

The Reformation Confessions such as the Westminster (1647), the Savoy (1658), and the London Baptist (1689), regarding Scripture state that, “The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authenticable...”

1. Only the self-interpreting Holy Scripture is competent to define Scripture. The Scripture’s witness to itself can be briefly summarized in the following propositions:
 - a. The Bible is God’s written revelation to mankind (Exodus 24:3-4; Psalm 119:140; Matthew 4:4).
 - b. Through the process of inspiration (which has the meaning ‘breathed out by God’), a supernatural power was exerted by the Holy Spirit upon certain chosen men, governing and directing them to write the very words of God, without admixture of error (1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:21). This is not to deny that each of the biblical writers had a distinctive style and vocabulary, but it is to affirm that the divine superintendence was such that the end product (verbally inspired) was the very Word of God, and as such, absolute and pure truth (Romans 3:2; 1 Corinthians 14:37).
 - c. The supernatural power involved in the process of inspiration, and in the result of inspiration, was exerted *only* in the *original* production of the sixty-six Canonical books of the Bible (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Peter 3:15-16).
 - d. In conformity to God’s purpose, promise, and command, faithful and accurate copies were made (Deuteronomy 17:18; Proverbs 25:1) and, through God’s special providential care, His Word has been preserved in all generations (Psalm 119:152; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; 1 Peter 1:25). The professing people of God under the Old and New Testaments have been the appointed custodians of His Word (Psalm 147:19, 20; Romans 3:2; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27), in a process sometimes referred to in textual criticism as ‘ecclesiastical transmission’.
 - e. The Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles received the preserved and standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament as *Scripture* (Luke 4:16-19, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16). This serves as our pattern for accepting the historically received text of the New Testament also as *Scripture* (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:15-16).

- f. These texts of Scripture reflect the qualities of God-breathed Scripture, including being authentic, holy, pure, true, infallible, trustworthy, excellent, self-authenticating, necessary, sufficient, perspicuous, self-interpreting, authoritative and inerrant (Psalm 19:7-9, Psalm 119). They are consequently to be received as the Word of God (Ezra 7:14; Nehemiah 8:8; Daniel 9:2; 2 Peter 1:19) and the correct reading at any point is to be sought within these texts.
- g. Translations from the original languages are likewise to be considered the written Word of God in so far as these translations are accurate as to the form and content of the Original. Acts 8:32f. 15:14-18, Romans 15:8-12 include Old Testament quotations rendered in Greek, and yet they are still accorded the status of the Word of God by the Holy Spirit, as indicated by the usage of the expressions 'scripture' and 'it is written'. The variants found in these and other quotations in the New Testament have a divine warrant. In order to achieve the necessary accuracy in translation, the method to be followed should be that of formal equivalence, not dynamic equivalence. The translation should best reflect both the form and the content of the Original, by being as literal as is possible and as free as is necessary; that is, by translating the words, and following the arrangement and propositional content of the original text as much as is possible, and by being free of human invention, addition, and subtraction, except as is necessary.
2. As affirmed above, the Lord Jesus endorsed the preserved and standard Old Testament of His day as 'scripture' (Luke 4:17-21), regarding it as reliable to each particular word and incapable of being 'broken' ('loosed' or 'untied') because pure, uncorrupted, and therefore absolutely trustworthy (John 10:34-36). The Church has therefore rightly and necessarily regarded the historically recognized manuscripts of the Old Testament Hebrew and the New Testament Greek, as the verbally inspired Word of God written, complete in the sixty-six Canonical books.
3. *FirstBible* International specifies the textual families to be employed in the translations it circulates. The Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Texts are the texts that FBI acknowledges to have been preserved by the special providence of God within Judaism and Christianity. Therefore these texts are definitive and the final point of reference in all FBI's work.

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