

LESSON 10

SUMMARY NOTES OF THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION

Chairman: Pr Dennis Kwok

Panelists: Rev Dr Jeffrey Khoo, Rev Dr Quek Suan Yew, Rev Dr Das Koshy

Summary notes by: Carol Lee

Question 1: I believe in VPP but I don't think it is serious enough for me to leave the church that believes otherwise. Am I wrong? Is believing in VPP a personal conviction?

Answer:

(a) Rev Koshy:

It is not serious enough for you to leave your church if your conviction is not contradicted or opposed by your church.

But if your church does not allow you to defend the truth, then it becomes very difficult for you to continue in your church.

Is VPP a serious doctrine? Most certainly. Without preservation, we would not have God's inspired words. And anyone can say this or that is his preferred reading, and not agree with the KJ translators' choice of Hebrew and Greek texts. It would be a matter of opinions then.

My conviction is that if VPP is denied so strongly as unbiblical and a heresy, you don't want to stay in that church and be called a heretic all the time.

Believing in VPP is a personal conviction because it is a doctrinal truth. It is not a preferred idea or opinion. It is God's truth.

(b) Rev Quek:

If you are a church leader, you have to make it known to your fellow leaders your position because it is a very serious doctrine.

If you are just an ordinary church member, your leaders may be ignorant so you must let them know the truth. If they persist in their position, and you do not leave the church and continue to teach VPP, you will be undermining the church leadership or sowing seeds of discord and that is wrong even if your doctrinal position is right. If you stay and keep quiet about VPP, your conscience will bother you when your fellow church members (your children included) are taught that the Bible has mistakes. Your tithes and offerings will be used to promote that the Bible has mistakes since they do it willingly and openly and are not ignorant.

Question 2: Is VPP a new issue that arises in this millennium?

Answer:

(a) Rev Quek:

The doctrine of preservation is not a new doctrine simply because it is taught in the Bible. It is as old as the Bible. The issue is new in the sense that there is a new attack on an old doctrine. And we have to defend this old doctrine. In our defence, we have to use words, adjectives (eg: “verbal,” “plenary”) to tighten the doctrine so that it will not be misunderstood, abused, misapplied, misinterpreted.

For example, when the doctrine of inspiration was not under attack, we never used the term “verbal plenary inspiration.” But when the doctrine of inspiration was attacked, fundamentalists defended it and extra-biblical terms (“verbal,” “plenary”) were used to ensure that the attack will have no hold in the hearts and minds of the flock that God has placed in your care to feed.

It is not a new doctrine but a new attack on an old doctrine.

(b) Dr Khoo:

The allegation that it is new doctrine comes from Bob Jones University and Central Baptist Theological Seminary. These schools do not believe that God has preserved His words 100%. They say that the doctrine of preservation is not based on the scripture. And if we cite Psalm 12:6-7, Matt 5:18, 24:35, they will very conveniently explain away these verses.

They will say they believe in the doctrine of inspiration and the infallibility of the autographs in the very beginning when it was first given. And they will say that now there are small insignificant mistakes in the Bible that will not affect our salvation. And that this is not important.

They say that VPP is a new doctrine that came about in 1648 when the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) was written. The WCF states that “God by his singular care and providence has kept his word pure in all ages.” Quoting Matt 5:18.

Those who attack the doctrine of preservation quote Matt 5:18 but do not believe in it and apply it only to the commandments of God and not to every jot and tittle of God’s words. They say it is an exaggeration to apply to every jot and tittle. The doctrine of preservation is considered a new doctrine by these so-called “scholars” in certain seminaries in the United States which do not believe in the preservation of the scriptures.

We Bible-Presbyterians believe and subscribe to the WCF. It is very surprising to me that B-Ps (who uphold the WCF and the Reformed Faith) are agreeing with people that attack the WCF and say that VPP is a new teaching and are attacking Scriptures that support the 100% preservation of the Word of God. Why must we here adopt and accept what they say? I can’t understand.

Question 3: What is wrong with the belief that the Bible is preserved in the totality of manuscripts (or body of manuscripts) which includes the Westcott and Hort (W/H) critical texts?

Answer:

(a) Dr Khoo:

The doctrine of VPP tells us that God has continuously preserved His words. No words are lost. All the words are kept intact to the jot and tittle and are always in the hands of God's people. His people will always receive His inspired and preserved words. The question is where these preserved words are.

Some say that the words are in the body of manuscripts (over 5,000 New Testament manuscripts). This body of manuscripts can be divided into two streams of manuscripts:

(i) The Preserved Stream: This consists of the majority of the 5,000 NT manuscripts and is the Preserved Line of manuscripts.

(ii) The Corrupted Stream: This consists of a minority of the 5,000 NT manuscripts, represented by Aleph, A, B, C and D (five manuscripts). W/H hailed these minority manuscripts in the corrupted stream as the best.

Dean Burgon (the contemporary of W/H) showed by clear study and investigation that these five minority manuscripts in the Corrupted Stream were scandalously corrupt. It is very difficult to find two verses in these manuscripts that can agree with each other. Yet they used these to "correct" the manuscripts that were received by the church as God's preserved words, that were used by the Reformers, and that were used by the KJ translators.

W/H changed the preserved texts and cut away 9,970 words, words that the church has been using all the ages. Egs: the last 12 verses of Mark, the verses in John 7:53 to 8:11 (on the adulterous woman), 1 John 5:7 (on the Trinity). These are God's preserved words that the church has received.

Can we accept W/H as part of the preserved texts? If we say yes, it means that we have been using the wrong Bible all along!

W/H are unbelievers who do not believe in the inerrancy of scriptures. They were friends of Darwin and Freud, and were secret worshippers of Mary. They considered the first three chapters of Genesis to be myths and not history.

So, we cannot include the W/H texts as among the preserved manuscripts because they are different from the majority of the preserved texts.

(b) Rev Quek:

Believing that the preserved words of God are in the body of manuscripts is an untenable position. If we believe in the doctrine of preservation, then we must have the words of God with us. If words are lost and we do not have them, then we cannot say we believe in the doctrine of preservation.

If we say the preserved words are somewhere in the body of manuscripts and start to use Higher Criticism to find these words, how do we know that what we find are really the words of God since we do not know what are the words of God in the first place? When we see two verses are different, how do we decide which is the word of God and which is not?

Be very careful of this deadly approach. We are not talking about a book of man, but The Book of God. The Bible can transform a child of darkness into a child of light, The Book that affects the eternity and the souls of people. If we say the Bible has mistakes, it will shatter our people's faith!

We do not play God. God is so powerful. Is He not able to preserve His own words? We must be aware of the deadly, diabolical proposal. It is subtle and laced with doctrinal arsenic. We must not swallow it. If we swallow it, we will die a slow death.

Question 4: Would it be difficult for Christians who are using a Bible translation that is based on the corrupt/minority texts to subscribe to the doctrine of VPP?

Answer:

(a) Rev Koshy:

They will never come to a conclusive decision whether they have God's Word completely in their hands. These scholars don't agree on one text. They will keep wondering which text is the correct text. For example, our Kenyan brethren use the Kalenjin Bible which is based on the W/H text. When I preached from the KJ Bible, they realized that something is amiss. They can believe in the VPP if they are willing to look into the KJB and then translate from the Hebrew and Greek texts underlying it in time to come.

I do not think that if you use a translation that is based on the W/H text, you cannot believe in VPP. Anybody can believe.

(b) Rev Quek:

The issue of preservation and the issue of translation are different issues.

The preservation issue is an issue about the Hebrew and Greek words preserved by God regardless of your language or translation of the Bible. You can believe in the Hebrew and Greek texts underlying the KJ Bible even if you do not have a Bible in your own language.

As for the choice of a Bible translation, it is about choosing the most faithful, most accurate translation. In using the word "most," it means that I must have something to compare with. That is: most faithful, most accurate compared to what? Compared to the Hebrew and Greek words!

The English Bible has a 500-year history. While we say that the KJ Bible is the most faithful, most accurate translation, we are not saying that the Chinese Bible, the Kiswahili Bible, and every other Bible have mistakes. Every translation must be measured against other translations in their own language to see which is the most faithful and accurate translation that they have. To make this measurement they must believe in the doctrine of VPP. The preserved texts underlying the KJ Bible are the texts preserved by God's singular care throughout the ages and finally identified for us by the KJ translators.

When the English Bible first came about by Tyndale, it was not a complete Bible. But people know that there are 66 books in the Bible. The English Bible took 500 years to develop to its present state.

Any Christian reading any translation can believe in VPP.

(c) Dr Khoo:

If a Christian truly understands VPP, he will not use the W/H text or translations that are from the W/H texts because he can recognize that the text has many words left out. He will want all the words of God.

(d) Rev Koshy:

In the church that has only the Kalenjin Bible, the members should seek help from their pastor and teacher to help them understand the differences. They can still believe in VPP.

(e) Dr Khoo:

Jonathan Langat, a Kalenjin, did his thesis for his MDiv degree on updating the Kalenjin Bible based on the preserved texts. This helps his people to have all of God's words in their own language. Work has been done in this area.

Question 5: There are differences within the preserved texts. How do we know which is correct?

Answer:

(a) Dr Khoo:

Based on the Logic of Faith, E.F.Hills in his book "The King James Bible Defended" starts with the promises of Christ that His words will be kept intact, that is, no words will be lost. This will lead us to the majority manuscripts and then to the printed text, the Textus Receptus (the Greek words underlying the KJ Bible). The identification is based on the Logic of Faith which is based on God's promises.

(b) Rev Koshy:

We can't go back to check every manuscript, every word. God has already used His servants to identify the right words all through the centuries. Godly men have to come together to study and to give us the texts.

We need not look at all the manuscripts and come up with God's Word. God has already preserved His words for us. Just apply the Logic of Faith.

(c) Dr Khoo:

Which edition of TR? We do not talk in terms of which text or edition of the TR is being preserved. Rather, preservation is the preservation of the WORDS of God: the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words behind the Reformation Bibles.

(The 16th Century Reformation is a great and miraculous event of God. Philip Schaff says that the Reformation is next to the Pentecost. Through it, the true church is separated from the false church. There was a return to the study of the biblical languages. The printing press was invented at that time which allowed for the production of the printed texts.)

The Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) has also identified the preserved words of God as the Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJ Bible: the Ben Chayim (not Stuttgart) text and the Scrivener's text (which is a combination of Beza's 1598, 5th edition and the Stephenus' last 2 editions). According to TBS, the words underlying the KJ Bible are the definitive reading. We do not need to change any words today. Our Hebrew and Greek Bibles are fixed.

From these Hebrew and Greek words, translations are to be made into the languages of the world so that people can know all the words of God. For us English Bible users, we use the KJ Bible as it is most faithfully and accurately translated.

Question 6: Is it true that 1 John 5:7 is not found in the Majority Texts but in the Latin Vulgate?

Answer:

(a) Dr Khoo:

1 John 5:7 teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. This clear proof text is found in the TR and the Latin Vulgate. It is not that we do not have Greek evidences. We have Greek manuscript evidence of the presence of 1 John 5:7.

There is also internal evidence as we study the grammar. If we remove 1 John 5:7, the grammar will not fit. Both external and internal evidences point to the accuracy of 1 John 5:7. Theologically, it is a most wonderful verse. The verse that glorifies God must be right. God's word will never demote Christ.

Question 7: Some say that the text underlying the KJ Bible is a virtual text because it came into being only after the KJ Bible has been completed. It is considered "reverse engineering."

Answer:

(a) Dr Khoo:

Jesus says He will preserve all His words. We just believe that all His words will be preserved. If God is the One who preserves, then we believe that the infallible and inerrant Hebrew and Greek words underlying the Reformation Bibles best represented by the KJ Bible are the preserved words of God.

This "reverse engineering" kind of talk is too technical for the lay person. We have God's infallible and inerrant words. And we have the most accurate English translation of these words. We do not have to invent or create words. We have the God-breathed words and they are kept pure by God.

Our logic must not work backwards: so many "errors," manuscripts, "mistakes," therefore the Bible has mistakes. Instead, we must begin with God's Word. No where in the Bible does it say that God's Word will be imperfectly preserved or lost. Dr George Skariah has exegeted more than 50 passages of God's Word that teaches us of God's preservation of His words. Begin with God's Word and it will lead us to the right conclusion.

Question 8: The KJV TR is the closest to the original is the original B-P stand. Have we shifted away from the B-P stand? How can “closest” mean exact?

Answer:

(a) Dr Khoo:

Does “closest” mean there are mistakes? No where in the B-P church history did we say that the Bible has mistakes.

If “closest” means that our Bible is not infallible and not inerrant, then it is a wrong understanding.

We have to go back to the Bible. Psalm 19:7: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”

“Closest” does not mean there are mistakes. “Closest” simply means although we do not have the autographs (tables of stone, the papyrus, the parchment), we have the same words, ie. the exact words although not the same tables of stone. The tables of stones are no more but we have the exact words. No autographs but we have the apographs. The B-P Church never held to the position that the Bible has errors.

(b) Rev Quek:

Even if some say “closest” means mistakes, and we say “closest” does not mean mistakes, are we not playing a semantic game?

Sometimes we cannot cling on to tradition and use it as the basis for our beliefs as if tradition is engraved in stone and we cannot let it go. If tradition is wrong, we must change and not continue to hold to it. If tradition is right, then keep it.

When I first joined the B-P Church, no pastor, elder or deacon told me that the Bible has mistakes. Even today, our Basic Bible Knowledge class notes never said that the Bible has mistakes. No one dares to put it into our BBK notes that the Bible has mistakes because they can’t defend their position.

If there were mistakes, can they list these mistakes? Does it mean that if these mistakes are corrected, we will have a perfect Bible?

So far, those who reject VPP have misinterpreted our position again and again to give themselves a bit of credibility.

They have not written any paper to defend their position. They made statements of what they do not believe, but never on what they believe. This is because they cannot demonstrate from Scriptures (not even from logic) to defend their position. Positional statements should state what one believes, not what one does not believe.

Question 9: Is the TR as old as the Bible? Or has the TR existed since the first century or for the last 400 years only?

Answer:

(a) Rev Quek:

We must not confuse the actual possession of the TR with the identification of the TR.

Eg: The first century Christians already possessed the 27 New Testament books, but these were identified for us only in the 4th century.

Similarly, the TR was already in existence but not identified till later.

Why were they not identified earlier?

My suggested answer is that God knew that earlier there was no printing press. Only after the invention of the printing press, God used His people (through King James's sanction) to identify for us His preserved words and from them they gave us the KJ translation.

God's providential hand is at work: Paul went west and not east. The printing press was invented. The KJ team was a team of gifted translators, never to be repeated. English is today's international language. The British Empire spreading her influence all over the world with the English language is no accident.

Today, so-called scholars (of less than kindergarten standard compared to the KJ translators) want to decide what should be in the Bible and what should be out. Who are they? Are they advocating sacerdotalism, that they are people with secret knowledge? This is absolutely subjective. How can we believe them?

But if God has preserved His words, and we have His preserved words, we have to stop using the deadly method of textual criticism to criticize God's Holy and Perfect Word. We must just accept God's words.

(b) Dr Khoo:

It is not human identification but divine identification.

Preservation is by God's singular care. How? God is a God of history. He works through history. In the days of the Reformation, God gave us the printed text, with all His words intact. Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Do our words today go back to the day of Moses? To the New Testament time? Yes, the Hebrew and Greek words underlying the KJ Bible go back to Moses and to the New Testament time. And this is based on God's promise. I take God at His word, by faith. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him..."

"It is written." It was written. And it will always remain written. The Greek word is in the perfect tense. It remains perfectly written.

If God can preserve my salvation, He can preserve His words.

Kept pure? Never disappear? Yes, He is all powerful. Hebrews 11:6: "...he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He has preserved His words for us. We are to diligently seek Him through His preserved words. And He will reward us. This is a matter of faith otherwise it will not please Him.