

A Defense of the King James Version

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Bible Text: Isaiah 40:1-11

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We are turning tonight, if you have your Bibles, to Isaiah chapter 40, the 40th chapter of Isaiah. We want to begin reading at the first verse.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.¹

Let's ask the Lord's blessing on his Word.

Our Father in heaven, we are thankful tonight for this revelation that is before us, for the promises that are here in these verses and throughout the pages of thy Word. We are grateful, indeed, for the privilege of being able to gather here to proclaim freely the gospel of salvation, to consider something of the great issues that face us in this day in

¹ Isaiah 40:1-11.

which we live. And we are asking you, tonight, to uphold us, to give us the strength that we need not only to preach, but to understand the Word of God. And we are looking forward to the day that is soon coming when we will meet the living Word of God face to face, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you, Lord, that tonight we can know if we have trusted him as our Savior that we have the gift of eternal life, that we need not fear the things of this world, the things of time and sense because we have trusted the one who is alive forever more and has the keys of hell and death.

We are asking you now to bless this Word to our hearts, to show us that which is thy truth and that which would bring praise and honor and glory to our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray these things in his precious name. Amen.

Before us tonight is a Scripture passage that speaks very well to an unusual subject for this message. I am calling this, “A Defense of the King James Version.” We see here that these were times of trouble for the people of God. But the message from heaven was, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”²

Now Isaiah had come with a message of comfort for the hearts of the people in a day of apostasy. It was a message of comfort because it reminded them of the mighty power of a sovereign God. Isaiah said, “Our God has the power to pardon iniquity. He has the power to elevate valleys, to tear down mountains. He has the power to straighten out crooked things and to smooth out rough places. He is the God who not only has the power to do these things, but has declared that he will do them in order that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.”

And we see that it is all because the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Now there could be no comfort for the people of God if our hope was in men. For all flesh is as grass,”³ as we see it set forth clearly here.

In spite of the glories of human intellect the Bible still tells us that “the flesh profiteth nothing.”⁴ In spite of all the halls of learning and the scholarship of men, “the flesh profiteth nothing.”⁵

God’s revelation of his glory has never depended for one second on man’s wisdom or there would be no comfort for his people. “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.”⁶

² Isaiah 40:1.

³ 1 Peter 1:24.

⁴ John 6:63.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Isaiah 40:6.

But our comfort tonight lies in the promise that is here. “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”⁷

Just like the prophet Isaiah we can climb to the tops of the high mountains with the good tidings of the gospel. There is no need for us to fear. We can lift up our voice with strength. We can lift up our voices and not be afraid to the cities, “Behold your God.” Because he will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will reveal his glory by a pure revelation of himself. And if he has to elevate valleys and throw down mountains to do it, he will. If he has to straighten out the crooked and smooth out the rough places, he will.

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”⁸

I want to bring you a message that is based on that premise called, “A Defense of the King James Version.”

This is not a message that would be popular in most places even in fundamental circles today. And yet it is one that is possibly the most critical message of our time because we are living in a day when even those who stand for the fundamentals of the faith, even those who profess to uphold the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ have turned away from that which is so obviously true with regard to the things that we are talking about tonight.

Now, when you begin to take the position that I will take tonight, you are smugly related to the category of the ignorant and the uninformed by those who traffic in textual criticism. You become a classic example of their little inside joke about those who say that if the King James version was good enough for the apostle Paul it is good enough for me.

But there have been few men in recent days with enough courage to provide some research and some information on the subject. There have been a few, notably Dr. David Otis Fuller of Wealthy Street Baptist Church; E. L. Bynum, Tabernacle Baptist in Lubbock, Texas; a man named Jasper Ray who is a missionary in Junction City, Oregon; the Trinitarian Bible Society has taken a stand on these things. But the voices are few and far between in these days in which we live.

And what I am going to attempt tonight is to bring before you the heart of this controversy as simply as I can and still retain the issues that are involved and try to help you understand just how important these things are and why we must, indeed, stand for the King James Version of the Bible as we have it in our hands tonight.

And we have gotten into the confusion in which we find ourselves today because Bible believing Christians have failed to face up to the practical reality that Satan has not

⁷ Isaiah 40:8.

⁸ Ibid.

changed. He came on the scene seeking to destroy the Word of God and he has been doing it ever since.

It was the devil who came out with the first new version of the Word of God. And he is still in the publishing business. There are over 100 versions on the market today and many of them are used by Bible believing churches and schools and authors and individuals.

One of the great difficulties that we run into at the Christian bookstore is otherwise sound men quoting—and thereby placing their stamp of approval—on many of these popular versions today.

All right, but let's begin at the beginning and see if we can't lay a foundation in our thinking. The Old Testament was given by God to Moses and the prophets and it was first written in the Hebrew language with a small portion in Aramaic. About 300 years before the Lord Jesus Christ came to earth all of the Old Testament was translated into Greek. Now this was done by a committee of 70 Jews, 70 Jewish scholars at Alexandria and this Old Testament Greek version of the Bible was called and is called the Septuagint which means 70 because of these 70 men who translated it. The Septuagint was in common use by the time that the Lord Jesus came to Bethlehem and it was quoted by the Lord and by the New Testament writers. So there has never been any real controversy among true Bible believers with regard to the authenticity and the preservation of the Old Testament.

Now in the 400 years before the Lord Jesus after the Old Testament was completed a new set of books appeared on the scene known as the apocrypha. Now that word "apocrypha" means hidden. And there came to light these 14 books, the book of Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, Bel and the Dragon and the others. And these were accepted by Roman Catholicism in later years, but they have been rejected by all others until today. We are seeing a resurgence of the printing of these apocryphal books in connection with some of these newer versions of the Bible.

Now this is just another example of how men are willing to accept a satanic attempt to add to the Word of God. The apocrypha has no foundation in the canon of Scriptures. It has no authority in the history of the Church and it should have no part in the Bibles of the people of God.

So up to the time that the Lord Jesus came we have the whole of the 39 books of the Old Testament canon given in the Hebrew and in the Aramaic, translated into the Greek Septuagint and fully accepted and authenticated by the Lord and by the apostles.

Now the 27 New Testament books were written in Greek and they were completed within the first 100 years after the Lord's death. It was about 397 AD that these books as we have them now in our Bible were accepted and recognized by the Church as the sum of God's further revelation.

Now for the sake of time I am not going to go into too much detail on the languages that don't relate to our own. But I am going to try to give you some idea of how this whole thing fits together with relation to the Bibles that we see coming on the scene today.

But let's end our thinking about the giving of our Bible with this thought. Within 300 years after the Lord and the apostles were on earth, we had our Bibles in the present form, 66 books, no apocrypha, the infallible Word of God had been delivered into the hand of men by divine revelation. And it was being used in the early church.

All right, but here is the problem. Even while writing the Bible, God inspired these writers to write some serious warnings about the Word of God. Peter said, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."⁹

He said:

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you"¹⁰

Now those were very prophetic words indeed because this is exactly what we see happening on the scene in America today. There is one reason and one primary reason only for the upsurge of these versions that we are seeing in our day. And that reason is money. A great deal of money can be made by selling these new versions of the Word of God.

And Peter said, "through covetousness."¹¹ This desire for money, "shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you."¹² They are making merchandise of the Word of God for monetary profits.'

The apostle Paul said, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God."¹³ He said even while he was writing, even in that day there were many that were corrupting the Word of God.

And the burning question is: How do we know that we have a Bible tonight that has not been corrupted? If even in the days in which this book was being written, what possible assurance can we have that we don't have a corrupted Bible in our hands tonight? If many corrupted the Bible 17 centuries ago, then we could be in very serious trouble.

But, you see, the answer to that question is very simple. If the preservation of the Word

⁹ 2 Peter 2:1.

¹⁰ 2 Peter 2:2-3.

¹¹ 2 Peter 2:3.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ 2 Corinthians 2:17.

of God depends upon the righteousness and the scholarship and the discernment of men, we have no reliable Bible.

All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field... The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.¹⁴

Unless God by his sovereign power has supernaturally intervened in the affairs of men to cause an infallible Bible to be preserved, we just simply have no foundation for our faith. Not one single Greek scholar ever lived from apostolic times until today, no theologians, no doctors of divinity, no doctors of theology. There are over 4000 manuscript portions extant today. And no man alive has ever seen the original autographs or has the slightest authority to pick and choose by textual criticism among these more than 4000 manuscripts.

Now, that being the case, that makes me just as much an authority as you and you just as much an authority as anybody else. See, it is kind of like the evolution question and all the argumentation about the origin of the universe. But the one great factor that brings everybody down to the correct level is that nobody is there. By faith you believe in evolution or by faith you believe in creation.

Now this is exactly the type of situation that we find here when it comes to the question of the Bible. The whole question is: Do we or do we not believe in a God who has the power to preserve an infallible Bible and one who has promised to preserve an infallible Bible and one who has preserved an infallible Bible.

Now the argument hinges on the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. The King James Version is not infallible. There never has been a translation that was infallible. But the issue is whether God has preserved the original text in all its integrity from which our King James Version came, or has he not? Unless we have a text available to us today preserved from the days of the apostles, God has not kept his promise and we build our spiritual house on shifting sand.

Now I maintain that we do have such a text. It is called the *Textus Receptus* or the Received Text as some people would call it. The *Textus Receptus* is a collection of manuscripts upon which the King James Version of the Bible is built.

All right, now, I believe the best way to get the point across to you here is to tell you how this *Textus Receptus*, this King James Version has come to us, to give you some background as to how this Bible came from the days of the apostles to the day in which we are living today.

Now there were versions in Egyptian and Armenian and Gothic and many other languages. And they were all translated from a set of manuscripts known as the Greek Vulgate. Now the word "vulgate" means common or ordinary. In other words, we are

¹⁴ Isaiah 40:6,8.

talking about Greek that was in common use. And it was this Greek Vulgate that later came to be known as the *Textus Receptus* and I will call it that for simplicity. The Greek Vulgate from which the Word of God was translated in the days of the early Church is the *Textus Receptus*, I believe, that is underlying our King James Version of the Bible.

Now two great scholars, Burgon and Miller, say that the Syrian Peshita—a very famous version of the Bible in Syria—came from the *Textus Receptus*.

Kenyon, writing on our Bible in ancient manuscripts says that the old Latin Vulgate is the *Textus Receptus* with the extra readings removed.

Dr. Fred Dolan spent 28 years tracing the *Textus Receptus* back through the Waldensians, a group of people which he called “a truly apostolic branch of the primitive Church.” And it was this italic church of the Waldensians and their version of the Bible that is dated by Beza back to 120 AD. Now that is the time of the apostles.

Now what all that means is this. It means that for 1400 years of Church history, many scholars have traced every important version back to the Greek Vulgate, back to the *Textus Receptus*, the very same manuscripts that we have underlying the King James Version today.

All right, but still in these considerations we have no English Bible of note on the scene. And we need a Bible in English.

John Wycliffe, a very famous man produced the English Bible translated into Latin or from Latin in 1382, the first English Bible. But the most important point, as far as we are concerned, was the birth of a little boy in 1466 in Rotterdam, Holland. His name was Desiderius Erasmus. And he was trained as a monk and as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church.

But Erasmus was a genius. His biographer says that he could do the work of 10 men in a day in the field of scholarship. He studied the Greek manuscripts faithfully. He wrote books against the immorality and the unbiblical nature of the Roman Catholic Church. The pope had previously offered to make Erasmus a cardinal and he refused. He chose, instead, to write books against the Roman hierarchy.

The king of England and the emperor of Germany approached Erasmus offering him anything that he desired in their kingdom at his own price if he would associate himself with their country. France and Spain sought Erasmus as a citizen. But his greatest glory was to gather together from the manuscripts of the Greek and the Assyrian and the Waldensian churches the New Testament in the original Greek language, to bring together these manuscripts for the first time in 1000 years and to get these things printed and available for study of the scholars of his day.

Now there is no way to underestimate the influence of this man Erasmus on the scene. He was God’s man for the hour without question. Erasmus taught Greek at Cambridge

University. And there was a young man who was a student in his classes named William Tyndale. Tyndale's biographer said that he was so skilled in seven languages—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English and French—that whichever he spoke you would suppose it was his native tongue.

Now Tyndale was that kind of a genius as well. And he was sitting there under this man Erasmus and it was William Tyndale who translated all the New Testament and much of the Old Testament into the English language from this *Textus Receptus* that was gathered together by this man Erasmus. And Martin Luther took that same set of manuscripts, the *Textus Receptus*. He translated the Bible into German and the Protestant Reformation began to burn with the pure light of the Word of God. The dark ages that had settled down upon the world for so many years were lifted by the pure light of the Word of God given forth by this man Erasmus as he gathered together the *Textus Receptus*.

In the next 100 years there were 21 editions of the *Textus Receptus* from this man named Erasmus to a man named Theodore Beza, 21 editions of the Greek New Testament. And not a single major change from the first edition to the last.

Now this was, without question, in the mind of any responsible observer, God's preserved Word brought to the English speaking world. It was the anchor of the Greek Church and the Syrian Church and the Waldensian Church. It was the anchor of the French Church and the Celtic Church and now it was to be the touchstone of the Protestant Reformation.

These very same manuscripts that had been preserved miraculously by God right down through the centuries. So the *Textus Receptus* came to the King James Version translators of 1611 with all the credentials of the stamp of God's preserving power upon them.

Now, again, let me emphasize to you that I never met Mr. Erasmus and neither did anybody else that is alive today. The only question that can even be considered under those circumstances is this. Did God deceive the early French Church? Did he deceive the Syrians and the Waldensians and the Greeks and is he deceiving us today? Or did the sovereign power of a promise keeping God preserve just the manuscripts of his infallible Word to be placed in the hands of Erasmus.

Now to answer that question I want you to turn to Psalm 12. The 12th Psalm gives us God's promise in this regard.

Psalm 12 and reading verse six. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."¹⁵ Now notice that. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."¹⁶

¹⁵ Psalm 12:6.

¹⁶ Ibid.

But don't miss this. "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."¹⁷

Now that is God's promise, to preserve his Word, his pure Word, as "as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."¹⁸

And he says, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."¹⁹ Now that is either true or it is not. Either along with the giving of God's revelation of himself goes the promise to preserve that revelation or it doesn't. And I say that there is no man who can stand upon this book tonight and refute the fact that that promise is there.

Now they might not believe it to be the truth, but it is there, the promise of God to preserve his Word from the time of David forever through every single generation.

Now work began about 1605 on the King James version and by 1611 the King James Version as we have it today was translated from the *Textus Receptus*, this God preserved text of his infallible Word. Now this was the hour that God has chosen to present the Bible to the English speaking world, a time when the English language was in its finest hour, a time when these men could produce something that would be a masterpiece of literature as well as a revelation of the truth of God.

Forty seven of the greatest and most devout scholars the world has ever known were gathered together to do the work. With 67 degrees among them, they had the scholarship that was needed. The chairman of the whole committee for the translation of the King James Version was a man named Lancelot Andrews. Not only was he the master of 21 languages, but he spent an average of five hours every day in prayer. He was a man not only with a great mind, but a man with a spiritual life to back it up.

Now these men, these 47 men who were a part of this translation committee were divided into six groups and they were each assigned portions of the Word of God to translate into the English language. Then the work of each one of these groups was to come back together to compare what they had studied with the rest of the people in the group. And then the work of that group was submitted to the other groups individually. And then there was a special committee to go through the whole work. And then there was a pair of men who made the final changes.

In other words, a total of nine separate investigations of every verse of the Bible by the greatest scholars in the world. Most of them were Puritans or at least who were very evidently saved. And so for 363 years the King James Version has stood the test of time as no other version. It has claimed the blessing of God as no other version. It has been the means of winning more souls to the Lord Jesus Christ than any other version.

¹⁷ Psalm 12:7.

¹⁸ Psalm 12:6.

¹⁹ Psalm 12:7.

All right, that is the positive side of the message. Now let's get to the negative side of it. I have in my hand a booklet that is printed by Bob Jones University Press. The title of it is, *Which Translation?* It is by Dr. Stewart Custer.

If you know Bob Jones you nothing leaves there unless it has their stamp of approval upon it. And I pick on Bob Jones tonight not because they are the worst school, but because they are the best. They have a longer and a stronger history of standing for the faith than any fundamental school in America. And if we find that the most militantly fundamental school in America is wrong on this point, you can imagine what condition all the others are in.

Now Dr. Custer says this. He says, "The King James Version is a true translation. The theological orthodoxy of its translators cannot be questioned. However, there are some dissenting voices that are now being raised. Some modern Bible students, particularly those of New Evangelical persuasion feel that the language of the King James is archaic and forbidding. They wish for a translation in modern English that they feel will have greater readability. The rising number of modern translations is the response to this desire."

All right, but get this part now. "Then, too questions are raised concerning the Greek text which the King James translators used. They were progressive men for their time, examining as many Greek manuscripts as they could find. Today, however, we have many more manuscript than they ever dreamed of finding. If they had known of them, they would have used them. We know have a text which goes back seven or eight centuries before the manuscripts which the King James scholars used. This is a much more accurate texts which avoids many of the copyist errors evident in the manuscripts used by the King James men."

Now I want you to understand that I do not for one second question Dr. Custer's sincerity or his scholarship or his salvation. But I simply call your attention to the fact that he is here espousing a philosophy that was accepted by R.A. Torrey, Dr. James Gray, D.L. Moody, Dr. C.I. Scofield and practically any fundamental school or preacher of note that you can name for the past 50 years.

It is the philosophy that older and better manuscripts have been discovered since the King James Version. And because these translators didn't know about them, there is a more accurate translation and an accurate text available today.

Now I say that there is no evidence of any kind to support that philosophy. I say that this is a device of the devil to get otherwise good men to unknowingly promote error. God knows every jot and every tittle of every manuscript that has ever been written. God knew every member of every copyist body before it was ever formed in his mother's womb. To me it is nothing short of ridiculous to say that we have something today that these men never dreamed of finding and if they had known about them, they would have used them and called the verbal inspiration. It is not, no matter what we might call it.

Our hope for a trust worthy Bible does not lie with some shepherd boy that is out throwing rocks into a cave over in the land of Palestine to discover the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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.²⁰

“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.”²¹

It makes no difference about the copyist. It makes no difference about the archaeologist. It makes no difference about individual higher critics and translators of the Word of God.

All right, so our final question is this. What is it that has brought all this about? For example, what grounds is there for the old and the new Scofield Bibles to inform us in the notes that the oldest and the best manuscripts correct such and such a passage?

Well, the story of how all this came about begins in 1870, 250 years after the King James Version came into existence. There were two professors at Cambridge University by the name of Westcott and Hort. And they began to push for a new translation of the Bible. For 20 years they had been working together on a new Greek text that was based primarily on two manuscripts that were not used in the King James Version and were not a part of the *Textus Receptus*. They were working with these two manuscripts and they were preparing over this 20 year period a new text, one that they considered to be improved and one that could be applied in the course of a new translation of the Bible that by their idea would be better than the King James.

Now these two manuscripts that they used as the basis for their Greek New Testament were very interesting. One of them was called *Codex Aleph* or *Sinaiticus*. Now it was named that because it was found in a waste basket about to be burned in a monastery on Mount Sinai by a German scholar named Tischendorf about 1844.

Now I like that because it is a very clear indication of how these people are thinking. Here we have what they consider to be the only accurate record of the truth of God in the whole world, the only one known to man and God didn't even know that it was about to be burned and only the quick action of good old Count Tischendorf has made it possible for us to have an accurate Bible today. I find that a little hard to believe. It sounds just a little bit too much like Joseph Smith receiving the golden plates that nobody ever got to see but him.

There in the monastery of Saint Catherine on the hill of Sinai in a wastebasket the only accurate representation of the truth of God in all the world. Now this was considered to be a very important discovery. In fact, this manuscript was sold to the British Museum in 1933 for \$510,000, the most expensive purchase ever known.

²⁰ Psalm 12:6-7.

²¹ Isaiah 40:8.

Now the second manuscript they used was very similar. It was a document known as *Codex B* or *Codex Vaticanus*. And they say that God had placed this one in the care of the pope and it stayed locked up in the Vatican library for several hundred years and it is still there today. The other half of the only accurate representation of the truth of God locked up in a dusty corner of the Vatican library and still in the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. It was—quote, unquote—discovered about 1481.

Now it is hard for you to imagine unless you have spent a great deal of time reading the books and the publications of the religious world in the past few years, it is hard to imagine just how much influence these two men, Westcott and Hort and these two manuscripts have had on the religious world. Now these two men, Westcott and Hort, were geniuses. They were Greek scholars that are almost unsurpassed in their field. And they put together a theory and a Greek New Testament that was based on these two manuscripts that has completely dominated thinking in this field every since.

Dr. Alfred Martin of Moody Bible Institute points out that of the over 4000 manuscript portions that are available today, 90 to 95% of them are in substantial agreement with one another and with the *Textus Receptus*. Now that is 90 to 95% of the over 4000 manuscript portions that are available today. But these two men came up with the idea that only the manuscripts that agreed with these two that they found *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*, only one ones that agreed with those two, these older manuscripts were the correct Word of God.

Now the result was that the Bible that they came out with, the English Revised Version of 1881, the one that underlies every major version that is in print today with the exception of the King James, this English Revised Version of 1881 contains 5788 changes from the *Textus Receptus* of the King James Version, 5788 changes from the text of the *Textus Receptus*.

And Dr. Martin says, “It is hard to see how God would allow the true text to sink into oblivion for 1500 years only to have it brought to light again by two Cambridge professors who did not even believe it to be verbally inspired.” Now that is hard to imagine.

It is hard to imagine, first of all, that the Word of God would be the waste basket, the last hope for man to know an accurate representation of the truth of God. It is hard to believe that it would be lost to man for 1500 years and be found locked up in the Vatican library. And it is just as hard to believe that God would use two men who did not even believe it to be the verbally inspired Word of God to bring it to light to our generation. Now this is the heart of the issue.

The Bible as we know it today comes from two strings of manuscripts. It comes from the *Textus Receptus*, the one underlying the King James Version and from the text of Westcott and Hort who did not even believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. The King James Version is the only one of the over 100 versions in print today that has any significant circulation that is based on the *Textus Receptus*. All the others are based upon

this English Revised Version of 1881 and upon the textual criticism theory of these two men, Westcott and Hort.

Now the theory of these men was based on two completely false ideas. One was that the Bible is to be examined and criticized as any other book. In other words, it is just a Greek manuscript just like any other Greek manuscript. And you examine that thing in the light of that. That was a false idea. The Word of God was miraculously preserved and to be miraculously treated, right down through all the ages of the history of the Church.

The second false idea upon which their theory was based is that the oldest manuscripts are necessarily the best. How many times whenever they had finished copying a true representation of the Word of God they take the old one out and burn it? It was preserved miraculously by God or it wasn't preserved at all. And many times if there were some which had been preserved, they were preserved they were not used very much because they were inaccurate translations, representations of the Word of God.

Now with 5788 changes it is very clear that both sets of manuscripts cannot be right. It is one or the other. It is not both. And you are either going to take your stand upon the *Textus Receptus* that which underlies the King James Version, or upon that which underlies the many other versions that are available in the world today.

One is the God preserved line. The other is a satanic counterfeit.

Now, again, I say to you that tradition and the early Church fathers and Westcott and Hort themselves admit that the *Textus Receptus* was used by the Church for over 1500 years. Ninety to 95% of the manuscripts available agree with one another and they agree with the *Textus Receptus*.

Tischendorf, that man that discovered one of those manuscripts, and Hort believe that the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Sinaiticus* were part of the 50 copies that were ordered by the Emperor Constantine for an ecumenical Bible in his day.

Now, beloved, if you know any thing about what is going on in the religious world you ought to know what category that places those manuscripts in. They belong in the garbage can. They ought to still be there today and not a part of the infallible Word of God.

There is absolutely no ground except the ideas of these two men, Westcott and Hort, for accepting this new stream of manuscripts as preferable to the *Textus Receptus*. There is no basis for it. And yet easily 95% of the Bible versions and the fundamental schools and the Christians follow this Westcott and Hort idea either consciously or unconsciously today. Now most of them don't give it too much thought. A lot of people never even heard of Westcott and Hort. And yet when they read in the footnotes in the Scofield Bible that this is not in the oldest and the best manuscripts, they believe that.

When they hear from a man who supposedly knows and loves the Lord Jesus Christ to that the New American Standard Version is more accurate than the King James, they believe that.

Now this is a serious business. If we are talking about the newspaper that would be one thing, but when we are talking about the Word of God, that of which the Lord Jesus said, “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,”²² we are talking about a different matter all together.

He said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”²³

I see that sure it is not.

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.²⁴

That is true or it is not. And if it is true, then the only version in wide circulation in the world today that is based upon this stream of manuscripts, the *Textus Receptus*, is the King James Version of the Bible. And every other major Bible—there are many of them that we could name like the Revised Standard Version, for example, Goodspeed’s New Testament, the New English Bible, The Berkeley Version, The New American Standard Version, The New World Translation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Good News for Modern Man, The Amplified Bible, the Revised Version of 1881, the American Standard Version, Philips’ New Testament, The Living New Testament, The Confraternity New Testament, the Douay Version—we could go on and on. Every single one of these Bibles are based upon the Westcott and Hort textual criticism theory and upon this false line of manuscripts with 5788 changes from the King James’ *Textus Receptus*.

Now that is a serious business and yet it is something that is being played down in fundamental circles all across this country today. Now I am no scholar. I don’t have much education. I don’t have much sense. But I have got a book that tells me that God has set before us a way that “the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”²⁵

And I say that the wayfaring man, though a fool, knows that God’s infallible Word does not depend on some joker picking it out of the wastebasket in a Roman Catholic monastery. God’s infallible truth does not get locked up in the library of the Vatican for 1500 years. You don’t have to be a scholar to know that. You see, God has hid these things from the wise and has revealed them unto babes.²⁶ And we can take a simple look at the pages of history. We can see how God preserved this record right down through the

²² Matthew 5:18.

²³ Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33.

²⁴ Psalm 12:6-7.

²⁵ Isaiah 35:8.

²⁶ See Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21.

pages of time and we can see how it came to 1881 and there the English Bible was attacked. And there the power of the English Bible in the thinking of men, men of scholarship, men who would be bringing out versions, men would be teaching Bible schools and colleges, the thinking of these men was altered. And that is a critical thing because, you see, when you can get good men espousing error you have got a miraculous opportunity to tear down the truth. And when you can take the people who want to stand for the *Textus Receptus* and the King James Version and relegate them over there into the corner of the ignorant and the unlearned, then that takes care of them quite nicely.

What we have in our hands tonight is the revelation of God if his promises are true. And if his promises are not true, let us eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.²⁷

“There hath not failed one word of all his good promise,”²⁸ and unless we can believe that, there is no reason for this meeting tonight. There is no reason for Bible colleges and fundamental Christians and people gathering together in the name of the Lord. Either God has given us an infallible record of his Son or he has not. And we need, tonight, to understand that we are talking about issues that ultimately effect the eternal souls of men.

The great conflict that was taking place back in the days of the early Church was a conflict between a man named Arius and a man named Athanasius. Arius believed that the Lord Jesus Christ was a created being, that he was just a creature, a very wonderful creature, but a creature just the same. And Arius propagated this idea. He had his versions of the Bible. He had his Greek manuscripts.

And on the other hand there was a man named Athanasius, five times banished because of his stand for the truth. He stood up for the deity of the Lord Jesus in a day when everybody else was turning away. His friends came to him. They said, “Athanasius, the world is against you.”

He said, “Then Athanasius is against the world.”

That is the kind of stand we need today. It makes no difference how many schools advocate Westcott and Hort, how many schools stand up for these modern versions of the Bible. It makes no difference how many churches and individuals would propagate a false system and try to tell us that the truth of God came from the trashcan of the Vatican library. We need to stand for that which is so evident on the face of history. We need to be willing at any cost to believe the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ as it has been delivered to us by the hand of God himself.

Erasmus was not an infallible man. The Waldensians were not infallible men anymore than Westcott and Hort. But there is a God who sits upon the throne of heaven and he has taken the weak things to confound the wise. He has taken the things which are not to bring to naught the things which are that no flesh should glory in his presence.²⁹ And we

²⁷ See Isaiah 22:13; 1 Corinthians 15:32.

²⁸ 1 Kings 8:56.

²⁹ See 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.

have before us a Word of God that is a sure Word, a pure Word, “as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”³⁰

And we have a promise from the God who sits upon the throne of heaven that he is going to keep them and preserve them forever.

Now that ought to be enough. It ought to be enough for anybody here or anybody anywhere who knows and loves the one whose name is called the Word of God. We need this Bible so desperately and we need an accurate representation of the truth, preserved in all its integrity because this book contains the gospel, the gospel “which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”³¹ We can find within these pages that which gives to men the message of the gift of eternal life. And there must not for one moment be a willingness on our part to compromise this truth, turn away from this message that God had given in all its simplicity and in all its purity.

People need to be saved and, “the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”³² He is out to snare the souls of men. He is out to come to the hearts and the minds of even the greatest scholars and to say, “Yea, hath God said?”³³ “Is this really what God said, this that you have before you? Or could it have been like this?”

The whole world is in confusion. They say, “Which Bible do you mean? You tell me to believe the Bible, well, which Bible should I believe?”

You need to have an answer, not a bunch of philosophical reasoning and beating around the bush about this and that Greek scholar and about this and that branch of the Church. You need an answer. And the answer is that God has preserved his Word in *Textus Receptus*, in the King James Version. And we can find here the message of salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ who alone is able to give the gift of eternal life.

Let’s bow our heads in prayer.

Our Father, we are thankful tonight that we could come and study these things together. We understand afresh our weakness when it comes to knowing those things which happened long before we were born. And yet we realize, as the people of God, a responsibility to lay hold upon these ideas, to think about them, to be concerned about the preservation of the truth of God. We know, Lord, that it is not by might nor by power, but by thy Spirit. We know that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And we know that the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand forever. We thank you for that promise. We rest upon it tonight. And we pray that thy people might be willing to turn away from the questions, to turn away from the false ideas that are being propagated in the minds of men today by this multiplicity of versions and to turn afresh to this one with thy stamp of approval upon it, this one that

³⁰ Psalm 12:6.

³¹ 2 Timothy 3:15.

³² 1 Peter 5:8.

³³ Genesis 3:1.

has been the means of salvation to so many and this one that will be found faithful long after these others have passed away. We pray these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen.