

THE TWO LIES by Daryl R. Coats

PART ONE

Since Satan first asked Eve, "*Yea, hath God said?*" hundreds of lies have been told about the Bible. Most "fundamentalists" have enough discernment to recognize most of these lies. However, the two biggest lies about the Bible form the basis of all other lies and are unrecognized by most "conservatives" and "fundamentalists." These two lies are promoted by their colleges, seminaries and churches. Both lies concern the Bible's inspiration in the attempt to undermine it. The first claims that the Bible "is" inspired only in the "original manuscripts"; the second maintains that the Bible is inspired only in the "original languages." These two lies share one thing in common with every lie ever told about the Bible since Genesis 1:1; they simply cover up the natural man's desire to undermine God's authority.

Supposedly, the translators of "The New King James Version" are "Bible-believing" conservatives because each one signed a statement that he believed in the inspiration of the "original autographs"; what a shame though, that they were not translating the original autographs! "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and is therefore inerrant in the original writings," says the doctrinal statement of a Christian organization, which sponsors archaeological digs and publishes a monthly newsletter. Apparently, no one in that organization has noticed that the words "in the original writings" make the statement logically misleading. Nor, apparently, has anyone in that organization noticed that "inerrant in the original writings" does not mean "inerrant now." As one liberal theologian pointed out in his review of Harold Lindsell's, *The Battle for the Bible*, the only real difference between the conservative and liberal positions on the Bible is that the conservatives say the Bible *used to* be inspired and inerrant, whereas the liberal says it was *never* inspired or inerrant. Both positions agree that the Bible is now not inspired or inerrant.

The fundamentalist and conservative position, on the Bible's inspiration is identical not only to the liberal position but to the charismatic, catholic and "neo-evangelical" positions. Exactly how this similarity is maintained in a state of "separation" from the world is never explained! "WE BELIEVE that the Holy Bible as originally written was inspired and the product of Spirit-controlled men, and therefore has truth without any admixture of error for its matter," says the first article in the statement of faith of a "prophetic ministry" in California. Left to the reader's imagination is just how past-tense inspiration "was inspired" is proof for present-tense inerrancy "therefore has truth."

"We believe that the Bible is the written Word of God, without error in the original manuscripts, and of infallible divine authority in matters of faith and life," says an advertisement for a Presbyterian church in Oxford, Mississippi. Immediately following those words in the ad comes the revelation of the real issue here: final authority. "Our only other doctrinal standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism."

In other words, since the Bible is no longer inerrant, it is necessary for this church to have two "doctrinal standards" in addition to the Bible. Such is always the case. Since the original manuscripts no longer exist, some other authority must be substituted for them, whether that other authority is a revelation, a Book of Mormon, a Nicene Creed or a college education. Modern "Bible scholars" realize this only too clearly, and that is why they spend so much time talking and writing about non-existent "originals." Since the "inspired originals" no longer exist, the scholars and their conjectures replace the Bible and become themselves "the final authority."

Like the "missing link," the original manuscripts have never been seen by Christians. How, then, can someone believe they are inspired? Suppose that locked in my office is a book which no one has ever seen, and that there is absolutely no way you could ever see it. Would you be willing to risk your eternal salvation on whether the contents of that book were inspired? I hope not. Most reasonable people would wait until they had seen an object in question before they made a judgment on it. However, modern Christians are more than willing to judge something no one has seen for two thousand or more years. Whether any scholar or layman admits it, present-day copies of the "inspired originals" are the only evidence available to support the inspiration of those originals, and unless those copies are also inspired, there is no evidence that the originals were inspired. In fact, if the present day copies are not inspired, then neither were the originals, because inspiration can no more produce non-inspiration than a fig tree can produce berries. (See James 3:12; cf. Genesis. 1:21, 24-25: "*after his kind*")

If the Bible was inspired only in the original manuscripts, no one in the entire history of the world has ever had an inspired Bible. The original autographs of Job and the books of Moses had disappeared more than a thousand years before the first book of the New Testament was written, so no one has ever owned a complete Bible made up of the "divine originals." Nor, has anyone ever owned a complete New Testament made up of "inspired originals", because the originals were distributed among more than a dozen individuals and local churches.

PART TWO

If the Bible were inspired only in the original manuscripts, then no one today really knows for sure what is in "the Bible" because no one today has ever seen the original manuscripts. Not surprisingly, this is the attitude behind every English "bible" published since 1611. "We can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text," says the preface to the RSV, too deceitful to define just what a "competent scholar" is and to cut through the double-talk and admit, "This is what we think the Bible might be." "Scholarly uncertainty" is more clearly evident in the third edition of the UBS "Greek New Testament", the introduction to which states, "The letter A [next to a passage] signifies that the text is virtually certain, while B indicates there is some 073 degree of doubt. The letter C means that there is a considerable degree of doubt whether the text or the apparatus contains the superior reading [note: "the superior reading" is not the same as "the correct reading"!], while D shows there is a very high degree of doubt concerning the reading selected for the text." Apparently, the scholars change their mind from year to year as to which "readings" are genuine; how else do we explain the more than five hundred changes between the second and third editions of the UBS "Greek New Testament"?

If the Bible were inspired only in the original manuscripts, no one today has an inspired Bible. If that is true, what makes your religion any different from that of the Buddhist, or Hindu, or Muslim or Mormon? If the Bible you read from, study from, memorize from and preach from is not inspired, what makes it any different from the Koran, the Book of Mormon and the Upanishads, none of which is inspired, either?

If the Bible were inspired only in the original manuscripts, God certainly went to a lot of trouble for nothing. Only Moses ever saw the original of *"the two tables of testimony"*, Exodus 31, 32. The "original manuscripts" of Exodus, then, did not contain the "original autograph" of the Ten Commandments; nor, did the "original manuscripts" of Deuteronomy. Were Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 somehow not inspired even in those books' "original autographs"?

Baruch, Jehudi and possibly Jeremiah, were the only people who ever read the "divine original" of portions of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 36) Less than a dozen local churches and even fewer individuals ever owned an inspired copy of a New Testament book. What was so special about Philemon and Gaius that God would give them inspired copies of New Testament Epistles, but not give them to all Christian believers? What was so special about the carnal church at Corinth that God gave it two inspired Epistles? And how did God decide which of the seven churches in Asia Minor would receive the "divine original" of Revelation and which six would have to settle for "uninspired" copies of the original.

If the Bible is no longer inspired, who removed its inspiration? Who gave it in the first place? God gives a man his breath, and only God can take it away. (Genesis 2:7, Daniel 5:23) If God gave the Bible its inspiration, and He did, (II Timothy 3:16) then only God could have taken it away. If He did, then He violated His own commandment: *"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it,"* He tells us in Deuteronomy 4:2, indicating that through His use of the word *"ought"* He is referring to more than just letters or words. If He did, then He lied when He said in Psalm 89:34 that He would not *"alter the thing that is gone out of my lips"* According to the Bible rejecters, then, God is guilty of the same sin that they are.

Fortunately, the Bible says nothing about its inspiration being limited to "original autographs" or even "original languages." Of course, many men teach that it does say such a thing, and each of them quotes 2 Timothy 3:16 to prove their point. However, is that what the verse really says? Looking at the verse in the context in which it appears, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, you will notice that Paul admonished Timothy to continue in those same scriptures that he had studied as a child. Did Timothy somehow own the original manuscripts of the Old Testament books? Of course not, yet the Scriptures that he owned were inspired!

Even taken out of context, 2 Timothy 3:16 cannot be used as a proof-text for limited inspiration. Look at it closely. Nowhere in the verse do the words "in the original manuscripts" occur. For that matter, nowhere in the verse will you find a verb in the past tense. *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God,"* not "was given." The inspiration of the Bible is present tense - NOW! It is alive and still breathing, and you had better be glad it is. God inspired the Bible for only one reason: *"that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (2 Timothy 3:17) If the Bible were inspired only in the original manuscripts you would have no chance of living and working for God the way He wants you to!

2 Timothy 3:16 also does not say anything about the Bible being inspired only in the "original languages." (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) Nor will you find a reference to "original languages" anywhere else in the Bible. Yet "scholars" and brain washed non-scholars alike continue to teach that the Bible's inspiration is somehow limited to "the original languages."

PART THREE

If the Bible is inspired only in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages, then less than two percent of the people who have ever lived have ever been able to read or understand the Bible, or portions of it, in its "inspired form." Again, the question arises, "Why would God have bothered to inspire the Bible if only a handful of people would ever be able to benefit from its "inspired form?"

When it comes to making the Gospel available to all people who want to receive it, is not God "*no respecter of persons?*" Did He not prove this when He sent the Latin-speaking, Roman, Cornelius, the same word that he had originally sent the Hebrew-speaking children of Israel in the Old Testament? (Acts 10:34-37) Regardless of his language or nationality, God will allow him to know, the same word "*which God sent unto the children of Israel.*" The same God who can understand a prayer in any language can also communicate in any language.

Stewart Custer, in his deceitfully titled pamphlet, "*The Truth About the King James Version Controversy,*" claims that, "...to say that the King James Bible is the inerrant Word of God is to say that God favors the English-speaking people of the world." (page 13) To the contrary, to say such a thing is to admit that God favors all people when it comes to making the Bible available to them. Custer's claim is logically misleading if not downright hypocritical. Doesn't he realize that to say that the Bible is inspired only in the "original languages" is to say that God somehow favors Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek-speaking peoples, most of whom have been dead more than a thousand years?

If the Bible is inspired only in the "original languages," it is a dead book, because Biblical Hebrew, Aramaic and Koine Greek are dead languages. The Bible, however, claims to be alive and "*quick.*" (Hebrews 4:12) "*Being born again...by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*" (1 Peter 1:23) "*The words that I speak unto you...they are life.*" (John 6:63) Because it is alive, the Bible can see and discern and produce life, an impossibility if it were dead.

If the Bible is inspired only in the "original languages," it is barbaric. "*Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me,*" wrote Paul to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:11) God required that the Corinthians translate their "unknown tongue" so that the entire church could be edified. (1 Corinthians 14:5) In light of that, since God inspired the Bible to equip Christians for His service, would not it be unbiblical for Him to limit the inspiration of His word to Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, "unknown tongues" to ninety-percent of the people who have ever lived? Would not it be unbiblical for God no to translate His word? It certainly would, and that is why, in accordance with 1 Corinthians 14:5, 19 and 27-28, God "interprets" from the "original languages" in the text of the Bible itself.

"To interpret" literally means "to translate." This sheds some new light on Peter's statement that the Bible is not of any "*private interpretation.*" (2 Peter 1:20) A preacher, professor, or scholar who makes up his own translation from a Greek or Hebrew Bible is making a "private interpretation!" At my church, "signers" translate or "interpret" sermons and testimonies and songs for the sake of the deaf. When I worked in Africa, "interpreters" translated my messages and presentations from English into Swahili. Joseph hides his identity from his brothers by speaking to them through an interpreter who translates from Egyptian to Hebrew. (Genesis 42:7, 23) Several times in the Greek New Testament, God throws in some Hebrew or Aramaic and then "interprets" it into Greek so it will not be barbaric, (Matthew 1:23, 27:33, Mark 5:41, 15:22, 34, John 1:41-42, 9:7, John 19:17, Acts 9:36, 4:36, 13:8, Hebrews 7:1-2) God also translates Hebrew words that appear in the Aramaic portion of Daniel. (Daniel 5:25-28)

A study of the "interpretation" found in Daniel chapter 5 sheds much light on the "Bible issue." When Daniel and the other Hebrew youths were brought into Babylon, they were trained in the use of "*the tongue of the Chaldeans.*" (Daniel 1:4) Even though every Jew in Belshazzar's court was completely fluent in his native Hebrew and his adopted Aramaic, only Daniel could "interpret" the Hebrew written on the wall; in the same way, years of study of "Biblical languages" do not of themselves qualify a man to "interpret" the Bible, because "*interpretations belong to God.*" (Genesis 40:8) God will provide the translation that He wants, wrought at the hands of a man or men whom He has proven, and any other translation is a 'private interpretation.' In addition, notice that for clarity, God's translation adds words not found in 'the original,' e.g., the italicized words in the AV 1611, and that God withholds His judgment until Belshazzar had heard the word in his own language!

Some argue that the Authorized Version of the Bible could not be inspired because if it were, then the King James translators would have been just as 'inspired' as the 'original 073 writers.' The Bible, however, does not say that Peter, Paul, Moses or any other Biblical writer was inspired. Instead, it says that the writers of the Bible "*were moved.*" (2 Peter 1:21) Only the Bible itself is inspired. If Paul were inspired, then everything he wrote would be Scripture; it isn't. If Solomon were inspired, all three thousand of his proverbs and one thousand and five of his songs would be Scripture; they aren't.

Just as God can use saved sinners to record His Word, so He can use saved sinners to translate His

Word. Rome, naturally, fully opposes this, especially when God translated his Word into English. Like many fundamentalists in the 1980's, Rome denounced the AV as it was being translated, claiming that God could speak only in the Biblical languages. The translators' response to such nonsense is as vivid today as it was in 1611.

"...we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the...translation of the Bible in English...containeth the Word of God, nay is the Word of God: As the king's speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latin, is still the king's speech."

What America needs today is more Christians who will affirm and not deny that the AV 1611 is the Word of God.

PART FOUR

That the Bible in English is just as inspired as the Bible in its "original languages" is shown by several passages in the Bible. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached only one sermon; yet every person present heard that sermon in his own language: just as there was only one sermon, there is only one Word of God: just as the sermon was not bound to Peter's "original" language, so "the word of God is not bound" to its original languages, (2 Timothy 2:9): and just as each version of Peter's sermon was true to the "original," so the genuine version of the Bible is true to the original, which is settled forever in Heaven. Hundreds of counterfeit versions exist today, but they are not true to the original. The only authorized version of the Bible in English, the only one that God is responsible for, is the King James Bible.

If the Bible is inspired only in the original languages, then every Old Testament passage quoted in the New Testament is uninspired, because the New Testament translates them before it quotes them. If the Bible is inspired only in the original languages, part of the Old Testament must be an uninspired translation of Egyptian, because the Scripture spoke to Pharaoh (Romans 9:17), and I doubt very much that it spoke to him in Hebrew. If the Bible is inspired only in the original languages, you had better start learning those languages as quickly as you can. Jesus said man was to live by "*every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" His Words are to abide in us, and if He did not give us any words in English, we had better pick up the original languages so we can stop living in disobedience.

According to Isaiah 55:11, one characteristic of the inspired Word is that it shall accomplish what God pleases. What does God desire? He desires that sinners repent of their sinful condition, and receive Christ as payment for their sins. (Isaiah 55:7, Ezekiel 18:23, 2 Peter 3:9, Luke 14:23) The preaching of the inspired Word accomplishes this. (Isaiah 55:11, Romans 10:14-15, 2 Timothy 3:15) Does the AV 1611 accomplish what God desires? If it does, the AV 1611 must be inspired, because the Word that accomplishes what God desires "*goeth forth out of my mouth.*"

According to Hebrews 11:5, "*Enoch was translated.*" The primary meaning of "to translate" is not "to turn one language into another", but rather "to convey, or remove from one person, place, or condition to another; to transfer, transport." (Oxford English Dictionary). Enoch was borne, conveyed and transported from one place, Earth, to another, Heaven, and as a translation into English, the AV 1611 has been borne, conveyed and transported from one place, the original languages, to another, English. Did this translation process effect the inspiration of the Bible? Not in the least. Notice that Enoch was the same person after his translation as he was before it; if anything, he was actually better off after being translated. Even so, the King James Bible is just as inspired after its translation as it was before it. Only its locale and language changed; its nature remained the same.

Some will argue, however, that some things cannot be conveyed from one language to another; some things will be clouded except in "the original." I once heard a student offer this excuse for not reading the Bible: "Reading it in translation is bad, because there are some words in Greek and Hebrew which we don't know what they mean." Somehow he could not comprehend that if a word's meaning is unknown, being able to read it in its "original language" still will not help him to know what it means!

Loss of meaning as a result of translation might be true as far as ordinary literature is concerned, but the Bible is not just literature, nor is it ordinary. God can communicate in any language, clearly and precisely, because He is God. God is not the author of confusion, (1 Corinthians 14:33) - in the context of "interpreting" and a Bible that is unintelligible without a knowledge of "original languages" is confusion at its worst. The "doctrine" that an idea, which can be expressed in Hebrew or Greek, somehow cannot be expressed in English,

even though a large portion of Greek vocabulary has been absorbed into the English vocabulary, the largest of any language in history, is nothing but "scholarly" ethnocentricity.

PART FIVE

The fact that the Bible in English is still the Word of God has not stopped a vast number of preachers, teachers and scholars from saying otherwise: "What this means in the original Greek"; "a better translation would be"; "the Hebrew actually says..." I have yet to see an example of "going back to the Greek" that was not a waste of time for one or both of these reasons: (1) the passage in question was clear to begin with; or (2) the word(s) in question could be explained by a dictionary instead of a lexicon.

"Going back to the Greek" is usually a good, "scholarly, acceptable" way of getting rid of distasteful doctrines and/or setting up scholarship as a final authority. For example, here is how most scholars and expositors explain what "inspired" means: "The phrase 'given by inspiration of God' is all one word in the Greek, *theopneustos* - literally, God breathed." Yet, when I look up "*theopneustos*" in my lexicon, I find only this: "given by inspiration of God." Knowing Greek does not explain what the word literally means; to learn the literal meaning, a person must trace the etymology of the word.

First of all, any English speaker familiar with his own language should not need a Greek scholar to tell him the literal meaning of "*theopneustos*." Did not "*theos*" (God) come into English in a number of forms, such as "theology" and "theism?" Did not "*pneustos*" (breathed) come into English in a number of forms, including "*pneuma*," "*pneumatic*," and "*pneumonia*?" Secondly, even if a speaker is not familiar with his native tongue, if he's willing to research the etymology of "*theopneustos*," why should not he, just for a change of pace, be willing to research the etymology of the English word "inspired?"

The English word "inspired" literally means "produced by blowing or breathing [into]", with the connotation that a deity is doing the breathing! This should be obvious to any American high-school student who had to memorize the opening lines of the "General Prologue" of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which speaks of Zephirus inspiring things with his sweet breath.

"...given by inspiration of God" literally means "given by the breath of God." "In" obviously means "in" or "into." "Spire" comes from the Latin word for breath and is the source of our word "spirit." (John 3:8 and 20:22) When your breath exits your body, you "expire." When it comes back or returns into you, you "respire." When you breathe through your skin, you "perspire." When you get close enough to someone else that you share his breath, you "conspire." When your breath travels, something has "transpired." Notice, you can discover this by simply looking into a dictionary; a lexicon is not necessary.

The number of Biblical passages abused by "language scholars" is almost legion and includes John 21:15-17, even though the Greek text of the New Testament uses "*phileo*" and "*agape*" interchangeably (Matthew 12:40), Jonah's whale, and others literally too numerous to list here. The Satanic motive behind such abuse is simply to establish a final authority other than the Bible. The "historic Baptist position" has always been that the Bible is the final authority on all matters. When the "original languages" are emphasized, as they are today, then not the Bible, but something else is the final authority. I once knew a woman whose husband was a student at a seminary. It became a chore for her to read, much less study, her Bible because exposure to the teachings of the seminary and to her husband's new-found knowledge of Hebrew and Greek convinced her that all translations of the Bible were faulty and that the Bible, if it were inspired, was inspired only in the original languages. Since she did not know the original languages, she ceased to study the Bible and instead took the word of Greek and Hebrew "scholars" as to what was "really" in the Bible.

When the Bible is inspired only in the "original languages," only those who know, or who claim they know, the languages can read it, and then they become the final authority because ignorant "lay people" go to them instead of the Bible itself. Students of history will recognize that this is the same ruse used by the Catholic church and its "inspired Latin Vulgate" for fifteen hundred years. No wonder, then, so many Baptists and Protestants are eager to embrace Catholicism through the ecumenical movement!