

## A BIBLE EXAMPLE OF INSPIRATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE “CORRECT TEXT” – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D. – 2010

Any study of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture should begin at Jeremiah 36 for here God reveals examples of inspiration, transmission, corruption, and the preservation of Scripture.

The LORD makes it clear in verse two that we are dealing with a very significant portion of the Book of Jeremiah. If we compare this verse to Jer. 25:1 and 25:3 we find that Jeremiah was being told to record everything God had spoken to him over a 23-year span. Indeed, my personal research found that more than 20 of its 52 chapters are involved (“write...all the words that I have spoken unto thee...from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.”).

The actual writing was performed, not by Jeremiah, but by Jeremiah’s scribe or amanuensis – a man named Baruch. Other amanuenses in Scripture include Tertius, who actually penned the Book of Romans at Paul’s dictation (16:22) and Silvanus who wrote for Peter (1 Peter 5:12).

Before us lies exposed a direct collision between the Scriptures and the popular definitions of “inspiration.” All definitions of inspiration offered by modern scholars deal exclusively with that which is referred to by textual critics as “autographs” (the *original* setting down of Scripture).

Here in Jeremiah 36, we find that the “autograph” was not physically produced by Jeremiah, the “holy man of God” (2 Pet.1:21), to whom the Lord actually spoke (vs. 2) but by an *uninspired* scribe. At verse 18, the scribe himself describes the manner by which he recorded God’s Words. There he informs the men to whom he is addressing (and subsequently those of our day) that the actual writing down of the words from the mouth of Jeremiah was merely a mechanical operation on his part. God spoke to Jeremiah, Jeremiah spoke, and Baruch faithfully recorded the words.

Nevertheless, Jeremiah maintains that the words contained on the scroll were the actual words of the LORD (vv. 4, 6, and 8; cp. Jer. 1:9). He instructed Baruch to read them aloud to the people. The words read from the manuscript which were dictated by Jeremiah to the scribe are the *verbal* (word for word), *plenary* (totally complete, nothing is to be added or subtracted) words of GOD. They were given by His inspiration and preserved (we still have them today) even though the autograph was destroyed (vs. 23: the same is true of the original 10 commandments, Exo. 32:19).

The attempted manner of corruption of God’s Word was through deletion (vs. 23), not by addition (most text critics assert addition as the main source of corruption). Similarly, the new versions omit many words, phrases, entire verses, as well as nearly two hundred references to Christ Jesus.

Finally, verses 27 and 28 depict the preservation of the Word of the Living God. Even though God has not chosen to preserve the actual piece of physical material upon which it was written, He has protected His Word from the attacks of wicked men so as to preserve both its existence and its exact content. The “correct text” is preserved totally intact, free from any corruption. It remains in the hands of the faithful as our infallible guide: it corrects the sinner and shows him the *only* way home to the Creator.

Thus we learn from Jeremiah 36 that it is *not* merely the *original* autographs that are inspired – it is the Word of God itself that is both inspired and *preserved*. Further, from this chapter, we learn that an exact copy of what God said has *the very same authority* as the “original.”

In like manner, we aver and asseverate that any accurate translation presents the Word of God with the same authority as if Baruch were reading the Word of God to our ear today (vv. 6, 8, and 10) – in *any* language that the hearer understands (Acts 2:8, it’s the Holy Spirit’s ministry). Selah.