

The Prattmont Church of Christ is just what the name suggests, a church that belongs to Christ. We are not a denomination; we are simply a group of Christians trying very hard to practice the teachings of our Head, Jesus Christ. The New Testament offers a complete pattern for what each local church should be like—its organization, its worship, its work, etc. We are committed to following that pattern. We cordially invite you to attend our services. We would also welcome any comments or questions about this bulletin.

TIMES OF SERVICES:

Sunday

Bible Study 9:00 A.M.
 Worship 10:00 A.M.
 Training Class 5:00 P.M.
 Worship 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 P.M.



Weekly Bulletin
 January 28, 2018

**The Bible: Is It The Same Today
 As When It Was First Written? (Part 2)**

by Bryan Gibson

In last week’s article, we saw how God has both the **ability** and the **desire** to preserve His word, so it is indeed a serious matter to charge Him with failing to do so. Don’t ever think yourself naïve to believe that God has so preserved His word that it is still “able to save our souls” (James 1:21).

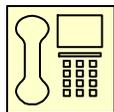
But what if we go back and look at the ancient documents or manuscripts translators use? Some think that with the variations in these manuscripts, we just can’t be sure that what we have today is God’s word. This scientific or historical look at these ancient documents is often called “textual criticism,” and despite what the word criticism implies, it should actually reinforce the faith of Christians. Let’s focus today on the reliability of the Old Testament, and then next week, we will

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discuss the New Testament.

Until the 1940's, the earliest available Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts were dated about A.D. 900. Called the Masoretic text, it was considered a reliable text because it was copied under such strict guidelines intended to safeguard accuracy. But with the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947, an

opportunity to test their accuracy was given to textual critics. These scrolls are dated from about 200 B.C. to about A.D. 68 and though

Old Testament Confirmation



The Caves at Qumran where the scrolls were found in 1947

all of the Old Testament was not found there, portions of every book except Esther were found. In addition to the fragments, a complete scroll of Isaiah was found and despite 1000 years between it and the oldest Masoretic text, the Masoretic text was shown to be substantially unchanged. With the Dead Sea scrolls verifying the accuracy of the Hebrew text and the witness of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament done in about 200 B.C.), along with some other ancient versions, you will find that there are relatively few readings of the Old Testament in dispute. Those in dispute do not affect the teachings of Scripture in anyway.

Consider, too, how Jesus and His apostles dealt with the Old Testament. They lived 1500 years after its beginning and 400 years after its completion. Did they see it as reliable? Clearly, they did, because they often read it or quoted from it, sometimes from the Hebrew, sometimes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation referred to earlier). They did so with confidence, even to arguments based on tense and number (for examples, see Mark 12:26-27; Galatians 3:16). Consider the confidence Jesus expressed in the fine details of the Old Testament: "...till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

So should textual criticism shake our faith in the reliability of the Old Testament? Not in the least. Sure, variations exist in the different manuscripts, but as we pointed out earlier, these are relatively few, and they do not change the teaching of the text in anyway. In short, when you read the Old Testament, you have every reason to believe you are reading God's word.

How to Teach the Lost

That's the focus of the lessons in our upcoming meeting with **Ken McDaniel**. We can all do better, so let's be prepared to learn all we can about this all important work. And, let's make sure we get the word out to our friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.