

God's Promise to Preserve His Word (Ps 12:5–7)

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Introduction

Problem

The Protestant church has today not only the 39 books of the OT but also the 27 books of the NT.¹ The biblical canon consists of a total of 66 books. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God.² The Word is not only inspired, but also preserved by God.

On the doctrine of Bible preservation, the Westminster Confession states: 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 authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them (I.8a). The Westminster Confession shows that the Hebrew OT and the Greek NT are the only authentic Scriptures,³ and they have been preserved.

The doctrine of Bible preservation rests upon two unfailing authorities: (1) the promise of God (Pss 12:6,7; 33:11; 100:5; 111:7–8; 117:2; 119:89,152,160; Isa 40:8; 59:21; Matt 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet 1:23,25; Rev 22:18,19), and (2) the character of God. God, who has revealed Himself in an inspired Book and magnified that Word to the highest degree, would carefully superintend its transmission. The doctrines of divine inspiration⁴ and providential preservation of Scripture are important, and they stand in the same position as the doctrines of creation and providence. Louis Gaussen believed that the God who inspired the Bible also preserved it from “all error and from all omission.”⁵ Gaussen considered inspiration and preservation as twin doctrines.⁶

Daniel Wallace, on the other hand, contends that the doctrine of the preservation has “neither ancient historical roots, nor any direct biblical basis.”⁷ By so saying, Wallace has contradicted many portions of Scripture, including Psalm 12, which speak of the divine preservation of the Word of God.

The King James Bible translates Psalm 12:6–7 thus,
The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever (Ps 12:6–7).

The KJV translation of Psalm 12:7 speaks of the preservation of the Bible. This view was held by many down through the centuries.⁸

However, some do not agree that Psalm 12 should be included in a list of verses on Bible preservation.⁹ The modern versions for example translate verse 7 in such a way that it cannot possibly mean Bible preservation. The NIV is representative: And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times. O Lord, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever. The NIV translation of Psalm 12:7 can only refer to the preservation of people.

This problem primarily comes from the interpretation of two pronominal suffixes in the Hebrew words **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ**. These two pronominal suffixes are read in various ways. Some interpret the suffix *em* as “us,”¹⁰ and others as “them.”¹¹ And the suffix *ennu* is understood as “them,”¹² “each one,”¹³ “him,”¹⁴ or “us.”¹⁵

There are various views on the meaning of the words **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ**. Some scholars view Psalm 12:7 as being applicable to Bible preservation.¹⁶ Others view it as having a double application, ie, preservation of the Bible and the godly man.¹⁷ There are still others who view it as being applicable only to the preservation of God’s people.¹⁸

So, does Psalm 12 teach the preservation of the Bible, or the people, or both? Peter Van Kleeck says, “there is no consensus within the English Bible tradition for the interpretation of the suffixes, and the churchly tradition in the new versions is censored by not including a translation that is broad enough to include both interpretations.”¹⁹

Purpose of Study

Since there are many questions concerning whether Psalm 12 teaches the preservation of the Bible or the preservation of God’s people, there is a need to examine it.

This paper will attempt to make clear the meaning of Psalm 12:6–7. It is the hope of this writer that a study of these verses would reveal that they do teach us the doctrine of Bible preservation.

Presupposition

The writer regards the 66 books of canonical Scripture to be the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God (Matt 5:17–18, 2 Tim 3:16). Though the Bible is essentially a salvation textbook, it is absolutely inerrant when it addresses matters pertaining to history, geography, and science.

Method of Study

The study will be exegetically oriented. The historical-grammatical-canonical method of interpretation will be adopted. The meaning of the text will be determined in the light of both the OT and NT. The Westminster divines said that the “infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.”²⁰ This is known as the “analogy of Scripture.” The intention of God is ascertained by both antecedent and subsequent Scripture.²¹

In order to understand Psalm 12:5–7 (6–8), this paper will attempt to ascertain its meaning through an exegetical study. It will then examine the validity of various views before concluding with a discussion on the doctrine of Bible preservation as found in the text.

Passage

The passage under consideration is Psalm 12:5–7:²²

מִשָּׁד עֲנִיִּים מֵאַנְקַת אֲבִיוֹנִים עֲתָה אָקוּם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית
בִּישָׁע יָפִיחַ לוֹ:
אֲמָרוֹת יְהוָה אֲמָרוֹת טְהָרוֹת כָּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לָאָרֶץ מִזְקָה
שִׁבְעָתִים:
אֲתֶה-יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנוּ מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם:

(Ps 12:6–8, Hebrew OT)

Ἀπὸ τῆς τάλαιπωρίας τῶν πτωχῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ στεναγμοῦ τῶν πενήτων νῦν ἀναστήσομαι, λέγει κύριος· θήσομαι ἐν σωτηρίᾳ, παρησιάσομαι ἐν αὐτῷ. τὰ λόγια κυρίου λόγια ἀγνά, ἀργύριον πεπυρωμένον, δοκίμιον τῇ γῇ, κεκαθαρισμένον ἐπταπλασίως. σύ, κύριε, φυλάξεις ἡμᾶς, καὶ διατηρήσεις ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Ps 12:6–8, LXX).

In verse 7, though certain manuscripts read תִּשְׁמְרֵנוּ for תִּשְׁמְרֵם, and the LXX follows it (φυλάξεις ἡμᾶς), it is better to follow the traditional

Masoretic Hebrew text.²³ It is possible that those manuscripts which read תִּשְׁמְרוּ followed the error of the LXX in a mistranslation. It ought also to be noted that the LXX is in general an inferior translation of the Hebrew OT.²⁴ This paper thus follows the Masoretic reading of תִּשְׁמְרוּ. Sources for the Scriptural quotations, are as listed below,²⁵ unless otherwise indicated by the writer.

An Exegesis of Psalm 12:5–7

Introduction

Title of Psalm 12

The title of Psalm 12 is, לְמִנְצֵחַ עַל־הַשְּׁמִינִית מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד. The term לְמִנְצֵחַ appears 55 times in the titles of the psalms, and seems to suggest that such psalms were used in the temple service.²⁶ It comes from the root meaning, “to shine,” “to be pre-eminent,”²⁷ from the Piel stem. The word as a substantival participle refers to an individual, a “director of music,” “choirmaster,” or “chief musician.”²⁸ The KJV translates it as “to the chief musician.”²⁹

The word הַשְּׁמִינִית appears in Psalms 6 and 12, and 1 Chronicles 15:21. It is related to the Hebrew word “eight.”³⁰ Some claim that it may denote an instrument with eight strings,³¹ to the manner of singing, or to an octave.³² However, it is hard to accept the rendering “on the octave,” because the Hebrews had no eight-toned scale.³³ Since this term signifies the number “eight,” Spurgeon says that it refers to the coming of Messiah, following the Arabic version which says it concerns the end of the world, which shall be on the eighth day.³⁴ It also is hard to accept this since there is no biblical evidence.

In 1 Chronicles 15:21, several musicians were celebrating the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem by playing “harps on the *Shemnith* to excel.” The KJV has it as “*Shemnith*.” What is meant by the הַשְּׁמִינִית remains a mystery.³⁵

The term מְזֻמֹּר occurs in the titles of 57 psalms. The LXX translates it as ψαλμὸς. The word “psalm” comes from it. The term comes from the root זָמַר, meaning “sing,” “sing praise,” “make music.”³⁶ It has the idea of taking hold of the strings of an instrument with the fingers, and thus implies that the psalms were “sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, or instruments.”³⁷

The word לְדָוִד may denote the authorship of David. The Hebrew preposition means “to,” “belonging to,” “of,” “for.” It has also other shades of meaning like “for the use of” or “dedicated to” according to the context.³⁸ However, David probably composed this psalm because of his name in the title.

The Literary Form and the Implied Situation

Psalm 12 is a psalm of lament. It is sung in times of distress. The vocative הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה (“Help Lord”) in verse 1 reveals that it is a situation where the people needed to be delivered by the Lord. Brug claims that this psalm may have been “provoked by the lie directed against David by the followers of Saul or Absalom.”³⁹ There is nothing in the psalm, however, which indicates that it is referring to any special persecution or trouble.⁴⁰ Geier says that this psalm contains “the common complaint of the church of all times.”⁴¹ According to verse 2, falsehood, hypocrisy, and deception are everywhere in society. This absence of truth and truthfulness evidently grieved David.⁴²

Summary and Structure of Psalm 12

The topic of the poem is about the proud words of the wicked versus the pure words of God. The theme is that the Lord preserves His words for His people. The psalmist intimates that in the midst of prevailing falsehood and hypocritical words of ungodly men, he finds consolation from the pure words of God, which the Lord has promised to preserve. The psalmist hopes the Lord will cut off the flattering lips of wickedness, and put the godly, the poor and the oppressed in a place of safety which is in the pure words of God. God will preserve His words forever for His people, although the wicked walk on every side.

This providential psalm is structured in such a way as to contrast the proud words of the wicked with the pure words of God. The psalm can be divided into two main parts.

1. *Vv 1–4: God’s people taunted by the proud words of the wicked.*
 - V 1: God’s people pray for help because of the oppression from the ungodly.
 - Vv 2–3: The ungodly speak falsehood with flattering lips.
 - V 4: The ungodly boast of their success in their lies and false words.
2. *Vv 5–8: God promises to preserve His pure words for His people.*
 - V 5: God promises to keep His people safe from the proud words of the ungodly.
 - Vv 6–7: God speaks only pure words and will keep His words perfectly.

V 8: God assures His people that His words will come true even when the wicked seem to prevail in their lies and falsehood.

In addition, this psalm can be seen as a chiasm:

- (A) God's people despair because of the proud words of the ungodly man (v 1).
(B) The words of the wicked are false and treacherous (vv 2–3).
(C) The wicked boasts about their safety (v 4).
(C¹) God promises His people safety (v 5).
(B¹) The words of God are pure and perfect, and God promises to preserve His words for His people (vv 6–7).
(A¹) God's people are comforted by God's promise to preserve His Word in the midst of prevailing wickedness (v 8).

Thus in this psalm contrast is drawn between the words of evil men and the words of God. While the wicked speak perversely, God speaks purely. The words of evil will come to nothing, but the words of the LORD will endure forever.

The Implication of יְהִיָּה אֲשִׁית בְּיָשַׁע יָפִיתָ לוֹ in Verse 5

From the first verse, the psalmist laments that the faithful are being overwhelmed by the oppression from the wicked. The psalmist hopes that the treachery through flattering lips would be stopped (vv 3–4). Seeing “the oppression of the poor” and listening to “the sighing of the needy,” the Lord gives a promise in verse 5, יְהִיָּה אֲשִׁית בְּיָשַׁע יָפִיתָ לוֹ.

However, in understanding this promise statement, there are various interpretations among the English versions:

KJV I will set *him* in safety *from him that* puffeth at him.

ASV I will set him in the safety he panteth for.

NASV I will set him in the safety for which he longs.

RSV I will place him in the safety for which he longs.

NRSV I will place them in the safety for which they long.

NIV I will protect them from those who malign them.

NKJV I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns.

The above English versions show a difference in understanding the words יָפִיתָ לוֹ. For the phrase יָפִיתָ לוֹ, most versions render it with the sense of “hope” or “desire” on the part of the poor and needy. On the other hand, the KJV reads it as “from him that puffeth at him,” and the NIV “from those who malign them.”

Meaning of בְּיָשׁוּעַ

The word בְּיָשׁוּעַ consists of the Hebrew noun יָשׁוּעַ and Hebrew preposition בְּ. The term יָשׁוּעַ derived from יָשַׁע which means, “be saved,” “be delivered,” “save,” “deliver,” “give victory,” “help,” “be safe,” “take vengeance,” “preserve.”⁴³ In the OT, the term יָשׁוּעַ occurs 36 times.⁴⁴ According to New BDB, it refers to “deliverance,” “rescue,” “salvation,” “safety,” and “welfare.”⁴⁵

The Hebrew preposition בְּ is primarily used in the following ways: “of position *in* a place,” “of presence in the midst of a multitude,” “*among*, and the limits enclosing a space *within*.”⁴⁶ The KJV reads “in safety” and the ASV, NASV, RSV, NRSV, and NKJV read “in the safety.”⁴⁷ The LXX reads it as ἐν σωτηρίᾳ. The Greek word σωτηρία refers to “salvation,” “safety,” “deliverance,” “preservation from danger or destruction.”⁴⁸ Hence the word בְּיָשׁוּעַ may be understood as “in the safety,” as found in most of the English versions, connoting “freedom from distress and the ability to pursue one’s own objectives.”⁴⁹

Meaning of יָפִיתָ

The word יָפִיתָ is a verb in the Hiphil stem of פָּוִה.⁵⁰ It means primarily “to breathe” or “to blow” in the negative sense of “to utter” lies, to be utterly deceitful.⁵¹ This verb appears 15 times in the OT.⁵²

The prophet Ezekiel used this word to refer to the blowing of God’s judgement, prophesying the sentence against the Ammonites.⁵³ In Habakkuk 2:3, the word is used to refer to speaking: “... but at the end it shall speak, and not lie ...” In the Song of Solomon, it refers to blowing: “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden ...” (4:16). In the other two occurrences, it refers to the “blowing” of the day: “Until the day break ...” (2:17; 4:6) in the Qal stem.⁵⁴ The word is used in the Song of Solomon with reference to nature.

In Proverbs, it is interesting to note that the object of the word is “lies” (see 6:19; 14:5, 25; 19:5, and 9). Similarly, Proverbs 29:8 speaks of scornful men who “bring a city into a snare.” Thus in most of these verses, the Hebrew verb פָּוִה is translated in the LXX by ἐγκαλέω which means “to accuse,” “to bring a charge against.”⁵⁵ Only in Proverbs 12:17 is the word used of “uttering truth.”

In Psalm 10:5, “*as for* all his enemies,” those who show contempt and scorn for God’s Law, the Lord “puffeth at them.”

From the above, most of the usages indicate that the verb refers to “speak,” “utter” or “blow” in the negative sense. So what does the word mean in Psalm 12:5? The context of the psalm speaks about flattering lips and words of deceitful men (vv 1–4). The word seems to refer to “being puffed up with proud words,” “showing contempt for and to scorn at God’s law” and “speaking lies.” Thus, the KJV is justified in rendering it this way.

As seen in the usage, the word **פִּוֵּחַ** does not seem to mean “to desire,” “to hope,” “to long for,” or “to pant” with a positive sense. Hence it is difficult to accept the ASV, NASV, RSV, NRSV, and NKJV translation of it.

The verb **פִּוֵּחַ** means “to puff,” “to scorn,” or “to show contempt.” The word **יִפְיֵחַ** could be interpreted literally as “he puffed” or “he has contempt for.”

Interpretation of **יִפְיֵחַ לוֹ**

The word **לוֹ** is a preposition **לְ** with a pronominal suffix attached in the form of the third person masculine singular.⁵⁶ The preposition **לְ** denotes “direction towards,” “locality,” “the object of a verb,” or “a reference to.”⁵⁷ The KJV understands it as the object of the verb **פִּוֵּחַ** expressing disadvantage.⁵⁸

In **יִפְיֵחַ לוֹ** the subject of the verb might be “he” for the word **יִפְיֵחַ** is in the third person masculine singular. Thus, since the subject and the object of **יִפְיֵחַ לוֹ** are both in the third person masculine singular, it is hard to accept the NIV and NRSV translation of it as the third person plural.

Since, the word **פִּוֵּחַ** means to “puff,” “scorn,” or “show contempt” with a negative sense, then, the phrase **יִפְיֵחַ לוֹ** could be interpreted literally “he will scorn at him (ie, another person).” From the context, it perhaps means “the one who speaks proud words has a contempt for one who is poor, needy or godly.”

The Words of Promise **אָשִׁית בְּיָשָׁע יִפְיֵחַ לוֹ** in Context

Why, then, does God promise that He will “set him in safety?”

Since **יָפִיתָ לוֹ** can mean “the one who speaks proud words has a contempt for one who is poor, needy or godly” in the context, the term **בְּיָשׁוּעַ** probably denotes “in safety” from **יָפִיתָ לוֹ**. The psalmist laments, “... for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men” (v 1).

Speaking “vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart” (v 2), the wicked “walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted” (v 8). The righteous suffer because the wicked speak lies with flattering lips *and* with a double heart. In this circumstance, a person might not be able to keep his social and political position without becoming a friend of the wicked. Hence the faithful man who speaks truth might lose his position and become poorer. They hope that God would cut off those with the flattering lips, who utter proud words (vv 3–4). Motivated by His love, the Lord promises the godly man to set him in safety from the circumstance in which the wicked man threatens.

Then, what kind of safety does God set for him? It could be assumed from the context that the godly man was suffering because of the proud words of the wicked. The godly desire not proud words but pure words of God. Thus, the promise clause **אֲשִׁית בְּיָשׁוּעַ יָפִיתָ לוֹ** connotes that the Lord will set the godly man in safety where there are no falsehood, flattering lips, double heartedness, proud words, but only the pure words of God.

Since the term “in safety” comes before the words of God in the next two verses, the psalmist continues speaking about the pure words of God. Man shall be saved in the words of God, and not in the words of men. For setting the godly man in safety, God promises to preserve His Word in the following verses.

Meaning of the Clause **אֱמֻרֹת יְהוָה אֱמֻרֹת טָהֳרוֹת** in Verse 6

The clause **אֱמֻרֹת יְהוָה אֱמֻרֹת טָהֳרוֹת** in verse 6, is described by the clause **כִּסֹּף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לְאָרֶץ מִזְקָק שְׂבַעֲתִים**.

אֱמֻרֹת יְהוָה modifies **אֱמֻרֹת טָהֳרוֹת**.

The Hebrew words **אֱמֻרֹת** and **אֱמֻרֹת** are feminine plural of the noun **אֱמֻרָה**. The term **אֱמֻרָה** is derived from the verb **אָמַר**, which primarily means “utter,” or “say.”⁵⁹ The term **אֱמֻרָה** here refers to the “word,” “law,” “wisdom,” “instruction,” and “teaching” of God.⁶⁰ The LXX

translates **אִמְרָה** as λόγιον in the form of a neuter plural noun. The term λόγιον is used “mostly of sayings originating from a divinity,”⁶¹ or “the utterance of divine oracles.”⁶² Since the term **אִמְרָה** is used with a suffix of the feminine plural form,⁶³ **אִמְרוֹת יְהוָה** does not denote just a few words, but the whole Word of God, that is, the Holy Scriptures.

The Hebrew term **טְהוֹרוֹת** is an adjective in the feminine plural form of **טָהוֹר**. The word **טָהוֹר** is derived from the verb **טָהַר** which means “be clean,” or “be pure.”⁶⁴ The adjective **טְהוֹרוֹת** describes the “words of God.” Also the psalmist speaks in a simile to compare the words of God to **כֶּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לְאָרֶץ מִזְקָה שִׁבְעָתַיִם** (“silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times”).

The clause **כֶּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לְאָרֶץ מִזְקָה שִׁבְעָתַיִם** describes **אִמְרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת**, qualifying the degree of purity. Silver is the emblem of everything precious and pure.⁶⁵ The verb **צָרַף** means “smelt,” “refine,” “test,”⁶⁶ and the verb **זָקַק** means “refine,” and “purify.”⁶⁷ That the term **צָרוּף** is used in the passive participle and the term **מִזְקָה** is used in the participle in the Pual stem means that silver should be tried in a furnace of earth and be refined until it could be useful. Since the number “seven” in Jewish terms is a number of perfection,⁶⁸ indicating the completion of any process,⁶⁹ seven times purified is the same as being “perfectly purified.”⁷⁰ It is “completely pure.”⁷¹ Hence, the clause **כֶּסֶף צָרוּף בַּעֲלִיל לְאָרֶץ מִזְקָה שִׁבְעָתַיִם** means the silver is tried and refined until it is pure and unmixed. Similarly, the words of God have been tried and refined. They are perfectly pure, and completely reliable and true. Thus, the words of God are absolutely authentic (v 6).

Various Readings of Psalm 12:7

This verse has various readings among the English versions:

- AB You will keep them and preserve them, O Lord; You will guard and keep us from this [evil] generation for ever.
- ASV Thou wilt keep them, O Jehovah, Thou wilt preserve them from this generation for ever.
- JB And You, Yahweh, hold us in your keeping, against that breed protect us always.
- KJV Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

NASV Thou, O LORD, wilt keep them; Thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever.

NEB Do thou, Lord protect us and guard us from them a profligate and evil generation.

NIV O LORD, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.

NKJV You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

NRSV You, O LORD, will protect us; you will guard us from this generation forever.

NWB You yourself, O Jehovah, will guard them; You will preserve each one from this generation to time indefinite.

RSV Do thou, O Lord, protect us, guard us ever from this generation.

TLV Yes, Lord, thou wilt watch over us, and keep us ever safe from these evil days (11:7–8).

It is noted that there are various views for rendering the words, **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ**, especially the pronominal suffixes *em* and *ennu*. The KJV, AB, ASV, NASV, NKJV and NWB render the suffix *em* as “them,” but the others render it as “us.” The suffix *ennu* is read in three ways. The KJV, ASV, and NKJV have it as “them” and the NWB has it as “each one.” The other group, such as the NIV, AB, JB, NEB NRSV, RSV, and TLV read “us.” The NASV and NWB depart from most by having it as “him,” and “each one” respectively.

Thus in order to understand this verse correctly, the words **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ** should be studied in order to ascertain the usage of the two pronominal suffixes.

Meaning of **תִּשְׁמְרֵם**

Meaning of the Term **שָׁמַר**

The Hebrew verb **שָׁמַר** occurs 468 times in the Old Testament.⁷² It is used 427 times in the Qal, 37 times in the Niphal, 4 times in the Piel and in the Hithpael. The Hebrew verb means “keep,” “watch,” “preserve.”⁷³ Etymologically it has parallels with the ancient languages in the Middle East. For example, the Akkadian *shamaru* means, “wait upon,” “attend to;” the Phoenician, *shamaru* means “watch,” “guard;” and the Arabic *samara* means “watch.”⁷⁴

The basic idea of the root **שָׁמַר** is “to exercise great care over.”⁷⁵ In the Qal stem, the meaning of the verb **שָׁמַר** has five large categories.

First the term means to “take care of,” “guard,” “keep,” “have charge of,” “tend.” This involves: (1) tending to or keeping of things such as a garden,⁷⁶ a flock,⁷⁷ ark,⁷⁸ a house,⁷⁹ a property in trust;⁸⁰ (2) tending to or keeping person(s);⁸¹ guarding against intruders,⁸² God’s care and protection,⁸³ to have care of;⁸⁴ (3) personal conduct and discipline, ie, the need to take heed in respect to one’s life and actions,⁸⁵ and (4) watching for or waiting for.⁸⁶

Second, in combination with other verbs, it refers to “keep understanding,”⁸⁷ “observe”⁸⁸ or “take heed to.”⁸⁹ Here the meaning of the verb in combination with another verb is “to do carefully or diligently.”⁹⁰ Third the term can mean to “regard” or “give heed to.” It is used of a man’s attitude of paying attention to,⁹¹ or reverence for God or others,⁹² in a hostile sense,⁹³ or in an expectant sense.⁹⁴

Fourth, it has to do with the “preserving,” or “storing up,” of (1) anger,⁹⁵ (2) knowledge,⁹⁶ (3) food,⁹⁷ (4) anything that is precious;⁹⁸ and (5) people,⁹⁹ or (6) their ways.¹⁰⁰

Fifth, the most frequent use of the verb is that of paying careful attention to the obligations of a covenant, to the laws and statutes of God.¹⁰¹ It is used in the following ways: (1) to “celebrate” a festival, etc,¹⁰² (2) to “keep” the Sabbath,¹⁰³ (3) to “keep or do” a covenant,¹⁰⁴ a command,¹⁰⁵ an office,¹⁰⁶ a function or duty,¹⁰⁷ and (4) to “observe” justice,¹⁰⁸ words of wisdom,¹⁰⁹ vanities.¹¹⁰ The expression “to do them” is frequently appended to the word.¹¹¹ This shows that the observance of God’s law was not to be a matter of theory only or of superficial compliance. The people of God are required to keep God’s commandments in their heart.¹¹²

In Psalm 12, the godly are harmed by the flattering words of men. God’s intention for preserving His words is shown in this verse. Hence, the Hebrew verb שָׁמַר has to do with the safekeeping of the purity of the words of God in opposition to the flattering and unfaithful words of man.¹¹³

Meaning of the Word שָׁמַר

Certain manuscripts read שָׁמְרוּ for שָׁמַר, following the LXX, which goes contrary to the reading of the accepted the preserved consonantal text.¹¹⁴ The Masoretes considered the consonantal text “sacred and inviolable.”¹¹⁵ The same is not attributed to other readings. It would seem that the Masoretes were determined on “no account to alter the consonantal text that had been handed down to them.”¹¹⁶ So the Traditional (Masoretic) Hebrew Text,¹¹⁷ is the Received text of the Hebrew OT.¹¹⁸ Its transmission

was confirmed by the Lord Jesus,¹¹⁹ and was preserved by the Jews from the first century until the Reformation.¹²⁰ Hence in this paper, it will read as **תִּשְׁמְרֵם**.

The Hebrew term **שָׁמַר** is used as a verb in the Qal stem of imperfect tense with the suffix of the third person masculine plural form. Though the NIV, JB, NRSV, RSV, and TLV read “us,” the *-em* suffix refers to the third person masculine.¹²¹ Since the prefix indicates the third person singular form, the word **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** perhaps means literally, “he will preserve them.” The words **אֶת־הַיְהוָה** indicates that the subject of **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** is the LORD. The context denotes the object of the word **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** as the “words of God,” though there is no agreement in gender. While **אִמְרוֹת** in verse 6 is feminine, the suffix of **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** is masculine. For this reason, some claim that it is not possible that verse 7 could be referring to the words of verse 6.¹²²

However, it should be noted that there are occasional exceptions to the principle of gender agreement in the Hebrew Scripture. It is noticeable elsewhere that there is a weakening in the distinction of gender.¹²³ It ought to be noted that “*masculine* suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to *feminine* substantives.”¹²⁴ Also, the masculine pronoun is often used for a feminine antecedent.¹²⁵ The KJV rendering that the Lord preserves His words is “not automatically incorrect, grammatically, but is definitely possible.”¹²⁶ Thus, in this particular case, the difference in gender does not prove or disprove a position.¹²⁷

Therefore, the word **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** could be taken to mean “*The LORD shall keep His words.*”

Meaning of the Term **תִּצְרֶנּוּ**

Meaning of the Verb **נָצַר**

The word **תִּצְרֶנּוּ** is derived from the root **נָצַר**. Its etymology is illustrated in the Akkadian *nasaru* “watch over,” and “protect,” and the Arabic cognate *nazara* “keep in view,” and “look at.”¹²⁸ This verb appears 63 times in the OT.¹²⁹ The term primarily means “to guard,” “to watch,” “to watch over,” “to keep.”¹³⁰ This meaning can underlie the various semantic modifications.

First, it refers to “keep” or “watch over” material things such as agricultural or military installations.¹³¹ In Isaiah 27:3, the LORD Himself is regarded as

a keeper or watchman over His vineyard Israel, and over all men in general.¹³²

Second, it is used in an ethical sense of guarding one's mouth,¹³³ tongue,¹³⁴ way of life,¹³⁵ and heart.¹³⁶

Third, it has the concept of “guarding from danger” or “preserving.” Here the subject is God or His attribute. So the Lord keeps or preserves a man's life,¹³⁷ the king,¹³⁸ peace,¹³⁹ Israel,¹⁴⁰ the faithful and their life,¹⁴¹ and knowledge.¹⁴² The Lord also protects the righteous from trouble,¹⁴³ and from the secret plots of the wicked¹⁴⁴ and violent men.¹⁴⁵ Also in Proverbs the subject of keeping is wisdom,¹⁴⁶ wise understanding,¹⁴⁷ and righteousness.¹⁴⁸

Fourth, it has the concept of “guarding with fidelity,” of “keeping,” and of “observing.” It is mainly used with reference to God's covenant or God's law. The Lord Himself is the One keeping mercy to thousands of generations.¹⁴⁹ Men are responsible for observing the covenant,¹⁵⁰ the divine law,¹⁵¹ the commands of parents,¹⁵² and the discipline of wisdom.¹⁵³

Fifth it has the sense of “keeping a secret,” and is used with reference to things,¹⁵⁴ places,¹⁵⁵ and subtleties of the heart.¹⁵⁶

Another meaning is that of keeping closed or besieging a city.¹⁵⁷

In Psalm 12, the psalmist is talking about two kinds of words. He is contrasting between hopeless words of men in the first part and hopeful words of God in the second part. God promised to set His people in safety in verse 5. The phrase “in safety” is linked to the “words of the Lord” in verses 6 and 7. Psalm 12:7 could thus refer to “preserving” the words of God, having the concept of “guarding with fidelity.”

Meaning of the Hebrew Word **נָצַר**

The Hebrew verb **נָצַר** here is used in the Qal stem of imperfect tense with the suffix of either third person masculine singular form with energetic *nun*, or the first person plural form.¹⁵⁸ Since the verb is prefixed by the second masculine singular form of the Qal stem of the imperfect tense, the initial *nun* of the verb was assimilated to the second root consonant throughout the inflection,¹⁵⁹ adding a compensatory dagesh forte in the letter **נ**.¹⁶⁰ For the third person masculine singular, according to *Gesenius*, the verbal suffix **וֹ** is used to express the accusative of the personal pronoun.¹⁶¹ However, a verbal form with a suffix gains additional strength, and sometimes intentional emphasis, when a special connecting-syllable (*an*) is inserted between the suffix and the vowel stem.¹⁶² Thus, **נִצְרוּ**,

is used, for **נָהִי** in the third person masculine singular ($n + h > nn$) and for **נָהִי** in the first person plural ($n + n > nn$).¹⁶³ Here, the n is assimilated and is indicated by dagesh forte,¹⁶⁴ expressing an energetic *nun*.¹⁶⁵

While the NIV, AB, JB, NRSV, NEB and TLV render it as “us;”¹⁶⁶ the NASV reads “him;”¹⁶⁷ the KJV, ASV, and NKJV, “them;” and the NWB “each one.” Each of them should be examined.

If the suffix *-ennu* refers to “us,” it should refer to the people including the psalmist. However, the context does not support this. This is because the previous verse is speaking about the words of the Lord, and not men or people. Rendering the suffix as “him” also has some problems. The context suggests the preserving of the “words of God” though there is no agreement in gender and number. Furthermore the suffix of the word **תִּצְרְנוּ** is in the masculine singular with the energetic *nun*,¹⁶⁸ which is emphatic. According to Gesenius, the energetic *nun* intends “to give greater emphasis to the verbal form.”¹⁶⁹ Thus, the reading “them” or “each one” (of them) remains legitimate. If so, the words **אֶת־יְהוָה** tell us that the subject of **תִּצְרְנוּ** is the LORD. The word **תִּצְרְנוּ** following the context means that the Lord will preserve His words. The context suggests that the object of the verb is the “words of God” though there is no agreement in gender and number.¹⁷⁰

Again, it must be stated that there are occasional exceptions to the principle of gender agreement in the Hebrew Scripture. That there is a weakening in the distinction of gender has been already dealt with above.¹⁷¹

The *ennu* suffix, as an energetic *nun*, may indicate the intention of special emphasis.¹⁷² The term **נָצַר** is the closest synonym to the term **שָׁמַר** and is used in much the same way.¹⁷³ Not only the verbs but also the pronominal suffixes in this verse show this “preserving of the words of the Lord” emphasis. The words **תִּשְׁמְרֶם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ** seem to emphasise the “preservation of the words of God,” by repeating two synonymous verbs and the pronominal prefixes and suffixes.¹⁷⁴ So the *ennu* suffix could be understood as “each one of them,”¹⁷⁵ following the antecedent pronominal suffix. Evidently, the KJV, ASV, and NKJV understand the suffix *-ennu* by a form of energetic *nun* of the third person masculine singular, then, properly use the pronoun “them” to keep the sense parallel with the former word.¹⁷⁶

Thus the word **תִּצְרְנוּ** can mean that God is promising to preserve every single one of His words.

Interpretation of the Verse

In the verse, the words **תִּצְרְנוּ** and **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** show a synthetic parallelism. The synthetic parallelism, without repeating part of it, “consists of a pair of lines that together form a complete unit, and in which the second line completes or expands the thought introduced in the first line.”¹⁷⁷ To express God’s promise to preserve every single one of His words, the psalmist seems to be employing a synthetic parallelism. Hence, the word **תִּצְרְנוּ** expands the thought of the Bible preservation introduced in the word **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and declares that God is promising to preserve every single one of His words.

The phrase **מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם** shows the temporal extent of the Lord’s preservation of His Word. The term **זֶה** is a rare form of the Hebrew demonstrative and relative pronoun,¹⁷⁸ and is used here as a demonstrative.¹⁷⁹ Since the preposition **מִן** is in the temporal sense,¹⁸⁰ the phrase **מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶה** (“from this generation”) shows the beginning point of the action. And the word **עוֹלָם** with the preposition **לְ** shows the duration or the ending point of the action. The term **עוֹלָם** refers to long duration, antiquity, and futurity.¹⁸¹ The LXX generally reads **עוֹלָם** by αἰών which means “age,” “(span of) time,” or “eternity.”¹⁸² In this verse, the LXX has it as αἰῶνα. Since it is used here to refer to the future, **מִן־הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם** means “from this generation forever.”

Thus, this verse can be interpreted, “O Lord, You shall keep them (ie, your words), and preserve them (ie, every single one of *your words*) from this generation forever.”

Examination of Various Views The Bible?

In the previous chapter, the Hebrew words **תִּשְׁמְרֵם** and **תִּצְרְנוּ** are rendered, “You shall *keep* them (ie, the words of the Lord),” and “You shall *preserve* (each one of) them” respectively. Many scholars view Psalm 12:7 as applying to Bible preservation.¹⁸³

On Psalm 12:6–7, Waite commented, The word “them” in verse seven refers back to “*the words of the LORD.*” That is a promise of Bible preservation. God has promised to “*PRESERVE* His “*PURE WORDS.*” This promise extends “*from this generation* [that is, that of the Psalmist] *FOR EVER.*” That is a long time, is it not? God is able to do this, and He has done it! He

has kept His words even more perfectly, if that is possible, then He keeps the stars in their course and the sun, moon, and all the other heavenly bodies in their proper place.¹⁸⁴

David Pitman likewise commented,

In v 7, the first “them” is masculine plural; the second “them” is masculine singular. “words” each time in v 6 is feminine plural. The word “silver” is used as another name for the Word of God in this passage. “Silver” is masculine singular. This allows for agreement in gender and may explain why preservation is promised to the words of God (plural) and to the Word of God (singular). This interchange between masculine singular and masculine plural (particularly in circumstances where a collective plural is suggested by the singular) is not uncommon in the OT. We believe God has preserved the Bible, but further, we believe that He has preserved the very words of the Bible.¹⁸⁵

Pitman proposed that the antecedent of “them” in the verse refers to “silver” in verse 6. This seems allowable contextually and theologically. If so, then the second suffix *-ennu* would lose the emphatic force of its energetic *nun* since it builds upon the previous suffix. It seems preferable to view the antecedent of the first suffix “them” to be referring to the “words.” By these two suffixes the faithfulness of God in guarding His Word, as a whole and in its parts, from corruption is underscored.

The Bible and the People?

Derek Kidner suggests that the first suffix may refer to the “words” in verse 6, and the second to the people in verse 5.¹⁸⁶ Anderson thinks the word **תְּשַׁמְרֵם** refers to “the poor and the needy” (v 5) and “the promises of Yehovah” (v 6).¹⁸⁷ Matthew Poole also holds to this view.¹⁸⁸

Hammond translates this verse thus, “Thou, O Lord, shalt keep, or perform, those words; thou shalt preserve the just man from this generation forever.”¹⁸⁹ He has viewed it as having a double application; that is, the first suffix refers to the words of God, and the second to the godly man. The AB translation “preserve them, ... and keep us” seems to show this understanding of the suffixes.¹⁹⁰

Did the psalmist use these suffixes to refer to both the words of the Lord and the godly man? Is there any evidence for such a usage in the Scriptures? It is interesting that there are 12 verses where the verbs **שָׁמַר** and **נָצַר** are found in a single sentence in the same verse in the OT.¹⁹¹ There are four verses in which the synonymous verbs have the synonymous independent

objects between the verbs without pronominal suffixes, three verses in the imperfect tense,¹⁹² and one verse with the form of the imperfect tense and infinitive.¹⁹³ In three verses in Proverbs, the verbs take the participle form, and their objects follow them.¹⁹⁴ In two verses, the first verb takes an object and the following verb has only a pronominal suffix that refers to the object of the first verb,¹⁹⁵ though the defined object is placed between the two verbs. In the final two verses, one of them has verbs that take the pronominal suffixes in the imperfect tense,¹⁹⁶ and the other has it in the imperative mood and the imperfect tense.¹⁹⁷

Among the verses, the synonymous verbs take the same objects or synonymous objects. When the objects are different, the verbs take independent objects without pronominal suffixes.¹⁹⁸ When the objects are the same, the verbs take either pronominal suffixes for their objects if possible,¹⁹⁹ or a definite and pronominal suffix.²⁰⁰ There are no usages where the synonymous verbs take different objects with pronominal suffixes. Hence in Psalm 12:7, the synonymous verbs take the same object with one having an energetic *nun* for emphasis. So these suffixes can refer to either the words of God or the godly man, but not both, unless context and usage are ignored.

Psalm 12 is speaking about “words.” The emphasis of the Psalm is not on “man” but on “words.” The truthful words of God will prevail against the flattering words of man.²⁰¹ To the oppression and ninefold mention of the words of men (vv 1–4),²⁰² God interposes with a promise of deliverance (v 5), to which the psalmist gives a glorious declaration about the words of the Lord (v 6).

Since in this context the words of God are the nearest antecedents, the pronominal suffixes should be taken to mean God’s faithful preservation of His words alone, and not both His Word and the godly man. The Lord shall surely preserve every single one of His words.

The People?

Some scholars view the suffixes as applying to the preservation of God’s people.²⁰³ They claim that Psalm 12:6–7 has nothing at all to do with the preservation of the Word of God but everything to do with the preservation of the righteous from the wicked people around them.²⁰⁴

Calvin says, “some give this exposition of the passage, *Thou wilt keep them*, namely, *thy words*; but this does not seem suitable.”²⁰⁵ Though Calvin held to this view, he admitted that there were those who disagreed with him.²⁰⁶

Barnes claims that the clauses, “thou shalt keep them,” and “thou shalt preserve them” refers “to the poor and the needy who were suffering from the wrongs inflicted on them” in verse 5.²⁰⁷ However, the context does not seem to permit it. The context is talking about words. It is contrasting between the hopeless words of men in the first part and hopeful words of God in the second. God promised to set the godly in safety in verse 5. The “in safety” is found before the words of God in verses 6 and 7. Man shall be saved from the treacherous words of men by trusting in the pure and perfect Word of God. God thus assured the godly that He would preserve His Word. Some manuscripts and the LXX read **תִּשְׁמְרוּנוּ** for **תִּשְׁמְרוּם**. The NIV, NEB, JB, RSV, NRSV, and TLV seem to understand both objects in the first person plural, translating it as “us” as the LXX does ἡμᾶς (us).

Dahood rendered this phrase “*you have protected us, you have guarded us...*,”²⁰⁸ making the suffixes refer to people (“us”) as in the NIV. He claims that reading the Hebrew word **תִּשְׁמְרוּם** in such a way is allowable because “of the poetic principle of balancing a pronominal suffix (in the case found in **תִּשְׁמְרוּנוּ**) with an enclitic *mem*.”²⁰⁹ Hummel suggests that “originally the verb was probably without suffix, but with an enclitic *mem*:

תִּשְׁמְרוּם.”²¹⁰ According to grammarians, the enclitic *mem* is common in poetry and is mostly used in the middle of the contract chain.²¹¹

Although in verbal pronominal suffixes, the third person masculine singular (with the energetic *nun*) and the first person common plural may have the same object suffix *-ennu* (save the dagesh forte),²¹² it is hard to think that the suffix *-em* of the word **תִּשְׁמְרוּם** should be an enclitic *mem*, and so become *-ennu* since it was not originally written as such,²¹³ and the context does not allow for it. Moreover, the suffix *-ennu* of **תִּשְׁמְרוּנוּ** could be construed as an energetic *nun* of assimilated form with the third singular suffix, as in the words **אֲרִיצָנוּ** (“... and he has not kept him in ...,” Exod 21:29), **אֲרִיצָנוּ** (“... make him run away ...,” Jer 49:19), **תִּזְכְּרָנוּ** (“... that thou art mindful of him ...,” Ps 8:4) and **יִסּוּבְכָנוּ** (“... shall compass him about ...,” Ps 32:10). This would make the suffix “him” and not “us.” Patton also does not see the suffix *-em* as an enclitic *mem*. He also sees the *-ennu* of the word **תִּצְרָנוּ** as an energetic *nun*, which is used for emphasis, and is found in Ugaritic literature.²¹⁴

Raphael Weiss says, “It appears that the pronominal suffix of one of the verbs **תִּצְרָנוּ** or **תִּשְׁמְרוּם** is the result of an error and that the correct reading

must be either **תשמרנו... תצרכנו** or **תשמרם... תצרכם**.²¹⁵ He seems to prefer reading **תשמרם... תצרכם** in Psalm 12:7 by following the Aramaic Targum.²¹⁶ If so, the *mem* of **תשמרם** could be regarded as a pronominal suffix, and not as an enclitic *mem* at all.

The NIV considers the object of the verb to be the man spoken of in verse 5.²¹⁷ Such a rendering is strange. It breaks down the structure of the psalm. For instance, the word **אִשִּׁית** in verse 5 is singular,²¹⁸ but the suffix of the word **תשמרם** is in the plural. The number of the noun and pronoun should agree. This rendering has not only contextual but also grammatical problems. Those who view the text to mean the protection of the people pose another argument. Delitzsch claims that the suffix *-em* refers to the poor and needy, and the suffix *-ennu* refers back to the man who longs for deliverance mentioned in the divine utterance in verse 5.²¹⁹ However, it is hard to accept this because the context is talking about the Word, not the man. Furthermore, it breaks the synthetic parallelism that exists between verses 6 and 7. To the poor and the needy, God's promise to save them is already given in verse 5. In verses 6 and 7, God is here interjecting to show that His promises to the man (v 5) will never be broken,²²⁰ because God keeps His Word. The context of the psalm and its poetical structure plainly say that God would preserve His Word forever. The view that God's protection of people is meant in verses 6 and 7 can be excluded. This verse strongly emphasises God's preservation of the Scriptures, not man.

Conclusion

Psalm 12:6–7 is one explicit proof-text for the doctrine of Bible preservation. It tells us that the merciful God will preserve His Word for His people forever. God will preserve His Word plenary (the whole of Scripture in its perfect harmonious unity), and verbally (every word to its jot and tittle). The Westminster divines were absolutely correct to say that the Holy Bible is “immediately inspired by God, and by *His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages*” (WCF 1.8).

The degree of preservation is in every single word of His as contained in the Holy Scriptures. This is supported by the energetic *nun* in the word **תצַרְנוּ** already discussed. Jesus Christ also taught this in Matthew 5:18, “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.” Here, Jesus Himself proclaimed that every jot and tittle of the OT until His time was faithfully transmitted and preserved without error. Hence, the Word of God is “innocent of error until someone can prove it guilty.”²²¹ Jesus Christ strongly emphasised

God's preservation of the Bible in every single one of His words. Therefore, the Bible teaches that the Lord will preserve His Word in pure form, including the minutest details in the whole of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments.²²²

So it is clear that Psalm 12:5–7 teaches that the words of the Lord are pure words of God. God promises that His words will be preserved in every generation.²²³ It is important to note that God preserves His words, not just doctrines, or historical facts, but the very Word as a whole and in its parts. The Bible plainly teaches this plenary and verbal preservation of Scripture.

Notes

¹ The 66 books of canonical Scripture refers the 39 books of the OT and 27 books of the NT as stated in the Westminster Confession (1.2). However, the Talmud and Jewish Bibles (the OT) today number 24. Since 1–2 Samuel is one book, 1–2 Kings is one book, 1–2 Chronicles is one book, Ezra–Nehemiah is one book, and the 12 minor prophets make up one book, the difference between the numbering of 39 and 24 is accounted for. For more information about the structure and division of the Bible, see Norman L Geisler and William E Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Revised and Expanded (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 21–9.

² “The NT canon was arrived at by consensus of God’s people who were indwelt and led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The Council of Carthage (397), after a period of discussion, identified the sacred books by name. There were exactly 27 of them. The list presented was no innovation, but an official statement of what the Church had already accepted as canonical Scripture. It was a grassroots acceptance of the many churches that have been planted worldwide, and not just by a single church or denomination. There was an ecclesiastical consensus.” Jeffrey Khoo, “[The KJV–NIV Debate](#),” unpublished lecture notes, Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, 1998, 4. Cf. Alan E Johnson and Robert E Webber, *What Christians Believe: A Biblical and Historical Summary* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1989), 39.

³ Turretin gives the reasons. They are: “(1) because the sources alone are inspired of God both as things and words (2 Tim 3:16); hence they alone are authentic. For whatever the men of God wrote, they wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21), who to keep them from error, dictated not only the matter but also the words, which cannot be said of any version. (2) They are the standard and rule to which all the versions should be applied, just as the copy should answer to the pattern and the stream be distinguished from its source. (3) These editions were authentic from the very first and were always considered to be so by the Jewish and Christian church many centuries after Christ ...” Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1992), 1:114.

⁴ Wilbur Norman Pickering, “John William Burgon And The New Testament,” in *True or False?*, ed. Davis Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1983), 277. According to Laird Harris, there is no doctrine, except “those of the Trinity and the deity of Christ, which has been so widely held through the ages of Church history as that of verbal inspiration.” R Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Scriptures: An Historical and Exegetical study* (Greenville: A Press, 1995), 55. Cf. Benjamin B Warfield, *The Inspiration And Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1945). Brian H Edwards, *Nothing But the Truth* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 1993), 57.

⁵ Louis Gaussen, *Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, trans. David D Scott (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971). Published in Edinburgh in 1842 under the title, *Theopneustia: The Bible, its Divine Origin and Entire Inspiration, Deduced from Internal Evidence and the Testimonies of Nature, History, and Science*, 34.

⁶ See E J Young, *Thy Word is Truth* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1957, reprinted 1991), 91–2.

- ⁷ Daniel B Wallace, "Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism," in *New Testament Essays: In Honor of Homer A Kent Jr*, ed. Gary T Meadors (Winona Lake, BMH Books, 1991), 84. Cf. Daniel B Wallace, "The Majority Text and the Original Text: Are They Identical?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991): 152–69. Gordon D Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus" *JETS* 21 (1978): 19–33. However, Harold G Stigers gives biblical bases; see Harold G Stigers, "Preservation: the Corollary Of Inspiration," *JETS* 22 (1979): 217–22.
- ⁸ See G Rawlinson, *The Pulpit Commentary: Psalms*, H D M Spence and Joseph S Exell, eds., "Homiletics," by E R Condor and W Clarkson (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, n.d.), 8:76–7.
- ⁹ Frank E Gaebelin, gen ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 5:136.
- ¹⁰ NIV, RSV, and TLV etc.
- ¹¹ KJV, ASV, and NWB etc.
- ¹² KJV, ASV and AB.
- ¹³ NWB.
- ¹⁴ Geneva Bible, 1560.
- ¹⁵ NIV, JB, RSV and TLV.
- ¹⁶ Donald Williams, *Mastering The Old Testament: Psalms 1–72* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1986), 107. *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity*, s.v. "Preservation—Bible," by David W Cloud.
- ¹⁷ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, TOTC (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973). A A Anderson, *The book of Psalms*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1972).
- ¹⁸ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Psalms*, ed. Robert Frew (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 1:108. *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Psalms*, 12 vols, ed. Carl Bernhard Moll, 9:107–8.
- ¹⁹ Peter Van Kleeck, *The Translational and Exegetical Rendering of Psalm 12:7 Primarily Considered in the Churchly Tradition of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Its Expression in the Reformation English Bibles: The Genius of Ambiguity*, Calvin Theological Seminary, March 1993. Quoted in David W Cloud, "Psalm 12:7 and Bible Preservation," *O Timothy* 12 (1995), go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/otimothy/otim0001.htm>.
- ²⁰ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, n.d.), 1.9.
- ²¹ This writer disagrees with Walter C Kaiser who claims that meaning can be ascertained only from the amount of prior information available to the text under consideration. See Walter C Kaiser, "Analogy of Antecedent Scripture," in *Towards an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 90, 134–7, 145.
- ²² For indicating chapter and verse of the passages, there are variants among the English versions, the Hebrew text and the LXX. To avoid confusion, chapter and verse of the passages will be quoted from the English version in this paper.
- ²³ Edward F Hills, *The King James Version Defended* (Des Moines: Christian Research Press, 1984), 88–102.
- ²⁴ *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Septuagint" by S K Soderlund. Blaiklock evaluates the LXX, saying, "... the LXX, besides manifesting those

faults of carelessness, weariness, and ignorance common enough in translation, shows also attempts to correct an existing text which may be well- or ill-founded, deliberate tampering with the story, and a quite unusual freedom in interpolation, improvisation, and modification. It is an uneven translation.” *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. “Septuagint,” by E M Blaiklock. 5:342–7. Francis Turretin claims that the LXX is not authentic, giving several reasons: “(1) It was executed by human study and labor not divinely inspired men; (2) If they wrote under the influence of the Holy Spirit, such a number would have been superfluous; (3) In many instances, it varies from the sources in words and things and has various interpretations and discrepancies, as has been shown by the handlers of this argument; and (4) It is not considered pure now, but greatly corrupted and interpolated” Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 1:128.

²⁵ The OT Hebrew text is from BHS. The OT Greek Text (LXX) is from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta*. The English text for both Testaments is from the KJV.

²⁶ Charles Seet, “Old Testament Poetic Books,” unpublished lecture notes, Far Eastern Bible College, Singapore, 1998, 42.

²⁷ New BDB, 663.

²⁸ TWOT, s.v. “נִצָּחַ,” by Milton C Fisher.

²⁹ Cf. The LXX translates *telos* that means “the last, highest station” in classical Greek. EDNT, s.v. “τέλος” by H Hubner.

³⁰ As this term signifies “eight,” Spurgeon says that it refers it to the coming of Messiah, following the Arabic version which says it is concerning the end of the world, which shall be the eighth day. However, it also is hard to accept this since there is no biblical evidence. Cf. C H Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, 6 vols (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott Limited, 1957 reprinted), 1:141.

³¹ John F Brug, *Psalms*, The People’s Bible (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1989), 1:75.

³² TWOT, s.v. “שְׁמִינִית,” by Herbert Wolf.

³³ Oesterley argues, “All authorities are agreed that the ancient music of the Hebrews was similar in style to that of the *primitive* type of Arab music, which may still be heard in parts of Arabia; in this, quarter-tones as well as semitones are recognized; it follows that they have no octave consisting of eight tones and thirteen semitones; and this must be presumed of ancient Hebrew music. There can, then, be no doubt that this term cannot mean ‘On the octave,’ *ie*, that the musical instruments were to be played, or that the male voices were to sing, an octave lower, as has been maintained.” W O E Oesterley, *The Psalms* (London: SPCK, 1962), 12.

³⁴ Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 1:141.

³⁵ Oesterley, *Psalms*, 12.

³⁶ TWOT, s.v. “זָמַר,” by Herbert Wolf.

³⁷ Oesterley, *Psalms*, 10.

³⁸ New BDB, 510–8.

³⁹ John F Brug, *Psalms*, The People’s Bible (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1989), 76.

⁴⁰ Barnes, *Psalms*, 103.

⁴¹ Geier, cited in William S Plumer, *Psalms* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1867), 174.

- ⁴² Joseph Exell, *The Psalms*, 2 vols, The Biblical Illustrator (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, n.d.) 1:185.
- ⁴³ TWOT, s.v. “יָשַׁע,” by John E Hartley.
- ⁴⁴ The KJV translated it “salvation” (32 times), “safety” (three times), and “saving” (once).
- ⁴⁵ New BDB, 447.
- ⁴⁶ New BDB, 88.
- ⁴⁷ But the NIV translates the promise phrase אֶשְׂמְרֵם בְּיָשָׁע as “I will protect them ...” The NIV understands the phrase in the sense of protection for “the weak” and “the needy.”
- ⁴⁸ WSDNT, 1360.
- ⁴⁹ TWOT, s.v. “יָשַׁע,” by John E Hartley.
- ⁵⁰ According to Gordon, however, “The problem of tracing the occurrences of this root in the OT is complicated by the fact that in Hebrew there are two roots, פָּוַח and פָּוַח, both meaning “to breathe, puff” and in many instance the consonantal skeleton of verbal forms of these two verbs will be indistinguishable.” C H Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, 19: no. 1129 lists “Ugaritic פָּוַח but פָּוַח, cited in TWOT, s.v. “פָּוַח” by Victor P Hamilton.
- ⁵¹ New BDB, 806; TWOT, s.v. “פָּוַח” by Victor P Hamilton.
- ⁵² The KJV translated it as “speak” six times, “puff” twice, “blow” twice, “break” twice, “utter” once, “bring into a snare” once.
- ⁵³ The Lord said, “... And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of brutish men, *and* skilful to destroy” (Ezek 21:31).
- ⁵⁴ Among 15 occurrences, the verb is used in the Qal stem only twice, and all others in the Hiphil stem.
- ⁵⁵ BAGD, 215.
- ⁵⁶ E Kautzsch, ed., *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 2d ed., trans. A E Cowley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1910), 301.
- ⁵⁷ New BDB, 510–8.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. Ronald J Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 2d ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 48–9.
- ⁵⁹ New BDB, 55.
- ⁶⁰ The term אִמְרָה occurs in the OT 37 times, mostly in poetry. It occurs 19 times in Psalm 119 and seven times in other Psalms as collective singular. The KJV translates it as “word” 29 times, as “speech” seven times, and as “commandment” once.
- ⁶¹ BAGD, 476.
- ⁶² WSDNT, 923.
- ⁶³ Cf. The usage of the feminine singular form of the word אִמְרָה with יְהוָה in the OT. In 2 Samuel 22:31 and Psalm 18:30, אִמְרַת־יְהוָה צִרְוּפָה (“the word of the LORD is tried”), and in Psalm 105:19, אִמְרַת יְהוָה צִרְפָּתָהּ (“the word of the LORD tried him”).
- ⁶⁴ New BDB, 372. The term טָהוֹר occurs 94 times in the OT. The KJV reads it as “clean” 50 times, “pure” 40 times, “fair” twice, “purer” once, “variant” once. The adjective is used in three senses; (1) in a material sense of “pure” (of gold in Exod 25:22, 27, 24, 29, 31, 36, 38, 39; 28:14, 22, 36; 30:3; 37:2, 6, 11, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26; 39:15, 25, 30; 1 Chron 28:17; 2 Chron 3:4; 9:7; 28:19; of water in

Ezek 36:25; of incense in Exod 30:35; 37:29; of a lampstand in Exod 31:8; 39:37; Lev 24:4; of the table in Lev 24:6; 2 Chron 13:11, and “clear” (of turban) in Zech 3:5; (2) in a ritual sense of “clean,” of animals in Gen 7:2, 8; 8:20; Lev 14:4; 20:25, Deut 14:11, 20; of place in Lev 4:12; 6:4; 10:14; 11:36; Num 19:6, of persons in Lev 7:19; 13:13, 17, 37, 39, 40, 41; 15:8; Num 5:28, 9:13; 18:11, 13; 19:9, 18, 19; Deut 12:15, 22; 15:22; 1 Sam 20:26, 2 Chron 30:17; Ezra 6:20, and of things in Lev 10:10; 11:37, 47; 14:57; Ezek 22:26; 44:23; Isa 66:20; Mal 1:11; and (3) in an ethical sense of morally “pure” and “clean” in Prov 30:12, Eccle 9:2; Job 14:4; of heart in Ps 51:10 (12); Prov 22:11, of hands in Job 17:9, of eyes in Hab 1:13, of men’s words in Prov 15:26, and of God’s law as object of reverential fear in Ps 19:9 (10). TWOT, s.v. “טהר,” by Edwin Yamauchi.

⁶⁵ Bahr, *Symbol*, 1:284, quoted in F Delitzsch, *Psalms*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d.), 5:197.

⁶⁶ New BDB, 864, TWOT, s.v. “צַרַּר,” by John E Hartley. It occurs 33 times in the OT. The KJV translates it as “try” 11 times, “founder” five times, “goldsmith” five times, “refine” three times, “refiner” twice, “melt” twice, “pure” twice, “purge away” once, “casteth” once, and “finer” once.

⁶⁷ TWOT, s.v. “זָקַק,” by Leon J Wood. It occurs seven times in the OT. The KJV translates it as “refined” three times, “fine” once, “pour” once, “purify” once, and “purge” once.

⁶⁸ Plumer, *Psalms*, 178.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 197.

⁷⁰ Plumer, *Psalms*, 178.

⁷¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 93.

⁷² The KJV translates it as “keep” 283 times, as “observe” 46 times, as “heed” 35 times, as “keeper” 28 times, as “preserve” 21 times, as “beware” nine times, as “mark” eight times, as “watchman” eight times, as “wait” seven times, as “watch” seven times, as “regard” five times, as “save” twice, and miscellaneously nine times.

⁷³ New BDB, 1036.

⁷⁴ TWOT, s.v. “שָׁמַר,” by John E Hartley.

⁷⁵ TWOT, s.v. “יָשַׁע,” by John E Hartley.

⁷⁶ Genesis 2:15.

⁷⁷ Genesis 30:31; in participle: 1 Samuel 17:20.

⁷⁸ 1 Samuel 7:1.

⁷⁹ 2 Samuel 15:16. 16:21; 20:3.

⁸⁰ Exodus 22:6, 9; Numbers 3:8; 1 Samuel 25:31; 2 Kings 22:14, 2 Chronicles 34:22, Zechariah 3:7.

⁸¹ Genesis 4:9; 1 Samuel 26:15; Joshua 10:18; 1 Kings 20:30, Proverbs 6:22, 24; Hosea 12:13; Esther 2:3, 8, 15. In Proverbs 4:6, wisdom is the subject of that “shall preserve thee.” Cf. 6:24; 7:5.

⁸² Such as cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life in Genesis 3:24, or watchmen (Isa 21:11,12; 62:5; Cant 3:3; 5:7; Ps 127:1; Cf. 1 Kgs 14:27; 2 Chron 12:10; Neh 13:22; Eccl 12:3; Jer 35:4.

⁸³ Psalms 34:20; 86:2; 121:3–4, 7.

⁸⁴ Job 2:6, 2 Samuel 18:12. In hostile sense: 2 Samuel 11:16; Job 14:16;

- ⁸⁵ In Psalm 39:1, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle...” In Proverbs 13:1, “He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life ...”
- ⁸⁶ Judges 1:24; 1 Samuel 19:11; Job 10:14; 13:27; 24:15; 33:11; Psalms 56:7; 59:1; 71:10; 130:6; Jeremiah 20:10.
- ⁸⁷ Proverbs 19:8.
- ⁸⁸ In Deuteronomy 11:32 “And ye shall observe to do (all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day).”
- ⁸⁹ Numbers 23:12.
- ⁹⁰ TWOT, s.v. “יָשַׁע,” by John E Hartley.
- ⁹¹ Psalm 130:3, “If thou, LORD shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand.”
- ⁹² In Hosea 4:10, “to take heed to the LORD,” Psalm 31:6, “that regard lying vanities.”
- ⁹³ 2 Samuel 11:16.
- ⁹⁴ Zechariah 11:11; Psalm 59:9.
- ⁹⁵ Amos 1:11.
- ⁹⁶ Malachi 2:7.
- ⁹⁷ Genesis 41:35, 1 Samuel 9:24.
- ⁹⁸ Exodus 22:7.
- ⁹⁹ 1 Samuel 30:23; Jeremiah 31:9, Numbers 6:24; Job 29:2; Psalms 16:2; 121:3, 5, 7; 1 Samuel 2:9; Proverbs 3:26.
- ¹⁰⁰ Genesis 28:15, 20; Exodus 23:20; Psalm 91:11; 121:8; Joshua 24:17.
- ¹⁰¹ Timothy Tow and Jeffrey Khoo, [A Theology for Every Christian: Book 1, Knowing God and His Word](#) (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1998), 43.
- ¹⁰² Exodus 12:17; 23:14; 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1.
- ¹⁰³ Exodus 31:13,14,16; Leviticus 19:3, 30; 26:2; Deuteronomy 5:12; Isaiah 56:2,4,6.
- ¹⁰⁴ Deuteronomy 29:8; 1 Kings 11:11; 2:43; Ezra 17:14.
- ¹⁰⁵ This occurs 120 times in the OT. In Genesis 18:19, Abraham is to command his children “to keep the way of the Lord,” that is, give careful attention to the ways of God. Cf. Exodus 20:5, 6; Leviticus 18:26; Deuteronomy 5:10; 28:16; Judges 2:22; 2 Sam. 22:22; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 20:18; Proverbs 2:20; 8:32; Psalms 18:22; 119:8, 17, 34; Jeremiah 35:18; Ezekiel 11:20; Amos 2:4.
- ¹⁰⁶ The expression is used to a sacred occupation such as the priesthood (Num 3:10; 18:7; 2 Chron 5:11).
- ¹⁰⁷ Leviticus 8:35; Numbers 1:53. It occurs 32 times.
- ¹⁰⁸ Hosea 12:6; Isaiah 56:1
- ¹⁰⁹ Proverbs 4:4; 5:2; 7:1,2.
- ¹¹⁰ In Psalm 31:7, it is used in bad sense.
- ¹¹¹ Ezekiel 37:24.
- ¹¹² “Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart” (Prov 4:21).
- ¹¹³ Tow and Khoo, [Knowing God and His Word](#), 43.
- ¹¹⁴ Since Hebrew has no vowels, the Jews had the consonantal text. The Masoretes introduced the vowel-points, and fixed accents to ensure correct pronunciation. They explained the meaning of words where ambiguity existed,

supplied marginal readings to remove obscurity, and marked intended pauses which often affect the meaning. For more information about the Masoretes, see Malcom H Watts, *The Lord Gave the Word: A Study in the History of the Biblical Text* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, n.d.), go to <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/>.

¹¹⁵ The consonantal text is called *kethiv*, and the Masoretic addition of vowel points and marginal consonants is called *Qere*. At certain places the Masoretes put other readings that differed from the consonantal text. Since the consonantal text was “considered sacred and inviolable, the Masoretes added the traditional reading in the margin, and placed the vowels of the traditional reading, together with a mark calling attention to the note, on the consonantal text.” William Sanford Lasor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1988), 25.

¹¹⁶ ZPED, s.v. “Text and Manuscripts of the Old Testament,” by A A MacRae, 5:689.

¹¹⁷ Hills, *King James Version Defended*, 88–102.

¹¹⁸ Benjamin C Wilkinson, “Our Authorized Bible Vindicated,” in *Which Bible?* ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1971), 187, 263.

¹¹⁹ Matthew 5:18; 22:42–45; John 10:34–36.

¹²⁰ Edward F Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 3d ed. (Des Moines: The Christian Research Press, 1991), 12–3.

¹²¹ William Sanford Lasor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1988), 225.

¹²² Cf. Doug Kutilek, “A Careful Investigation of Psalm 12:6,7,” *The Biblical Evangelist*, October 1983.

¹²³ *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 135.o.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ In Job 1:14, חָרְשֹׁת וְחֹאֲתָנוֹת רְעוֹת עַל־יְדֵיהֶם (*The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them*). Here, the suffix of יְדֵיהֶם is masculine plural, which is used for feminine antecedent רְעוֹת (feminine plural). Job 39:3, תִּכְרַעְנָה וְלִדְיָהֶן תִּפְלַחְנָה חֲבִלֵיהֶם תִּשְׁלַחְנָה (*They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows*). Here חֲבִלֵיהֶם (masculine plural) is used in parallel with וְלִדְיָהֶן (feminine plural). See also Job 42:15; Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6; Proverb 6:21.

¹²⁶ Lackey, quoted in *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity*, s.v. “Preservation—Bible” by David W Cloud.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ TWOT, s.v. “נָצַר,” by Walter C Kaiser.

¹²⁹ The KJV translates with “keep” 38 times, “preserve” 13 times, “watchmen” 3 times, “besieged” twice, “keeper” once, “monuments” once, “observe” once, “preserver” once, “subtil” once, “hidden things” once, “watchers” once.

¹³⁰ New BDB, 665.

¹³¹ A vineyard (Job 27:18; Isa 27:3); a fig tree (Prov 27:18); fortification (Nah 2:2); Watchman (2 Kgs 17:9; 18:8; Jer 31:6).

¹³² Cf. the Lord Himself regarded as “preserver” in Job 7:20.

¹³³ Proverbs 13:3; Psalm 141:3.

¹³⁴ Psalm 34:14.

- ¹³⁵ Proverbs 16:17.
- ¹³⁶ Proverbs 4:23.
- ¹³⁷ Psalms 25:20; 40:12; Proverbs 24:12.
- ¹³⁸ Psalm 61:8.
- ¹³⁹ Isaiah 26:3.
- ¹⁴⁰ Deuteronomy 32:10; Isaiah 42:6; 49:8.
- ¹⁴¹ Psalm 31:24; Proverbs 2:8.
- ¹⁴² Proverbs 22:12.
- ¹⁴³ Psalm 32:7.
- ¹⁴⁴ Psalm 64:2.
- ¹⁴⁵ Psalm 140:2, 5.
- ¹⁴⁶ Wisdom keeps those who do not forsake her (Prov 4:6).
- ¹⁴⁷ Proverbs 2:11.
- ¹⁴⁸ Proverbs 13:6.
- ¹⁴⁹ Deuteronomy 34:7.
- ¹⁵⁰ Deuteronomy 33:9; Psalm 25:10.
- ¹⁵¹ Psalms 78:7; 105:45; 119:2, 22, 33, 34, 56, 69, 100, 115, 129, 145.
- ¹⁵² Proverbs 6:20; 28:7.
- ¹⁵³ Proverbs 3:1; 21; 4:13; 5:2.
- ¹⁵⁴ In Isaiah 48:6 it refers to hidden things previously not revealed by God.
- ¹⁵⁵ “The rebellious Israel spends her night remaining among the graves, and lodging in the monuments with the idols in order to receive dreams about the future” (Isa 65:4).
- ¹⁵⁶ “A harlot with the secret, crafty mindedness of a seductress, or wily minded met a young man void of understanding” (Prov 7:10).
- ¹⁵⁷ Isaiah 1:8; Jeremiah 4:16; Ezekiel 6:12.
- ¹⁵⁸ In the pronominal suffixes of the verbs, for the third person masculine singular, *-ennu*, and *-ehu* are used, and for the first person plural *-ennu* is used. Thomas O Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 271.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 133.
- ¹⁶⁰ Nathan R Bunce and Mark A Price, “An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Grammar Correlated With the Grammars of Gesenius/Kautzsch/Cowley and Waltke/O’Connor,” unpublished ThM thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1991, 157. Cf. *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 20.a.
- ¹⁶¹ In the third person masculine, *-ahu*, “by contraction of *a* and *u* after the rejection of the weak ה, frequently gives rise to *o*.” Ibid., 58.a.
- ¹⁶² This is called the *Nun energicum*. Ibid., 58.i.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 58.i.
- ¹⁶⁴ In Psalm 8:4 תִּפְקֹדֶנּוּ (“thou visitest him”), in Psalm 32:10, חֲסֹד יְסֻבֵּבֶנּוּ (“mercy shall compass him about”). Cf. Exodus 21:29; Jeremiah 49:19; Deuteronomy 30:12; Proverbs 18:14. The dagesh forte indicates the strengthening of a consonant. *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, 20.a.
- ¹⁶⁵ Cf. Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 31.7.2a.
- ¹⁶⁶ The LXX, Coverdale Bible 1535, and The Matthew Bible 1537 also read it “us.”
- ¹⁶⁷ The Geneva Bible also reads it as “him.”
- ¹⁶⁸ Lasor, *Handbook of Biblical Hebrew*, 225.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Gesenius Hebrew Grammar*, 58.i.

- ¹⁷⁰ While the **תִּצְרְנוּ** in verse 6 is feminine plural, the suffix of the word is the masculine singular form with the energetic *nun*.
- ¹⁷¹ See discussion on the word **תִּשְׁמְרֶם**.
- ¹⁷² Bunce and Price, "Biblical Hebrew Grammar," 292.
- ¹⁷³ TWOT, s.v. "שָׁמַר," Hartley.
- ¹⁷⁴ Cf. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 7.
- ¹⁷⁵ Khoo, "The KJV–NIV Debate," 58.
- ¹⁷⁶ D A Waite, *Foes of the King James Bible Refuted* (Collingswood: Bible For Today Press, 1997), 38, 40.
- ¹⁷⁷ Seet, *Poetic Books*, 20.
- ¹⁷⁸ TWOT, s.v. "זָה," by Herbert Wolf.
- ¹⁷⁹ Cf. Waltke and O'Connor argue that the term is used in determinative, reading this phrase "from the generation, the one of everlasting (ie, the everlasting generation)." See *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 337.
- ¹⁸⁰ Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 55.
- ¹⁸¹ More than 20 times it is used to indicate past time, pointing to something that has occurred long ago (cf. Deut 32:7; Job 22:15; Prov 22:28; 23:10). It rarely if ever refers to a limitless past (Cf. Ps 73:12; Eccl 3:11). New BDB, 761. It is, however, used more than 300 times to refer to indefinite continuance into the very distant future. TWOT, s.v. "עוֹלָם," by Allan A MacRae.
- ¹⁸² EDNT, s.v. "αἰών," by T Holtz.
- ¹⁸³ Williams, *Psalms 1–72*, 107. David W Cloud, *For Love of the Bible* (Ontario: Way of Life Literature, 1995), 48–50. William P Grady, *Final Authority* (Schereville: Grady Publication, 1993), 7.
- ¹⁸⁴ D A Waite, *Defending the King James Bible: A Fourfold Superiority* (Collingswood: Bible For Today, 1992), 6–7.
- ¹⁸⁵ David Pitman, quoted in *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity*, s.v. "Preservation—Bible" by David W Cloud.
- ¹⁸⁶ Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 76.
- ¹⁸⁷ Anderson, *Psalms*, 127.
- ¹⁸⁸ Matthew Poole, *Psalms*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990), 2:18.
- ¹⁸⁹ Cited in Plumer, *Psalms*, 178.
- ¹⁹⁰ Cf. *The Amplified Bible*.
- ¹⁹¹ All are written in the Qal stem: Seven times in Proverbs, four times in Psalms, and once in Deuteronomy.
- ¹⁹² In Deuteronomy 33:9, **וְכִי שָׁמְרוּ אֱמֻנָתְךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ יִנְצְרוּ** ("for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant"), in Psalm 105:45, **בְּעִבּוֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ** ("That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws"), and in Proverbs 2:8, **לִנְצֹר אֲרָחוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְדֶרֶךְ חֲסִידוֹ יִשְׁמֹר** ("He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints").
- ¹⁹³ In Proverbs 5:2, **לְשֹׁמֵר מִזְמוֹת וְדַעַת שְׁפָתֶיךָ יִנְצְרוּ** ("That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge").
- ¹⁹⁴ In Proverbs 13:3, **נֹצֵר פִּי שְׁמֵר נַפְשׁוֹ פֶּשֶׁק שְׁפָתָיו מַחֲתָה־לוֹ** ("He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction"), and in Proverbs 27:18, **נֹצֵר תְּאֵנָה יֹאכַל פְּרִיָּהּ וְשֹׁמֵר אֲדָנָיו יִכָּבֵד** ("Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured").

- ¹⁹⁵ In Psalm 119:34, וְאֶשְׁמְרֶנָּה וְאֶצְרֶנָּה תּוֹרַתְךָ (“...and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it ...”), and in Proverbs 2:11, מְזִמָּה תִשְׁמֹר עָלֶיךָ תְּבוּנָה (“Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee”).
- ¹⁹⁶ In Proverbs 4:6, וְתִשְׁמְרֶנָּה אֶהְבֶּה וְתִצְרֶנָּה (“and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee”), and in Psalm 12:7.
- ¹⁹⁷ In Psalm 140:4–5, שְׁמֹרְנִי... תִּנְצְרֶנִּי (“Keep me ... preserve me”).
- ¹⁹⁸ Deuteronomy 33:9; Psalm 105:45; Proverbs 2:8; 5:2; 13:3; 16:17; 27:18.
- ¹⁹⁹ Psalm 140:4; Proverbs 4:6.
- ²⁰⁰ Psalm 119:34; Proverbs 2:11.
- ²⁰¹ Jack Moorman, “Psalm 12:6,7 and the Bible Preservation,” *Foundation*, Mar–Apr 1994, go to <http://www.fundamentalbiblechurch.org/Foundation/fbcpresv.htm>.
- ²⁰² “They **speak** vanity ..., with flattering **lips** and with a double heart do they **speak**, The Lord shall cut off all flattering **lips**, and the **tongue**, that **speake**th proud things, Who have **said**, With our **tongue** will we prevail; and our **lips** are our own (vv 2–4)” (emphasis added).
- ²⁰³ Brug, *Psalms*, 76; Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, 1.147; *The Chokmah Commentary: Psalm I*, ed. Kang Byoung Do (Seoul: The Christian Wisdom Publishing Company, 1992), 117–8.
- ²⁰⁴ Doug Kutilek, “A Careful Investigation of Psalm 12:6,7,” *The Biblical Evangelist*, October 1983. 9; Edward Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture,” in *The Bible Version Debates: the Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary*, (Minneapolis: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997), 90–2.
- ²⁰⁵ John Calvin, *Psalms I*, trans. James Anderson, (Grand Rapids: Wm B Eerdmans, 1973), 178–9.
- ²⁰⁶ Cf. John T McNeil, ed., *Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), I.viii.9–10.
- ²⁰⁷ Barnes, *Psalms*, 108; Rawlinson, *Psalms*, 77–8.
- ²⁰⁸ William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman, gen eds., *The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 75.
- ²⁰⁹ Dahood, *Psalms*, 75.
- ²¹⁰ Horace D Hummel, “Enclitic *Mem* in Early Northwest Semitic,” *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957), 103. He tries to prove citing the LXX and the Vulgate. However, the Aramaic Targum presupposes תִּשְׁמְרֶנָּה... תִּצְרֶנָּה. Quoted in Weiss Raphael, “On ligatures in the Hebrew Bible (*m=nw*),” *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 72 (1963): 192.
- ²¹¹ According to Waltke and O’Connor, the enclitic *mem* is common in poetry and most of it is used in the middle of the construct chain. “The archaic grammatical format called the enclitic *mem* ... was generally reinterpreted by later scribes as a plural marker. ... [So] the *mem* became confounded with other common morphemes formed with *mem* such as the masculine plural suffix *-im*, the pronominal suffix *-am*, the inseparable preposition *min*, etc. ... In Hebrew, it sometimes has an emphatic force, while at other times, it serves as a morpheme for indetermination. It is seen in connection with almost every part of speech, including verbs, nouns, pronominal suffixes, adverbs, etc.” Waltke and O’Connor, *Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 1.6.2e and 9.8.
- ²¹² Lasor, *Biblical Hebrew*, 225.
- ²¹³ See Hebrew pointing by Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 197.

²¹⁴ Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms*, 13. Cited in Weiss Raphael, “On ligatures in the Hebrew Bible (*m=nw*),” *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, 72 (1963): 192. Cf. Psalm 91:12, עַל־כַּפֵּיָם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ (“They shall bear thee up in their hands”), and Deuteronomy 32:10, יִסְבֶּנְהוּ יְבוֹנֶנְהוּ יִצְרֶנְהוּ (“he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him”).

²¹⁵ He claims that “the existence of such ligatures accounts for a number of cases in the text of the Hebrew Bible in which an original *nun* + *waw* (נו) at the end of a word is represented by a closed *mem* (ם) or in which, on the contrary, the closed *mem* (ם) which the context requires is represented by *nun* + *waw* (נו); for the joining of *nun* and *waw* in the square script results in a closed *mem*, or something very much like it. A copyist might therefore easily take a closed *mem* in his archetype for a combination of *nun* and *waw*, or a ligature of *nun* and *waw* for a closed *mem*.” Weiss Raphael, “On ligatures in the Hebrew Bible (*m=nw*),” *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 72 (1963): 188, 192.

²¹⁶ The Hebrew word *targum* denotes an Aramaic translation or paraphrase of some part of the OT. The Targums offer an important witness to the OT text, comparable in value with the LXX and Peshitta, though the targums are not of any great value for fixing the text. Targums are extant for every book except Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel. The evidence is much more reliable in literal than in paraphrastic targumic material, for obvious reasons. NBD, s.v. “Targums,” by D F Payne. ZPEB, s.v. “Targums,” by A A MacRae. 5:597. John Owen said, that the targums “do corrupt the Bible most wretchedly.” See his *Biblical Theology* (Morgan: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1994), 553.

²¹⁷ James R White claims that verse 7 “does not refer back to ‘the words of the LORD’ in verse 6, but instead back to those of verse 5 of whom the LORD says, ‘I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns’ (NKJV).” James R White, *The King James Only Controversy* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1995), 243–4.

²¹⁸ The Hebrew verb יִשְׁשִׁית is in the imperfect tense, with Qal stem and common person singular form.

²¹⁹ Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 197.

²²⁰ Lackey, quoted in *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*, s.v. “Preservation—Bible” by David W Cloud.

²²¹ Mickey P Carter, *Things That are Different are Not the Same* (Haines City: Landmark Baptist Press, 1993), 14.

²²² David Cloud, “Inspiration is Perfect but Preservation is General,” *Myths About The King James Bible* (Oak Harbor: Way of Life Literature, 1993), 13.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 12.