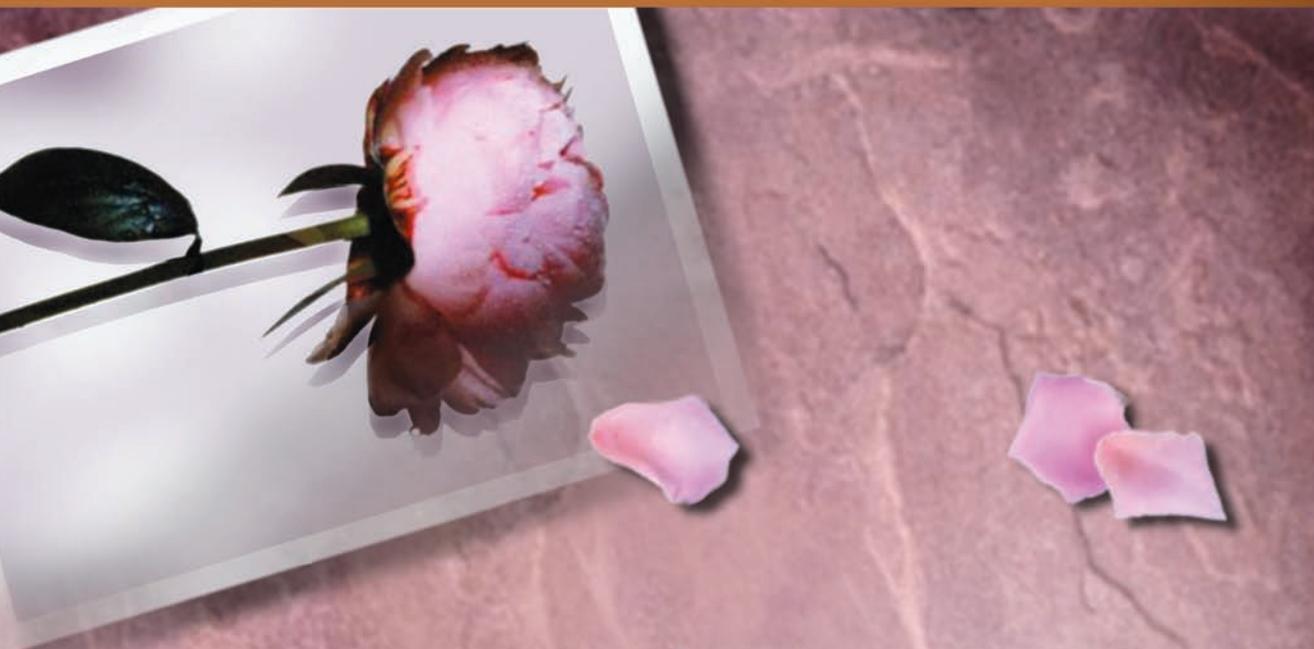


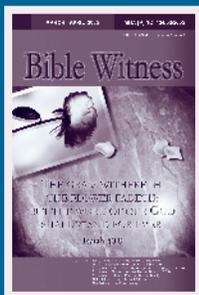
Bible Witness



THE GRASS WITHERETH,
THE FLOWER FADETH:
BUT THE WORD OF OUR **GOD**
SHALL STAND FOR EVER.

Isaiah 40:8

Articles Inside: Jesus on Perfect Preservation of The Bible
The Canonisation and Preservation of Scripture
God's Word is Perfect and Pure, Sure and True (Psalm 19:7-10)
God's Word: The Incorruptible Seed (1 Peter 1:23-25)
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The Gethsemane Care Ministry



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Singapore

Printer

Chung Printing

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SUBSCRIPTIONS INFORMATION

1 year subscriptions (6 issues)

All rates inclusive of postage

Singapore / Malaysia: S\$14.00

International

*Surface Mail: S\$16.00

*Air Mail: S\$24.00 (Asia)

S\$30.00 (All Other Countries)

International bank draft, money order or postal order drawn on a Singapore bank in Singapore dollars may be made payable to "Bible Witness."

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JESUS ON PERFECT PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

Quek Suan Yew

The two most important passages that record Jesus' words on the perfect preservation of the Scriptures are Matthew 5:17-18 and Matthew 24:35. However, in these days many claim that these passages do not refer to the perfect preservation of the Bible. So, we shall revisit these passages and learn what they teach us.

Matthew 5:17-18

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Meaning of some key words

The word "**think**" (*nomisete*) means "to suppose, assume, to regard or acknowledge as custom, to have and hold as customary." Its verbal form is aorist subjunctive, and when it is used with the Greek word for "not" (*me*), it forbids the initiation of an action. Hence, we know that the Lord Jesus Christ was saying, "Do not even begin to think ..."

The word "**destroy**" (*chatalusai*) comes from a root word, which indicates the

act of demolishing something, just as one would demolish a building, which is already in existence. Jesus states absolutely that He did not come to destroy or demolish the Word of God.

The word "**fulfil**" (*plerasai*) means "to fill out, complete, make perfect, accomplish an end." So the Lord Jesus "did not come to demolish" but "to make complete or perfect."

The word "**pass**" (*parelthe*) is used metaphorically to mean "pass away, perish," and also in an absolute sense in a general way. That means, heaven and earth may perish, but God's Word shall never perish!

The phrase "**no wise**" (*ou me*) is a double negative with the aorist subjunctive of *parelthe*. This is an emphatic future negation. The aorist subjunctive with the double negative "*ou me*" is used to strongly deny that something will happen. The word "never" may be used in the translation.

The word "**fulfilled**" (2nd aorist 3rd person singular subjunctive of *genetai*) has the following meanings, "to have come into existence" or "simply to be." In the aorist and perfect, it has the

sense of “to have begun to be, to have come into existence, meaning simply to be, to exist.” This tells us that every jot and tittle of God’s Word will continue to exist from the moment it comes into existence with an emphasis on its eternal existence.

Explaining Matthew 5:17-18

From the context of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 to 7), the meaning of Matthew 5:17-18 is that Jesus emphatically pointed out to the assembly gathered at the Mount that they must never begin to think that He came to destroy the law or the prophets. The law had been grossly abused and misinterpreted and misapplied by the religious leaders at that time. The purpose of Jesus’ coming was never to destroy the law and the prophets (Jesus was referring to the words of God in the Apographs because the Autographs were not in existence at that time after more than 1,400 years) but to fulfil, i.e., to complete. For with great certainty, Jesus said that even till heaven

and earth are completely destroyed, one jot (smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) or one tittle (the tiny little extension of the letter “daleth” in the Hebrew alphabet) of God’s law shall never (use of the double negative “ou” and “me” for emphasis) pass away or perish till all come to pass or come into existence, i.e., as KJV rightly translated it “be fulfilled.” The finality and degree of God’s preservation extends beyond the words! It even includes the smallest letter and the tiny little extension of the letter “daleth” in the Hebrew alphabet.

Matthew 5:17-18 clearly teaches the doctrine of perfect preservation! How can God’s Word be fulfilled if its words can be lost? Jesus said that it shall never be destroyed, even when heaven and earth are destroyed. Heaven and earth have only the appearance of eternity when compared to the Word of God. The minute details of every word of God even to the smallest letter of the alphabet, including the tiny parts of the letters, will remain forever! No part, including the smallest part of God’s Word,

will ever be lost or destroyed! (The Lord Jesus Christ is not referring to someone who burns the Bible. Someone was foolish enough to think that the Word of God can be destroyed if he burns the whole Bible! If God’s Word does not, at least, last as long as this present heaven and this present earth, which will one day be destroyed by fire, then Jesus would be wrong to make such an assertion with regard to the eternity of His Word. But Jesus is most definitely not wrong!)



The contrast is between the largest (heaven and earth) which will perish (be destroyed) and the smallest (jot and tittle) which will not perish (never be destroyed or lost). The preservation and promise from the Lord Jesus Christ is that even the minutest detail of His Word (no such thing as insignificant and significant) will be fulfilled, i.e., nothing will be lost but all will be preserved even when heaven and earth pass away!

Matthew 24:35

Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Mark 13:31 and Luke 21:33 repeat this promise word for word. The promise is found in all three synoptic gospels in the same context of the Second Coming of Christ for a triple emphasis and a treble confirmation.

Meaning of some key words

The first "pass away" comes from *pareleusontai*. When heaven and earth pass away in the future, the words of God shall not! Note the plurality of "words" which emphasizes "all the words."

The second "pass away" comes from *parelthosi*. The use of the aorist subjunctive of the verb with the double negative, "*ou me*," means "to strongly deny that something will ever happen." The word "never" may be used in the translation. The double negative with the subjunctive makes the statement an emphatic future negation. This means that the words (plural, not just the "word"—singular, in the general

sense) shall never, never pass away, i.e., be lost or perish!

Explaining Matthew 24:35

The two Greek words for "pass away" have the same root as Matthew 5:17-18 (*parechomai*) which means "to perish" in the absolute way. The immediate context is on the two questions posed by the disciples to the Lord Jesus Christ. When will the destruction of the temple (Herod's temple) and the sign of Christ's coming and of the end of the world (cf. Matthew 24:1-3) be? Jesus tells His disciples and all future disciples that even that which appears so eternal, like the heaven and the earth, will not outlast God's words. They will perish first. Does that mean that after heaven and earth have perished, God's words would also perish? God forbid! Jesus adds with a definite adversative "but" for contrast, "*my words shall not pass away*." The use of the double negative with the aorist subjunctive means that even when heaven and earth are destroyed, God's words, to the last letter, including jot and tittle, will never pass away or perish or be lost! In other words, to restate it positively, God's words will forever be preserved in its minutest detail!



Can Matthew 24:35 mean that only the prophecies concerning the Second Coming of Christ would not perish but the rest of God's Word could perish or be lost? Limiting the meaning of what Jesus said in Matthew 24:35 to His Second Coming prophecies only is to commit the

hermeneutical fallacy of wooden literalism. It is like saying that 2 Timothy 3:16¹ refers only to Paul's second epistle to Timothy since the immediate context refers to that letter alone and not the whole Bible. Or can it be that it refers to the Old Testament only since most of the New Testament was not written yet? Would one then say that the rest of the New Testament Scripture which has not been written yet, e.g. the Gospel of John, the three Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation, were all not inspired? Of course not! In addition, when the Apostle John warned that no one must add to or subtract from God's Holy Word,² is it correct then to conclude, using the woodenly literal method of interpretation, that it only warns against the adding to and subtracting from the Book of Revelation and not the other 65 books of the Bible? It goes without saying that interpreting the Scriptures in such a way is preposterous!

By the application of proper hermeneutical principles, the inspiration of God's Word would definitely include the entire Bible! Using the same understanding, anyone who adds to God's Word (any part of God's Word including Revelation) will face the judgment of God. Anyone who subtracts from any part of God's Word would have his name removed from the Book of Life. Likewise, the perfect preservation of God's Word as taught in Matthew 24:35 includes the words of Christ regarding His Second

Coming as well as all the Words (every jot and tittle) of the entire Bible.

Conclusion

When one begins with God and His wisdom, then it is easy to see that the Bible clearly teaches that God has promised to preserve for us His inerrant, infallible and divinely inspired Word, even to the very jot and tittle.

It is important to understand that the doctrine of the perfect or special providential preservation of Scripture is not based upon the knowledge of the process but only on the Word of God. The Bible says that God has preserved and will continue to preserve His Holy Word. What God says and what God does must be perfect. To argue that one must know the process first before one can believe that the Word of God is perfectly preserved is very dangerous. This line of argument is based upon modernistic rationalism where man's reason is supreme. If man cannot understand or explain it, then it cannot be true. Man can never understand the process of inspiration, yet it is true because God says that it is true. The final product is not the words of man but the very Word of God. Faith is to believe in what God says, period. There is no necessity to know the process first before believing.



¹ "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

² Revelation 22:18-19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

THE CANONISATION AND PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE

Jeffrey Khoo

There are Christians who wrongly think that the Bible is only infallible and inerrant in the past but no longer infallible and inerrant today. They say that the church today does not have all the words God has “breathed out” for His people (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Such a view undermines the very foundation of the Christian Faith. If the church today does not have an infallible and inerrant Bible, then how can we know for sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? If we do not have every inspired word of the Holy Scriptures today, then how can we obey Jesus’ command that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4)?

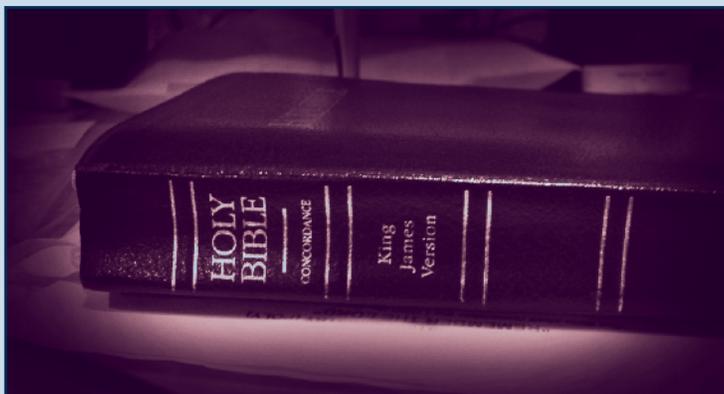
It is disturbing that so-called Christians today, even conservative or fundamental ones, do not and cannot believe they have in their possession a perfect Bible, infallible and inerrant. They would rather accept the false teaching that the Bible is no longer infallible and inerrant; that God did not preserve His words perfectly to the jot and tittle; that some of God’s inspired

words have been lost and remain lost. According to them, it is simply “foolish faith” to believe in the perfect preservation of the divinely inspired Scriptures.

The New Testament comprises a total of 27 books with 140,521 words that God has inspired and preserved throughout the ages according to His promise, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18); “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35; Luke 21:33; Mark 13:31). By faith in God’s unfailing promise, every sincere Christian ought to believe that he has a perfect Bible today.

How do we know this? In the same way that God worked in history to preserve and identify for us the 27 canonical books of the Greek New Testament, God has also preserved and identified for us the 140,521

inspired words of the Greek New Testament in the time of the 16th century Protestant Reformation. It is important to understand that God’s



special providential work can involve a closure, a terminus. All the inspired New Testament books were completed by A.D. 100 when the Apostle John wrote the last book of Revelation, and God warned against adding to or subtracting from His Written Word in Revelation 22:18-19. We also know that in the first few centuries, there were uninspired men who penned spurious writings and passed them off as Scripture. Some of these were the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Epistle of Barnabas, etc. These false and heretical books threatened to confuse and overthrow the truly inspired books of Scripture. Nevertheless, God would never allow any of the inspired books of Scripture to be lost or obscured during the process of biblical canonisation (i.e., the precise identification and authoritative listing of the divinely inspired books of the New Testament). The Holy Spirit providentially guided the church in His own special way to identify the 27 books which we accept today as our New Testament Canon, no more, no less. There was a terminus to the canonisation of Scripture at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397.

In like manner, the Lord allowed copyist errors and corruptions to enter into the transmission process through the pen of fallible scribes. Nevertheless, His special providential hand kept His inspired words from being lost. By virtue of God's special providence, that nothing happens by chance, and that history is under His sovereign control, in the fulness of time—in the most opportune time of the Reformation when the true church separated from the false, when the study of the original languages was emphasised, and the printing press invented (which meant that no longer would there be any need to handcopy the Scriptures thereby ensuring a uniform text)—God restored

from out of a pure stream of preserved Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the purest Hebrew and Greek Text of all—the Text that underlies our KJV—that accurately reflects the original Scriptures.

That the special providential preservation of Scripture sees its historical parallel in the special providential canonisation of Scripture was Dean Burgon's thinking as well. Dr E. F. Hills wrote of Burgon: "Burgon ... never lost sight of the special providence of God which has presided over the transmission of the New Testament down through the ages, expressly set out to maintain against all opponents that the Church was divinely guided to reject the false readings of the early centuries, and to gradually accept the true text. He denied that he was claiming a perpetual miracle that would keep manuscripts from being depraved at various times, and in various places. But "The Church in her collective capacity, has nevertheless—as a matter of fact—been perpetually purging herself of those shamefully depraved copies which once everywhere abounded within her pale' (*The Revision Revised*, 334-5). He believed that just as God gradually settled the *Canon* of the New Testament by weaning His churches from non-canonical books, so He did with the *Text* also."

The God of the Bible is an all-powerful and all-knowing God, and this God cannot fail to preserve His inspired words to the last iota according to His promise, so that His people at every age, even today, can say with absolute certainty that they have in their possession a 100% perfect Bible, infallible and inerrant; and can tell precisely where all His divinely inspired words are providentially preserved to the glory of His Name.

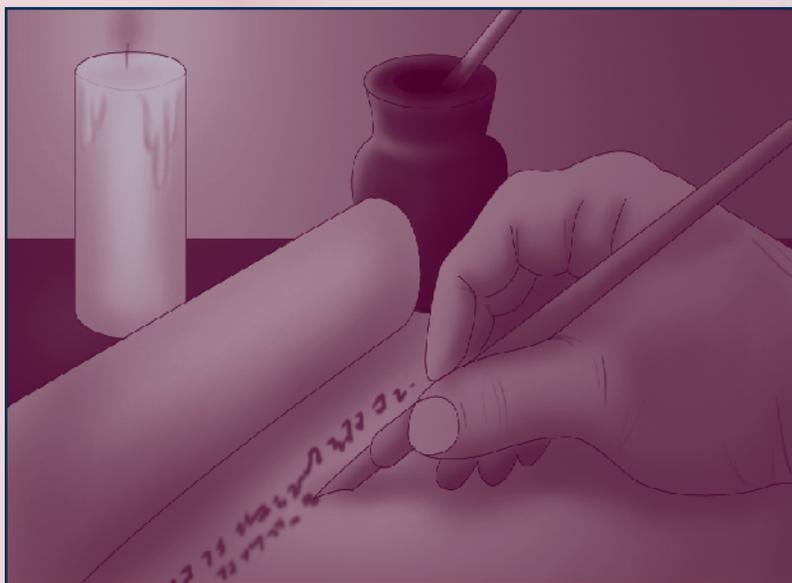


GOD'S WORD IS PERFECT AND PURE, SURE AND TRUE (PSALM 19:7-10)

George Skariah

Introduction

What is the standard of purity of God's words? Is it ninety-nine percent pure or ninety-nine point nine percent pure or one hundred percent pure? There are several adjectives and nouns used in the Scriptures describing the standard of purity of God's words. Psalm 12:6 says, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." The psalmist in Psalm 119:140 says, "Thy word is very pure." Again, Psalm 19:7-9 says, "The law of the LORD is perfect, . . . The statutes of the LORD are right, . . . The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." Not only the Old Testament explains the perfection of God's words, but also the New Testament. Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:15, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Another important verse is John 17:17, where the Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, "Thy word is truth." These passages



describe the absolute purity of God's words. Here we will consider one of these passages: Psalm 19:7-10.

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

⁹The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Context

Psalm 19 generally speaks of the glory of the Lord. In the first part of this Psalm (vv. 1-6), the psalmist praises the great Giver of the law and thus prepares for the expression of the glory of the law which comes from the hand of such a great Author. Psalm 19 can be outlined as follows:



- a) The glory of the Lawgiver (vv. 1-6).
- b) The glory of the law in its manifold uses (vv. 7-10).
- c) The law in relation to the psalmist (vv. 11-14).

Having stated the glory of the Lawgiver, which has been revealed in His handiwork, the psalmist turns to declaring the glory of the law. Much emphasis is given to the revelation of God in His law, as he attaches it to God's covenant name, "Yahweh" (the LORD).

The Excellence of God's Word (vv. 7-9)

In verses 7-9, the psalmist follows a fixed pattern in every verse: first a distinctive name for the law; then an appropriate adjective; and thereafter a beneficial effect or a characteristic.

- a) **The distinctive names for the**

law: "law," "testimony," "statutes," "commandment," "fear," and "judgments."

- b) **The descriptive adjectives:** "perfect," "sure," "right," "pure," "clean," and "righteous."
- c) **The beneficial effects:** "converting the soul," "making wise the simple," "rejoicing the heart," "enlightening the eyes," "enduring for ever," and "righteous altogether."

Verse 7 lists the first two distinctive names for the law, followed by the two adjectives, and benefits. The first line reads "the law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul." The word "law" is used here to mean "revelation" of God,

not just legislation. The phrase "the law of the LORD" indicates that the revelation is from the Covenant God, who is Yahweh. The revelation of Yahweh is described as "perfect" which means "complete, sound, wholesome, unimpaired, having integrity." God's law is perfect in the sense that it is flawless and spotless. The function of the law is "converting" or literally "restoring" the soul to God. It is to revive, refresh, and renew life and hope.

The second line reads "the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." It is important to note that God's law is called "the testimony of the LORD." God's law is His own testimony, which He Himself gives concerning His attributes, works, the glory and harmony of His mercy and truth in His dealings with men. Therefore, the psalmist describes it as "sure." It means "made firm, sure, lasting," or "confirmed, established, verified," or "reliable, faithful, trusty." This

is the word used to describe the certainty of God's covenant with David (the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:12-16) in Psalm 89:28. Therefore, God's law is raised above all doubt in its declarations. Hence, one is able to place the most perfect reliance upon it. The psalmist adds: it makes wise the simple. The simple are those who are open to the suggestions of the moment, and therefore are easily led astray. To such ones, God's Word gives a solid basis and stability by unfolding to them the great principles of eternal truth which are the fountain of all wisdom in the affairs of men (2 Timothy 3:15; also see Proverbs 1:4; 9:4).

Verse 8 lists the next two distinctive names for the law, followed by the two adjectives, and benefits. The first line reads "the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart." The statutes, literally the precepts of the LORD, is another name that the psalmist uses for the Word of the LORD. The description the psalmist adds here is "right" which also means "straight, straightforward, just, upright." This is the word used to describe the uprightness of God in Deuteronomy 32:4; and in Psalm 25:8; 92:15. God's Word is upright because it proceeds from the upright and absolutely perfect will of God. They are, therefore, rejoicing the heart. Truth, when received into one's heart, brings much delight to his heart.

A parallel thought follows in the next line of verse 8, "the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." The adjective means "pure, clean" like "a pure heart" in Psalm 24:4. It indicates that God's commandments are undefiled, unadulterated. It is ritually clean and morally right. God's commandments are pure because it is given

by a holy God. It is sanctified by Him and, therefore, it brings enlightenment to the eyes, not just enlightening one's understanding, but also one's whole being, from darkness to light (Ephesians 5:8).

Verse 9 adds two more distinctive names for the law, followed by the two adjectives, and benefits. First, the psalmist says, "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever." The psalmist calls the revelation of God "fear." It is not the fear of God as an act performed, but as a precept, it is what God's revelation demands. God's Word reveals the way in which God is to be feared. In Psalm 34:11, the psalmist says, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD" (see also Proverbs 15:33; Deuteronomy 17:19). The psalmist describes "the fear of the LORD" as "clean" which also means "pure." This word, as an adjective, is used to mean: (1) pure in a physical sense, as opposed to filthy, soiled (used of gold in Exodus 25:11); (2) pure in a ceremonial sense, as opposed to that which is profane (used of animals for sacrifice in Leviticus 13:17; 14:4); and (3) pure in a moral sense (used of heart in Psalm 51:10; Proverbs 22:11). All of these ideas can be applied here. God's revelation is sacramentally and morally pure and separate.

The same word is used in Psalm 12:6 to describe the purity of God's Word as compared with the purity of silver tried in a furnace of earth: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." This explains the absolute purity of God's revelation. In the context of Psalm 12, the psalmist is contrasting the words of the ungodly with the words of God. The words of the ungodly

are described as "vanity" (v. 2), "flattering" (v. 2), and "double heart[ed]" (v. 2). In contrast to their words, the LORD's words are described as "pure" (v. 6).

Because God's Word is undefiled and unadulterated, the psalmist says, it endures for ever. This was what Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." God's Word stands through all eternity. No word, even one jot or tittle, will ever pass away from it.

The next line reads "the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." God's law is called the judgments of the LORD because it is through the revelation of God that He establishes His justice. The judgments are "true." The word "true" here expresses sureness and utter dependability of God's Word. God's revelation is His truth and therefore it is true and faithful. Since God's Word is true, the psalmist adds, it is righteous altogether.

The Exceeding Preciousness of God's Word (v. 10)

Having dealt with the remarkable perfection and the immense value of God's Word, the psalmist now comes to his concluding remark on the issue. He now explains the absolute desirability and sweetness of the law. The immense value of the Word has been brought into view by comparing it with the most precious things which men seek

after: gold, honey, and honeycomb. Gold is one of the most costly items and most sought after by many. Honey and honeycomb (the finest of the honey) symbolize sweetness that gives the most delightful enjoyment to man. The psalmist says that God's commandments are exceedingly more precious than gold or the sweetest of honey. Therefore, he desires God's commandments in his life above all the precious things of earthly life (Psalm 119:127).

Conclusion

All the six adjectives and benefits of God's Word together describe the excellency of God's revelation. God's revelation is absolutely perfect, sure, right, pure, clean and true. These descriptions symbolize the very nature of God.

God's Word reflects the nature of God because it is His Word, His revelation to man. Hence it always remains perfect, sure, right, pure, clean and true. Therefore, it is able to: (1) convert the soul of men; (2) make wise the simple; (3) make the heart of men rejoice; and (4) enlighten the eyes of men. Only the Word of the LORD is able to accomplish these things in the life of a sinful man, who is saved by His grace and mercy. The Word that is perfect and pure, sure and true is the most powerful instrument of God to work in the lives of His children so that their lives will be converted and transformed to the likeness of the Master.



GOD'S WORD: THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED

(1 PETER 1:23-25)

Ephrem Chiracho Ouchula

The Word of God has never left us to speculate about its nature and work. The Holy Scripture bears sufficient witness to its fundamental characteristics that are eternal by nature. In 1 Peter 1:23-25, the Apostle Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has written about the nature of the Holy Scriptures. May the Spirit of God illumine our minds to unravel the gems of truths concerning God's Word that are mentioned in this passage.

1. God's Incorruptible Word Gives New Birth

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. . ." (v. 23a).

The Word of God is the "seed" that brings new life (cf. Luke 8:11). There is an inherent divine power in the Word of God that brings about spiritual birth in the hearts of sinners who receive it by faith (cf. James 1:18; Romans 1:16-17; 10:17). Just as God accomplished the creation of all things by the power of His Word, He also designed to accomplish re-creation of man in Christ Jesus through His incorruptible Word (cf. Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 11:3). As the preached Gospel is heard (v. 25b), the Holy Spirit releases the dynamic power of the Word of God to bring about salvation (cf. Romans 1:16; Titus 3:5). The supernatural

work of regeneration by means of the Word enables believers to purify themselves, believe and obey the truth, love the brethren, and motivate them to accomplish their Christian duties. And this change in their lives will be permanent, because it takes place through God's Word, which is imperishable, living and enduring (v. 23b, 25a). The saving power of the Word of God is enduring and that is only because the Bible remains intact through the ages and changes of time. This is what is affirmed by 1 Peter 1:23-25.

2. God's Word Is the Incorruptible Seed

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. . ." (v. 23a).

Here the word used for "incorruptible" in the original language of the New Testament Scripture is *aphthartos*, the same word that is used in 1 Peter 1:4 to describe the imperishable nature of the believer's eternal inheritance. This Greek word refers to something that is not liable to corruption or decay, i.e., uncorrupted, or imperishable. The same word is used to describe the incorruptible nature of the Almighty God in 1 Timothy 1:17. This implies clearly that as much as God's nature is incorruptible, so is His Written Word. Thus, the Word of God shares in the character of its Author. God's

Word is not liable to corruption because its Author has set His seal of protection over it (cf. Psalm 12:6-7). The word *aphthartos* is also used to refer to the eternal life and the resurrection bodies of believers (Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:52). Again, the implication is that God's Word is beyond any possibility of corruption. Thus, the Scripture firmly declares that the Word of God is incorruptible as its Author, the eternal God Himself, is incorruptible. Thus, Peter declares that God's Word is preserved beyond any corruption. What great comfort and assurance can every child of the living and true God draw from this truth!

3. God's Incorruptible Word Lives and Abides Forever

"The word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (vv. 23b-25a).

Peter further describes the incorruptible Word of God as that "which liveth and abideth for ever" (v. 23b; cf. Hebrews 4:12). Grammatically, the adjectives "liveth and abideth" could refer either to "God" or to the "Word of God." But the context strongly argues for the latter. The contrast being made here is between the frailty of man and the permanence of God's Word that saved him (vv. 24-25). This is confirmed by the illustration in verse 24 and the restatement of this truth in

verse 25a. Thus, the statement in verse 23b again reinforces the fact that God's Word abides eternally intact beyond any possibility of corruption. It answers the question: "How long does God's Word remain pure and uncontaminated?" It lives and abides intact forever. As much as God is eternally immutable, so is His Word. The verb "abide" implies "to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy," meaning to continue or endure without any change of state.

Thus God's Word retains its vital and efficacious power of regenerating and sanctifying souls forever. And the Word does not lose its life-giving power because it is eternally whole, incorruptible and unchanging. Truly, the word of God is the everlasting truth; it is so in its nature, and also in its effects in regenerating and sanctifying our souls. Therefore, as much as we are sure of the eternal preservation of the Word of our God, we are sure of the eternal security of the salvation of our souls.



4. God's Incorruptible Word Does Not Fall Away

To reiterate and illustrate the unchanging and indestructible nature of God's Word, Peter quoted Isaiah 40:6-8. Isaiah was giving consolation to the exiles of Israel to trust in God's Word through which they received the promise of a future restoration and glory. The Apostle Peter was also speaking to the believers in the Diaspora (cf. 1 Peter 1:1) to reaffirm the surety of their salvation and future glory that are built upon God's permanent Word. Peter, having declared that God's Word lives and abides intact forever, now contrasts these characteristics of the Word with the defencelessness of man. He asserts that "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." Every man and his riches, wisdom, power and glory will fade away like the flower of grass. But once he is born-again by the Word of God, he will be made a new creature, and his glory will not fade like a flower, but shine like an angel of God in heaven (cf. Daniel 12:3). Our evangelistic efforts must be centred upon the Word of

God and our lifestyle must back its power and trustworthiness (Philippians 2:14-16; Matthew 5:13-16).

In sharp contrast to man's frailty, Peter affirms that "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (v. 25). The Word of God is fixed, and permanent. Amidst all the revolutions on earth, all the natural objects continue to fade in glory. But against all hostility and destructive powers, His truth remains unaffected. Its glory, beauty, power, and efficacy remain unabated forever because it is the incorruptible seed that God gave for man's salvation, sanctification and edification. And it is this same Word which is preached unto us by the Gospel (v. 25). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is as lovely now as it was when it was first revealed to man. This is the foundation of our faith. The fact that God's Word stands unchanged and unchanging through all ages, gives us the surety that God's precious promises to us, even the whole of God's Word, stands forever; and so is our salvation that is produced by it and our faith that is built on this eternally incorruptible Word of God.



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"For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

GOD'S WORD IS SETTLED FOREVER

(PSALM 119:89)

George Skariah

Introduction

How long does the purity of the Word last? Does it last only for one generation, the generation that received the inspired Word? or does it continue to remain holy, perfect, pure, and true, even for the generations to come? There are several scriptural passages that talk about God's Word being preserved for ever. Psalm 12:6-7 says, "The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." The same thought has been echoed in several other portions of the Scripture. The psalmist in Psalm 119 says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (verse 89); "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever" (verse 152); and "Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever" (verse 160). In Isaiah 40:8, the prophet says, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." The Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:23-25, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the

Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." In this article, Psalm 119:89 will be discussed in detail.

Context

Psalm 119 is the *locus classicus*, when it comes to the doctrine of the preservation of the Bible. This is the longest psalm with 176 verses and the most elaborate of the Alphabetical Psalms. It consists of twenty-two groups of eight verses each. The first group has all its verses beginning with the Hebrew letter Aleph, the second with Beth, and so on alphabetically. The Masoretes observed that in every verse of this psalm, except verse 122, there is direct reference to the Word of God, using one of these ten terms; law, way, testimony, precept, statute, commandments, judgment, word, saying, and truth. Along with several themes concerning the Word of God, the psalmist, in this psalm, talks about the nature of God's Word (see vv. 89, 144, 152, 160). There are several verses that talk about God's Word as true/truth (vv. 142, 151, 160).

The immediate context (vv. 81-88) is all about comfort from God's Word in times of affliction. In this section, the psalmist shows how he was comforted by faith in God's eternal Word while he was

under persecution. For that reason, he commends the worth of God's Word. His commendation of God's Word is based on four reasons: (1) the stability of God's Word in heaven (v. 89); (2) the durable usefulness of it in every age of the church (v. 90a); (3) by God's Word, the earth is established (vv. 90b, 91); and (4) his own experience of deriving comfort and strength from God's Word in his affliction (v. 92).

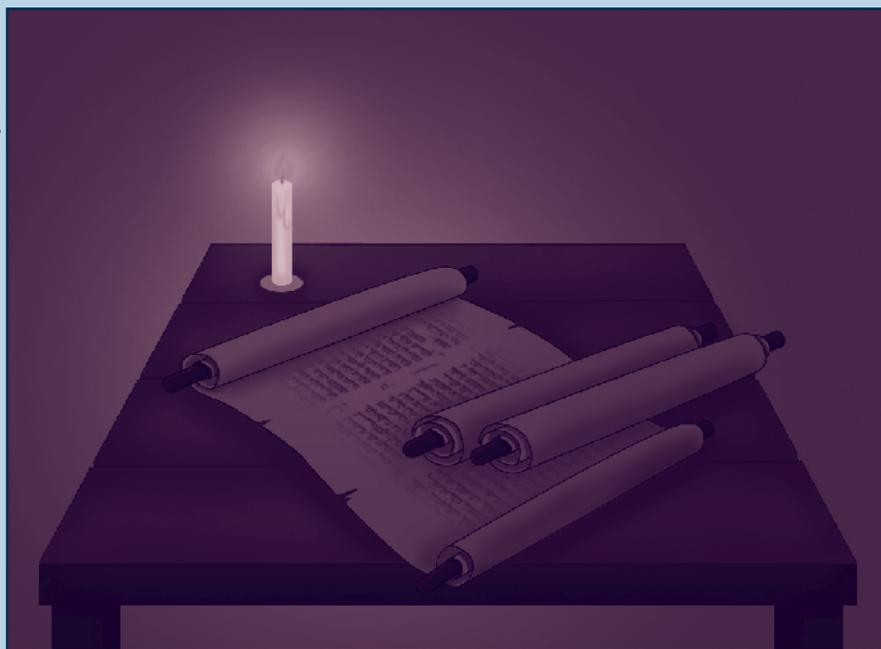
The Eternal Nature of God's Word (v. 89)

The psalmist says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven." Significantly, the psalmist places "for ever" in the beginning of the sentence, followed by "O LORD" in the vocative, together adding great emphasis to the statement. The adverb "for ever" indicates

indefiniteness of time. It is used in relation to God's everlasting covenant (Genesis 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19; Exodus 31:16), God's law (Isaiah 59:21; Psalm 119:160), God's promises (promised dynasty of David: 2 Samuel 7:13, 16, 26), His relations with His people (1 Chronicles 29:18; Psalm 45:17), Messianic reign (Psalm 110:4; Isaiah 9:6), etc. Here it is used to express the extent of the preservation of God's Word, i.e., "for ever," a time that is indefinite in its extent. The same adverb is also used in verses like

Psalm 12:7; 119:152, 160; Isaiah 40:8; 59:21 (also in 1 Peter 1:23, 25), all referring to the same topic.

That which is settled for ever is "thy word." What does it refer to? Some people believe that it is "a general designation for God's communication, whether spoken or written, although the vast majority of its uses have direct application to the spoken, not the written word" (James G. Williams, *God's Word in Our Hands*, 90-91). Without much objection, one may accept that "word" could



mean word spoken by God since it has "speech" as its lexical meaning along with "word." However, this in no way minimizes one's understanding of "word" as God's written Word because the written Word of God is His breathed-out words.

The prophets in the Old Testament frequently used this word, especially the construct phrase "the Word of the LORD" or its counterpart "the Word of God" to refer to God's revelation which they received from

the Lord and also to that which is already written. (For example, see the superscriptions of the prophetic books such as Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1; Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1; and Malachi 1:1; also see 1 Chronicles 17:3.) When the Apostle Peter talks about the written Word of God ("prophecy of the scripture") in 2 Peter 1:20-21, he refers to it as the Word that was spoken, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."

Significantly, the psalmist mentions the other synonyms such as "ordinances," "law," "precepts," "testimonies," etc. in the same section, all referring to the written Word of God. The psalmist, in Psalm 119, constantly uses these synonyms along with "word" to refer to the written revelation of God.

The psalmist uses the verb "settled", which has the root meaning of "to set, to put, to place." It is in passive form (Niphal stem), and hence, "to be put, set." So, it has the sense of to "be stationed," and "stand firm." Then the psalmist mentions the location of God's Word standing firm, "in heaven." It is the eternal habitation of the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God.

What does the psalmist assert here? The psalmist affirms that God's Word is for ever certain and sure because it is for ever set firm in the eternal heaven. Some say that this verse only talks about the "immutability of God's truth" and nothing has been said about the "durability of the text" (J. G. Williams, 92). No one challenges the fact that this

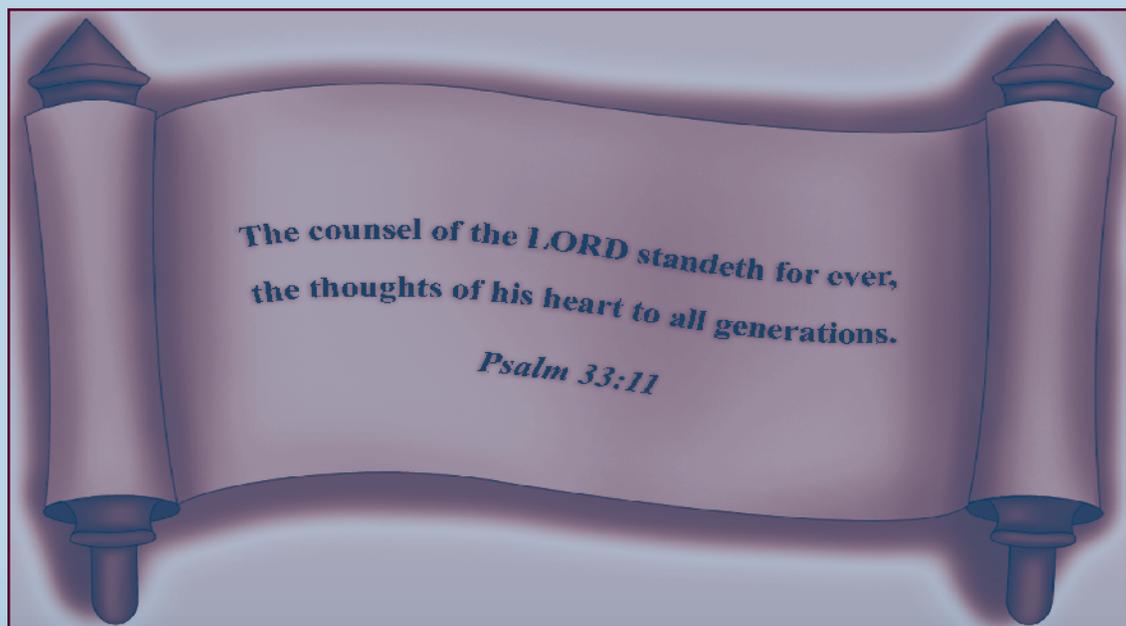
verse talks about the immutability of God's Word. However, the point here is that this verse affirms more than the immutability of God's written revelation. As noted earlier, the adverb "for ever" is placed very emphatically in the beginning of the sentence, and with the added locative "in heaven". By this, the psalmist emphasizes the durability as well. Delitzsch comments on this verse, "Eternal and imperishable in the constant verifying of itself is the vigorous and consolatory word of God, to which the poet will ever cling. It has heaven as its standing-place, and therefore it also has the qualities of heaven, and before all others, heaven-like stability" (*Psalms*, 254). Plummer adds, "However fleeting, changeable and unsatisfactory are all things merely temporal; yet the word of God is stable, unchangeable and everlasting. It depends upon his truth and faithfulness, and these are so much a part of his nature that if he were without them, he would cease to be God, vv. 89, 90, 91. The divine faithfulness has never failed" (W. S. Plummer, *Studies in the Book of Psalms*, 1060).

Some people regard what verse 89 teaches to be God preserving His Word primarily in heaven. William Barrick writes, "... God preserves His Word primarily in heaven. God's revelatory Word is fixed firmly in heaven. Regardless of what might happen to His Word on earth, it is securely preserved in His mind" ("Ancient Manuscripts and Biblical Exposition," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 9/1, 28). It is totally illogical for God to preserve His Word perfectly in heaven and never care about what is happening to His Word on earth. If God is concerned to perfectly preserve His Word in heaven, by the same token, He is also concerned to preserve His Word on earth. What is the

point of God having His perfect Word in heaven, and His church on earth having a corrupt Bible! God has given His Word to His people on earth, for their profitability—“for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Therefore, it is imperative that the church must have all of God's Word always. D. A. Waite writes along the same line, ‘Some people say, “Well, it is settled in Heaven but not on earth.” But God needs it less than we do; He knows His Word. We are the ones who need it. He is using this verse, Psalm 119:89, to show us that God has given us Words that are settled’ (*Defending the King James Bible*, 7). The Word that is settled in heaven is also available to the psalmist on earth and for that reason he commends the worth of God's Word.

Conclusion

Several points can be observed from this verse: (1) this verse begins with an emphasis on the durability of God's Word, “for ever;” (2) the psalmist then mentions the content, it is “thy word,” the Word of the LORD, the written revelation of God; (3) the verb “settled” explains the nature, it is firmly set; (4) the location is the eternal habitat of the eternal God; (5) the ever settled Word is ever available to men on earth for His faithfulness is unto all generations; and therefore (6) the church on earth has the certainty of every Word of God. For God's children, this is a comforting thought: they have all of God's revealed words in their hands. Therefore, they should love His Word and treasure it in their lives by meditating upon it every day and building their lives in accordance with God's holy oracles.



BIBLICAL SCEPTICISM OR TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

Vincent Chia

An astonishing spiritual phenomenon has taken the world by storm; it is a destructive anomaly of unparalleled proportions. The faith of innumerable Christians has been shipwrecked, and God's Word is now subjected to the scepticism of men. In the name of scholarship and manuscript evidence, men stand in judgment of the Holy Scripture. Although the tsunamis of the Andaman Sea had caused monstrous devastation in various coastal cities on 26th December 2004, this spiritual phenomenon has resulted in a spiritual blight far more extensive than any natural cataclysm. It is the phenomenon of biblical scepticism and unbelief.

Satan was the first sceptic of the Bible (Genesis 3:1); indubitably, his disciples are hidebound sceptics of Holy Scripture. From the pulpit of Satan's minions, the congregation is fed with the leaven of rationalism, worldly scholarship and philosophy. Adept at spouting forth what the world wants to hear, a fusillade of questions is directed at God's faithful defenders of His Word: Yea, hath God said that His Word is without error and incapable of errors? Yea, is God able to preserve His Word for all eternity? Yea, do we Christians have in our hands the infallible, inerrant, and inspired Word of God? From the mouths of those who claim to be the Lord's servants have come sombre allegations of errors and mistakes within the Holy Writ of Scripture.

These are the churches that say to Christ, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach" (Isaiah 4:1). Adorning the name of Christ and mouthing theological jargon to boost their credibility, the followers of this new religion called "scepticism" are attracting disciples quickly and effectively. But their disciples are often from the cohort who calls themselves Christians. These sceptics eat the bread of textual criticism and wear the apparel of scholarship, only to mock at the Bible they claim to proclaim. Entreating Christ to take away their reproach and shame, they themselves "heap coals of fire" (Romans 12:20), judgment and condemnation upon their heads with the sin of unbelief.

This is the new crop of borderline liberals who utilise the language of orthodoxy, but they are essentially bedfellows with the old-line liberals. They seek to escape the reproach of the cross with what they believe to be an astounding display of intellectualism and reasonableness. But what they escape from are the fundamentals of the faith and the "crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:4). Seeking to please the world and its coterie of scholars, the sceptics decidedly compromise the Lord's Word and its perfection. Denying the preservation of Scripture, and hence its extant inerrancy, these titular Christians inadvertently lend arsenal to the enemies of the Bible. While the heathen rage and

ridicule the Bible, these sceptics stand with the enemies of God in their choir of outrageous blasphemy.

Spiritual calamities follow the desolation of the tsunamis of scepticism. The stench of spiritual corpses and theological decay is only matched by the reeking halitosis of intellectualism and pride. But the spiritual fatality is only the tip of the iceberg. Within the spirit of compromise is the slippery slope towards spiritual death and apostasy. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

It is indeed a paradox that some Christians who believe in a perfect God would not believe in a perfect Bible. Did Jesus ever own the autographs (the original manuscripts penned by inspired prophets) of the Bible, while He was on earth? Did Jesus ever question the inerrancy of the apographs (copies of the autographs) He had? Jesus was absolutely dogmatic about the fact that not one jot or tittle of Holy Writ will ever be lost (Matthew 5:17-18), not even in the apographs. No honest student of the Scripture can ever claim that Jesus did not believe in an inerrant Bible (Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 24:44; John 10:35). Yet our Lord did not possess the autographs of Scripture. Neither did the apostles possess the autographs of the entire biblical canon.

In 2 Timothy 3:14-17, we read the following words of Saint Paul:

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from

a child **thou hast known the holy scriptures**, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture **is given** by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Paul admonished Timothy to continue (verse 14) in the Holy Scriptures that he had known since he was a child (verse 15). The "holy scriptures" which Timothy possessed were copies of the original Hebrew Old Testament texts. Timothy obviously did not own the autographs of the Old Testament. The apostle Paul referred to these copies as Holy Scriptures. When Paul wrote verse 16 under the inspiration of God, we observe that there is not a single verb in the past tense. Paul said, "All scripture **is** given by inspiration of God"; the holy scripture which Timothy knew from childhood **is** presently inspired.

It is remarkable that 2 Timothy 3:16 is written in the present tense. Paul could have written, "All scripture **was** given by inspiration of God"; this might imply that the Scripture *was* perfectly inspired only at its original writing. But the grammatical structure of verse 16 ("All scripture **is** given by inspiration") unequivocally points out that God's inspired and inerrant words were not only in the autographs, but also in the apographs.

It is not only the message of God, but also the very *words* of Scripture that are inspired. Modern textual scholarship claims that the

perfectly inspired, inerrant Word of God was only found in the autographs, while the scripture says that all of the inspired words still exist in the apographs.

Timothy only had the apographs of the Old Testament books, yet he did not deny, but claimed that he had all of the inspired words. God's inspired words cannot contain error! It is still perfect and pure.

Whenever the Apostle Paul preached the perfect Word in the synagogues (Acts 13:16; 13:46; 14:1; 17:2; 17:10; 17:17; 18:4; 18:19; 19:8), he did not use the autographs of the Old Testament. The Berean church (Acts 17:11), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:34-35) and the first century Christians did not have all the Old Testament autographs. Is it true, then, that they did not have the perfectly inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God? God forbid! It is a fact that whenever the word "scripture" occurs in the Bible, it never refers to the autographs alone. The Bible is adamantly clear that the inspired words of the Holy Writ must be believed by believers of all times - "All Scripture is given by inspiration."

Some sceptics of the Bible desperately try to maintain a fundamentalist veneer, yet they frolic with the Neo-Evangelical's game of semantics. It is amusing to see how they grapple with the terms "infallibility" and "inerrancy", while at the same time, defend the erroneous doctrine of an imperfectly preserved Bible. Such double-mindedness is characteristic of the Father of lies, and such men are unstable in all their ways (James 1:8). "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (James 4:8).

God's Holy Word has been made a slave to the "science" of textual criticism (1 Timothy 6:20). True believers of Christ cannot worship at both the altar of faith and the altar of "scholarship". The rejection of the logic of faith will result in the following theological tragedy: the inerrancy of Holy Scripture will be replaced by the inerrancy of the hypothetical 'original manuscripts'.

If we do not have a perfect Bible today, then our faith is in vain, and all the old-line fundamentals of the faith are subjected to the scrutiny of unbelieving scholarship and philosophy. If we cannot say that the Bible in our hands is perfectly preserved, the textual scholars would decide for us what "inerrant" scripture is. Subjecting themselves to the final authority of manuscript evidence and human scholarship, these textual critics had substituted the authority of God's Word with the authority of men's carnal wisdom. They are "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). Consequentially, sceptical "Christians" must concede with infidels that there is no perfect authority for the church today.

The tsunami of rationalism and unbelief has already destroyed many fundamentalist churches. Unless doctrinal leaven is exterminated at its inception, the tidal waves of apostasy would eventually devour the faithful remnant. May the good Lord deliver His church from yielding to all theological hypocrisy and compromise.



THE GETHSEMANE CARE MINISTRY

Prabhudas Koshy

The Lord Opens a Door

“For a great door and effectual is opened unto me” (1 Corinthians 16:9a). The Lord has opened a new door of Gospel ministry to Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, namely, The Gethsemane Care Ministry. This work belongs to the Lord, for He has opened the way to begin this special outreach to ex-addicts and ex-offenders. The following account is written to testify of the Lord’s gracious, providential leading that led to this ministry.

About seven years ago, the Lord brought to Gethsemane B-P Church some ex-addicts who were saved through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord not only saved them from their sins, but also strengthened and guided them through the truth of His Word that they have become useful Christians for His glory.

We have witnessed their spiritual progress and fruitfulness in the work of the Lord. Five of them have

already entered the full-time service of the Lord. Four of them, after being trained in Far Eastern Bible College, serve the Lord actively.

In recent years, it has become more apparent to us that a fundamental Christian ministry to the drug addicts and convicts is lacking in Singapore. Thus far, to the best of our knowledge, almost all the Christian ministries are either charismatic or neo-evangelical in their doctrine and practice. With so many brethren of the same doctrinal convictions on board, the Lord put a burden in my heart to see a Bible-believing, fundamental Christian ministry being set up as part of Gethsemane B-P Church.

So, when Bro. Paul Cheng (a graduate of FEBC with a BRE degree) was burdened to start a new ministry to help former drug addicts to grow in the Lord and integrate into society through Christian fellowship and honest work, Gethsemane B-P Church supported him

in starting a fundamental Christian witness in this area. After much prayer and consideration, Bro. Paul returned to express his readiness to co-labour with the church. The Session named the ministry, “The Gethsemane Care Ministry.” Bro. Paul was appointed as the church full-time staff to co-labour with Pastor and the Session in co-ordinating the activities of the ministry and providing pastoral care to those who will come to this ministry. We also hope that pastors and elders of like-minded fundamental churches will extend their fellowship by visiting and preaching in the daily morning worship services.

The Goals of the Ministry

- ✦ Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to free men from their sinful addictions.
- ✦ Edify the ex-addicts and ex-offenders through the faithful preaching and teaching of God’s Word.
- ✦ Provide counselling based on God’s Word.
- ✦ Provide a drug-free residence to shelter them from the worldly influences.

- Encourage them through Christian fellowship to integrate into fundamental churches.
- Inculcate spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, prayer, worship, fellowship, evangelism, serving in and supporting church ministries, etc.
- Develop good interpersonal and work attitude so that they may be well equipped for employment or to start their own businesses.
- Find and introduce viable job opportunities that will help them to be gainfully employed.

The Activities of the Ministry

- Daily morning devotions.
- Daily individual quiet time with the Lord.
- Provide counselling for those who are in crisis.
- Lead them to work projects such as removal, disposal, transportation,

- painting, etc.
- Participation in church worship services, evangelism, prayer meetings and fellowship groups, etc.
- Provide support for other ministries of the church such as Seniors' ministry.

The Needs of the Ministry and God's Provisions

- About S\$50,000/- was needed for the purchase of a lorry for the various work projects. The Lord has provided that sum through the generous giving of members and friends of Gethsemane B-P Church, and a 14-foot lorry (Daihatsu Delta-Turbo) has been purchased.
- Funds for the rental of the house, food and necessary equipment, support of the staff, etc.
- Encouragers to visit, fellowship and pray with the brethren.
- Prayer supporters.

We give ourselves to this ministry, knowing that only Christ's love and truth can fully liberate those who are in the bondage of sinful addictions. We have seen the power of the Gospel at work in the lives of many former addicts and former offenders. So it is high time for us to rise in faith and true dedication to enter this ministry for His glory.

We implore your loving support for this glorious work of the Lord. (Please send your gifts to Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church. Cheque may be made payable to Gethsemane B-P Church; and please write Gethsemane Care Ministry at the back of your cheque). "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).



OUR VISION FOR THE GETHSEMANE CARE MINISTRY

Paul Cheng

Drug addiction is not a new phenomenon in Singapore. In fact, the problem of drug addiction can be traced back to the time of the founding of modern Singapore, when opium smoking

was rampant in the society, and it was subsequently followed by the addiction to morphine and heroin. The 90's saw the emergence of "designer drugs" like Ecstasy; and in this new millennium, new kinds of

drugs have surfaced, and leading the pack is Ketamine. It is feared that more potent and dangerous drugs would be introduced into the society, which would bring more serious and damaging effects to man and society. Indeed, we are living in an evil and wicked world, where sin is abounding like never before. So let us redeem the time, because the days are evil (cf. Ephesians 5:16).

With the influx of drug activities, many different modes of treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependents were also introduced, which are very humanistic and man-centred in their approach – mainly focusing on the physical and mental frame of man. There is little or perhaps no emphasis at all on the spiritual aspects, neither of man nor of God. Thus, we see a need for a biblical approach to help these drug addicts where the Church would take the leading role. And we thank the Lord that in His time, He has raised up Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church to take up the burden to start this new drug ministry. In our Gethsemane Care Ministry, we will seek to look into the spiritual and physical needs of the drug addicts.

SPIRITUAL NEED

Our biblical perspective of treatment and rehabilitation is the exact opposite of all those secular, humanistic, man-centred approach, as it is primarily aimed at the spiritual renewal of man through the transforming power of the Gospel. Our main concern is to lead the addict to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In our programme, we will utilize the whole counsel of God, believing in the sufficiency of God's inspired, infallible and preserved Word to convict and convert the hearts of sinners. "All scripture is given by inspiration

of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Today, vital doctrines of the Christian faith are being compromised. Christian institutions, organisations and even churches, are being subtly led away from the sound teaching of the Word of God. Neo Evangelicals, Charismatics, Liberals and Modernists gladly accept the false thinking that drug addiction is just a social disease and not a sin. Some even say that since drug addiction is not a sin, you do not need a Saviour to deliver addicts from this problem.

The Charismatic movement has already infiltrated the prisons and Christian halfway houses, teaching the people strange doctrines. Even so-called 'fundamental' Christian organisations are also succumbing to secularism and becoming more and more like the world. Though we live in such a time as this, we thank the Lord for His bountiful mercies, for even the promise "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against Him" (Isaiah 59:19).

It is our strong conviction that the Bible alone must be our manual and the sole source of wisdom in dealing with men who come for spiritual transformation, which they need. Thus, we emphasize the importance of sharing the Gospel at the onset of our rehabilitation programme, which would enable the drug addict to: (1) acknowledge his sinfulness; (2) confess his sins in repentance; and (3) believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord.

We strongly believe that in any Christian ministry, there must be the proclamation of

the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith and of the good news of what Christ has done for the salvation of sinners. Therefore, our programme must first and foremost be Bible-centred and it must not be allowed to compromise the doctrines of the Christian faith. For without the preaching of God's Word, our lives can never be transformed.

PHYSICAL NEED

Without the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives, drug addiction is truly a vicious cycle. Through the years, it has ruined many a life and has broken many a family, more than any other vice could. It is a terrible and merciless affliction that not only brings despair and misery to the drug addict, but also to all those whom he loves and cares about.

Through many years of being in bondage to drug addiction and alienation by the society, many of the former drug abusers find it difficult to keep up with the expectations of society once they leave the confines of prisons, drug rehabilitation centres or halfway houses. The very thought of their inability to cope with the demands of the outside world makes them despair and separate from the rest of the community. They are often troubled by the thoughts of bringing home insufficient money for their families and loved ones. As a result, the remnants of their past association with drug abuse keep returning to haunt their troubled minds. It is a taboo for them to even get a job outside because the public views former drug abusers as a 'problematic' group of people.

Faced with bleak prospects of their future, many of them would have either turned back

to drugs or accepted their fate as members of the lower rung of society. Drug aftercare programmes that focus on their physical development and survival are critically lacking. That is the sad truth for this group of former drug abusers who are struggling to survive in the real world out there. Therefore, it is our earnest desire that we may develop some viable enterprises like removal and painting services so that they can be gainfully employed. Years spent in the streets have somehow caused the drug addicts to develop an unhealthy attitude towards work and they have lost their values on good and healthy working relationship with others. It is also our hope that we may create a conducive environment to inculcate in them good working habits as well as provide the opportunity to relearn what it means to work with others.

Our ministry will always seek to lend a hand to the many drug addicts who are on the brink of despair. Our ministry offers a drug aftercare programme centring on the grace and mercy of God in Christ. This is the most powerful source of hope and love. Each day, the residents will do their share of physical exercises, and work projects, etc., but at the heart of it all, we emphasize the spiritual renewal through His Word, and yielding to the Holy Spirit through prayer and obedience. Our short-term goal is to provide the residents with an affirmative and drug-free environment, but our long-term goal, on the other hand, is to help them accept the reality that they have been alienated from God because of their sin and therefore, to teach them that their ultimate freedom can only be realised by having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Soli Deo Gloria!



BIBLE TRIVIA - GENESIS 7, 8 & 9

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. To whom did the Lord say, "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation"?
2. How many days before the rain began, did God ask Noah to bring the animals and birds into the ark?
3. How old was Noah, when the flood of waters was upon the earth?
4. How long did it rain upon the earth to bring about the flood of Noah's time?
5. Who shut the door of the ark after Noah, his family and the animals had entered it?
6. How many cubits above the mountains did the waters prevail?
7. How long did the waters prevail upon the earth?
8. What are the two sources of water that God brought to cause the flood?
9. Upon which mountains did the ark rest?
10. Which two birds did Noah send out to see if the waters had abated?
11. What was in the dove's mouth when it came back to Noah after its second trip?
12. Is it true that the dove did not return to Noah anymore after its third trip?
13. How many people were alive on earth immediately after the flood?
14. What did Noah build unto the Lord after the flood?
15. After the flood, is man supposed to be only herbivorous, only carnivorous or omnivorous?
16. What punishment is given to a man who shed another man's blood?
17. God established a covenant with Noah. What was it?
18. What is the token of this covenant?
19. Who are the sons of Noah?
20. Who was cursed for seeing his father's nakedness and telling his two brothers?

Answers to Vol. 5, Issue 1 - Bible Trivia from Genesis 6.

Pg. 23 - 1. (a); 2.(c); 3. (b); 4. (c); 5. (a); 6. (a); 7. (b); 8. (a); 9. (c); 10. (c); 11. (b); 12. (a).

THE GETHSEMANE CARE MINISTRY



↑ Lorry for Work Projects

The Lord's provisions
for the ministry
to the ex-addicts
and ex-offenders.

← God's Servant for the ministry

↓ The Brethren of TGC

