

Preservation of the Scriptures

But He answered, "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." - Matthew 4:4 HCSB



Imagine that I built a beautiful deck for my wife. I carefully chose the most select, quality lumber and painstakingly ensured that every cut was exactly on the line; each cut to within a sixteenth of an inch. Oh – only one problem. I forgot to put any sealer on our deck.

You would rightly cry out, “Fool! Don’t you know what will happen to all your work if you don’t preserve it somehow?” I would be a fool if I did such a thing. Yet somehow many people think that Hashem is just that foolish.

They think that He would divinely inspire people to write His words down, giving humanity special insight into His character, will and ways, only to forget, or be unable¹ to preserve His Word. I ask you, what would be the point of inspiration if it weren’t preserved?

How can I live “by every word that comes from the mouth of God” if I can’t be sure I’m getting the right words? How can I teach, rebuke, correct and train both myself and others, if the Scripture’s inspiration is not preserved for our use?²

Notice, too, several things about Jesus’ view of the Scriptures. He believed they were inspired (comes from the mouth of God); that there were no surplus words (every word); that they were authoritative (man must live by them). Beyond that, He believed that the Scriptures that had already been written by that time were complete and securely preserved because He said “it is written” (present perfect). He believed that His Father’s preservation of the inspired Word was an ongoing endeavor and that what He was reading was the holy word of God. Therefore, by this one passage we can know that at least the Old Covenant is complete, entire, preserved, inspired and authoritative.

Jesus assured us that not only would it be impossible for the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter from the law to pass before its accomplishment,³ but that the same standard applied to His teaching.⁴ “The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever.”⁵

The question of the Bible’s preservation is the same old question the devil has always used to sow doubt into the minds of the faithful. “Did God really say...?”⁶ And it inevitably leads to the same conclusion, “No, you will not die...”⁷ Through the ages those who have questioned the Bible’s preservation have inevitably ended up placing themselves as authorities above it.

We must remember that not everyone who claims to be a believer or a wise Bible scholar actually is!⁸ We must decide whether we join Paul in his declaration, “God must be true, but everyone is a liar, as it is written: That you may be justified in Your words...”⁹

¹ Romans 4:21

² 2 Timothy 3:16-17

³ Matthew 5:18

⁴ Matthew 12:34

⁵ Isaiah 40:8 cp 1 Peter 1:23-25

⁶ Genesis 3:1

⁷ Genesis 1:4

⁸ Matthew 7:21

⁹ Romans 3:4