

# Bob Jones University, Neo-Fundamentalism, and Biblical Preservation

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## Whither Biblical Fundamentalism?

**Without a present, existing, tangible, and identifiable, infallible and inerrant Scriptures in the original languages, Biblical Fundamentalism is as good as dead.** If there is no such a truth as an infallible and inerrant Scripture that is pure and perfect in every way today, “then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; ... ye are yet in your sins. ... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (1 Cor 15:14, 15, 17, 18).

**But Bible-believing and Bible-defending Christians can praise God that Biblical Fundamentalism is not dead.** This is because God has indeed given His people such a perfect Bible not only in the past but also today! He has promised the perfect preservation of His Word in the Old Testament (Ps 12:6-7) as well as in the New Testament (Matt 5:18, 24:35). Biblical Fundamentalists have such a perfect Bible in the original languages which is the sure and certain foundation of their faith and practice. This perfect Bible is none other than the 100% inspired, 100% preserved, 100% sufficient, and 100% authoritative Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament underlying the Reformation Bibles which is best represented today by the Authorised or King James Bible. The biblical doctrine of the special providential preservation of the Scriptures assures us of this. There is a perennial need to contend earnestly for the once-for-all-settled faith that is found in the forever infallible and inerrant Word of God (Ps 119:89, Jude 3).

**The biblical doctrine of the 100% preservation of Scripture is the truth,** “for we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor 13:8).<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Satan, having lost his battle against the Verbal Plenary Inspiration (VPI) of Scripture in the last century, in this new century, seeks to attack the Verbal Plenary Preservation (VPP) of Scripture in every way he can, even making use of those within the fundamentalist camp.

## Neo-Fundamentalism and the Imperfect Preservation of Scripture

**The latest book to cast doubt on God’s verbally and plenary preserved Word in the God-breathed Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words underlying the Authorised Version** is this misnamed book called *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* edited by James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor with various contributors who are connected

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<sup>1</sup> See Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages: Recapturing the Authorised Version and the Doctrine of Providential Preservation* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2001); “A Plea for a Perfect Bible,” *The Burning Bush* 9 (2003):1-15; *KJV Q&A* (Singapore: Bible Witness Literature Ministry, 2003).

with Bob Jones University (BJU).<sup>2</sup> Bob Jones III on the back cover wrote, “Like a clean-edged sword, *God’s Word in Our Hands* cuts through the current confused and schismatic clatter on the subject of biblical preservation. These conservative and God-fearing authors do the Church great service by presenting us with soul-thrilling evidence of the reliability and durability of the eternal Word.”

**The authors of this book might well be “conservative” and “God-fearing,”** but I fear we might be looking at a case of “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:5). In this critique, I will show that Bob Jones III’s glowing endorsement of this book is entirely misleading: (1) The book is not a clean-edged sword as claimed because it misinterprets and misapplies the double-edged Sword which is God’s Word itself. (2) It creates more confusion and schism on the subject of biblical preservation because it misrepresents the Pro-KJV and Preserved Text position, and promotes the modernistic and ecumenical modern versions that are based on the corrupt Critical Text. (3) The data are not at all soul-thrilling because they are based on man’s subjective and fallible interpretation of so-called “evidence.” (4) It does not edify the faith of believers in God and His Word because of its deistic view that not every jot and tittle of Scripture is preserved, that some words are already lost and remain lost; and also its agnostic thinking that though God’s inspired Word is preserved somewhere out there, no one can be sure of precisely where.

**As Biblical fundamentalists, we reject the postmodernistic mind set of uncertainty, and neo-deistic view of the imperfect preservation of Scripture.** Based on God’s explicit promise of Biblical preservation (Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35), and the certainty of faith (Heb 11:6) that believes in God’s special providential preservation of His very own words to the jot and tittle, we can tell for sure where the inspired words are exactly preserved. God does not play hide and seek with His people (Prov 22:20-21). He desires His people to know the precise location of His inspired and preserved words. Faith in God and His Word is the key to knowing where His very words are and how He has supernaturally worked in history. But it is unfortunate that neo-fundamentalists have chosen rather to follow the pride of human intellectualism that is based on false rules of textual criticism leading to a dead end of unbelief. As much as they hope to have, they really do not have an infallible and inerrant Bible in their hands as claimed. Even with all their clever human reasoning and textual critical prowess, they are still unable to produce a Bible that they can assuredly say, “This is the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant!” Herein we see the weakness of man, but the greatness of God!

### **Misinterpretation and Misapplication of God’s Word**

**In BJU’s previous book—*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*<sup>3</sup>—its writers undermine the doctrine of the perfect preservation of Scripture,<sup>4</sup> sharing the same view as their partners-in-crime, namely,**

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<sup>2</sup> James B Williams and Randolph Shaylor, eds, *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 2003). Besides Bob Jones University, other schools that contributed to this book include Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary, Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, Northland Baptist Bible College, Faith Baptist Bible College, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Maranatha Baptist Bible College, and Temple Baptist Seminary. All the above schools bear a pro-Westcott and Hort or Critical Text, and pro-modern versions disposition that undermines the Textus Receptus and the King James Version. Thankfully, there is an antidote for the above poison, and ironically from the same publisher, which is Ian R K Paisley’s, *My Plea for the Old Sword* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> James B Williams, ed, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Greenville: Ambassador Emerald International, 1999). See my critique, “Bob Jones University and the KJV: A Critique of *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*,” *The Burning Bush* 7 (2001): 1-33.

<sup>4</sup> Randolph Shaylor, who has become the managing editor of *God’s Word in Our Hands*, on page 22 of the prequel, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, said that the Bible nowhere teaches nor implies that the copies of Scripture are inerrantly and infallibly inspired. On page 25 of the same book, he quoted errant Warfield for support saying that only the autographs are inspired, not the apographs.

the writers of *One Bible Only*?<sup>5</sup> from Central Baptist Theological Seminary which is again proudly listed in this sequel. In the latter book, Edward Glenny said, (1) “the doctrine of preservation was not a doctrine of the ancient church,” (2) “we might have lost a few words through negligence,” and (3) “not only is Scripture without a verse to explain how God will preserve His Word, but no statement in Scripture teaches that God did preserve perfectly the original text of Scripture.”<sup>6</sup> What a faith-shattering declamation of God’s forever infallible and inerrant Word! Can these words be from the pen of a fundamentalist? These men cannot be acknowledged as true fundamentalists. They give Biblical Fundamentalism a bad name. Until they recant and repent of their error, they deserve to be known as neo-fundamentalists or neo-deists.

**Now in this book—*God’s Word in Our Hands***—the writers admit that the Scriptures do teach the doctrine of Biblical preservation. One might think they are at last on the right track, but no, they undermine the doctrine the very next moment when they say that though the doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, it is *not clearly* taught.

**Their “bottom line” on Matthew 5:18 is particularly disturbing.** One feels like he has come face to face with the old serpent. In the same way the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden (Gen 3:1-4), so do the neo-fundamentalists of this book with their twisted interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18. Satan’s deadly strategy of seduction usually begins with a friendly “Yes!” Then he creates doubt, “Did God really say this?” Finally, he goes for the kill with a deadly “No!”

**Such a lethal hissing of the snake is found on page 106.** First the Yes! “Is our Lord here guaranteeing the preservation of all the written words of Scripture?” The reply is “an emphatic ‘yes.’” Next, the doubt, “Although ... preservation is not His *main* point, it is nevertheless *the* point ... What He does not do, however, is give even so much as a hint as to how or where preservation will take place.” Finally, the No! “The conclusion one must reach is that this passage does not teach that those words are preserved in one particular manuscript or lineage of manuscripts alone. Neither does this passage guarantee that all the words will be always available at all times.”

**Let us analyse the above fallacious interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18.** The editorial committee that penned those words began by *agreeing* emphatically that *all* the written words of Scripture are preserved. But know that what was said is not the same as what was meant. This is revealed at the end when they *denied* that “all the words will be always available at all times.” In other words, some of God’s words can be and have been lost. Now, if some of God’s words can be and have been lost, how can the promise of Matthew 5:18 be true, and how can it be so emphatically stated at the outset that God guarantees the preservation of all His written words? Furthermore, the statement that the preservation of Scripture is not the *main* point and yet *the* point is *contradictory* and *confusing*, if not *deceptive*. This “Yes, Yes-No, No” interpretation and application of Matthew 5:18 has the Satanic stamp all over it. What is the real bottom line? It is this: *BJU and the neo-fundamentalists do not believe that God will and is able to preserve perfectly all of His inspired words to the last iota, that all of His inspired words will always remain available and accessible to His people all the time until the end of time.*

**The only Christlike response to such an unfaithful treatment of Jesus’ words** must come from the very words of the Lord Himself who told Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men” (Matt 16:23).

**May these fundamentalist brethren return to the godly path** of Christ-honouring and faith-centred exposition and application of God’s forever infallible and inerrant Word. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom 3:4).

## **Confusion and Schism in Fundamentalism**

<sup>5</sup> Roy E Beacham and Kevin T Bauder, eds, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001). See my critique, “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism: *One Bible Only?* or ‘Yea Hath God Said?’,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 2-47.

<sup>6</sup> Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, 116, 121, 123.

**BJU and the neo-fundamentalists are upset with the confusion and schism** that surround the present controversy over the preservation of Scripture and the KJV. They say “it unnecessarily detracts from the main purpose for the church’s existence.”<sup>7</sup> How does a clear and bold declaration that the church has a 100% inspired and 100% preserved Scripture detract from the main purpose of the church’s existence? On the contrary, it enhances and ensures the witness and testimony of the church, and gives believers the solid and immovable foundation they need to evangelise the lost, and edify the saints. It is those who cannot confess that there is a perfect Bible today, who say that the Bible today is not infallible and inerrant, who say that the Bible today contains mistakes that are destabilising and destroying the church. What is the main purpose of the church’s existence? Is it not to glorify God? How does the neo-fundamentalist and neo-deistic position that God has not perfectly preserved His Word and that there is no perfectly preserved Scripture today glorify God? Those who say they do not have God’s perfect Word today, or say they cannot tell where the perfect Word is are the ones causing the confusion, not those with a clear and definite position.

**The Far Eastern Bible College has a declared position that affirms in no uncertain terms the present perfection of Scripture:** “We believe in the divine, Verbal Plenary Inspiration (Autographs) and Verbal Plenary Preservation (Apographs) of the Scriptures in the original languages, their consequent inerrancy and infallibility, and as the perfect Word of God, the supreme and final authority in faith and life (2 Tim 3:16, 2 Pet 1:20-21, Ps 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35).” As regards the Hebrew OT, Greek NT, and the KJV, “We believe the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament underlying the Authorised (King James) Version to be the very Word of God, infallible and inerrant. We uphold the Authorised (King James) Version to be the Word of God—the best, most faithful, most accurate, most beautiful translation of the Bible in the English language, and do employ it alone as our primary scriptural text in the public reading, preaching, and teaching of the English Bible.”<sup>8</sup> How does such a position detract from the main mission of the church? We are simply reaffirming good old Reformed and Reformation doctrine and practice over against the modernistic and postmodernistic views and methods as found in neo-evangelical churches, and now in neo-fundamental churches.

**No matter what clarification is made by Biblical fundamentalists, neo-fundamentalists are bent on confusing the issue** by repeatedly making false and dishonest claims like these: KJV fundamentalists “advocate the inerrancy of a particular translation;” “Problems arise when we make any translation the exclusive revelation from God;” “It is troubling that so many ... attempt to prove God has promised us a perfect English translation;” “They have overlooked the supreme significance of the original languages and have staked their claim on the King James Version of the Bible as the God-inspired Bible for this present age.”<sup>9</sup> This may be the position of Peter Ruckman (who ironically received his Ph.D. from BJU), but certainly not the better known and sound defenders of the KJV like E F Hills and D A Waite. The above accusations are both confusing and damaging because the *original language text* is the issue, not the KJV *per se* nor any foreign language translation as alleged.<sup>10</sup>

**Why do those who believe in the perfect preservation of Scripture believe that the KJV is the English Bible for today?** Is it because they feel the KJV is as

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<sup>7</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, xiv.

<sup>8</sup> Hutcheson rightly observed, “The orthodox Christians in the nineteenth century used that greatly revered translation which had been handed down to them. Since its appearance in 1611, the King James Version had gained prominence as the primary English translation and had been blessed of God over the previous two hundred and fifty years.” *God’s Word in Our Hands*, 4. Pro-KJV advocates are saying that we should continue in this good and faithful tradition, and should reject the modern English versions today because they are significantly different from the good old KJV. If the modern English translations are also based on the preserved instead of the corrupted text, and are translated literally rather than loosely, then there would be no problem, but this is simply and truly not the case. See “A Survey of English Bible Translations,” in *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 69-100.

<sup>9</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, xv, 27, 111, 195.

<sup>10</sup> See David H Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing: The Text Issue and Separation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Duluth: Northstar Baptist Ministries, 2001).

perfect and as inspired as the original language Scriptures? Of course not! Such misrepresentations do not reflect well on these BJU men and neo-fundamentalists. It does look like their position is so weak that they must resort to such low blows to make themselves look good.

**Let it be known once and for all that the KJV of 1611 is the logical choice for faithful English Bible users** because they do believe and can see that God has indeed kept His promise to preserve His words perfectly in the *original languages* throughout history and especially during the great Protestant Reformation. The KJV is the best English Bible today precisely because it remains the most accurate and faithful translation of the divinely inspired *Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* that God has supernaturally preserved throughout the ages. All foreign language Bibles including the English must be judged by this perfect rule of God's totally inspired and fully preserved words in the original languages, and not vice versa. Any foreign language Bible if accurately translated and based on the perfectly preserved text can rightly be held up like the KJV as the Word of God, yea, even the *very* Word of God.

**It is neo-fundamentalism's tragic compromise with modernistic, rationalistic, and ecumenical textual critics and their modern perversions of the Bible that is causing the confusion** and the schism within Biblical Fundamentalism today. Biblical fundamentalists loyal to their Lord and His Word have no choice but to separate from these neo-fundamentalists, and expose them for their hypocrisy.

### **Man's Subjective and Fallible Opinions**

**Many names do not the truth make.** No man is perfect save the Lord Jesus Christ, and no book is perfect save the Holy Bible.

**Biblical fundamentalists believe that the Holy Scriptures, infallible and inerrant, are the final and supreme authority of Christian faith and practice.** It is unfortunate that BJU and company, despite their "conservative and God fearing" profession, do not practise what they preach. In their vain attempt to bolster their untenable position on Biblical preservation, instead of simply believing what Scripture explicitly teaches about its own preservation, and applying that truth in their ministry, they cite a list of fundamentalists who had likewise thought and taught wrongly concerning the preservation of Scripture. They quote James Brookes, B H Carroll, C I Scofield, James Gray, R A Torrey, John Straton, William Erdman, A T Robertson, W B Riley, Richard Clearwaters, Noel Smith, John R Rice, and speak as though they are the only rightful representatives of fundamentalism, and there is consensus among fundamentalists over the text and translation issue.<sup>11</sup>

**Are we supposed to be impressed by big names?** Why do they forget many other fundamentalists like Ian Paisley, Carl McIntire, E F Hills, David Otis Fuller, D A Waite, O Talmadge Spence, Jack Moorman, David Cloud, Arlin Horton, Dell Johnson, Thomas Strouse, M H Reynolds Jr, Dennis Costella, David Sorenson, Arthur E Steele, S H Tow, and Timothy Tow, who have written and spoken strongly in favour of the continued use of the KJV *because of its faithfulness to the 100% inspired and 100% preserved Hebrew and Greek Texts* on which it is based as opposed to the corrupted text and versions? I wonder where Bob Jones Sr and Bob Jones Jr stood on the KJV issue. Did they not strongly uphold the KJV as the fundamentalist's Bible? Why were they not mentioned in

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<sup>11</sup> Although it is regrettable that the VPP of Scripture was not discussed in *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915) edited by Dixon, Meyer and Torrey, it is heartening to note that L W Munhall did allude to it in his chapter on "Inspiration" when he wrote, "The attitude of Jesus toward the Old Testament and his utterances confirm beyond question our contention. He had *the very same Old Testament we have today*" (*The Fundamentals* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990 reprint], 168, emphasis mine).

this BJU book? This silence is telling! I do not believe that the late Bob Jones Sr and Bob Jones Jr would have allowed this shift from the KJV towards the modern versions that we see happening in BJU today.<sup>12</sup>

**BJU's departure from the KJV today is due to her unequal yoke with Westcott and Hort.** For decades, BJU has promoted the false theory and text of Westcott and Hort in the classroom, though not at the pulpit. The new generation of BJU graduates are now asking, "If the Westcott and Hort text is superior to the Textus Receptus, why then should we continue to use the KJV? Since the modern English versions are based on the superior Westcott and Hort text, it only makes sense that we replace the KJV with the modern versions." Is it no wonder that James B Williams and company are so upset with Biblical fundamentalists who continue to promote the KJV and decry this falling away from the KJV that they see in BJU? If BJU does not repent of this wayward trend that she has embarked on, her legacy would be similar to the many Bible-loving and God-fearing institutions that once were but are no more. I personally hate to see this happen, but with this sequel it does look like the writing is already on the wall. Why does history have to repeat itself?

**It needs to be reiterated that the issue has to do with the original language Scriptures, not the translations *per se*.** We must not put the cart before the horse which only confuses the issue and hinders any progress towards knowing the truth. It must also be pointed out that many a fundamentalist today are seriously in error to think that the infallible and inerrant Scriptures lie *only* in the autographs (which no longer exist)<sup>13</sup> and not in the apographs (which exist today).<sup>14</sup> Another grave error is the view that there is no such thing as an infallible and inerrant Bible today because the apographs have not been perfectly preserved by God. It is taught that since the disappearance of the perfect autographs, God's people only had imperfect apographs as their Scriptures, which are the imperfect Scriptures we possess today with words added, subtracted, changed, missing or even lost.<sup>15</sup>

**As already said, *God's Word in Our Hands* is a book that does not live up to its name.** The reason: a flawed Bibliology! Their constant appeal to human authority instead of biblical authority keeps telling me, "Let man be true, but God a liar!" (contra Rom 3:4).

### **Agnostic with Deistic View of Biblical Preservation**

**On a front page of *God's Word in Our Hands* we find this statement of faith:** "*We believe that the Bible teaches that God has providentially preserved His written Word. This preservation exists in the totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation. We are therefore certain that we possess the very Word of God.*"<sup>16</sup> Is this not a wonderful statement? Should we not give it a loud Amen? A superficial and simplistic reading of this statement might lead one to think that BJU and company now believe they have a 100% inspired and 100% preserved Scripture they can hold in their hands and say, "This is the very Word of God!" Upon further investigation, we discover that this is far from true. In the confusing world of theology today, what counts is not what is said but what is meant.

**Now, let us analyse the above statement to see what is meant.** They say, "We believe that the Bible teaches . . ." But if one were to ask them whether the Bible clearly and directly teaches the

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<sup>12</sup> One proud BJU graduate that I know of had assured me personally that the BJU alumni had pledged to protest in unison the day they see their alma mater abandoning the KJV. If this is true, then I really hope it would come soon for the sake of their school.

<sup>13</sup> John Hutcheson wrote, "The pioneers of the [fundamentalist] movement argued for the inerrancy of the autographs alone" (Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 27).

<sup>14</sup> See my paper, "*Sola Autographa or Sola Apographa?: A Case for the Present Perfection and Authority of the Holy Scriptures*," *The Burning Bush* 11 (2005): 3-19.

<sup>15</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 94, 106, 110, say that Biblical preservation does not mean "a perpetual activity of sustenance," "that all the words will be always available at all times," "that an absolutely perfect copy would be produced."

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, iii.

doctrine of preservation, they would answer in the negative: The Bible does not give explicit but only “implicit teaching” on preservation.<sup>17</sup> An “*implicit* teaching?” How can such a vital doctrine as the preservation of Scripture be “implicit?” Is it God’s nature to keep His words uncertain and unclear to us? If the teaching on the preservation of the saints is explicit (Matt 10:22, Mark 13:13, John 10:28, Rom 8:30-39, Phil 2:12-13), how can the teaching on the preservation of the Scriptures be implicit? If we cannot be sure of God’s perfect preservation of every single one of His inspired words, how can we be sure of God’s perfect preservation of every single one of His saints, that none would be lost? Surely, we cannot! By saying that the Bible does not teach clearly the preservation of Scripture, these neo-fundamentalists have not only undermined the perspicuity of Scripture and the preservation of the saints, but even more so the omnipotence of God.

**They say, “God has providentially preserved His written Word.”** Although they say that God has “providentially preserved His written Word,” they do not believe that He did it *supernaturally*. According to them, the Bible “does not support supernatural preservation.”<sup>18</sup> In their mind, only the inspiration of Scripture was supernatural, not its preservation; God was careful in inspiration, but somehow careless in preservation. Does this make sense? Is it not contradictory to speak of God in such a way? Why would God want to inspire His words supernaturally without wanting to preserve them in the same way? They oppose my citing of Psalm 12:6-7 to prove the VPP of God’s inspired words, but fail to interact with the faithful exegesis of the divine intent in the infallible and inerrant Hebrew text offered by Biblical preservationists.<sup>19</sup> Instead they cite commentator after commentator, commentary after commentary as though these commentators and commentaries are infallible and inerrant.<sup>20</sup>

**It has to be pointed out that when these neo-fundamentalists say that God has “providentially preserved” His written Word,** they mean His general providence and not special providence. There is a significant distinction between the two. General providence refers to God’s *indirect* intervention in the maintenance and sustenance of all things through the *laws of nature* (Ps 104:10-30). Special providence, on the other hand, speaks of God’s *direct* intervention in the protection and preservation of certain things through *extraordinary acts of miracles* (Ps 91:1-16). The providential preservation of the Scriptures falls under the latter category. The Westminster Confession of Faith speaks of God’s preservation of Scripture in terms of “His singular care and providence.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, God Himself, in His very own inscrutable ways without the limitations inherent in secondary causality, guarantees that every iota of His written words would be “kept pure in all ages.” E F Hills wrote, “If we believe that the New Testament Scriptures are the infallibly inspired Word of God, then it is logical for us to believe that God has preserved this written Word by His *special* providence.”<sup>22</sup>

**The rejection of the *special* providential preservation of Scripture has led neo-fundamentalists to conclude that preservation “exists in the totality of the ancient language manuscripts of that revelation.”** Ask them precisely where in the sea of over 3,000 Hebrew manuscripts, and over 5,000 Greek manuscripts is the “very Word of God” that we possess today, and they would shrug their shoulders and say, “I don’t know and I can’t tell.” But they are sure of one thing, that some of the inspired words of God could be lost at any given period of time. They say, “God’s

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Khoo, “The Emergence of Neo-Fundamentalism,” 29-31; Suan-Yew Quek, “Did God Promise to Preserve His Words? Interpreting Psalm 12:6-7,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 96-99; Thomas Strouse, “The Permanent Preservation of God’s Words, Psalm 12:6,7,” in *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, ed Kent Brandenburg (El Sobrante: Pillar & Ground, 2003), 29-34.

<sup>20</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God’s Word in Our Hands*, 86.

<sup>21</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith*, I:VIII.

<sup>22</sup> Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1977), 36-7. Emphasis mine.

promises for the preservation of His words do not apparently necessitate the availability of that written Word at every moment in history. It is therefore possible for a portion of His words to be unavailable [or lost] at a point in time.”<sup>23</sup>

**Since the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words could be lost, it is no wonder they think in terms of the “ancient language manuscripts of that revelation.”** Who are they trying to fool? Note the words “*ancient language*” instead of “*original language*,” and “*revelation*,” instead of “*words*.” This is not by accident. By “*revelation*” they mean *only doctrines* are preserved, *not words*. And when they say “*ancient language*” they mean to include the *ancient translations* like the Septuagint (Greek version of the Hebrew OT).<sup>24</sup> This surely contradicts what Jesus said in Matthew 5:18. Just as heaven and earth have been continually existing and never at any moment “*unavailable*,” so also the divinely inspired words (not just “*that revelation*”) of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures even to their jots and tittles, *not the translated words in any version ancient or modern*.

**Having such a faulty view of biblical preservation, it is no wonder that neo-fundamentalists are ever ready to correct the Hebrew text** on the basis of a translation like the Septuagint<sup>25</sup> even when there is absolutely no evidence of a scribal error in the original text.<sup>26</sup> For instance, in 1 Samuel 13:1, every single Hebrew manuscript reads “*a year*” (*shannah*) which the KJV correctly translates as “*Saul reigned one year*.”<sup>27</sup> But neo-fundamentalists insist that “*one year*” is a scribal error even though all the preserved Hebrew apographs since the time of the inspired autographs read precisely so, “*one year*.” The logic of faith would lead a sincere Bible believer to stick to the inspired and preserved Hebrew text, but not Harding who says, “*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.*”<sup>28</sup> This is amazing! Harding is prepared to believe that “*thirty*” is the “*inspired reading*” even when there is absolutely no such “*inspired reading*” to begin with! It is like saying, “*I believe in the resurrection of Christ even when no such resurrection ever took place.*” Is this not foolish fai

**If the Bible contains such scribal errors as they say when there is absolutely none in the Hebrew Scriptures past and present,** then these must be errors committed not by the copyist or scribe, but by the writer of the inspired words himself! Unwittingly, these neo-fundamentalists have denied the verbal inspiration of Scripture, and might as well throw out their doctrine of “*inerrant autographs*.” It goes without saying that the problem with these neo-fundamentalists is in their rejection of the plain words of Scripture that teach not only its 100% inspiration but also 100% *preservation*. It is no wonder that based on their flawed belief of an imperfect Scripture which they hold in their hands, they are prepared to use a corrupt translation to correct the inspired and preserved Hebrew text in places like 1 Samuel 13:1. In so doing, are they not like the Ruckmanites whom they accuse as heretics?

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<sup>23</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 124 (parenthesis mine). For instance, on page 375, Downey says that a Hebrew word has been lost in Deuteronomy 8:3 and recovered in the Greek translation.

<sup>24</sup> Williams in his prequel (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, 4, 7), castigated those who defend the KJV as God's preserved Word in the English language, calling them “*unqualified*,” “*immature*,” and “*a cancerous sore*.” He says the KJV ought not to be exalted, but in this sequel of his, he exalts the ancient translations and puts them on par with the original language Scriptures! What hypocrisy!

<sup>25</sup> See Prabhudas Koshy, “*Did Jesus and the Apostles Rely on the Corrupt Septuagint?*,” *The Burning Bush* 10 (2004): 93-5.

<sup>26</sup> According to Harding and Shaylor, the Septuagint can be used to correct the Hebrew text “*even though we do not currently possess a Hebrew text with that reading*” (*God's Word in Our Hands*, 26, 414).

<sup>27</sup> The year is calculated not from the time of Saul's birth but his appointment as king. Matthew Poole commented, “[*Saul*] had now reigned one year, from his first election as 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” (*A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol 1 [McLean: MacDonald Publishing Company, nd], 542).

<sup>28</sup> Williams and Shaylor, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 361, emphasis mine.



**Although these neo-fundamentalists do not believe they truly have a perfect Bible today, they try to reassure themselves and their readers that they actually do:** “We are therefore certain that we possess the very Word of God.” Taking into account that what they say is not what they mean, this is but an empty and vain affirmation. It is a delusion. It must be underscored that *they do not believe in the 100% perpetual, permanent, and perfect preservation of the divinely inspired Hebrew/Aramaic Old Testament and Greek New Testament words of the Holy Scriptures*. They do not believe that “soon after the invention of printing this written Word was placed in print and became the Textus Receptus, being immediately received by believers everywhere and made the basis of faithful translations such as the King James Version.” Why this unbelief? It is because “conservative scholars, by and large, have been so brain-washed by naturalistic propaganda that they hesitate to follow this logic of faith. Some of them go to the extreme of denying that the Bible teaches the special, providential preservation of the Scriptures. According to them, apparently, it is theoretically possible that the true New Testament text has been lost.”<sup>29</sup>

**Hills’s words continue to ring true and accurately describe the neo-fundamentalists of the BJU mould,** “there is a growing number of conservative Bible teachers who go around saying that all New Testament texts and versions are good enough and that controversy concerning them is much ado about nothing, a tempest in a teapot. They justify this position by maintaining that the object of God’s providential preservation of the Scriptures was not to preserve the precise words of the original Scriptures but merely the substance of their doctrine, their essential teaching. According to these teachers, the substance of doctrine, the essential teaching, is found in all the New Testament manuscripts, even the worst, and in all translations, even the most inaccurate. Hence, they conclude happily, there’s nothing to worry about. Choose any version you please.”<sup>30</sup> This is precisely the tragedy we see in BJU and other fundamentalist colleges and churches today.

## **Achilles’ Heel of Neo-Fundamentalism**

**The neo-fundamentalists say they are sure that the Bible is preserved for us.** However, their very own words incriminate them. The Bible to them is only 99.9% preserved, not 100%. They believe that some of the inspired, original language words have been lost and still nowhere to be found.

**These neo-fundamentalist writers want their readers to believe that they do believe in Biblical preservation when they in fact do not.** Their past denial of Biblical preservation as a fundamental doctrine taught in the Scriptures and their present affirmation of the same without recanting and repenting of their error is deceptive and creates confusion all the more. It is important to realise that it was the Textus Receptus KJVists and not the Critical Text modern versionists who first championed the sorely neglected doctrine of the VPP of Scripture of true Fundamental Protestantism as expressed in the Presbyterian Westminster Confession (1645) and Baptist New Hampshire Confession (1833).

**What kind of Bible do we have in our hands?** *According to BJU and neo-fundamentalists, what we have in our hands is a once-upon-a-time inspired, but not happily-ever-after preserved Bible.* Since the Bible today is not without spot and blemish, it may no longer be deemed infallible and inerrant, or perfect in every way, not in any manuscript, family of manuscripts, text or translation. “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps 11:3).

**This is the Achilles’ heel of neo-fundamentalism:** (1) The Bible though 100% inspired is not 100% preserved. Therefore, there is no such thing as a 100% perfect Bible today, not in any text, not in any translation. (2) The 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century Westcott-Hort and Critical Text is superior to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century Traditional Text

<sup>29</sup> Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 37.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

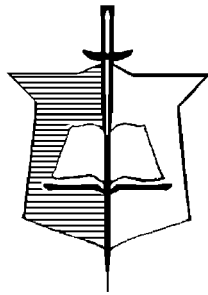
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or Textus Receptus. Therefore, the Reformers and the Reformation saints have all used the wrong Bible. (3) The KJV is good, but the modern versions are better. Therefore, replace the KJV with the modern versions.

**The above neo-deism spells the death knell for BJU.** We can see the neo-evangelicals cheering the neo-fundamentalists on to the finish line. If they do not stop their undermining of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures underlying the KJV, they will sooner or later deny not only the VPP but also the VPI of Scripture. *What a fellowship, what a view so blind, leaning on the ever-lethal arms of liberal scholarship!*

**Unless Biblical fundamentalists are fully committed to the twin doctrines of the VPI and VPP of Scripture,** and wholeheartedly defend the traditional and preserved text on which the KJV is based, they will gradually melt and blend into the neo-evangelical and liberal crowd. The backsliding and downgrading is already taking place. The warning is hereby sounded. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt 11:15).



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