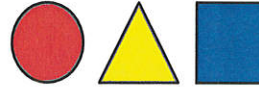


God's Word Preserved – the beloved English Bible

REVIEW



- Things that are **different** are **NOT** the **same**.
- God promised to **preserve** His **WORDS** – and God **cannot** lie. Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:17-18
- **1 perfect Book** has **more authority** than **many** books that do not say the same thing.



Every Word

VS



Different Words



- The *living* Word and the *written* Word **cannot** be separated!
- The Bible issue really comes down to a tale of two cities – **Antioch** vs. Alexandria, Egypt.
 - **Antioch**, Syria has a glorious heritage and is always cast in a positive light in the Bible:
 - They were called “Christians” first at Antioch. (Acts 11:26)
 - The Antioch church sent out the first missionaries. (Acts 13:1-3)
 - Antioch was Paul’s home base of operations. (He always returned there to report on his missionary journeys)
 - Antioch is the home church for God’s pure words.
 - **Alexandria** is referenced in a negative light in Acts and Egypt is overwhelmingly bad:
 - Egypt is a picture of the world. (Isaiah 31:1-3)
 - God calls his people OUT of Egypt. (Hosea 11:1)
 - God calls Egypt the “house of bondage”. (Exodus 20:2)
 - KEY – Don’t put your trust in anything coming from Egypt! (Isa 30 and 31)

WEEK 5: The Nicolaitans (a.k.a. scholars and clergy class)

Consider this – the Bible is very clear on the things that Jesus hates...



Plowman

OR



Scholar

Revelation 2:6 – But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Revelation 2:15 – So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

1. The name **Nicolaitan** means “destruction of people” or “conquer the laity” (a.k.a. the common people). When we look at these two verses in their proper context, it is clear that there was something that the Nicolaitans were doing that Jesus hated and he calls out two things:

- 1) Their *Deeds* – by their actions, they had set themselves up as a priestly class or “clergy” over the common people in the church.

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2) Their *Doctrine* – by their words, they were teaching that the common people couldn't really "know" what God said and they were needed in order for the people to hear from God.

2. The **Bible** makes it very clear how God expects His leaders to lead.

When the mother of James and John asked Jesus to make them to rule on His right and left hand in His kingdom, He made it very clear how His leaders would lead.

Matthew 20:25 – But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

Matthew 20:26 – But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Matthew 20:27 – And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Matthew 20:28 – Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus also made it very clear that they were to call no man "father" upon the earth (in a spiritual leadership role). He wanted it to be clear that we all have **direct** access to God.

Matthew 23:9 – And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Peter also, describing the pastors of God's flock, made it very clear that they were not to be "lording" over God's flock and heritage.

1 Peter 5:2 – Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

1 Peter 5:3 – Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Jeremiah called out the rebellious leaders of God's people (pastors) that were leading God's flock astray and away from trusting in what God had clearly spoken and had **written** in a Book.

Jeremiah 23:1 – Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:2 – Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:11 – For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

In Matthew and Luke, Jesus calls out the scribes and Pharisees who were doing the same thing. They were using their "religious" titles and roles to lead people away from His **written** Word.

Matthew 23:13 – But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Luke 11:43 – Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

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3. Today, we see the same thing happening in so-called “Christianity”, but it comes in a slightly different package. Through scholarship and church structures, men have raised themselves up over the common people once again.

In order to understand what is really going on, we must first ask ourselves some questions to get our brains warmed up:

- 1) When a Roman Catholic Priest is leading a Latin mass service, how do the common people understand what he is saying if they do not know Latin?
- 2) When a Charismatic pastor leads a service where people are speaking in unknown tongues, how do the common people know what God is saying if they do not understand?
- 3) When a Charismatic pastor leads a service where people are healed and the common people watching do not have the ability to do such “miracles”, do they turn to the men or the Bible for help the following week?
- 4) When a pastor makes a reference to Greek or Hebrew words or meanings, how do the common people know he is telling the truth?
- 5) When a pastor makes a reference to several English translations of the Bible, how do the common people know which one is accurate or which one they should use?
- 6) When a pastor is critical of God's word and then proceeds to tell the common people what it should *really* say, who is he setting up to be the final authority?

In reality, what is really happening is that these men have set themselves up to be a priestly class or “clergy” over the common people in the church.

In reality, what is really happening is that these men are subtly teaching that the common people are not able to really “know” what God said. The common people are then put in a position where they believe that they cannot hear from God and know for themselves what the Bible says.

KEY QUESTION

Do you now see that when these men in “churches” today do these things, they are in fact **by their actions** doing the deeds of the Nicolaitans and **by their words** holding the doctrine of the Nicolaitans?!?!?

And, didn't Jesus make it _____ that He **hates** both!!

We need to be careful when it comes to the people that have leadership roles over God's flock. Remember 2 Corinthians 11...

2 Corinthians 11:3 – But I fear, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty**, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

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2 Corinthians 11:13 – For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:14 – And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:15 – Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Remember, it was the common people that heard Jesus gladly – not the so-called “religious” leaders of the time.

Mark 12:37 ... And the **common people** heard him gladly.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

When we see the history of the New Testament church unfold, we are expecting to see a situation in which the **common people** are going to be able to gather together to hear the Scriptures preached and taught in their own language so that they understand clearly what God said and expects of them. We expect to see the pastors of God's church not lording over the flock, but equipping them to read and obey the Scriptures that they hold in their hands.

When we see the history of the English Bible unfold, we are expecting to see a situation in which the **common people** are going to be able to hold a copy of the Scriptures in their hands, read it in their own language and understand clearly what God said and expects of them. We expect to see the pastors of God's church not lording over the flock, but equipping them to read and obey the Scriptures that they hold in their hands.

TOUGH QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Which of these three scenarios leads to a situation where the leaders of God's church are setting themselves up to be a priestly class or “clergy” over the common people in the church?

Which one leads subtly to a situation where the common people _____ the well-schooled leader of God's church in order for them to understand what He said?

SCENARIO #1

Α α Β β Γ γ Δ δ
Ε ε Ζ ζ Η η Θ θ
Ι ι Κ κ Λ λ Μ μ
Ν ν Ξ ξ Ο ο Π π
Ρ ρ Σ σ Τ τ Υ υ
Φ φ Χ χ Ψ ψ Ω ω



The Pastor or teacher reads a verse, references some Greek words, and then explains to the common people what the Bible passage “really” means...

SCENARIO #2



The Pastor or teacher quotes from different English versions and then says to the common people, “This version says it best”...

SCENARIO #3



The Pastor or teacher lifts up the Holy Bible and says, “Every word of this Book is perfect. Read it. Believe it. Trust every word. Obey it. It is God's preserved Word!”

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A few quotes from Charles Spurgeon (called the Prince of Preachers):

Related to the preservation of God's Word in English...

"...they miss no chance of saying...The Greek is so-and-so. It makes a man an inch and a half taller by a foolometer, if he everlastingly lets fall bits of Greek and Hebrew...making every old lady distrust the only Bible she can get at, or what is more likely, mistrust you for falling out with her cherished treasure"

(Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, 1876).

"...If this book be not infallible, where shall we find infallibility? We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly; but we shall not set up instead of him a horde of little popelings fresh from college. Are these correctors of Scripture infallible? Is it certain that our Bibles are not right, but that the critics must be so?..."

Striplings fresh from reading the last new novel correct the notions of their fathers, who were men of weight and character. Doctrines which produced the godliest generation that ever lived on the face of the earth are scouted as sheer folly...But where shall infallibility be found?...

Are we now to believe that infallibility is with learned men? Now, Farmer Smith, when you have read your Bible, and have enjoyed its precious promises, you will have, tomorrow morning, to go down the street to ask the scholarly man at the parsonage whether this portion of the Scripture belongs to the inspired part of the Word, or whether it is of dubious authority...

All possibility of certainty is transferred from the spiritual man to a class of persons whose scholarship is pretentious, but who do not even pretend to spirituality. We shall gradually be so bedoubted and becriticized, that only a few of the most profound will know what is Bible, and what is not, and they will dictate to all the rest of us. I have no more faith in their mercy than in their accuracy: they will rob us of all that we hold most dear, and glory in the cruel deed.

This same reign of terror we shall not endure, for we still believe that God revealeth himself rather to babes than to the wise and prudent, and we are fully assured that our own old English version of the Scriptures is sufficient for plain men for all purposes of life, salvation, and godliness. We do not despise learning, but we will never say of culture or criticism. "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

(Spurgeon, *"The Greatest Fight in the World," delivered at the Pastor's College Conference, April, 1891*).

Samples from local and mainstream websites

Bible

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority.

(A) The Holy Scriptures. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the verbally and plenary inspired Word of God; furthermore, we believe that the Holy Scriptures, as originally written, do not only contain and convey the Word of God, but is the very Word of God. The Scriptures are

Holy Scriptures

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Timothy 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical historical interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Genesis 1:31; Exodus 31:17).

1. We believe the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God; inerrant in the original manuscripts, and the supreme and final authority in faith and life.

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TIME TO THINK

Things that are not the same are different.

Acts 8:36

KJV

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; **what doth hinder me to be baptized?**

Acts 8:37

KJV

And Philip said, **If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.** And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

NIV

No text available.

Footnote:

* Some late manuscripts baptized?" ³⁷ Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

NASB

[*And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

RSV

Other ancient authorities add all or most of verse 37, [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

Footnote:

* **Other ancient authorities add all or most of verse 37,** [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

NKJV

Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Footnote:

* **NU-Text and M-Text omit this verse.** It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

NOTE

Most people are surprised when they realize that verse 37 is not in modern English translations. You have to ask yourself why the verse is missing. In verse 36, the eunuch asks Philip what is keeping him from being **baptized**. Without verse 37, the eunuch gets baptized before he even professes to call upon the Lord and trust Christ alone for salvation. With verse 37, he believes first and then is baptized. So, if you are tracking...**without verse 37...you might just think that you have to be baptized to be saved! _____!**