History of Received Text

The Means of Preservation

Study Pak1B

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THE ANVIL - GOD'S WORD

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I,
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed - the hammers gone.
~~ Author Unknown ~~

I. THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION IN ACTION

A. God gave Scripture to Jeremiah, Jeremiah 36:4.

1. The Scripture was already _____.
2. It was given by God to Jeremiah.
3. Jeremiah had Baruch write down the _____.

B. The earthly copy was taken to the scribes and princes, Jeremiah 36:11-16.

C. The Scripture is taken to the king, Jeremiah 36:21-23. The king destroyed the _____.

D. God gave a _____ The Scripture was preserved, Jeremiah 36:27-32.

II. GOD PRESERVED THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT THROUGH THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD AND THE HEBREW SCRIBES

The scribes had very strict rules for copying the Scripture.

A. Parchments must be made from the skins of clean animals only.

B. Parchments must be prepared by Jews only.

C. Parchments must be bound together by strings taken from clean animals only.

D. Each column of writing must have between 48 and 60 lines only. Rolls must have the same number of columns consistently throughout, and each column was to be exactly 30 letters wide.

E. Each column must be lined first, and if 3 words were written down without a line, the whole copy is made worthless and destroyed.

F. The fifth Book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line.

G. Ink must be black only, and made to a recipe.

H. Scribes must be clothed in full scribal dress.

I. No word or letter can be written from memory. The scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and must read and pronounce each word out loud before writing it.

J. Pens must be wiped reverently each time the word "God" is written.

K. The scribe must wash his whole body before writing the Name of God (Jehovah).

L. Strict rules apply dealing with the use of the pen, shapes of the letters, and spaces between letters, words, and sections.

M. Rolls must be checked and revised within 30 days, or the whole roll becomes worthless.

N. One mistake condemns the sheet.

O. Three mistakes on any page condemns the entire manuscript.

P. Every word and every letter must be counted. If one letter is missing, is added, or touches another - the whole manuscript must be destroyed.

Q. Between each consonant, a hair's breadth; between each section, the breadth of nine consonants; between each book, three lines.

III. NEW TESTAMENT PRESERVATION

The Holy Spirit, through _____, used the New Testament

priesthood _____ and _____ to preserve His word.

A. Jesus promised His word would be preserved, Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33.

B. Heretics and false teachers tried to corrupt copies of the Scripture, II Corinthians 2:17.

C. Faithful and trustworthy copies of the Scripture were read and recopied throughout the centuries.

D. Untrustworthy copies were generally rejected and as a result they were in the minority.

IV. AUTOGRAPHA AND APOGRAPHA

When theologians before the 19th Century referred to the inspiration of the originals they meant the apographa _____ not the autographa _____:

> "By the original texts, we do not mean the autographs written by the hand of Moses, of the prophets and the apostles, which certainly do not now exist. We mean their apographs which are so called because they set forth to us the word of God in the, very words of those who wrote under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit."
>
> ~~ Francis Turretin, Calvinist Theologian ~~

> "By 'original' and 'authentic' text, the Protestant orthodox do not mean the *autographa* which no one can possess but the *apographa* in the original tongue which are the source of all versions. The Jews throughout history and the church in the time of Christ regarded the Hebrew of the Old Testament as authentic and for nearly six centuries after Christ, the Greek of the New Testament was viewed as authentic without dispute. It is important to note that the Reformed orthodox insistence on the identification of the Hebrew and Greek texts alone authentic does not demand direct reference to *autographa* in those languages: the "original and authentic text" of Scripture means, beyond the autograph copies, the legitimate tradition of Hebrew and Greek *apographa.* The case for Scripture as an infallible rule of faith and practice and the separate arguments for a received text free from major (non-scribal) error rests on an examination of the *apographa* and does not seek the infinite regress of the lost autographa as a prop for textual infallibility."
>
> ~~ Richard Muller, Reformed Church historian ~~

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