

## Graphé – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Today, we are expected to believe in the *inspiration* without believing in the *preservation* of the Scriptures. We are being asked to believe in the inspiration of the "originals" without believing in the preservation of the *text* of the Scriptures. It is a statement of unbelief when we say that we only believe that the original autographs were inspired. What we really are saying is that we do not believe that we have the infallible Word of God on this planet, or at least in our hands, at this moment. Let us scripturally consider that statement:

<sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: <sup>17</sup>That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (II Tim.3:14-17)

Here God tells us His purposes in giving us the Scriptures: "... for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Do we actually believe that God allowed them to become lost after giving them? If so, how could He use them to accomplish these purposes?

Now we know that we do not have an original. Like the original 10 commandments (Exo. 32:19) and much of the original of Jeremiah (Jer. 36), they have been lost or destroyed during the passing of time. The question is – has God preserved His Word, *the original text*, although not the original piece of stone, paper or vellum on which it may have been written?

Note that in the above cited verses given through Paul to Timothy, no reference is being made with regard to the "original" Scriptures. Look at verse 15. Paul says to Timothy, "from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation." Paul is obviously not speaking of the "original" New Testament Scripture. Second Timothy was penned about A.D. 65. Further, Timothy was old enough to join Paul and Silas c.53 A.D. (Acts 16:1-4). Thus, **when Timothy was a child, there was no New Testament collection of Scripture anywhere.** Nor was Paul speaking of the "originals" of the Old Testament for there was not an original Old Testament piece of stone, paper or vellum extant at that time. Wrestle with this! Come to grips with it! These are the verses upon which many of us base our faith and say we believe in the "originals". Yet these very verses are *not* speaking of the original manuscripts!

But are the copies inspired? The Bible itself clearly teaches that **faithful copies** of the originals **are** also **inspired**. The word "Scripture" in II Timothy 3:16-17 is translated from the Greek word "*graphé*" (γραφή). *Graphé* occurs 51 times in the Greek New Testament, and at every occurrence it means "Scripture" – in fact, it usually refers to the Old Testament text.

A perusal of the N.T. reveals that the Lord Jesus read from the *graphé* in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:21) as did Paul in the synagogue at Thessalonica (Acts 17:2). The Ethiopian eunuch, returning home from worshipping at Jerusalem, was riding in his chariot and reading a passage of *graphé* (Acts 8:32-33). These were not the autographs they were reading; they were copies – moreover, copies of copies! Yet the Word of God calls them *graphé* – and every *graphé* is "given by inspiration of God" (II Tim.3:16). Thus, the Holy Writ has testified and that testimony is that faithful copies of the originals are themselves inspired. Selah!

Therefore, it all comes down to a promise given by God – that He would preserve the text which He gave us. Timothy never saw an original when he was a child of either the Old or New Testament, yet in verse 16 God says that what Timothy learned as a child was given by inspiration of God and **is** profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Now if God were talking about something which had been lost and/or is no longer true and accurate, why did He give verse 17?