament Canon has also been preserved.

Summary:

Considering the early subsection of the written text to methods of preservation, the historical accuracy of the text, and the lack of viable variants in the textual data we can also consider the content of the Old Testament text is reliable and preserved, with the Canon also remaining intact.

4)

Conclusion

The Essence, Implications & Contemporary Expression of Preservation

Before we consider the very essence of the doctrine itself, it will be good for us to do a short review of the differing viewpoints and to summarize everything:

- Bart Ehrman does not believe Scripture has been preserved. He makes an interesting point in that Preservation is foundational to any sort of theology in that if the Bible is not preserved then we have no right to call it inspired (which would logically remove any reason for doing any serious theology using the biblical text).
- KJVO advocates interpret Psalms 12:6,7 as God preserving the exact words that was written i.e. every single letter that God chose must have been preserved. We may call this ‘word-for-word’ preservation.
- The Biblical data claims that God will ensure that the information he made available to us will not be lost, not even to time.
- The Textual Data simply vindicates the Biblical data.

Keeping these things in mind the best way to express this doctrine in today’s world would be the following:

- Considering the textual data the Bible’s claims of preservation are correct. What God revealed, He has assured us that it will continue to be revealed throughout the ages. I.e. God has ensured that the knowledge he has given us will never be lost, that a complete retelling of the knowledge will never have to be done as God will ensure the information will continue to exist as part of human knowledge.
- At the heart of this entire doctrine is the preservation of Special Revelation. God never used word-for-word inspiration,⁴⁵ and thus he will never use word-for-word preservation. God preserves Special Revelation by preserving the information itself, not how the information is to be expressed (which makes sense given how people can say the same

thing in many ways anyhow). Thus, the essence of the doctrine of preservation is preservation of information that was given via special revelation

Implications

Considering that God is preserving what was revealed through special revelation this comes with a few implications as to our understanding of God.

- Because God is mainly concerned with the information God gave, this implies that, by nature, the gospel and the sharing thereof can be fluid and flexible to all situations, cultures and peoples etc.
 - Methods of sharing the gospel being flexible themselves justifies methods such as using social media, DVD's and documentaries, preaching, pamphlets, door-to-door etc. are all consistent with spreading the gospel so long as the information that is being shared is consistent with God's words.
- Bible translations, though never perfect conversions of a text in another language, are still Holy books as it contains the information God is trying to convey.
- God also involved in all other forms of knowledges both complements & goes alongside of scripture i.e. includes things special revelation is involved with, such as history (and therefore things such as archaeology, anthropology etc.) This way, God preserves information that is useful in helping us to understand special revelation. For example to help us understand prophecy, God preserved the

Artaxerxes I's decree to rebuild Jerusalem so that we may be able to understand and be able to study the 2,300 years prophecy.⁴⁶

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- 3) Ibid. pg 19
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- 9) Ibid pg 187
- 10) Ibid pg 13. An English example would be “GODISNOWHERE” - is it “God is now here” or “God is no where?”
- 11) Ibid pg 189,194
- 12) Ibid pg 197
- 13) Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012. Pg 258
- 14) David M. Steimle. Preliminary Biblical Studies. Books-A-Million. p. 351.
- 15) Ehrman, Bart D., and Daniel B. Wallace. *The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart D. Ehrman & Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue*. Edited by Robert B. Stewart. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011. Pg 28
- 16) Ibid pg 29
- 17) Ibid pg 30
- 18) Ibid pg 31
- 19) Ibid pg 38-39
- 20) Ibid pg 40
- 21) Ibid pg 39
- 22) All Manuscripts mentioned can be found at the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts. View manuscripts here - <http://www.csntm.org/>
- 23) “He says also: *And he will cause a mark [to be put] in the forehead and in the right hand, that no one may be able to buy or sell, unless he who has the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name; and the number is six hundred and sixty-six,.....*I am inclined to think that this occurred through the fault of the copyists, as is wont to happen, since numbers also are expressed by letters; so that the Greek letter which

expresses the number sixty was easily expanded into the letter Iota of the Greeks.”Against Heresies 5, 28,2....Against Heresies 5, 30,1 translation by newadvent.org

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- 25) González, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. Pg 75-77
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- 27) Jones, Ron. " The Manuscript Evidence of the NT Gospels Affirmation for the Authorship of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." Jesus Evidences | The Historical Literary Evidence for Jesus. 2014. Accessed November 29, 2018. <http://jesusevidences.com/manuscriptevidence.php>.
In 1 cor 5:9 Paul mentions a previous letter he wrote which is now lost to us. This same verse also explains the message and therefore the content of the previous letter. Thus, even though we don’t have the letter itself, the Canon is still preserved as we have what Paul taught in that letter, ironically from Paul himself.
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"Oppenheim even maintains that the continuity of religious tradition was guaranteed not through ecclesiastical pressures but purely through the scribal process i.e. exact reduplication. This freezing of sacred lore, a practice he traces back to to the third quarter of the second millennium B.C., he states, was for the 'purpose of preventing hypertropic growth of the written corpus under inside pressure, especially to restrain the theologian from reinterpreting the sacred story, elaborating it, embellishing it, and destroying it" pg5-6. Vasholz quoting L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* pg 18,232
- 31) Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012. Pg 10
- 32) Ibid
- 33) Vasholz, Robert I. *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church: The Internal Rationale for Old Testament Canonicity*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990.
“While admitting that the citing of the Old Testament alone is non-decisive, I propose that the degree of a probability of a written source for allusions is heightened particularly because there are so many allusions to small details in the Old Testament text” pg 96. On page 97 Vasholz points out an example of how precise these allusions are. He cites 2 kings 17:34 as mentioning when Jacob was renamed Israel (Gen 32:28). Not only are the texts of Genesis and Kings far removed as far as when they may have been written, but 2 kings 17:34 is the only verse that alludes to that verse. The point here is that the attention to even the small details increases the likelihood of Israel working with a written text rather than an oral tradition.
- 34) Barrett, Samuel. "A Historical Investigation to the Talmud's Origin." Sam's Creation Blog. December 3, 2017. Accessed November 28, 2018.
<https://samscreationblog.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/talmuds-origin2.pdf>.
In my Paper I argue that what God had revealed the Israelites committed it to a written tradition rather than an oral tradition i.e. they used a written text as a means of recording what occurred.
- 35) Tov, Emanuel. *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012. Pg 10
- 36) Ibid pg 281

- 37) Strobel, Lee. *The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/ Willow Creek Resources, 2014.
- "Wallace himself has conducted seminars called 'The Gospel According to Snoopy' for the past thirty years at universities and other settings. His goal is to demonstrate in a practical way how textual criticism can succeed in reconstructing a missing text. 'In the game, numerous people serve as 'scribes,' who copy out an ancient text on a Friday night,' he said. 'There are six generations of copies. The scribes all make mistakes, intentionally or unintentionally. In fact, the resultant copies are actually significantly more corrupt than the manuscript copies of the New Testament.' 'How corrupt?' I asked. For a fifty-word document, they are able to produce hundreds of textual variants,' he said. 'Then the next morning the rest of the folks at the seminar get to work as textual critics, with the scribes as silent onlookers. But they don't have all the manuscripts to work with. The earliest copies are destroyed or lost. And there are many breaks in the chain. But the textual critics do the best they can with the material they have. 'After about two hours of work, they come up with what they think the original text said. There are some doubts at almost every turn. But remarkably, even with the doubts, the core idea is hardly changed. Sometimes the doubts have to do with 'too' versus 'also,' or 'shall' versus 'will.' Then I show the group the original text and we compare the two texts, line by line, word by word.' 'How successful are these amateur textual critics?' I asked. 'Altogether, I've conducted this seminar over fifty times in churches, colleges, and seminaries - and we have never missed reconstructing the original text by more than three words. In fact, we were off by three words only once. Often, the group has gotten the original wording exactly right - and the essential message of the original is always in tact." - pg 86
- 38) North, Francis S. "Textual Variants in the Hebrew Bible Significant for Critical Analysis." *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 47, no. 1 (1956): 77-80. doi:10.2307/1453187.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1453187?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
 "most of these variants can contribute nothing to critical analysis" Francis later goes on to explain how these variants are "due to such regular causes of scribal error" such as "confusion of letters similar in appearance" - pg 77
- 39) Sinclair, David. "An Overview of the Bible." Accessed November 28, 2018.
<http://www.davidsinclairmc.com/christian-lecture-notes.htm>. Pg 15
- 40) Brotzman, Ellis R. *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998. Pg 168
- 41) The very definition of textual criticism is trying to reconstruct the original wording. It should also be noted that here the author is referring to difficulties of the specific wording, not difficulties regarding preservation, transmission, nor even the message of the text, Thus, the information, the message, which God intended to convey is still preserved.
- 42) Kitchen, K. A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*. William B Eerdmans Publishing, 2006.
- 43) Slick, Matt. "Errors in the Apocrypha." Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry. February 06, 2019. Accessed February 21, 2019. <https://carm.org/catholic/errors-apocrypha>
- 44) Slick, Matt. "Early Church Fathers on the Apocrypha." Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry. October 10, 2017. Accessed February 21, 2019. <https://carm.org/early-church-fathers-apocrypha>
- 45) Holbrook, Frank B. "Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration and Authority." Biblical Research Institute. July 23, 1998. Accessed November 29, 2018.
<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/bible/biblical-doctrine-inspiration-and-authority>.
 Inspiration and Preservation go hand in hand, though preservation is more foundational.
- 46) Shea, William H. "When Did the Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24 Begin?" Biblical Research Institute. July 22, 98. Accessed December 21, 2018.
<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/prophecy/when-did-seventy-weeks-daniel-924-begin>

Further Reading

- 1) Newman, Robert, "The Council of Jamnia and the Old Testament Canon" *Westminster Theological Journal* 38.4 (Spr. 1976) 319-348.
https://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/OTeSources/00-Introduction/Text/Articles/Newman-Cano nJamnia-WTJ.pdf
- 2) InspiringPhilosophy, "The Reliability of the New Testament", Filmed 2014- 2017, YouTube Video Playlist.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rml5Cif01g4&index=1&list=PL1mr9ZTZb3TW70EEo4e2onJ4lq1QYSzrY>

Appendix: Israelite Apostasy and Corruption of Scripture

The Israelites fell into apostasy almost immediately upon entering the promised land, which may cause some doubt as to the faithful transmission of the Old Testament. As stated earlier, the historical accuracy of the text is more than enough evidence to argue against any claims of embellishments within the text. Even during deep periods of apostasy, such as throughout the book of 1 & 2 Kings, there is virtually no indication of embellishments when considering the text has no problem criticising certain rulers and their policies and even criticises the paganism of the day arguing for the God of the Torah.¹ In fact, in the book of Kings people had rediscovered the book of the law implying the text to be untampered with, which the internal evidence certainly demonstrates, especially considering the lack of influence of any pagan practices, rather we only see criticisms of said pagan practices rather than an incorporation thereof in the theology of the text i.e the biblical text never defends said pagan practices.

Although we may never know for sure this alone seems sufficient to remove a good amount of doubt as to whether the Old Testament text has been faithfully transmitted or not.

Bibliography of Appendix

- 1) Strauss, Mark L. *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.
"the criterion of embarrassment, claims that statements that would have produced theological difficulties or embarrassment in the church are likely to be authentic"
pg 361 The fact the text admits something that is embarrassing and damning of Israel is a good indication that the text was not significantly altered i.e. 'authentic'.