

passage was quoted as scripture by several writers: Justin Martyr (c. 150), Tatian (c. 175), Iraneus (c. 180) and Hippolytus (c. 200). Thus the evidence of the majority of witnesses and the evidence of greatest antiquity both overwhelmingly support the passage. Why then do the scholars still prefer to omit the verses? Evidently because they still desire to follow Alexandrian scholarship.

Conclusion

Alexandria became the world center of education and scholarship. Here, both Judaism and Christianity tried to merge their thought with Grecian Platonism. Soon, human wisdom took place over the words of the Bible, and scholars leaned upon allegorical interpretations to derive from the Bible what they already accepted as truth. However, this was not enough. The science of textual criticism had to be developed to remove from the scriptures phrases which were offensive to their own doctrine. Hence, Alexandria became the place known for her subtraction from the Word of God.

- continued next week

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. *Admit that you are a sinner.*
2. *Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.*
3. *Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.*
4. *You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).*
5. *By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.*

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of March 18, 2012

Sunday School -----	20
Sunday Morning Service -----	37
Sunday Evening Service -----	30
Wed. Eve., 03/21/11 Service -----	18

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of March 18, 2012

<u>Undesignated</u> Tithes & Offerings -----	\$ 1,049.64
Insurance Fund Offering -----	\$ 3.00
Total Received for Week of 03/18/12:	\$ 1,052.64

Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed to operate the church EACH WEEK, as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00

INSURANCE FUND REPORT FOR FEBRUARY, 2012:

Monthly Requirement -----	\$ 273.08
Amount Received during February, 2012 -----	\$ 21.00
Amount <u>SHORT</u> -	\$ 252.08

RYAN QUINNELLY'S CORRECT ADDRESS -

Please write Ryan Quinnelly, who is in Basic Training right now in the National Guard. Letters, pictures, newspaper clippings, etc., are allowed, but NO food or drink :



PFC Quinnelly, Ryan M
RN#404 C Co 2nd Bn 47th Inf 192 Brigade
5375 Hanson Dr Bldg 3245
Fort Benning GA 31905-4934

Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!



As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today - OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

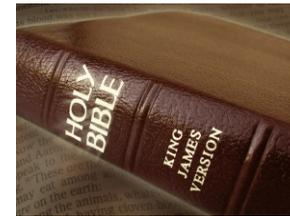
Todd W. White -----	Pastor
Mickie Shatwell -----	Pianist
Dickie Eberle -----	Greeter, Custodian
Shayne Hooper, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White -----	S.S. Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford, Dwayne English -----	Outreach
Flowers -----	Shirley White

SOUTH HEIGHTS BAPTIST'S WEEKLY
REMINDER

Volume XVI

March 25, 2012

Number 11



A Tale of Three Cities: Where the Bible Versions Began

by the late Dr. David F. Reagan, Pastor
 Antioch Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee

A conflict rages in this age which has been called "the battle for the Bible." This battle (more like a war) is being fought on several levels. Some deny that the Bible is God's Word at all. Others deny that the Bible completed God's revealed Word. While some scholars battle over original inspiration, and some argue over Greek texts, others are fighting the battle of English translations.

Amid the confusion of theological word battles and personal vendettas, many are crying for answers. As we survey the battlefield, several points must be made clear. The first point is that this battle is one battle. On every level, this battle is about whether or not you and I have or can have the Word of God.

If the Bible only contains God's Word, but no one knows which parts are His Word and which parts are not, **what good is that?** And why argue over perfect inspiration, if God has not preserved His Word? And what about all those translations? The whole problem comes down to this: **Can you and I get a hold of God's pure Word; and if we can, where?**

Another point to be made is that this battle for the Bible is **very important**. Nothing is more important than whether or not we can get God's truth. If God's Word is not our source of absolute truth, then what is? We are left holding an empty bag.

Yet those who claim allegiance to the Bible cannot seem to do enough to weaken its power. Scholars dilute the Bible text. Publishers come out with new, better-than-ever bibles every few months. Preachers freely correct the words of the living God. And young men herd off to seminaries (or rather cemeteries) to be taught the inadequacies of the Word of God.

No one claims to have a painting that contains the work of Rembrandt. They either have a painting by Rembrandt or they do not. Even a careful imitation is worthless next to the real thing. **Likewise, we either have God's Word or we do not.** Since God's Word by reason of God's own character must be totally pure, then an impure word **cannot be** God's Word. God's Word is incorruptible (1 Pet. 1:23). That which is God's Word is completely pure (Prov. 30:5). Other forms of printed matter (printed sermons, tracts, corrupted "bibles," etc.) may contain portions of God's Word, but they cannot be said to be God's Word.

Yes, this is all one battle. And this battle is important. But a third point needs to be made. This battle is not new. Ever since the Garden of Eden, when Satan denied God's Word and Eve changed it, Bible correcting has been one of man's favorite hobbies.

Take, for instance, the text of the New Testament. Its alteration has not been solely the recent work of little men with thick glasses hovering over ancient manuscripts. No, the greatest corruptions of the New Testament text occurred during the first two or three centuries after it was written. By the end of this period, the vast majority of various readings had already been written and the different Greek texts of today could have been composed. These centuries, during which the battle lines were drawn, set the time frame for the **Tale of Three Cities**.

A Tale of Three Cities

A Tale of Three Cities is a tale of intrigue and deception - one which pits the forces of God and Satan into battle over the integrity of the Bible. This war over the Word, which began in Eden's beautiful Garden, and still rages today with ever-increasing fury. God's churches, God's men, and God's people cannot afford to remain neutral when the stakes are so high. Yet, many seem determined

(continued inside)

to live their spiritual lives as deserters.

THE PRINCIPLE OF PRESERVATION

Before the unfolding of this story begins, two Biblical principles must be understood. The first principle is that God has promised, without exception, to preserve not only the Word which He has given to man, but also the words. This promise is confirmed every time God commands us to read, memorize, meditate upon, learn, or obey the words which He has given us. Nowhere in the Bible does God suggest the possibility of us not having His words. The promise of preservation is stated as follows in *Psalms 12:6,7*: **“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.”** This passage demands responsibility from present-day Christians. According to God, His words are preserved pure. If they are preserved, then we had better find them and believe them without correcting them.

THE PRINCIPLE OF CORRUPTION

The second principle which must be understood is that many will **“corrupt the word of God”** as stated by Paul in II Corinthians 2:17. Paul also warned against **“handling the word of God deceitfully”** (II Cor. 4:2). This evil practice of corruption assures us of the fact that many corrupted copies of God’s Word have been and will be made. The man who claims that all bibles are the word of God either does not know the scriptural principle of corruption or denies it. Corrupting the words of God is not an exception or simply an accident; it is an industry.

The Uniqueness of God’s Word

These two principles taken together demonstrate another important truth. Since God in His power is preserving the Word, and since the devil and his forces are corrupting the Word, the Bible cannot be approached as any other ancient book. Textual criticism sufficient for Homer’s Iliad will **not** work for God’s Word! And while mistakes in Homer do not really matter, mistakes in God’s Word could send a generation of mankind to hell. Unless God’s preserving power and Satan’s corrupting influence are considered, manuscript evidence is no more honest than last year’s politicians.

Modern bibles exist in a myriad of forms because intentional changes were made in copies of God’s Word by those who disbelieved its teaching. Of course, modern scholars claim that none of the various readings in the multitude of versions affect any major doctrine. This claim requires a low opinion of the weight of scripture. Every change made in the pure Word affects doctrine because **“all scripture is profitable for doctrine” (II Tim. 3:16)**. When any passage loses this profitability, then the Word of God is no longer pure.

The Three Cities Introduced

With these principles stated and explained, the story can now

begin. A tale of three cities begins in the Roman Empire during the time of Christ. The three cities (Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch) were the three largest and most influential cities in the Roman Empire. Yet, to the Christian, their influence concerning Bible corruption and preservation is of much greater importance.

As capital of the Roman Empire and the empire’s largest city, **Rome** ruled the ancient world. Rome emphasized form, legalism, and tradition. Through tradition, Rome became the center of Biblical addition. The Apocrypha is one example of how Rome added to scripture. From Italy, Rome dominated the theology and spiritual life of southern Europe and northern Africa.

Alexandria, Egypt, the second largest city, was the world capital for science, education, and scholarship. Great minds gravitated to Alexandria. This home town of Philo and Origen dominated the theology of surrounding Egypt and Palestine. As is the practice of modern scholarship, Alexandria subtracted from the Word of God. ***The Alexandrian Text is still the basis of modern Bible corruptions.***

The third largest city of the empire was **Antioch of Syria**. Located in the East, Antioch dominated the regions of Syria and Asia minor, the lands of early apostolic work. Antioch was known for her luxury and cosmopolitan flavor, but also for a literal interpretation of scripture. Although belittled by the scholarship of today, the Syrian Text was the underlying basis for the King James Version of 1611.

These three cities were located in three important countries on three different continents. They represented the three major races. Why are they so important? How did these cities become so influential in the historical transmission of the Biblical Text? These questions and more are to be answered in the following text. ***But never forget that God promised to preserve His Word.*** Our greatest concern should never be to judge or criticize the Word, but to find it, then read it, study it, memorize it, obey it, teach it, preach it, and if necessary, die for it.

ALEXANDRIA

Located on the Mediterranean Sea in the country of Egypt on the continent of Africa, Alexandria is still an active city today. This great seaport is in the area known scripturally as the **“land of Ham” (Ps.105:23)**. Alexander the Great founded the city in 332 BC during his conquest of the world. It rapidly developed into the greatest metropolis of the ancient world, reaching an estimated population of one million by the first century BC. At the time of Christ, the city was superseded only by Rome.

Under the rule of the Egyptian Ptolemies, Alexandria became the literary and scientific center of the world. Its university molded much of the philosophical thought of the time. The famous library of Alexandria contained half a million or more books and rolls. Vigorously pursued were the studies of mathematics, astronomy, poetry, and medicine. Alexandria was a Greek city by founding and thought; but because of the city’s open-mindedness, it became a city known for its cosmopolitan

collection of the religions and philosophies from the known world. It was in this environment that the Jewish theologian Philo first combined Judaism with Platonism to establish the allegorical approach to the Old Testament.

School of Alexandria

In practice, Philo (b. 20 BC) was more of a Greek philosopher than a Jewish theologian; hence his greatest influence was not in the Jewish realm. He desired to use the Old Testament to support his Greek philosophy. Therefore, he established a system of allegorical interpretation (spiritualizing of scripture) in order to make the scripture mean anything he desired. He taught that the hidden, deeper meaning of a passage of scripture was far superior to the plain, literal meaning. His allegorical interpretation became a wealth of ideas for the Alexandrian school of Christian thought of the second and third centuries.

This theological school was established in Alexandria in the second century after Christ by a man named Pantaenus and was continued by Clement of Alexandria. The School elevated Greek philosophy and emphasized the allegorical interpretation of scripture. The school became known for its scholarship and philosophy and was later brought into great prominence by a man named **Origen** (lived 185-254 AD).

Influence of Origen

In most church histories, Origen is praised as one of the greatest Bible scholars of all time. In this book, Origen’s mental genius and religious fervor are not questioned, only his knowledge of Biblical truth and his spiritual relationship with God. Origen possessed only one coat and no shoes, rarely ate flesh, never drank wine, devoted much of the night to study and prayer, and slept on the bare floor. The certainly demonstrates religious fervor and devotion. On the other hand, because of his doctrine, Origen is certainly unworthy of his reputation as a great Bible scholar. He taught that the Father is the originating cause of the Son, and that the Holy Spirit was subordinate to and created by the Son. He believed in the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins and approved of the baptism of little children. He taught that even the damned and devils would be brought into voluntary subjection to Christ after they were sufficiently punished. Origen developed a formal method of interpreting the New Testament scriptures by applying Philo’s allegorical interpretation. In this way, he was able to support all of the above doctrines and more.

Theologians and scholars who reject Origen’s method of allegorical interpretation and doctrinal conclusions often claim that his abiding merit lies in his work in textual criticism. He is famous for his labors to produce a correct text of the Greek Bible. ***Is it possible, however, that Origen’s false doctrines affected his Biblical criticism?*** Two examples should suffice:

While editing the New Testament text, Origen removed the word **carpenter** from Mark 6:3 because he did not think it should be there. He also removed the command, **“Thou shalt love thy**

neighbor as thyself,” from the passage of Matthew 19:16-22 because he could not logically explain its presence and said it therefore must have been added. How many times Origen applied this method of Bible correction? - only God Himself knows.

The Greek text which was being formed at Alexandria during the time of Origen came to be known as the **Alexandrian Text**. This text is represented mainly by two Greek manuscripts: the **Sinaiticus** (found by Tischendorf in 1844 in a Greek Orthodox monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai) and the **Vaticanus** (discovered in the Vatican library in 1481). These manuscripts are the basis for the majority of the subtractions made in the English bibles since 1611. Because Origen supported the readings which make up the Alexandrian text, scholars look to him as one of the most important witnesses to the corrupted text which is used for modern translations of the Bible. After Origen’s death, Alexandria continued to have great influence on the text of the New Testament. Even today, the Alexandrian Text is accepted by the majority of scholars as that which is closest to the originals. Alexandria in Scripture.

Alexandria is very rarely mentioned in the Bible, but these references tell the Bible student much about the direction the city would take. Its commerce and shipping trade are evident in the fact that the ships which took Paul from Caesarea to Rome for trial were ships of Alexandria (Acts 27:6; 28:11). Alexandria’s opposition to true doctrine is demonstrated by the Alexandrian Jews which were found in the temple disputing with Stephen (Acts 6:9). But the most revealing passage about Alexandria is found in Acts 18:24 where, **“a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.”** Here was a man who was eloquent in speech and very knowledgeable in the scriptures, but who knew, “only the baptism of John” (v.25). For this reason, Aquilla and Priscilla, converts of the apostle Paul, “took him unto then, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (v.26). The high degree of training and superior knowledge of Apollos confirms the emphasis on scholarship in his home town. However, his gaps in Biblical knowledge and errors in Biblical doctrine also point to the characteristic problems of Alexandria. These problems were to continue in Alexandria through the early church history period. The old copies of manuscripts of the New Testament which were influenced by the Alexandrian scholars are characterized by their omitting of important doctrinal phrases and verses. These omissions are not mistakes - ***scholarship always subtracts from the Word of God.***

For an example of their subtractions, let us examine the passage of Mark 16:9-20. This passage is missing in both the Sinaitic and the Vatican manuscripts. Therefore, in most recent versions, it is either omitted, or marginal notes question its place in the divine text. However, these verses **are found in all** of the Greek manuscripts except the two noted above and in all the Latin manuscripts but one. The Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts were written between 325-350 AD, but - approximately 150 years before Mark 16:9-20 was deleted by these manuscripts, the