


This post shows the church's role in perfect preservation.

 kentbrandenburg.com/2026/04/01/the-perfect-preservation-of-scripture-through-true-new-testament-churches-a-presuppositional-and-historical-defense

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From a presuppositional standpoint grounded in scripture's own testimony, [the perfect preservation of God's words](#) is not open to neutral debate. It is a divine promise that must shape how we understand all historical evidence. The Bible preservation issue starts with scriptural teaching on it. When you believe what God said, you come to perfect preservation.

Scriptural Foundation for Preservation

Scripture clearly promises the perfect, verbal preservation of every word. The Lord Jesus Christ declared in Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Psalm 12:6–7 affirms God's words are pure and will be preserved "from this generation for ever." Isaiah 40:8 states, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19–20 commands teaching "all things" Christ taught until the end of the age. This requires the exact words to remain available. Most importantly, 1 Timothy 3:15 identifies the church — the Lord's assembly — as "the pillar and ground of the truth." True churches therefore serve as the New Testament equivalent of Old Testament Israel in guarding and transmitting Scripture. What the Lord says about the preservation of scripture, which includes the New Testament, He expects His people to believe and teach.

The Old Testament Parallel

In the Old Testament, God committed the oracles to Israel ([Romans 3:2](#)). Preservation occurred through priests, Levites, scribes, and the covenant community. Even during times of apostasy or exile, a faithful remnant ensured the text was copied, read, and passed on. This

was not random but God's chosen means, as Deuteronomy 31:24–26 shows the law placed in the ark under priestly care. Edward F. Hills, explains the parallel directly:

The Old Testament text was preserved by the Old Testament priesthood and the scribes and scholars that grouped themselves around that priesthood (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

The New Testament Pattern: True Churches as Custodians

God has followed the same pattern in the New Testament era. He entrusted His words to true churches — visible assemblies of regenerated, baptized believers who follow the New Testament pattern. These churches operate as the “pillar and ground of the truth,” fulfilling the role once held by Israel.

Preservation happens through the everyday life of these churches: copying manuscripts, translating into the vernacular, preaching, teaching, and defending the text. The New Testament text has been preserved by the universal priesthood of believers by faithful Christians in every walk of life (1 Peter 2:9). The biblical position on preservation says that all the Words were available to every generation of churches.

The 1689 London Baptist Confession states that the Scriptures in the original languages have been “kept pure in all ages” by God’s “singular care and providence.” This providence works through faithful believers in true churches, not through state institutions or academic critics. God promised He would keep or preserve both His Words and His church.

Historical Evidence from Manuscript Tradition

The vast majority of surviving Greek New Testament manuscripts — about 80–90% of the later minuscules — belong to the Byzantine text-type. These were produced and used in the regions where Paul planted churches, including Asia Minor and Greece. This dominance reflects long-term church usage rather than mere chance or climate.

After scripture had its dominating effect through available translation and a true gospel, these relied on and propagated the *Textus Receptus*. This printed edition, based on Byzantine manuscripts brought west after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, represented the text received and used by the churches for centuries. The Traditional Text, found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts, is the True Text because it represents the God-guided usage of this universal priesthood of believers.

The Role of Persecuted Non-State Churches

True churches often existed outside powerful state systems and faced persecution. Groups such as the Waldensians translated the New Testament into Old Occitan from Old Latin sources that frequently aligned with Byzantine and Textus Receptus readings. Their portable Bibles emphasized lay access and preaching, preserving the fuller church-used text amid opposition.

A biblical view of church history connects these groups to perpetuity: independent Bible-believing churches, including those with “true Baptist principles” like the Waldensians, continued from the apostles, guarding both the church and the words. Similar patterns appear among the Paulicians and other dissenting groups. Though direct Greek manuscripts from these groups are rare due to persecution and destruction, their vernacular translations and use of Scripture show continuity with the text upheld by faithful churches.

Baptist Confessions and the Doctrine of Preservation

Seventeenth-century English Baptists explicitly affirmed this truth. The Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 declares that God kept the Scriptures pure in all ages through His singular care and providence. Particular Baptists used the King James Version, based on the Textus Receptus, as the preserved Word of God.

These confessions align with the historic, orthodox position. The church has believed in the perfect preservation of scripture and not believing it overturns historic, orthodox church doctrine. Earlier Anabaptist statements, such as the Schleithem Confession (1527), assumed the plain sufficiency of Scripture for faith and practice. Baptist histories trace a spiritual line of true churches that guarded the pure text even when larger institutions drifted.

The Church’s Agreement and the Inward Testimony of the Holy Spirit

True New Testament churches fulfill the biblical pattern of canonicity not only for the books of scripture but also for the very words themselves. Furthermore, since in the same manner that churches agreed on the books of the Canon they have agreed on the words of the TR underneath the KJV, the burden of proof is on opponent. Churches, led by the Holy Spirit, have historically recognized and settled upon the received text in the same way they affirmed the canon. This agreement is not a human invention but the outworking of 1 Timothy 3:15, where the church stands as the pillar and ground of the truth.

The [inward testimony of the Holy Spirit](#) through these churches provides certainty about the preserved words, functioning in the New Testament era as a type of Urim and Thummim did for Old Testament Israel. Just as the high priest received divine direction through the Urim and Thummim for clear guidance, believers in true churches recognize the voice of God in the received text by the internal witness of the Spirit.

This “Internal Witness of the Spirit” allowed believers to know the preserved Word with the same assurance as the inspiration of Scripture itself. The Holy Spirit did not retire after the apostolic age; He remains the active “Librarian” of the text, leading the churches to affirm what God has kept pure.

Dovetailing with the Providential Work of Scribes

The work of scribes dovetails perfectly with this church recognition in a providential way. God sovereignly “ordered the pens of scribes” so that the text remained intact despite the inevitable minor variations in hand-copied manuscripts. Drawing from the historic position, God, by his

singular care, has so ordered the pens of scribes, that the Hebrew and Greek remain. Scribes copied faithfully under God's oversight, but it is still the true biblical churches — through their universal priesthood of believers — that stand as the means and method of preservation.

The churches' ongoing use, preaching, and consensus confirm what the scribes produced, ensuring availability to every generation exactly as Scripture promises. This harmony of scribal labor and ecclesiastical recognition upholds the presuppositional certainty that God has kept every word pure through His churches. Believers today can rest in the same inward testimony that guided the churches, including the persecuted ones before them. The *Textus Receptus* and faithful translations reflect this divine process, giving the people of God the exact words they need for faith and practice.

A Presuppositional Synthesis

This view follows the presuppositional approach, which is a scriptural one. The biblical presupposition is not that individual manuscripts or particular printed editions are perfect — the opposite. It is belief in the perfect preservation and availability of the words of scripture. God did not leave preservation to neutral processes. He superintended the text through the common faith and usage of believers in true churches. The Byzantine/Majority Text and the resulting *Textus Receptus* reflect this divine guidance, not human reconstruction.

Neutral textual criticism treats the Bible like any ancient document and produces uncertainty. In contrast, the biblical presupposition of perfect preservation through true churches gives believers full assurance. Scripture teaches verbal plenary inspiration and therefore verbal plenary preservation. What God inspired He preserved. This is perfect preservation.

Assurance for Today's Churches

The evidence converges beautifully. Scripture promises preservation through the church as the pillar of truth. History shows the Byzantine text-type as the one continuously used by churches in apostolic regions and defended by dissenting believers. Baptist confessions affirm God's singular providence keeping the text pure in all ages. True New Testament churches perpetuate both the church and the preserved words, just as God promised.

True churches today stand in this same stewardship. They inherit the preserved words of God, just as Israel delivered the Old Testament oracles. Believers can therefore trust that faithful translations like the King James Version deliver the exact words God intended for His people in every generation.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but His words — kept pure through true New Testament churches — will never pass away. This is both the clear teaching of Scripture and the consistent testimony of history.