

The Role of Men in Giving Us the Bible: Preservers

Men were the writers of the Bible, but the human work in giving us the Word is somewhat more extensive than this, for men were not only the writers but also the *preservers* of the Bible.

Preservation means that men were responsible (1) to keep the writings that God had given; and (2) to see that there was no altering of those writings. In that capacity men became the preservers of the Scripture.

In the case of (1), the responsibility of men to keep the sacred writings for posterity is seen in a number of examples from the Scriptures. For instance: the law was placed in the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place in order that it might be maintained centrally and lastingly among the people (Exod. 25:16). In its preservation a copy of it was to be given to the king who would come to the Israelite throne (Deut. 17:18). This event would not happen for nearly 400 years; but this practice was instituted before other portions of the Old Testament were written (possibly excepting Job), demonstrating the duty placed upon the receivers of the Word of God: the truth was preserved to be presented!

Specific commands for the maintenance of the prophetic literature are not so obvious, but its treasured place and preservation is very apparent. Within the Old Testament Daniel reads authoritatively from Jeremiah (Daniel 9); Zechariah refers to the former prophets (Zech. 7:9); Jeremiah appeals to the work of Micah (Jer. 26:18); etc. The historic books, of course, keep up a lively interchange of counterreferences that would not have been possible without the accurate maintenance of the