

Scholarly Myths Perpetuated On Rejecting the Masoretic Text of the OT

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Introduction

Paul warned Timothy about promoting fables (i.e., myths [*muthoi*]) in the Ephesian church. He stated “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do” (I Tim. 1:4). Biblical critics have rejected the Hebrew Masoretic text of the OT and perpetuated historical myths about the language and text of the OT. Several fallacious corollaries stem from these diabolical myths.

The popular expression of the mythical views of the language and text of the OT follows these fallacious assumptions: 1) The language God gave Adam in the garden is unknown. No one knows what the divinely given “mother tongue” was. 2) The Hebrew language, in consonantal form only, evolved from the Canaanite language around 1200 BC.¹ 3) Through Alexander the Great Greek culture and language permeated the Mediterranean Basin resulting in the wide spread usage of the Greek OT (*LXX*). Christ and the early Christians used the *LXX* for evangelistic purposes.² 4) The *LXX* flourished between 200 BC and AD100 in the Near East. After this period the Hebrew language came back in vogue among the Jews.³ 5) Somewhere between AD 600-1000, the Masoretic scribes invented a vowel pointing system for the consonantal Hebrew text,⁴ resulting in the inaccurately transliterated name “Jehovah” among other infelicities.⁵ 6) The Reformers used the inferior Masoretic text for their translations of the OT. 7) Critical Biblical scholarship (19th century) realized the MT was inferior and began to correct it with the Greek OT translation (*LXX*), the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), and other ancient authorities. Critical scholars are still tweaking the Hebrew text in order to give some assurance to Christians of what God has said in the OT.⁶ 8) Christians should thank God for textual critics who have restored the OT and NT texts to such an advanced degree of certainty and authority. 9) Furthermore, since Christ and the Apostles used the loose and poor *LXX* as their translation, Christians then have the precedence to use a similar quality of translation today, especially as found in the modern translations.

These historical myths and supporting corollaries diametrically oppose the reception of the Masoretic text as the Hebrew text behind the Authorized Version. The

¹Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naude and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), pp. 15-17.

²Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1979), pp. 38-39.

³David Ewert, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1983), pp. 105-107.

⁴Kyle M. Yates, *The Essentials of Biblical Hebrew* (NY: Harper and Row, Publ. 1938), p. 1.

⁵Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), p. 218.

⁶Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 2001), p. 409.

perpetuation of these deceptive propositions seriously weakens confidence in the Authorized Version. Yet if these are truly myths then why do Bible scholars of all stripes, including fundamentalists, perpetuate them? The writer's purpose for this brief essay is to expose the non-biblical nature of these scholarly lies and repudiate them with Scripture. Several of the aforementioned fallacious and presumptuous corollaries will be scrutinized with Scripture and Biblically repudiated: 1) The original language of Adam in the Garden and the mother tongue until the Tower of Babel is unknown. 2) Biblical Hebrew evolved out of the Canaanite language as a consonantal text only. 3) Christ and the Apostles used the *LXX* to evangelize the Gentiles. 4) The Masoretic scribes invented vowel points for the inspired consonantal Hebrew text. 5) Christians should thank textual critics for restoring the original texts of Scripture that God chose not to preserve.

Myth Number 1: The Original Language the Lord gave to Adam is unknown.

The Lord God created Adam and gave him a working vocabulary and capability for language. This divinely originated language was perfectly suited for Adam to think concepts and enunciate words for clear expression and communication. The first recorded human words were Adam's response to God's creation of Eve. Adam said, "*This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man*" (Gen. 2:23). Adam's first recorded statement has a significant element in it called the *paronomasia* or word pun. He punned on the name "man" (*'ish*) with the word "woman" (*'ishshah*) which means "from the man." Gill argues that this pun is not found in other ancient versions:

This paronomasia does not appear in the Syriac version, nor in the Chaldee paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan. The Syriac uses *Gabra* for a man, but never *Gabretha* for a woman, not even in places where men and women are spoken of together...The Syriac or Chaldee language will not admit such an allusion as is in the text. Just a *Gabra* is used for a man, and not *Gabretha* for a woman, so *Itta*, and *Ittetha*, and *Intetha* or *Antetha*, are used for a woman, but never *Itt* for a man...this seems to prove that the language Adam spoke to his wife must have been the Hebrew language, and consequently is the primitive one.⁷

Hebrew students recognize that there are numerous other puns in the Hebrew language, many of which are not translatable in any language, even the English of the KJV, in Gen. 1-11.⁸ Gen. 11:1 is pivotal because Moses states "*And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*" Prior to the tower of Babel there was one mother tongue created by God.⁹ Jehovah divided this original language into many to disunite man's rebellion (Gen. 11:6-9). Zephaniah the prophet predicted for the

⁷John Gill, *A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel Points, and Accents* (London: G. Keith, 1767), p. 11.

⁸John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1990), p. 106.

⁹If this God-given mother tongue were Hebrew, those who are anti-Semitic might oppose this interpretation and create other linguistic alternatives. This anti-Semitism is pronounced in the Hebrew lexicons edited by rationalistic German linguists, who promote the evolution of the Hebrew language in the Akkadian—Canaanite—Hebrew lineage.

Millennial reign of Christ there would be the restoration of the original tongue, stating “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9). What would this language be for the people to call upon Jehovah, the God of Shem (Gen. 9:26)? Would it be Akkadian, German, or English? It would be the language of the Shemites or the Jews, who trace their lineage back to Shem (cf. Gen. 10:21-31; 11:10-32). In fact, the Scripture calls Abram “the Hebrew” (*‘eber*) because he was a descendent of Eber, in whose generation the mother tongue (Hebrew) was last universally spoken before the tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 14:13; 10:21).¹⁰

Whatever the mother tongue of humanity was, it should have many descendants in the present languages and therefore traceable for modern linguists. Modern linguists, holding to the evolution of language, dismiss the possibility that Hebrew could have been Adam’s language. They would rather hold that language evolved from a series of grunts into highly sophisticated languages, including the lately developed Hebrew. Not only is this approach unbiblical but it is refuted by languages which trace their roots back to Hebrew. In a significant and enlightening new work, Isaac Mozeson demonstrates beyond any “coincidence” that over 22,000 English words trace their roots back to Hebrew. He states,

Don’t worry if you’ve never read anything on language, or if you’ve never heard a Hebrew word. You will soon know that you’ve never heard a word that wasn’t Hebrew...Hebrew vocabulary has as much affinity with English as it has with Arabic. More English words can be clearly linked to Biblical Hebrew than to Latin, Greek or French. Most known English words or roots are treated in this book...The last group of Westerners to take up the lost paradise of Hebrew included 17th-century Englishmen like John Milton and his Puritan counterparts in colonial America...The curriculum of Harvard was full of Hebrew, and an early graduate theses at Harvard concerned Hebrew as the Mother tongue. Noah Webster’s etymologies (discredited for 200 years now) were full of English words traced to “Shemitic” sources. Most significant of all, if a vote in the Continental Congress had gone the other way, America, and much of today’s world, would now be speaking Hebrew.¹¹

Darwin’s book *The Origin of Species: The Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859) dethroned from its rightful reign the position that the Hebrew language was the original language God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden. This very title bespeaks of the impact evolution would have on all academic disciplines, including not only sociology but also linguistics. Bible commentators prior to this publication embraced the views of a recent creation of the universe and of Hebrew as the original tongue. Davis affirms the history of this latter point in the following:

That all men were of one language and dialect should not be surprising since they were fundamentally united in the sons of Noah. Research in the area of comparative grammar has demonstrated that known languages are related and could have descended from one language. Of course it is unknown whether that language resembles any modern

¹⁰Asshur was the father of the Assyrians who spoke Assyrian (Num. 24:23-24).

¹¹Isaac E. Mozeson, *The Word: The Dictionary that Reveals the Hebrew Source of English* (NY: SPI Books, 2000), pp. 1-2.

language, but until the nineteenth century the theory that the original language was Hebrew was practically unquestioned.¹²

The Scripture demands that the original language of Adam was Hebrew. That this is the case is based on the puns Moses used in Gen. 1-11 that have not been duplicated in ancient versions. Furthermore, Zephaniah's prophecy concerning the restoration of the original language to praise Jehovah, and the designation of Abram the Hebrew requires the aforementioned premise that Hebrew was the mother tongue. Extra-biblical arguments such as linguistic studies tying English with Hebrew and the contrived schemes of evolutionists powerfully corroborate the truth that Adam spoke Hebrew.

Myth Number 2: Biblical Hebrew, as a consonantal text only, evolved from the Canaanite language.

This myth has two components, namely that the consonants only were originally inspired and this Hebrew consonantal text evolved from the Canaanite¹³ language. Since the theory or implementation of evolution is not an option for the Bible believing Christian, the latter component cannot be affirmed. This view denies the perfect preservation of God's Words and therefore must assume the evolution of the Hebrew language. Those who are so enamored with the scholarship that assumes evolutionary principles are legitimate within Biblical criticism¹⁴ would accept, without Biblical authority, that all languages including Hebrew evolved. Old Testament scholars and Hebrew grammarians constantly claim that Hebrew is a derived language. For example Unger states:

Necessary to the formation of the canon was a suitable language to serve as a medium for the reception and recording of the inspired message. Such a vehicle was providentially provided for the Hebrew people in the development of a simple *alphabetic* script rather than an unwieldy and cumbersome language like *Akkadian*...From the testimony of the Pentateuch and the witness of archeology there is every reason to believe that Hebrew was already in spoken and written use by Moses and the Israelites who came out of Egypt about 1440 BC.¹⁵

Payne advocates this derived approach to the theology and language of the Jews stating,

¹²John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 144.

¹³The descendants of Canaan were cursed by the Lord (Gen. 9:25). Biblically it is impossible to reconcile how God could use the cursed Canaanites to produce a language from which the blessed Shemites and their language would come (Gen. 9:26).

¹⁴The OT textual critic Wurthwein exemplifies unbelieving critical scholarship as he states: "The available witnesses to the text must first be examined in order to reconstruct a single form of the text which we can assert with confidence to be as close to the form of the autographs as scientific principles can lead us, if not (ideally) identical with them." Ernst Wurthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1981), p. xviii.

¹⁵Merrill F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1951), p. 51.

It is our historical knowledge of the religions of the pagans who surrounded Israel that serves to explain certain terms or forms that God chose to use in His own true religion. The very names of God in Biblical Hebrew, which is a Canaanitish language, illustrate this point.¹⁶

Archer treats Hebrew as a branch of West Semitic in the development of language, stating,

The traditional classification of the various Semitic languages divides them, according to the geographical location of the nations speaking them, into north, south, east, and west...West Semitic (often classed with Aramaic in what is called Northwest Semitic by modern scholars) comprises Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Canaanite (of which Hebrew and Moabite are dialects).¹⁷

Post-Darwinian Hebrew grammarians have continually maintained that Hebrew is merely a derived language in the long history of the evolution of the languages. For instance, H. F. W. Gesenius states:

The Hebrew language is one branch of a great family of languages in Western Asia...The better known Semitic languages may be subdivided as follows:--The Middle Semitic or Canaanitish branch. To this belongs the Hebrew of the Old Testament with its descendants, the New Hebrew, as found especially in the Mishna, and Rabbinic...¹⁸

The former component that assumes that the inspired Hebrew text contained only the consonants and that the vowels (and consequently the pronunciations) were passed on through oral tradition is unbiblical and wrongheaded.¹⁹ This view maintains an insufficient position on the perfect preservation of the Hebrew text. The Bible is replete with divine promises of the preservation of the Lord's Words (e.g., Pss. 12:6-7, 119:111, 152, 160; Mt. 4:4, 5:18, 24:35, etc.). Consonants are not words. Words include consonants and vowels. The Bible declares that "*every word of God is pure*" (Prov. 30:5-6) and these pure Words are complete Words with consonants and vowels. When the Lord God spoke the heavens and earth into existence He used Words (Gen. 1:3). When the Lord gave His commandments to Moses He wrote Words on the tablets (Ex. 34:1; cf. 20:1 ff.; Dt. 10:2). When the prophets, such as Amos, saw God's revelation, they wrote Words (cf. Amos 1:1; Obad. 1:1; Hab. 1:1). None of these examples, as well as scores of others, allows that God's revelation was in the form of consonants only.

¹⁶J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1962), p. 20.

¹⁷Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), p. 20.

¹⁸E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, editors, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 1-2.

¹⁹Waltke represents some who seemly suggest that there was a "proto-Masoretic" text which is superior to the current Masoretic text and must eventually be recovered through textual criticism. Bruce Waltke, "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament," *The Gaebelin Bible Commentary*, Vol. I, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, 1987), p. 223.

The denial of the perfect preservation of the Hebrew OT text carries with it several specific ramifications. One such ramification will be explored. Since God has not preserved His OT Hebrew text, the argument goes, the current MT is an inferior Hebrew text to the supposed “proto-Hebrew” text.²⁰ This earlier Hebrew text allegedly utilized a cipher system whereby Hebrew letters were used for Hebrew numbers. This supposed cipher system then allows for “scribal errors” in the numbers of various Biblical texts because the scribes mis-read the letters depicting the numbers. In attempting to explain how numerical errors entered into the Sacred Text of the OT, Kaiser states the following:

In the Old Testament documents now available to us, all the numbers are spelled out phonetically. This is not so say, however, that a more direct numeral system or cipher notation was not also in use originally for at least some of these numbers. While no Biblical texts with such a system have been found, mason’s marks and examples of what may well be simple tallies have been attested in excavations in Israel.²¹

Although in the preserved Masoretic Text there are no examples whereby a Hebrew letter represents a number, and every number is a written word, Bible critics nevertheless assume, with no evidence, a cipher system existed in a “proto-Masoretic” text. Davis quotes Merrill Unger who asserts:

But, though, on the one hand it is certain that in all existing manuscripts of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament the numerical expressions are written at length, yet, on the other, the variations between themselves and from the Hebrew text, added to the evident inconsistencies in numerical statements, between certain passages of that text itself, seem to prove that some shorter mode of writing was originally in vogue, liable to be misunderstood by copyists and translators. These variations appear to have proceeded from the alphabetic method of writing numbers.²²

The Lord Jesus Christ put His full approval on the Hebrew text He had preserved unto Himself (Mt. 4:4). Since evolution is not true and there was no consequent proto-Masoretic Hebrew text from which the current one evolved, there is no cipher system for the numbers of the OT and no excuse to argue for misread letters to allow “scribal errors” for the apparent numerical conflicts in the OT.²³

²⁰Contradicting the clear promises of the Lord Jesus Christ, Bible critic Beacham fallaciously affirms that “God nowhere in Scripture assures us that the Jewish scholars of the first century AD produced a corpus of Scripture that perfectly mirrored the originals. Thus, the Masoretic text should not be considered a flawless reproduction of the autographs. Rather, the Masoretic text evolved from a late, standardized recension of variant, imperfect, and updated copies made by imperfect men.” Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder, *One Bible Only?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publ., 2001), p. 63.

²¹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Baruch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 51.

²²John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology: A Basic Study of the Use of Numbers in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), p. 35.

²³For a complete refutation of the alleged cipher numbering position, see Chester Kulus, *I Heard the Number of Them: General Principles for Handling Apparent Biblical Contradictions*

Myth Number 3: Christ and the Apostles used the LXX to evangelize the Gentiles.

In attempting to refute the charge that Christ and the Apostles' inexact use of the *LXX* argues for errancy in the originals, Archer and Chirichigno argue vociferously that the aforementioned preachers used the *LXX* to evangelize Gentiles. Their argument follows this line of thought:

The very reason for using the *LXX* was rooted in the missionary outreach of the evangelists and apostles of the early church...It was virtually the only form of the OT in the hands of Jewish believers outside Palestine, and it was certainly the only available form for Gentile converts to the Jewish or Christian faiths.²⁴

Others dogmatically maintain, albeit recognizing the questionable history and character of the *LXX*, that this version was readily available to the early first century evangelists and apostles. For instance, Waltke asserts the following:

Although many details of the story are fictitious, it is widely accepted that the translation of the Law was made in the time of Philadelphus. Contrary to the story, however, it is concluded that *LXX* arose out of the needs of the Alexandrian Jews and was done by various literary Greeks at Alexandria on a text type already present in Egypt...Scholars agree that a complete version of the Bible existed at least at the beginning of the first century A.D.²⁵

Accordingly, the consensus of most scholarship assumes that the *LXX* was available to and had the veritable character for the first century Christians to use as their OT Scriptures. This consensus is faulty because of two important Bible truths. First of all, the Bible plainly demonstrates that the Lord Jesus Christ used the Hebrew OT for His Scripture and that He never used the *LXX*. Secondly, the Lord and His apostles did not need to utilize the *LXX* for evangelism of the Jews and Gentiles and consequently did not do so.

First, the Bible clearly shows that the Lord Jesus Christ used the Hebrew text as His Scriptures. When Satan tempted Him, the Lord submitted Himself to the written Words of God²⁶ by stating, "*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Mt. 4:4). The expression "*It is written*" (*gregraptai*) is in the perfect tense indicating past action with continuing results. In effect the Lord said this Hebrew verse to which He alluded (Dt. 8:3), and obviously the Hebrew Book of Deuteronomy and consequently the Hebrew Pentateuch, had been written (by Moses the Hebrew) and was still written to His very day. The Lord Jesus

with Specific Applications of the Principles to the Alleged Numeric Contradictions in I Samuel to II Chronicles (Newington, CT: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2003), pp. 128-138.

²⁴Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), p. ix.

²⁵Waltke, p. 220.

²⁶This action harmonizes with Ps. 138:2, which states, "*I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.*"

Christ had the preserved Words of the Hebrew OT available to Him just as He had promised (cf. Dt. 4:2; 12:32; 17:18-20; 29:1, 29; 30:11-14 [*vide* Rom. 10:6-8]; 31:9-13, 24-27; Josh. 1:7-8; Ps. 12:6-7; 119:111, 152, 160).

The Lord taught that the jots and tittles²⁷ of the Hebrew OT would be preserved, stating, “*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*” (Mt. 5:18). He believed that the very consonants and the very vowels of the OT Hebrew words of prophecies (and of course all the other words of Scripture) were preserved perfectly intact in His day and would continue until final fulfillment (cf. Jn. 12:48).²⁸ Since the Greek OT (*LXX*) does not have jots and tittles He was not referring to this inferior translation which has a historical background and time table that are very suspect.

Again the Lord Jesus alluded to the three-fold division of the Hebrew OT, which division the *LXX* does not follow, when He affirmed, “*These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me*” (Lk. 24:44; cf. v. 27; also Acts 26:22). The law (*torah*), the prophets (*nebiim*), and the writings (*kethubim* [of which Psalms was first]) made up the Hebrew OT and is called the *Tanak*.²⁹ He elaborated on His use of the Hebrew OT when the Lord identified the Pharisees’ persecution of the prophets with their murderous Jewish ancestors, stating, “*From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation*” (Lk. 11:51). He surveyed the whole scope of the Hebrew OT, using the examples of the murder of the righteous Abel from the first book (Genesis 4:8) to the murder of the righteous Zacharias from the last book (II Chronicles 24:20-22).

The Biblical truths that the Lord Jesus always used the Hebrew text for His Scriptures includes His reference to the perfectly preserved Hebrew text, His reference to the perfect preservation of the smallest components of Hebrew words, and His reference to the three-fold division of the Hebrew OT are indisputable. The NT does not countenance the assumed position that Christ used the *LXX* because it clearly contradicts this false assumption. The Lord consistently alluded to the Hebrew OT. Since the nature and character of the *LXX* are extremely questionable, the alleged argument that the NT quotes the *LXX* must be rejected. The supposed NT quotes of the *LXX* must be understood in another way. The simple fact of the matter is that the *LXX* was in part or whole post-first century and never used by Christ or the Apostles.

Second, the Lord and the Apostles did not need to implement the use of the *LXX* in their evangelistic endeavors. The initial ministry of Christ was to the Jews in Galilee and Judaea (Jn. 1:19-4:3). He sent His Jewish apostles to the Jews to declare to them that

²⁷“[L]it. ‘horn’; projection, hook as part of a letter, a serif (of letters...of accents and breathings...” Walter Bauer, William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 429.

²⁸The prophecies could not be perfectly fulfilled if the prophecies themselves were not perfectly preserved for one to match the minute details of the prophecy with the minute details of the fulfillment (cf. Isa. 34:16).

²⁹This is an acrostic for the letters “T” (*Torah*), “N” (*Nebiim*) and “K” (*Kethubim*) and Jews use this designation even today for their Scripture.

their Jewish King was on hand (Mt. 10:2-6). When He ministered to the Jews there is no exegetical necessity that He had to use the *LXX*. The Lord ministered to the Syrophenician Greek woman, no doubt speaking to her in Greek (Mk. 7:26-30). But He did not need to use the *LXX* since He gave her His inspired Greek Words.³⁰ There is positively no indication in Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ had the necessity to use or in fact did use the *LXX* to evangelize Jews and Gentiles.

Furthermore, there is no indication that the Apostles had the necessity to use the *LXX*. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached to the Jews citing the OT book of Joel, but not using the *LXX* (Acts 2:14-36).³¹ The Lord eliminated the necessity for Peter using the *LXX* for the Gentiles present that day by the supernatural occurrence of tongues. The Apostles taught the early church members, both Jews and Gentiles, “*the apostles doctrine*,” presumably in Greek (Acts 2:42). When the Apostles and Paul eventually evangelized the Gentiles (e.g., Acts 13-21) they taught them the apostles’ doctrine, which eventually was inscripturated as the Greek NT. Where is the alleged need for the *LXX*? No exegesis requires that the Lord and His Apostles had to have used the *LXX* to evangelize the Greek-speaking Jews or Gentiles. This fallacious assumption has not been and cannot be proved and must, therefore, be rejected. Biblically, there is neither need nor exegesis for this ill founded but popular assumption.

Myth Number 4: The Masoretic scribes invented vowel points for the inspired consonantal Hebrew text.

Rejecting the aforementioned Biblical promises for perfect Words preservation, critical scholarship argues that the original Hebrew text was only in consonant form, that the vowels were not inspired,³² and the pronunciations were passed on by oral tradition until the Masoretic scribes invented a vowel pointing system. For instance, van der Merwe affirms,

Originally BH (Biblical Hebrew) text consisted of consonants only. In order to prevent the eventual complete loss of the correct pronunciations, a group of Jewish scholars began to devise a system of signs (from about 600 CE) to record and standardize the received pronunciation (inasmuch as it was known).³³

³⁰There is no question that Christ and the Apostles, as well as many in the ancient Near East, were multilingual, as the message over the cross in various languages suggests (Jn. 19:19-20). Jesus of Nazareth read the preserved Hebrew OT in the synagogue (Lk. 4:16 ff.), spoke Aramaic on several occasions (i.e., Mt. 27:46; Mk. 7:34), and had a brother who wrote elegant Greek (cf. the Book of James).

³¹A careful examination of the Greek NT demonstrates that Peter did not quote Joel 2:28-32 from the *LXX*.

³²“Yet another argument is advanced by bringing forward the testimony of Elias Levita, who lived in Germany about 1520, and who roundly states that the post-Talmudic Massorettes of Tiberias invented the points, and goes on to attempt to prove it. And why is this testimony considered important? Because Levita says so!” John Owen, *Biblical Theology: The Nature, Origin, Development, and Study of Theological Truth, in Six Books* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publ., 1996 reprint), p. 522.

³³van der Merwe, p. 17.

Ewert posits the same argument for the Masoretic invention of vowels stating “But they made one very important innovation. They developed a system by which the vowels of the Hebrew words could be indicated in writing.”³⁴

Consonants without vowels are not words. One cannot distinguish between some nouns and verbs, conjugations or stems without vowel pointing. The other ancient languages of the Samaritans, Syrians, Chaldeans, and Arabs had consonants and vowels. The Hebrew vowels must be *ab origine* for several reasons.

Linguistically, the very nature of words requires both consonants and vowels since God and man spoke and wrote words from the beginning. Words need to be precise to convey accuracy and this precision comes only with the vowels. Gill cites several arguments for the divine origin of the vowels. 1) The perfection of language requires vowels. 2) The nature and genius of the Hebrew language require points. 3) The vowel points are necessary and useful to easier learning, reading, and pronouncing of the Hebrew language. 4) The vowel points and accents are useful and necessary. 5) It will be difficult to assert and maintain the clarity of the Scriptures if the vowel points and accents are removed. 6) One would be unable to support the infallibility of the Scripture. 7) The inspiration of Scripture is affected by the points and accents.³⁵

Historically, the main fallacy with positing the invention of the Hebrew vowel points with the Masoretes is the lack of recorded testimony.³⁶ Furthermore, this historical assumption makes the Masoretes the final authority with regard to the Words of Scripture. Moncrieff gives a list of five Hebrew words, as select examples, whose meanings vary depending on the vowel pointing.³⁷ The final meaning of a Word of Scripture cannot be dependent on man in light of the promises for the authoritative inspired and preserved Words of Scripture. The preacher of Scripture must declare “thus saith the Lord,” not “thus saith the Masoretes.”

Scripturally, Christ recognized the preserved Words of the Hebrew OT (Mt. 4:4) and affirmed the inspiration and preservation of the consonants (*jot*) and vowel points (*keriaia*) in Mt. 5:18. The Gospel writers consistently followed a pattern for the vowel pointings of the proper Hebrew nouns to which they alluded. For example, they recognized the inspired *dagesh forte* (a small dot to indicate doubling) in words like Immanuel (Mt. 1:23; cf. Isa. 7:14), Anna/Hannah (Lk. 2:36; cf. I Sam. 1:2), Abaddon (Rev. 9:11; Ps. 1:6), Armageddon (Rev. 16:16; cf. Zech. 12:11), and Sabbaton (Mt. 12:5; Ex. 20:11). Paul knew the pointing of the inspired Hebrew word behind the inspired Greek *arrabon* (“earnest”) in Eph. 1:14 because he doubled the “r” (*rho*) in his inspired transliterated spelling of the Hebrew word (*errabon*) from Gen. 38:17. The authority of the inspired NT text demands that the vowel pointings were part of the inspired OT text.

Bible critics assume that man invented the pointing and that consequently the proper pronunciation for the divine name of the *tetragrammaton* JHWH (יהוה) is unknown. This view alleges that the Jews refused to pronounce the name of the Lord

³⁴Ewert, p. 90.

³⁵Gill, pp. 67-70.

³⁶On the other hand, Gill gives an abundance of historical evidence that the points were known at least back to 454 BC, and consequently could not have been invented by the Masoretes. Gill, pp. 38-66.

³⁷John Moncrieff, *An Essay on the Antiquity and Utility of the Hebrew Vowel-Points* (Glasgow: John Reid & Co., 1833), pp. 34-35.

because of a faulty interpretation of Lev. 24:16, which states, “*And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death...*”³⁸ After many centuries of not pronouncing the divine name the Jews claimed the proper pronunciation was lost. The Masoretes interjected the so-called *Qere perpetuum* reading into the text and produced the impossible name Jehovah.³⁹ Based on extra-biblical authorities, critics assume the best rendering for the *tetragrammaton* should be Yahweh.⁴⁰

The popular position that the Masoretes invented the vowel pointing of the OT Hebrew text denies the Bible claims of perfect Words preservation. Furthermore, this view posits the inspired source and final authority for the Words of Scripture upon man and not God. Since the Masoretes merely passed on the divine vowel points with the consonants, the falsely assumed Masoretic-invention position must be rejected along with the fallacious tradition that the divine name of the *tetragrammaton* must be pronounced Yahweh. According to the Masoretic Hebrew text behind the KJV the proper pronunciation for the OT name of the LORD is Jehovah.

Myth Number 5: Christians should thank textual critics for restoring the original texts of Scripture that God chose not to preserve.

Waltke confidently states “to restore the original text of ancient documents, such as the OT Scriptures, is the task of textual criticism.”⁴¹ Another Bible critic affirms the following role for seminaries such as his:

Our purpose at Central is “to reconstruct from all the witnesses available to us the text essentially preserved in all, but perfectly preserved in none” [footnote 3, Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 197]. It is evident from the historical evidence that God has providentially preserved His Word for the present generation. However, we do not believe that God has preserved His Word perfectly and miraculously in any one manuscript or group of manuscripts, or in all the manuscripts. Therefore, in our study of the text we work with all the manuscripts to compile a text closer to the original than any one manuscript or group of manuscripts.⁴²

³⁸The *LXX* incorrectly renders this caveat as “he that names the Lord shall be put to death.” Both the OT saints and sinners named the name of Jehovah without fear of punishment (Moses [Ex. 3:13-14, 4:1]; Pharaoh [Ex. 8:8]; Rahab and Canaanites [Josh. 2:10]).

³⁹Some argue that the *holem* and *waw* must be treated as the *holem waw* vowel and thus the *waw* loses its consonant status giving an impossible *Jehoah* construction. There are numerous examples, however, of the *holem* vowel with the *waw* consonant construction (e.g., Isa. 47:11; Ezk. 7:26; Lam. 3:25; Pss. 37:9, 88:16; Neh. 6:6; Est. 3:8). Could it be possible that Satan has inspired and promoted through his Bible critics a different name for Jehovah?

⁴⁰Gustave F. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publ. House, n.d.), pp. 92-93.

⁴¹Waltke, p. 211.

⁴²Michael A. Grisanti, editor, *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* (Minneapolis, MN: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), p. 131.

Again, Mark Norton states, “Christians are thus in debt to the textual critics who have worked, and are working, to provide a dependable biblical text.”⁴³ These writers obviously think that the role of Textual Criticism is to restore or reconstruct a Bible text that God apparently chose not to preserve. This view begs the question as to how the critic will know that the text is restored or reconstructed since the Lord apparently left no exemplar for comparison! The anti-supernatural German rationalistic movement (17th-19th centuries) known as Biblical Criticism spawned several literary-critical fields, one of which was Textual Criticism. The picking and choosing of Bible texts is not Textual Criticism. Textual Criticism is a sophisticated system based on elaborate and evolutionary schemes following human logic to determine the possible origin of variants.⁴⁴ The so-called science of Textual Criticism is only needed when one believes that God has not accomplished His promise to preserve the inspired original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of the *autographa*.⁴⁵

The Lord Jesus Christ has promised the full preservation of the divinely inspired Words of the OT and NT Scriptures (Ps. 12:6-7; Mt. 4:4, 5:18, 24:35). He has given the responsibility of preserving His Words to His only ecclesiological institution—the local, immersionist assembly (Mt. 28:19-20; I Tim. 3:15). God has given His chosen people (Jews) and His chosen institution (the local immersionist assembly) the responsibility and empowerment to preserve His OT and NT Words, respectively. The Bible nowhere gives credence to the role of the professional “textual critic,” especially outside of the immersionist assembly, to restore what He has determined not to preserve. In spite of Biblical evidence, some want to praise textual critics for their role in giving Christians the approximate Words of God. Mark Minnick states:

For many centuries now God has ensured that there have been qualified textual critics to analyze available manuscripts. In other words, textual criticism is not a new discipline—it is an old one—employed by anyone who has ever compared two or more manuscripts in an effort to reproduce an accurate copy of God’s Word. If our present translations do indeed reproduce the original readings, it is because textual critics did their work well.⁴⁶

This claim is repudiated by the inspired history of NT immersionist churches recorded in the NT. For instance, the church at Ephesus not only received but also copied perfectly

⁴³Mark Norton, “Manuscripts of the Old Testament,” *The Origin of the Bible*, ed. Phillip Comfort (Cambridge: Tyndale House Publ., 1992), p. 177.

⁴⁴Archer lists seven canons for OT Textual Criticism. Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, pp. 63-66. The Alands give twelve basic rules for NT Textual Criticism. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1987), pp. 275-277.

⁴⁵One does well to consider the negative influence of the textual critics. For example, the Masoretic Hebrew text incorporates the titles of the Psalms in the text. However, textual critics reject the Masoretic text and consequently do not know the background of the titled Psalms. For instance, the “contribution” the textual critics Rogerson and McKay give the Bible-believing Christian is that the Psalm titles “are almost certainly not the work of the authors of the psalms.” J. W. Rogerson and J. W. McKay, *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, Psalms 1-50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 3.

⁴⁶James B. Williams, editor, *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 1999), p. 72.

the Book of the Apocalypse from John. The church at Smyrna made a copy and passed it on to the church at Pergamos, and so on, until there were six perfect copies and one original, and all this accomplished by faithful church members (cf. Rev. 22:7,18-19). This inspired scenario was repeated thousands of times through history so that now we have immersionist churches which receive the preserved inspired OT and NT texts and accurate translations of God's Words through the instrumentality of fallible yet faithful church members. Since the text of Scripture was never lost, the Lord never used textual critics to restore His text. Faithful church members have never had to use the premise or tools (i.e., rules, canons, axioms, etc.) of Textual Criticism since neither are Biblically valid.⁴⁷ The Lord has always used, whether history can corroborate this or not, faithful church members as He promised (Mt. 28:19-20), not to restore, but to preserve His Received Words (Jn. 17:8).

Conclusion

As Paul warned Timothy (I Tim. 1:4) even so Bible-related myths are a concern today for all Bible believers. Christians have the responsibility and the means whereby to dispel these myths. Those Bible critics and their followers who have rejected the Masoretic Hebrew text behind the King James Version have postulated several myths and fallacious corollaries, and at the same time given no assurance of final Words or absolute authority. The Bible refutes these myths. The Bible teaches that the original language of the Garden of Eden was Hebrew. Therefore, Hebrew did not evolve from the Canaanite language. Christ used the Hebrew text and His NT Words to evangelize Jews and Greeks. The early Christians used the Hebrew and the Apostles' tradition to evangelize Jews and Gentiles. Since the vowel points were part of the original Words God preserved, the Masoretes did not need to invent a pointing system. Since the Masoretes passed on the preserved Words, the name Jehovah for the *tetragrammaton* stands. Bible critics have only questioned the Words and the authority of Scripture, and even the authorship of the Psalms, and have given no valuable contribution. When the preserved Hebrew text represented by the Masoretic text is received by faith, then the scholarly myths are dispelled. Is it not time for Bible-believing, fundamental Baptist church members to stop giving "heed to fables" and honor Jehovah God, the Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in His inspired and preserved Words of promise?

⁴⁷As Paul taught his understudy Timothy, he never gave him any tools for Textual Criticism. He did warn Timothy, nevertheless, stating: *"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself"* (I Tim. 6:3-5).