



*Dr. Chester W. Kulus*

Dr. Chester W. Kulus is the pastor of the Calvary Independent Baptist Churches of Lebanon, Plymouth, and Tilton, NH, and he is also an adjunct professor at Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary in Newington, CT. He graduated from Emmanuel in 2003 with a Doctorate of Ministry and in 2006 with a Doctorate of Theology. For more biographical information, see page 456.

*One Tittle Shall In No Wise Pass* presents a Biblical case for why God inspired the vowels of the Old Testament. Shockingly, many Bible scholars do not believe that the Old Testament vowels are inspired. What does this mean to you? If the vowels are not inspired, then this opens the door for scholars to substitute their own vowels and arrive at alternate words. This would have the affect of “making the word of God of none effect” (Mark 7:6) as in many cases a person would not be able to decide on the exact wording of thousands of verses. For example, in Genesis 49:10 should the middle of the verse read, “Until Shiloh come,” or, “Until tribute comes to him”? Without inspired vowels it is impossible to determine the correct wording. This is exactly where the devil would want the Word of God as he was the one who first said, “Yea, hath God said?” (Genesis 3:1). The inspiration of the vowels is a vital issue and those who love the Words of God ought to take their stand with Jesus Who declared that “one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” (Matthew 5:18).

Dr. Kulus is also the author of the book, *Those So-Called Errors*, which debunks the liberal, new evangelical, and fundamentalist myth that you should not hear, receive, and believe all the numbers of Scripture.

**Calvary Independent Baptist Church**

(603) 632-7408 | [www.cibcnh.org](http://www.cibcnh.org)

Published: 2009

ISBN: 978-0-9820608-7-2

Cover: Calvary Design (717) 525-1080

Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press

Old Paths Publications



One Tittle Shall in No Wise Pass

# One Tittle Shall in No Wise Pass

**DESTROYING THE SCHOLARLY MYTH  
THAT GOD DID NOT INSPIRE THE  
VOWELS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**Dr. Chester W. Kulus**

**ONE TITLE SHALL IN NO WISE PASS:**

Destroying the Scholarly Myth  
that God Did Not Inspire  
the Vowels of the Old Testament

*by Dr. Chester W. Kulus*

Copyright ©2009 by Chester W. Kulus  
All rights reserved  
Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Control Number: 200690737  
REL006410: Religion: Biblical Reference – Language Study  
REL006210: Religion: Biblical Studies – Old Testament  
REL006270 Religion: Bibles – Hebrew

**ISBN 978-0-9820608-7-2**

Address all inquiries to:  
THE OLD PATHS PUBLICATIONS, Inc.  
142 Gold Flume Way  
Cleveland, Georgia, U.S.A.

Web: [www.theoldpathspublications.com](http://www.theoldpathspublications.com)  
E-mail: [TOP@theoldpathspublications.com](mailto:TOP@theoldpathspublications.com)

Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press  
296 New Britain Avenue  
Newington, Connecticut 06111

SAMPLE

PAGES

***About the cover:*** The background of the cover is the pointed and accented Hebrew Text from Jeremiah 36:1-7, wherein God told Jeremiah to write the words that He had spoken.

## TO THE READER

I thank you for purchasing this book. It is my desire that it will aid in your understanding of God's Words. If you should find any typographical errors, I would appreciate it if you would bring them to my attention.

This book sets forth the complete reliability and trustworthiness of the Words of God. The Bible is so trustworthy that you can trust your soul's destiny to what the Scriptures teach. Dear Reader, have you trusted what the Bible teaches about salvation? Would you please consider the following points from the Word of God?

1. The Bible says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). According to the Word of God, you have sinned.
2. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin *is* death" (Romans 6:23a). Your sin results in death: physical death, spiritual death, and the second death. Concerning the second death, the Bible says, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14,15). Your sin will ultimately take you to the lake of fire.
3. The Bible says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Jesus died for your sins. As He died on the cross, Jesus shed His blood. He was then buried. And on the third day, He rose again. He is the only One ever to have done these things; therefore, He is the only One Who can save you. The Bible says of Jesus, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

4. The Bible says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9). You cannot possibly save yourself. No amount of good works, sacraments, or prayers to Mary will save your lost soul from hell and the second death. Only Jesus can save you. You must put all of your faith and trust in Him.
5. The Bible says, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19a). Would you repent and receive Christ as your Saviour? The Bible says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). Pray to Him and ask Him to save you.

If you have received Christ as your Saviour or would like to find out more about this all-important decision, please contact me.

*Chet Kulus  
873 NH Rt 4A  
Enfield, NH 03748  
chetkulus@netzero.net  
January, 2009*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank various ones who assisted in this project. First, I thank the Lord Jesus Christ for (1) saving me; (2) giving me the Bible, a wonderful Book which captivates my mind; and (3) giving me good health over the bulk of this work. “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 7:12).

I thank both Pastor Richard Anderson and Dr. Thomas Strouse for encouraging me in this project. Both of these men also thoroughly proofread the text when it was in its dissertation format and provided valuable insights on its content. Also, I thank Calvary Independent Baptist Church in Lebanon, NH for their financial and spiritual support during this endeavor. Furthermore, I thank the Calvary Independent Baptist Churches of Tilton and Plymouth, NH for their encouragement and enthusiasm in getting this book into print.

And I thank various others: (1) David Bohn for his moral and financial support for this work; (2) Tom Kennedy for the use of some of his books as well as for gathering information from the internet; (3) Marjorie Carr and the rest of the staff at the Enfield Public Library for obtaining books through inter-library loan; (4) Dartmouth College Rauner Rare Book Collection for the use of *A New Greek and English and English and Greek Lexicon with An Appendix, Explanatory of Scientific Terms, &c.* by George Dunbar and *The Greek Lexicon of Schrevelius Translated into English with Many Additions* by Schrevelius; (5) Caspari Library of the University of Pennsylvania for the use of *Thesaurus Grammaticus Linguae Sanctae Hebraeae* by John Buxtorf; (6) Dr. Donald Waite for taking time out of his busy schedule to consult with me on several matters; (7) my wife, Nancy, for her prayers and support; (8) my son, Chester Haddon Kulus, for his work on

the cover; (9) Mike Rucker for proofreading the entire document, as well as assisting on computer matters; and (10) those past and present who have defended or are defending the inspiration of the vowels of the Traditional Hebrew Old Testament Text.

SAMPLE

PAGES

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>TO THE READER.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PRELIMINARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>What Is a Tittle?.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Why Write on the Tittle?.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Do Not Old Testament Words Have Vowels? .....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Who Denies that Old Testament Words Have Vowels and Why Do They</i> <i>Deny It?.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>PROBLEM .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Autographa Position .....</i>	<i>13</i>
The Position .....	13
The Proponents .....	13
Simon ben-Jochai or Moses de Leon – 120 AD or 13 <sup>th</sup> century.....	14
Levi ben-Joseph – 11 <sup>th</sup> century or earlier.....	16
Moses the Punctuator – 13 <sup>th</sup> century and 1524-1525.....	17
David Kimḥi – 13 <sup>th</sup> century and 1540, 1545, 1550.....	20
Johannes Isaac Levita – 1559.....	20
Antoine Rudolphe Chevalier – 1560.....	21
Azariah De’ Rossi – 1574-1575.....	22
William Fulke – 1583 .....	23
Guilielmus Eyrius – 1607 .....	24
Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. – 1609.....	25
Valentin Schindler – 1612 .....	26
Amandus Polanus Von Polandsdorf – 1617.....	26
Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. – 1620.....	27
John Weemes – 1623 and 1630.....	28
John Lightfoot – 1629.....	29
Johannes Buxtorf, Jr. – 1648.....	30
Gisbert Voetius – 1648–1699 .....	30
James Ussher – 1652.....	31
John Owen – 1659 .....	32

Matthias Wasmuth – 1664, 1669 .....	32
Joseph Cooper – 1673 .....	33
Formula Consensus Helvetica – 1675 .....	33
Francois Turretin - 1696 .....	34
Samuel Clark –1698, 1699.....	35
Johann Gottlob Carpzov – 1721, 1723.....	36
Pierre Guarin – 1724.....	36
Peter Whitfield - 1748.....	37
John Gill – 1767.....	37
James Robertson – 1770 .....	39
Adam Benedict Spitzner – 1791 .....	41
John Moncrieff - 1833 .....	41
George Sayles Bishop - 1919.....	42
Kent Brandenburg – 2003.....	43
The Author – 2003.....	43
Gary Webb – 2003.....	43
Thomas Strouse – 2005.....	44
Various Others .....	45
Conclusion .....	46
The Problems .....	47
Historical Problems.....	47
Difficulty in Writing Points .....	48
Spelling Variations between the Hebrew and Other Languages .....	48
Unpointed Documents .....	51
Newspapers .....	51
Dead Sea Scrolls.....	52
Synagogue Scrolls .....	53
Other Languages and Inscriptions .....	53
Conclusion.....	54
Supposed Silence about the Points.....	54
Story about Joab .....	56
Vowel Point Names Are not in the Hebrew Language .....	57
Accents .....	58
Kethib / Keri .....	60
Matres Lectionis .....	61
Biblical Problems.....	63
Spelling of David's Name.....	63
New Testament Spelling of Old Testament Names .....	65
Matthew 5:18.....	69
Acts 15:17.....	69
Hebrews 11:21 .....	70
Consonants with No Vowels.....	72
Conclusion .....	74
Summary .....	74
<i>Accommodation Position</i> .....	75
The Position .....	76
The Proponents .....	77
Elias Levita – 1538 .....	77

John Calvin – 1550 .....	78
Louis Cappellus – 1624 .....	79
Brian Walton – 1657 and 1659 .....	80
Homer A. Kent – 1972.....	81
Randy Jaeggli and the Coalition – 1998 .....	82
Larry Oats – 2003 .....	83
David Sorenson – 2004.....	84
The Problems .....	85
Relying on Oral Tradition.....	85
Adding to the Words of God.....	86
Neglecting Written Words .....	87
Genesis 22:16 .....	88
Exodus 24:4 .....	88
Exodus 34:27 .....	89
Deuteronomy 11:18-20.....	89
Deuteronomy 27:8 .....	89
Judges 12:6 .....	90
Nehemiah 8:8.....	90
Jeremiah 36:1,2.....	90
Habakkuk 2:2.....	90
Matthew 22:31.....	90
I Corinthians 9:10 .....	91
II Timothy 3:16,17.....	91
II Peter 1:21 .....	91
Summary.....	92
Conclusion .....	92
Summary.....	92
<i>Non-Authoritative Position .....</i>	<i>93</i>
The Position .....	93
The Proponents .....	94
Natronai II ben-Hilai – 9 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	94
Louis Cappellus – 1650 .....	94
Albert Barnes – 1832 .....	96
Most Modern-Day Scholars .....	96
The Problems .....	97
Psalm 12:6,7 .....	97
Psalm 19:7 .....	97
Psalm 93:5 .....	98
Psalm 111:7 .....	98
Psalm 119:89 .....	98
Psalm 119:105 .....	98
Psalm 119:138 .....	98
Psalm 119:152 .....	99
Psalm 119:160 .....	99
Psalm 138:2 .....	99
Proverbs 6:23 .....	99
Proverbs 22:20,21 .....	100
Isaiah 30:8.....	100

Isaiah 40:8.....	100
Matthew 4:4.....	100
Matthew 24:35.....	100
Luke 16:17.....	101
John 10:35.....	101
Acts 7:38.....	101
Romans 9:29.....	101
II Timothy 3:16,17.....	102
I Peter 1:23-25.....	102
II Peter 1:19.....	102
II Peter 3:2.....	102
Conclusion.....	103
Summary.....	103
PREVIEW.....	104
<b>CHAPTER TWO – THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY AUTHORITY.....</b>	<b>113</b>
DELINEATION OF THE DOCTRINE.....	115
<i>Scripture Is the Authority for Salvation.....</i>	<i>115</i>
Romans 10:17.....	115
II Timothy 3:15.....	116
I Peter 1:23-25.....	117
Conclusion.....	118
<i>Scripture Is the Authority for Judging.....</i>	<i>118</i>
Genesis 2:17.....	118
Exodus 5:1.....	119
Leviticus 10:1,2.....	120
Deuteronomy 4:1; 7:11; 27:26.....	120
I Samuel 15:3,22.....	121
Isaiah 8:20.....	121
John 5:39.....	122
John 12:48.....	123
Acts 17:11.....	123
Hebrews 8:5.....	124
Saith the Lord.....	125
Conclusion.....	126
<i>Scripture Is the Authority for Local Churches.....</i>	<i>127</i>
New Testament Scripture Is for Local Churches.....	127
Matthew 28:20.....	128
I Corinthians 14:37.....	129
I Timothy 3:14,15.....	130
II Peter 3:2.....	131
Jude 3.....	132
Conclusion.....	133
Old Testament Scripture Is for Local Churches.....	134
Acts 7:38.....	134
Romans 15:4.....	135
I Corinthians 10:11.....	135

Conclusion .....	136
All of Word of God Is for Local Churches.....	136
II Timothy 3:16,17.....	137
II Timothy 4:2.....	137
Conclusion .....	138
Local Churches Must Reject False Authorities .....	138
Colossians 2:8.....	139
Titus 1:14.....	141
Conclusion .....	143
Summary .....	143
<i>Scripture Is the Authority for Jesus' Life</i> .....	143
Positively .....	144
Psalm 138:2 .....	144
Matthew 2:23 .....	144
Matthew 4:4,7,10 .....	145
Matthew 4:12-15.....	146
Matthew 5:17.....	146
Matthew 8:16,17.....	146
Matthew 12:15-21.....	147
Matthew 13:34,35.....	147
Matthew 21:1-5.....	147
Matthew 26:53,54.....	148
Luke 22:37.....	148
Luke 24:44.....	149
John 13:18.....	149
John 15:25.....	150
John 19:28.....	150
Hebrews 10:7.....	150
Conclusion .....	151
Negatively .....	151
Matthew 12:1-8 (Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5).....	152
Matthew 12:9-13 (Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11).....	154
Matthew 15:1-6 (Mark 7:1-9) .....	156
Luke 11:37,38.....	158
Luke 13:10-17.....	158
Luke 14:1-6.....	159
John 5:5-12,16,18; 7:22,23 .....	159
John 9:14-16.....	160
Conclusion .....	161
<i>Scripture Is the Authority for All of Faith and Practice</i> .....	162
Scripture.....	162
Inspiration.....	163
Profitable.....	163
Purpose .....	165
Conclusion .....	166
Summary .....	166
DEVIATION FROM THE DOCTRINE.....	169
<i>In Non-Baptist Groups</i> .....	169

Eastern Orthodox .....	169
Catholics .....	170
Lutherans .....	171
Others.....	171
Conclusion .....	171
<i>Amongst Fundamentalist Baptists.....</i>	<i>172</i>
In the Matter of Preservation.....	172
In the Matter of the Text .....	174
In the Matter of the Vowel Points .....	178
Proponents .....	178
Problems .....	179
Reliance on Extra-Biblical Authority .....	179
Reliance on Oral Tradition .....	180
Reliance on Additions to the Bible .....	181
Reliance on Fables.....	182
Conclusion.....	183
Summary.....	183
CONCLUSION.....	184
<b>CHAPTER THREE – UNCERTAINTY.....</b>	<b>187</b>
THE COMMENTS OF THE COMMENTATORS .....	189
<i>Genesis 10:6 .....</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>Genesis 47:31 .....</i>	<i>190</i>
<i>Genesis 49:10 .....</i>	<i>190</i>
<i>Exodus 2:25 .....</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>Leviticus 24:11.....</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>Deuteronomy 33:27 .....</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>Joshua 4:24.....</i>	<i>192</i>
<i>I Samuel 1:7.....</i>	<i>192</i>
<i>I Samuel 18:11.....</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>I Samuel 20:14,15 .....</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>I Samuel 20:17.....</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>II Samuel 24:9.....</i>	<i>194</i>
<i>I Kings 13:12 .....</i>	<i>194</i>
<i>I Kings 17:1 .....</i>	<i>195</i>
<i>I Kings 17:4 .....</i>	<i>195</i>
<i>I Kings 20:29 .....</i>	<i>196</i>
<i>I Kings 20:30 .....</i>	<i>197</i>
<i>I Chronicles 4:10 .....</i>	<i>197</i>
<i>I Chronicles 7:4 .....</i>	<i>197</i>
<i>II Chronicles 17:14-18.....</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>Ezra 8:26.....</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>Job 3:5 .....</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>Job 5:15 .....</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>Job 6:18 .....</i>	<i>200</i>

<i>Job 15:23</i> .....	200
<i>Job 21:23</i> .....	200
<i>Job 21:24</i> .....	200
<i>Job 24:12</i> .....	201
<i>Job 27:19</i> .....	201
<i>Job 31:18</i> .....	202
<i>Job 36:33</i> .....	202
<i>Job 37:23</i> .....	202
<i>Job 39:16</i> .....	202
<i>Psalms 2:9</i> .....	203
<i>Psalms 7:11</i> .....	203
<i>Psalms 29:9</i> .....	204
<i>Psalms 33:7</i> .....	204
<i>Psalms 42:2</i> .....	204
<i>Psalms 52:5</i> .....	204
<i>Psalms 58:1</i> .....	205
<i>Psalms 59:10</i> .....	205
<i>Psalms 60:8</i> .....	205
<i>Psalms 69:22</i> .....	206
<i>Psalms 109:17</i> .....	206
<i>Psalms 110:3</i> .....	206
<i>Psalms 119:118</i> .....	207
<i>Psalms 147:17</i> .....	207
<i>Proverbs 1:7</i> .....	207
<i>Proverbs 6:24</i> .....	208
<i>Proverbs 10:4</i> .....	208
<i>Proverbs 11:23</i> .....	208
<i>Proverbs 12:19</i> .....	208
<i>Proverbs 14:1</i> .....	208
<i>Proverbs 21:4</i> .....	209
<i>Proverbs 23:7</i> .....	209
<i>Proverbs 25:27</i> .....	209
<i>Proverbs 26:23</i> .....	209
<i>Proverbs 29:14</i> .....	210
<i>Proverbs 30:1</i> .....	210
<i>Proverbs 30:1 &amp; 31:1</i> .....	210
<i>Ecclesiastes 3:21</i> .....	211
<i>Song of Solomon 1:2</i> .....	211
<i>Song of Solomon 7:9</i> .....	212
<i>Isaiah 1:2</i> .....	212
<i>Isaiah 1:8</i> .....	212
<i>Isaiah 16:4</i> .....	212
<i>Isaiah 19:10</i> .....	213

<i>Isaiah 21:13</i> .....	213
<i>Isaiah 27:7</i> .....	214
<i>Isaiah 30:8</i> .....	214
<i>Isaiah 40:6</i> .....	214
<i>Isaiah 62:5</i> .....	215
<i>Jeremiah 2:16</i> .....	216
<i>Jeremiah 8:13</i> .....	216
<i>Jeremiah 10:18</i> .....	216
<i>Jeremiah 15:19</i> .....	216
<i>Jeremiah 23:17</i> .....	217
<i>Jeremiah 25:24</i> .....	217
<i>Jeremiah 48:4</i> .....	217
<i>Jeremiah 48:15</i> .....	218
<i>Jeremiah 48:18</i> .....	218
<i>Jeremiah 49:1</i> .....	219
<i>Jeremiah 50:38</i> .....	219
<i>Jeremiah 51:3</i> .....	219
<i>Ezekiel 8:2</i> .....	220
<i>Ezekiel 16:30</i> .....	220
<i>Ezekiel 23:4</i> .....	220
<i>Ezekiel 31:14</i> .....	220
<i>Ezekiel 34:3</i> .....	221
<i>Ezekiel 36:5</i> .....	221
<i>Ezekiel 39:26</i> .....	222
<i>Daniel 7:4</i> .....	222
<i>Daniel 9:27</i> .....	222
<i>Daniel 11:6</i> .....	223
<i>Hosea 13:7</i> .....	223
<i>Joel 1:18,19</i> .....	224
<i>Obadiah 3</i> .....	224
<i>Micah 2:7</i> .....	224
<i>Micah 6:9</i> .....	224
<i>Micah 6:11</i> .....	225
<i>Nahum 3:8</i> .....	225
<i>Habakkuk 1:8</i> .....	225
<i>Zephaniah 3:8</i> .....	226
<i>Haggai 1:11</i> .....	226
<i>Zechariah 9:8</i> .....	226
<i>Malachi 2:3</i> .....	226
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	227
THE COMMENTS OF THE AUTHOR .....	228
<i>Uncertainty</i> .....	228
<i>Ambiguity</i> .....	229

<i>Malignancy</i> .....	229
Permeates .....	230
Perpetuates .....	230
To Other Verses .....	230
LORD .....	230
Thousand .....	231
Milk or Fat .....	232
Summary .....	233
To Other Verbs .....	233
To Consonants .....	237
To Translations .....	238
Summary .....	238
<i>Rationalism</i> .....	239
Concerning Miracles .....	239
Concerning Numbers .....	240
Concerning Grammar .....	240
Summary .....	241
<i>Unbelief</i> .....	242
Summary .....	242
CONCLUSION .....	243
<b>CHAPTER FOUR – BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....</b>	<b>245</b>
OLD TESTAMENT VERSES .....	246
<i>Exodus 4:22</i> .....	246
<i>Exodus 24:4</i> .....	247
<i>Exodus 34:1</i> .....	249
<i>Exodus 34:27</i> .....	249
<i>Deuteronomy 6:6-9; 11:18,19; &amp; 30:13,14</i> .....	249
<i>Deuteronomy 27:8</i> .....	250
<i>Deuteronomy 31:24</i> .....	251
<i>Joshua 1:8</i> .....	251
<i>Judges 12:6</i> .....	252
<i>Nehemiah 8:8</i> .....	255
<i>Psalms 12:6,7</i> .....	255
<i>Psalms 19:7</i> .....	256
<i>Psalms 93:5</i> .....	259
<i>Psalms 111:7</i> .....	259
<i>Psalms 119:86</i> .....	260
<i>Psalms 119:89</i> .....	260
Thy Word .....	261
Is Settled .....	261
For Ever .....	262
In Heaven .....	262
Only in Heaven .....	262
On Earth Also .....	263

Conclusion .....	265
<i>Psalm 119:105</i> .....	265
<i>Psalm 119:138</i> .....	266
<i>Psalm 119:152</i> .....	267
<i>Psalm 119:160</i> .....	268
<i>Psalm 138:2</i> .....	269
Thou Hast Magnified .....	270
Thy Word .....	271
Above .....	271
All .....	271
Thy Name .....	272
Conclusion .....	273
<i>Proverbs 22:20,21</i> .....	274
<i>Isaiah 30:8</i> .....	276
<i>Isaiah 40:8</i> .....	277
<i>Isaiah 59:21</i> .....	277
<i>Jeremiah 30:2</i> .....	278
<i>Jeremiah 36:1-4,6</i> .....	278
<i>Habakkuk 2:2</i> .....	279
Summary .....	280
NEW TESTAMENT VERSES .....	281
<i>Matthew 4:4</i> .....	281
<i>Matthew 22:31</i> .....	281
<i>Matthew 24:35</i> .....	286
<i>John 10:35</i> .....	288
<i>Acts 7:38</i> .....	290
<i>II Timothy 3:16,17</i> .....	291
<i>Hebrews 4:12</i> .....	291
<i>I Peter 1:23</i> .....	292
<i>II Peter 1:19</i> .....	292
<i>II Peter 1:21</i> .....	295
Summary .....	296
NEW TESTAMENT WORDS .....	296
<i>Gill's Illustrations</i> .....	296
Eli, Eli .....	297
Names of Persons .....	298
Dagesh Forte .....	302
Dagesh Lene .....	306
Pathach Genubah .....	306
<i>Strouse's Illustration</i> .....	307
Summary .....	308
CONCLUSION .....	308
<b>CHAPTER FIVE – ONE TITTLE .....</b>	<b>310</b>

LEXICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	310
<i>Pasor – 1621</i> .....	310
<i>Schrevelius – 1812</i> .....	311
<i>Donnegan – 1837</i> .....	312
<i>Fradersdorff – 1860</i> .....	312
<i>Thayer – 1901</i> .....	313
<i>Arndt and Gingrich – 1979</i> .....	314
<i>Perschbacher – 1990</i> .....	315
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	316
CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	317
<i>One Jot or One Tittle</i> .....	317
Jot Refers to Consonants .....	318
Tittle Refers to Non-Consonants .....	319
Various Commentators .....	320
Piscator .....	321
Broughton .....	321
Prideaux .....	321
Lightfoot .....	322
Owen .....	322
Gill .....	322
Whitfield .....	322
Bengel .....	323
Van Doren .....	323
Yeager .....	324
Franklin .....	324
Summary .....	325
<i>Till All Be Fulfilled</i> .....	326
<i>One of These Least Commandments</i> .....	328
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	330
ETYMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	330
<i>Ch in Hebrew Equal to K in Greek</i> .....	333
<i>I in Hebrew Equal to E in Greek</i> .....	335
<i>R in Hebrew Equal to R in Greek</i> .....	336
<i>E in Hebrew Equal to Ai in Greek</i> .....	336
<i>Q in Hebrew Equal to A in Greek</i> .....	336
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	338
SCRIPTURAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	339
TRANSLATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	341
<i>Tyndale – 1525</i> .....	341
<i>Polyglot Testament – 1600</i> .....	342
<i>Revised Standard Version – 1952</i> .....	342
<i>New International Version – 1984</i> .....	342
<i>English Standard Version – 2001</i> .....	343
<i>Summary</i> .....	343
CONCLUSION .....	343

<b>CHAPTER SIX – FURTHER OBJECTIONS .....</b>	<b>347</b>
HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS .....	347
<i>Unpointed Documents</i> .....	347
Newspapers.....	348
Dead Sea Scrolls .....	351
Synagogue Scrolls.....	354
Other Languages and Inscriptions.....	359
Summary.....	361
<i>Story about Joab</i> .....	361
The Story .....	361
The Problems .....	362
Summary.....	364
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	365
BIBLICAL OBJECTIONS .....	365
<i>Consonants without Vowels</i> .....	366
Method of Conveying This Notation .....	366
At the Time of the Vision .....	366
At the Time of Writing .....	367
Conclusion.....	368
Purpose of This Notation .....	368
A Test .....	368
Punctuation Marks .....	369
Emphasis.....	370
Conclusion .....	371
<i>Vowels without Consonants</i> .....	372
<i>Lone Vowels</i> .....	373
<i>Summary</i> .....	373
CONCLUSION.....	375
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>377</b>
ARGUMENT SUMMARY.....	377
EVIDENCE SUMMARY.....	383
<b>DEFINITIONS AND DELIMITATIONS.....</b>	<b>394</b>
DEFINITIONS .....	394
DELIMITATIONS.....	399
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>402</b>
BOOKS.....	402
ARTICLES, SERMONS, AND VIDEOS .....	422
<b>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .....</b>	<b>431</b>

## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

As the reader picks up this book, a couple of immediate questions may come to his mind such as (1) what is a *tittle*; (2) why write a book about the *tittle*; (3) why is the *tittle* important; (4) why should a person read such a book as this; and more. The next section, subtitled “Preliminary,” addresses these questions. The section following, “Problem,” details three positions concerning the *tittle* and the problems connected with these positions. The last section of this chapter, “Preview,” presents an overview and summary of the entire work.

### PRELIMINARY

#### *What Is a Tittle?*

As the reader looks at the title of this book, he may be asking himself, “Just what is a *tittle*?” Chapter Five, “One Tittle,” gives an in-depth analysis concerning the meaning of *tittle* as it exegetes Matthew 5:18 where Jesus states: “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.” Lexical, contextual, etymological, Scriptural, and translational considerations demonstrate that *tittle* in Matthew 5:18 refers to the smallest Hebrew vowel point known as *chirek*, which is as small as the dot atop the *i*. The reader should understand that the vowels of Old Testament Hebrew are dots and dashes that writers inserted amongst the consonants. It is for this reason that some refer to these vowels as vowel points.<sup>1</sup> When using the expression *vowel points*, one should not think that these points are somehow not actual vowels. In-

---

<sup>1</sup> For more about vowel points, see “Definition of Terms” in the back of the book.

deed, just as *a, e, i, o, u*, and sometimes *y* are actual vowels in English, so the vowel points are actual vowels in Hebrew and Aramaic.

For a complete treatment on why *tittle* in Matthew 5:18 is the Hebrew vowel point *chirek*, one should consult Chapter Five, but a brief presentation of the argument is fitting here. Lexically, *tittle* can mean a vowel point. Contextually, the word *jot* referring to the least of the Hebrew consonants, adequately guarantees the preservation of all the consonants (see Luke 16:10); therefore, *tittle* need not refer to consonants. Also, the phrase *one jot or one tittle* with the use of the disjunctive conjunction (וְ) *or* makes it clear that *tittle* is different from the *jot*, which further establishes that *tittle* is referring to something other than consonants or something connected to consonants. Etymologically, the Greek word for *tittle* (κεραία) is a transliteration into Greek of the Hebrew חֵיקֶק (chirek).<sup>2</sup> Scripturally, the Bible teaches the inspiration and preservation of the vowels of the Old Testament (see the rest of this chapter as well as Chapter Four), which teaching is in exact agreement with understanding *tittle* to be a vowel point in Matthew 5:18. Translationally, many translations of the Bible understand the Greek word for *tittle* to be a dot, which describes exactly the *chirek*.

### ***Why Write on the Tittle?***

As to why write a book on the *tittle*, this subject is important theologically and practically. The fact that Jesus in two verses spoke of the *tittle* (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17) gives theological importance to this subject. These verses are the Words of God and, therefore, are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

---

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew and Greek fonts that the author uses in this work are BWHEBB, BWHEBL [Hebrew]; BWGRKL, BWGRKN, and BWGRKI [Greek] Postscript® Type 1 and TrueTypeT fonts Copyright © 1994-2002 BibleWorks, LLC. All rights reserved. These Biblical Greek and Hebrew fonts are used with permission from BibleWorks, software for Biblical exegesis and research.

righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Timothy 3:16,17).

Some may think that the subject of the *tittle* is merely an academic one, but this is not true since God’s Word speaks of the *tittle* and all of the Words of God are designed to make the man of God throughly furnished unto all good works. In other words, the subject of the *tittle* has a practical importance to one’s own spiritual growth. The practicality of this subject, however, reaches far beyond the two verses in which the word *tittle* occurs, for it is a subject that can affect the interpretation and understanding of thousands of Old Testament verses.<sup>3</sup> This may seem like an astounding claim, but a little two-part demonstration will help to prove the point. In the first part of this demonstration, consider the English word *cat*. It has just one vowel. If one were to remove that one vowel and substitute other vowels, then he could make several other words such as *cut*, *cot*, *coat*, *cute*, *acute*, *cite*, *cote*, and possibly more. Now consider the sentence: The girl loved her black cat. If *cat* has no vowels, then the sentence could be that the girl loved her black coat, cot, cote, or some other thing; and in certain contexts, it may be very difficult to determine what should be the exact word.

In the second part of this demonstration, consider some verses in the Bible. Genesis 49:10 in the *King James Version*, an accurate translation of the Traditional Hebrew Text, states: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.” Genesis 49:10 is a Messianic prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, for Jesus is from the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5)<sup>4</sup> and the people shall

---

<sup>3</sup> In Chapter Three the author presents over five thousand (5,000) verses that are affected or infected by tampering with the vowels of the words. These five thousand cases may be just scratching the service.

<sup>4</sup> Leupold indicates that Genesis 49:10 uses the word *until* not in the exclusive sense, but in the inclusive sense “even as it is found in [Genesis] 26:13; 28:15; Ps.

be gathered together unto Him in the Millennial Kingdom (Isaiah 11:1,10). But if one were to adjust the vowels in the word *Shiloh*, then he could dramatically change the teaching of Genesis 49:10 and remove its Messianic nature. Such is what the *English Standard Version* has done, for it reads: “Until tribute comes to him,” instead of “until Shiloh comes.” The *English Standard Version* removes the clear Messianic nature of Genesis 49:10. According to the *English Standard Version* there is no person named *Shiloh* who came from Judah in Genesis 49:10 and, therefore, the gathering of the people is not to Shiloh but to Judah. How did the *English Standard Version* arrive at its non-Messianic translation? A footnote gives the answer when it states that it arrived at *until tribute comes to him* “by a slight revocalization.”<sup>5</sup> A *slight revocalization* means that the translators of the *English Standard Version* changed the Hebrew vowels in Genesis 49:10 to get different words. It should be clear to the reader that if God did not inspire the vowels of the Old Testament, then there would be no way to determine the exact words and teaching of Genesis 49:10, for either rendering fits the context. If it is impossible to determine the exact wording of Genesis 49:10, then how can it be “profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16)? Indeed it could not be. Changing vowels has the result of making the Word of God of none effect (cf. Mark 7:13).

A couple more examples that are Biblical should suffice to prove the importance of the *tittle*. In a familiar verse in Deuteronomy the *King James Version* accurately reads: “The eternal God is *thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out

---

112:8; Ps. 110:1. For if the dominion were to endure only up to a certain point, the word as such would constitute a threat rather than a blessing” (H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1942), II:1181). Judah would continue to reign in the Person of Shiloh, therefore, Shiloh is from Judah.

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001), 42.

the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy *them*” (Deuteronomy 33:27). The *New Revised Standard Version* through a change of the vowels reads: “He subdues the ancient gods, shatters the forces of old; he drove out the enemy before you, and said, ‘Destroy!’”<sup>6</sup> Such a reading completely changes the meaning of the verse. Indeed, the changing of the vowels removes the wonderful personal promise at the beginning of the verse. If God did not inspire the vowels, then how would any one know for sure what Deuteronomy 33:27 should say?

Over in Ecclesiastes 3:21, the *King James Version* accurately states: “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” Through a change of the vowels the *New International Version* has: “Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?”; the *New Revised Standard Version* reads: “Who knows whether the human spirit goes upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth?”; and the *English Standard Version* has: “Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down into the earth?”<sup>7</sup> Does the spirit of man go upward, or does it not? Does the spirit of an animal go downward, or does it not? The *King James Version* makes it clear that the spirit of man does go upward and that the spirit of the beast does go downward; but the other versions are ambiguous here. The point is this: if God did not inspire the vowels, then there is no way of knowing for certain from Ecclesiastes 3:21 whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast downward.

To anyone who loves the Bible, tampering with the Words of God by changing the vowels should be alarming. Jesus said: “Man

---

<sup>6</sup> For more on this change see the discussion concerning the verse in Chapter Three.

<sup>7</sup> For more on this change see the discussion concerning the verse in Chapter Three.

shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Without every Word of God, a child of God cannot properly live the Christian life. Without inspired vowels, much of the Old Testament is uncertain and one would have to say about many verses in the Old Testament, “Yea, hath God said?” Uncertainty about what God has said is exactly the place in which the devil would want God’s Words (cf. Genesis 3:1). On the other hand, with inspired vowels the Old Testament provides a sure, certain, and solid foundation for the believer. Such a foundation is vital to the Christian life for “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3).

#### *Do Not Old Testament Words Have Vowels?*

Now, the question may arise: is it not obvious that Old Testament words have vowels? It should be obvious that Old Testament words have vowels, for how could something be a word without vowels? For instance, is *dg* a word? No, but by inserting an *o* between the consonants, one gets the word *dog*. Consonants without vowels are not words. The Bible teaches in many verses that words must have vowels. At this time, may the reader briefly consider Exodus 34:27; Jeremiah 36:1,2; I Corinthians 9:10; and Matthew 4:4.

In Exodus 34:27 the Lord said to Moses: “Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.” *Tenor* (טֵנׁוֹר masculine singular construct noun from פֶּה) refers to the mouth. Ainsworth, commenting on *tenor of these words*, states that in Hebrew it means “*the mouth of these words*,” which the Chaldee expounds, *the speech of these words*.<sup>8</sup> Mouthing

---

<sup>8</sup> Henry Ainsworth, *Annotation upon the Second Book of Moses Called Exodus: wherein, by Conferring the Holy Scriptures, Comparing the Chaldee and Greek Versions, and Other Records of the Hebrewes: Moses His Wordes, Lawes and Ordinances Are Explained* (London: n. p., 1617), comment on Exodus 34:27. There are no page numbers in this edition.

and speaking of words involves the use of vowels to vocalize the words. Exodus 34:27, then, defines these words as something that was mouthed, therefore vocalized, therefore having vowels. Indeed, it is impossible for one to mouth consonants. For example, how would one pronounce *cttl*? If one were to attempt to pronounce it, he would have to insert half-vowels to accomplish the task, but using half-vowels would be cheating since there are no half-vowels amongst the consonants. But what God gave to Moses were mouthed words, not just unpronounceable consonants and God wanted Moses to write (בְּהַבִּיבָה Qal masculine singular imperative from בָּהַבֵּב) according to the mouthing or the speaking of His Own Words; therefore, the words Moses wrote must have also had vowels.

Jeremiah 36:1,2 presents the same teaching as Exodus 34:27. Jeremiah 36:1,2 states: “And it came to pass in the fourth year of Je-

---

*Tenor of these words* occurs in Genesis 43:7 where the sons of Jacob say, “The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, *Is your father yet alive? Have ye another brother? And we told him according to the tenor of these words,*” that is, they gave answers suitable to Joseph’s “questions, or such as his words required” (Matthew Poole, *A Commentary on the Holy Bible* (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, n. d.), I: 96). They “answered him in conformity (עַל פִּי as in Ex. 34:27, etc.) with these words (i.e., with his questions)” (C. F. Keil, *Pentateuch*, vol. 1 in *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866-91, reprinted Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishers, 2001), 231). Though not related in Genesis 42, Joseph specifically asked them about their father and their brother (Genesis 44:19) and phrased his question on at least one occasion according to the exact words of Genesis 43:7. In the brother’s answer, they took into account the mouthing of Joseph’s words.

In English, *tenor* can mean “the general drift of thought” (F. Sturges Allen, ed., *Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1923), 2128). However, for anyone to suggest that in the Bible *tenor* means according to the general idea, would be for him to suggest that Moses in Exodus 34:27 only wrote according to the general idea of what God said, which would suggest conceptual inspiration, rather than verbal inspiration – a most dangerous suggestion, indeed. If one desires to limit himself to the English definition of *tenor*, he should choose the legal definition, that is, “an exact copy of a writing, set forth in the words and figures of it. Setting forth a document to its *tenor* necessitates giving an exact copy of it, as distinguished from setting it forth according to its purport and effect” (Ibid.).

hoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, *that* this word came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day.” Here the Lord instructed Jeremiah to write all the words that He had spoken. Again, since the speaking of words involves vocalizing with the use of vowels, and since Jeremiah was to write the spoken Words of the Lord, then the words Jeremiah wrote had to have vowels. Scripture defines the written words as having vowels.

I Corinthians 9:10, referring to a statement in Deuteronomy 25:4, presents the same truth when it states (in part): “Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written.” I Corinthians 9:10 teaches that what the Lord said in the Old Testament is the same as what is written in the Old Testament. The Old Testament writers were not merely stenographers using some sort of shorthand notation to convey what the Lord said, but they were like human tape-recorders, so that what they wrote is the same as what God saith. And since speech involves vocalization with the use of vowels, then the written words of the Old Testament must have vowels.

Jesus also defined words as including vowels when He stated: “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). According To Jesus, every Word of God proceeded out of the mouth of God. Since mouthing of words involves the use of vowels, then the Words of God must also have vowels. And since the Words of God are written, then the written Words of God must also have vowels. From Exodus 34:27; Jeremiah 36:1,2; I Corinthians 9:10; and Matthew 4:4 it is clear that according to Scripture the words of the Bible have vowels. These are not the only verses that teach that Bible words have vowels. In subsequent sections of this chapter and in Chapter Four this book presents many other verses that substantiates this view.

***Who Denies that Old Testament Words Have  
Vowels and Why Do They Deny It?***

It should be clear that Old Testament words have vowels, but are there those who think that Old Testament Hebrew as originally given by God had no vowels and, if so, why would they think such a thing? Yes, some think that when God inspired the Old Testament that He did so without the use of vowels. The next sections of this chapter detail some of those who think such a thing. As to why some would believe that there are no inspired vowels in the Hebrew Old Testament, a multitude of reasons surface. Subsequent sections of this chapter as well as Chapter Six present these reasons. Many of the reasons for thinking that God did not give inspired vowels involve a person walking by sight in the teachings of the scholars, instead of walking by faith in God's promises. One of God's promises concerning Hebrew vowels is Luke 16:17 where Jesus declares: "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." The middle part of Luke 16:17 speaks of the *tittle*. The writer, basing his position upon the sound principles of exegesis, understands *tittle* to refer to the smallest vowel point of the Hebrew Old Testament, the *chirek*, which is as small as the dot atop the *i* (see Chapter Five for more information). The *chirek* is the smallest little bit of the Hebrew Old Testament. Luke 16:17 presents powerful teaching concerning the Old Testament.

The first part of Luke 16:17 states, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass." Lenski states that *pass* refers to heaven and earth passing "away in one sweep (*παρελθεῖν*, aorist)."<sup>9</sup> Only the power of God Almighty will bring about the passing away of heaven and earth in one sweep (Isaiah 65:17). No one else is able to make heaven and earth pass away in one sweep. Now since it is easier for heaven and earth to

---

<sup>9</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 841.

pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail; and since only the power of God can make heaven and earth pass away; and since no one else has such power; then this means that no man, no fallen angel, or even Satan himself can cause a single tittle of the Old Testament to fail. Some believe that over time some things have been lost from the Old Testament, but not according to Jesus. The complete Old Testament will continue to stand in spite of all attacks or mishandlings from created beings!

The last part of Luke 16:17 uses the word *fail*. *Fail*, πεσεῖν, is a second aorist active infinitive from πίπτω. Here the Bible uses it metaphorically, “meaning to fall to the ground, to fail, become void.”<sup>10</sup> In Luke 16:17, Jesus is, therefore, teaching that no human or demonic power is able to cause even the smallest bit of the Hebrew Old Testament to fail. If all anti-God power were concentrated on one small vowel, that is, on one small *chirek* or dot, it would be impossible for that power to cause that one small vowel point to fail! What a wonderful promise this is!

The promise of Luke 16:17 asserts a couple of truths about the Old Testament. First, Jesus’ mentioning of the smallest of the Hebrew vowel points is further evidence that in His day, the words of the Old Testament had vowel points. Second, Jesus’ words in Luke 16:17 assert that the entire Old Testament is perfectly preserved, for if God promises that the least aspect of the law will not fail, then the greater aspects will not fail either, for “he that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10). Third, since one tittle shall not fail or become void, then Jesus’ promise asserts that every tittle of the law is completely authoritative; therefore, one need not wonder if a particular word in the Old Testament is pointed correctly or if the vow-

---

<sup>10</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, “4098. πίπτω” in *The Complete Word Study Bible & Reference CD* [CD-ROM] (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1997).

el points are of human origin. And fourth, since one tittle shall not fail, then to repoint or revocalize words in the Old Testament is to fly in the face of Jesus' Words, a very dangerous thing to do (see John 12:48).

For anyone who will believe it, the Words of Jesus in Luke 16:17 settle the matters of the vowel points, the perfect preservation, and the complete authority of the Traditional Hebrew Old Testament text, thereby showing the dangerous futility of trying to correct the Traditional Old Testament Text. If men would simply believe Luke 16:17, then there would be no need for this book. It is because men fail to comprehend and to believe the promise of Jesus that there is a serious problem – a problem that this book addresses.

#### PROBLEM

Beginning in the Garden of Eden to the present day, the devil has questioned God's Words. In Genesis 3:1 he said, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" With this question, Satan cast doubt upon the very Words of God. The Bible mentions others who "corrupt the word of God" (II Corinthians 2:17), handle "the word of God deceitfully" (II Corinthians 4:2), and wrest the Scriptures (II Peter 3:16). Furthermore, the Bible repeatedly warns about not adding to or diminishing from the Words of God (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; and Revelation 22:18,19), indicating that it is distinctly possible that men would attempt to tamper with the Words of God.

These attacks upon the Words of God have taken various forms through the ages. One such attack, which is the subject of this book, is upon the vowel points of the Hebrew Old Testament text. Did God inspire the vowels? Did Ezra add the vowels to the text? Did the exilic prophets add the vowels? Did scribes after the time of Christ add them? Are the vowel points authoritative? The way in which some answer these questions poses real Biblical problems. In present-

ing these problems, it is necessary to present three positions that various writers espouse concerning the vowel points and about each position present the problems that arise. The author has grouped writers according to one of three positions: (1) the *autographa* position, that is, that God inspired the points; (2) the accommodation position, that is, that the points were passed down via oral tradition to the Masoretes of the sixth to ninth century after Christ and that these points reflect the correct vocalization of the text; and (3) the non-authoritative position, that is, that the points are merely the invention of men and are of no authority. Just so the reader knows that these positions are not merely arbitrary assessments by the author consider the following statement by Moncrieff in which he, too, categorizes the opinions on the points with the same three positions:

There are three opinions respecting the Hebrew Vowel-Points. One or other of these have been maintained by men possessing an extensive knowledge of this sacred language.

By one class it has been most strenuously maintained, that these Vowel-Points, as to their forms, names, and pronunciation, are wholly an arbitrary invention of a school of Rabbis, who lived at Tiberias in Palestine, about the beginning of the sixth century of the Christian Era.

The opinion of a second class coincides to a certain extent, with that which has now been now stated. They hold that the Vowel-Points were invented by the Jewish doctors of Tiberias, but they, at the same time, maintain, that they were not intended by these Rabbis to point out any sounds of their own invention, but to fix down in all their variety of application, the vowel sounds which were in constant use in reading the scriptures, when the Hebrew was a living language, and which are understood by this class, to have been accurately preserved, by oral tradition, among the learned men of the Jewish nation, down to the late period in which those learned Rabbis are said to have flourished at Tiberias.

A third opinion is, that since the time of Moses, and, at all events, since the days of Ezra, and the Great Synagogue, there were distinct Vowel-Points, which, if not the same in form, were, at least, signs for

the very same vowel sounds, which these points, now in common use in our Hebrew Bibles, were intended to express.<sup>11</sup>

### *Autographa Position*

In discussing the *autographa* position, this section presents the position itself, the proponents of the position, and some problems that may arise from the position.

#### *The Position*

The first position in regard to the vowel points is, what the writer calls, the *autographa* position. The *autographa* position states that God gave the vowel points when He inspired His Words so that the vowel points were inscripturated at the same time as the consonants and are, therefore, part of the *autographa* and are fully authoritative.

#### *The Proponents*

The *autographa* position is the position that this book espouses and defends. Over the years, others have also espoused the *autographa* position and this section lists some of them. The reader will notice that the list of proponents is somewhat longer and more complete than the lists of proponents for the other positions. The author desires to give as exhaustive a list as he can so as to aid others in their research and to demonstrate that the *autographa* position is not merely a privately held interpretation. This is not to suggest that the writer arrived at a position by seeing which position has the largest number of proponents and then adopting it as his own. If that were the case, he would not hold the *autographa* view since it is a minority view.<sup>12</sup> The author

---

<sup>11</sup> John Moncrieff, *An Essay on the Antiquity and Utility of the Hebrew Vowel-Points* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1833), 19,20.

<sup>12</sup> Pick writes: "Modern research and criticism have confirmed the arguments urged by Levita against the antiquity of the present vowel signs" (B. Pick, "The Vowel-Points Controversy in the XIV, XVII, and XVIII Centuries" in *The Princeton Re-*

has arrived at adopting the *autographa* position because he is convinced that the *autographa* position is the position that the Bible teaches. Indeed, if no one else held to the *autographa* position, but if he were convinced that the Bible teaches the inspiration of the vowel points, then, by God's grace, he would hold it. However, such is not the case with the *autographa* position, for a number of men have espoused and are espousing it, and their writings and insights can be a help to those seeking to better understand what the Word of God teaches on the subject.

### **Simon ben-Jochai or Moses de Leon – 120 AD or 13<sup>th</sup> century**

This first entry concerns the *Zohar*, a Jewish cabalistic commentary on portions of the Old Testament, a work that argues for the inspiration of the vowel points. John Lightfoot and John Gill<sup>13</sup> believe that R. Simon ben-Jochai is its real author with Gill placing its date at

---

*view* 6 (January 1877), 168). McClintock and Strong write that Cappellus believed that the points "were invented by the Jews of Tiberias some six hundred years subsequently to the death of Christ; whereas Buxtorf held them to be coeval with the language. The opinion of Cappellus has since been generally received" ("Cappel (Cappellus), Louis" in *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, eds. John McClintock and James Strong (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), II:106). Ginsburg notes that Walton's *Prolegomena* and *The Considerator Considered* "decided the battle in England in favour of the anti-vowelists. Henceforth all Biblical critics, with very few exceptions, regarded the points as modern, useless, and of no authority, though Walton himself . . . maintained that they, as a rule, represented the ancient and genuine reading" (Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita, Being an Exposition of the Massoretic Notes on the Hebrew Bible, or the Ancient Critical Apparatus of the Old Testament in Hebrew, with an English Translation, and Critical and Explanatory Notes*, by Christian D. Ginsburg (NY: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 59). Keil writes, "The violent controversy as to the age of the Hebrew vowel points, set in motion two hundred years ago, was terminated in the second half of [the] last century by the general acknowledgement that they were of comparatively recent origin" (C. F. Keil, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, trans. G. C. M. Douglas (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869, reprinted Peabody, MA: Hendrikson Publishers, Inc, 1991), II:190).

<sup>13</sup> "Zohar" in *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, eds. John McClintock and James Strong (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), XII:1028.

120 AD.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, Christian Ginsburg and a host of others believe that “it is not the production of R. Simon, but of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, by Moses de Leon.”<sup>15</sup> It is beyond the scope of this work to settle the exact authorship and date of the *Zohar*, nor are these matters germane to the main argument of this book. The fact remains, however, that the *Zohar* teaches a belief in the inspiration of the vowel points. For instance, the *Zohar* on the Song of Solomon states:

The vowel-points proceeded from the same Holy Spirit which indited the sacred Scriptures, and that far be the thought to say that the scribes made the points, since even if all the prophets had been as great as Moses, who received the law direct from Sinai, they could not have had the authority to alter the smallest point in a single letter, though it be the most insignificant in the whole Bible.<sup>16</sup>

Elsewhere the *Zohar* declares: “ ‘The letters are the body and the vowel-points the soul, they move with the motion and stand still with the resting of the vowel-points, just as an army moves after its sovereign.’ ”<sup>17</sup> These statements from the *Zohar* are clear assertions concerning the importance, inspiration, and antiquity of the vowel points.

---

<sup>14</sup> John Gill, *A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel Points, and Accents* (London: G. Keith, 1767), 212.

<sup>15</sup> “Zohar” in *Cyclopedia*, XII: 1028. Ginsburg presents his own work on establishing the author of the *Zohar* in his book, *The Kabbalah* (London: Longmans, 1865), 85-93. Also, see the article in *Cyclopedia* for a list of reasons for the late date for the *Zohar*.

<sup>16</sup> Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita, Being an Exposition of the Massoretic Notes on the Hebrew Bible, or the Ancient Critical Apparatus of the Old Testament in Hebrew, with an English Translation, and Critical and Explanatory Notes, by Christian D. Ginsburg, in The Library of Biblical Studies*, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (NY:KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 48. Ginsburg cites the *Zohar* on the Song of Solomon, Amsterdam edition, 57 b.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Ginsburg cites i., 15, b from the *Zohar*.

### Levi ben-Joseph – 11<sup>th</sup> century or earlier

The author does not have a specific date for Levi ben-Joseph because he knows of no sources that give a specific date. However, in McClintock and Strong's chronological discussion of the debate over vowel points, they place him before an 11<sup>th</sup> century work. McClintock and Strong state: "Levi ben-Joseph, author of the book, *Semadar*, quotes, in favor of the antiquity of the vowel-points, the passage in Deut. xxvii, 8, 'And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law *very plainly*.'"<sup>18</sup> Burnett adds to the discussion of Levi ben-Joseph by saying that the elders having to write the words very plainly implies the use of vowel points, "since, for example, the root שלמה could mean 'wherefore, retribution, Solomon, garment or perfect',"<sup>19</sup> that is, without the vowel points there is the possibility that the Words of God would not be very plain. Elias Levita quotes Joseph:

If any should ask, Whence do we know that the points and accents were dictated by the mouth of the Omnipotent? The reply is, It is to be found in the Scriptures, for it is written, "And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law *very plainly*" (Deut. xxvii.8).<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> "Vowel-points" in *Cyclopedia*, X:820.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies Johannes Buxtorf (1564-1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (NY: E. J. Brill, 1996), 213.

<sup>20</sup> Elias Levita, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita, Being an Exposition of the Massoretic Notes on the Hebrew Bible, or the Ancient Critical Apparatus of the Old Testament in Hebrew, with an English Translation, and Critical and Explanatory Notes*, by Christian D. Ginsburg, in *The Library of Biblical Studies*, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (NY:KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 122. Though Levita quotes Joseph, one should not assume that Levita is in favor of the inspiration of the vowel points, for, indeed, he is not. See discussion under the accommodation position, which is the next major section.

### Moses the Punctuator – 13<sup>th</sup> century and 1524-1525

Moses the Punctuator was a “Jewish exegetist, [who] lived in London about the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>21</sup> He “suggested in his *Treatise on the Vowel Points and Accents* that the vowel points were given on Mount Sinai.”<sup>22</sup> McClintock and Strong give the title of this work as *Treatise embodying the rules about the points of the Hebrew Scriptures*.<sup>23</sup> “Excerpts of this treatise, made by Jacob ben-Chayim, were first printed with the Massora in *the Rabbinic Bible* (Venice, 1524-25), and since in all the editions of the Rabbinic Bible.”<sup>24</sup> It was in the second appendix in the fourth volume of 1524-1525 Rabbinic Bible.<sup>25</sup> According to McClintock and Strong, “Those who recognize the real importance of the Hebrew vowel-points and accents will find in this unpretentious treatise a useful guide.”<sup>26</sup> While McClintock and Strong list several editions of this work,<sup>27</sup> the author failed to find a copy of it when doing a search for it in the World Catalog of Libraries.

Concerning the position of Moses the Punctuator, the author must make a comment. According to Burnett, while Moses the Punctuator advocated that the points were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, yet he believed that they “were forgotten until Ezra revealed them

---

<sup>21</sup> “Moses the Punctuator” in *Cyclopedia*, VI:690.

<sup>22</sup> Burnett, 213, 214.

<sup>23</sup> “Moses the Punctuator” in *Cyclopedia*, VI:690.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Christian D. Ginsburg, “Jacob Ben Chajim Ibn Adonijah” in *Jacob Ben Chajim Ibn Adonijah’s Introduction to The Rabbinic Bible, Hebrew and English; with Explanatory Notes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, in *The Library of Biblical Studies*, ed. Harry M. Orlinsky (NY: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1968), 7.

<sup>26</sup> “Moses the Punctuator” in *Cyclopedia*, VI:690.

<sup>27</sup> In addition to the edition published with *the Rabbinic Bible*, McClintock and Strong list an edition by Zebi ben-Menachem (Wilma, 1822) and one by Frensdorf (Hanover, 1847) (Ibid.).

again.”<sup>28</sup> Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. and John Owen held similar views (see further). However, the belief that Ezra added the vowels is not the view of this treatise, for Exodus 34:27 speaks of Moses writing God’s mouthed words, which would necessitate Moses writing the vowels along with the consonants. Further, Deuteronomy 27:8 teaches that the elders of the Jews were to write the words of the law very plainly, which necessitates the use of vowels so as to avoid confusion, for without the vowels some misunderstanding of the words could occur. If the vowels were present, as Exodus 34:27 and Deuteronomy 27:8 teach, and then later lost and then restored by Ezra, this would have a serious impact on the promises of preservation. For instance, in Psalm 12, which is a Psalm of David and, therefore, predates Ezra by over five hundred years, is this promise: “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” (Psalm 12:6,7<sup>29</sup>). However, what becomes of the prom-

---

<sup>28</sup> Burnett, 214.

<sup>29</sup> The author is aware of the controversy surrounding Psalm 12:6-7 and its application to the perfect preservation of God’s Words. He realizes that some believe that both occurrences of *them* in vs. 7 refer to the poor and needy in vs. 5, rather than to *words* in vs. 6. The main argument in favor of *them* referring to *poor* and *needy* is that both of these words are masculine, whereas *words* is feminine. However, it is not out of the ordinary for a masculine pronoun to refer to a feminine noun, especially in the matter of a masculine pronoun referring back to a feminine noun that speaks of the Words of God as Psalm 119:111,129,152, and 167 demonstrate.

In Psalm 119:111, the masculine plural pronoun *them* refers back to *testimonies*, a feminine plural noun. In Psalm 119:129, the masculine plural pronoun *them* attached as a suffix to the verb *keep* refers back to *testimonies*, a feminine plural noun. In Psalm 119:152, the masculine plural suffix pronoun *them* attached to the verb *founded* refers to *testimonies*, a feminine plural noun. In Psalm 119:167, the masculine plural pronoun *them* attached as a suffix to the verb *love* refers to *testimonies*, a feminine plural noun.

In light of the above, the author asserts that both occurrences of *them* in Psalm 12:7 refer to *words* in Psalm 12:6 and that, therefore, the passage teaches the perfect preservation of God’s Words. For a more complete treatment of Psalm 12:6,7, see the author’s *Those So-Called Errors: Debunking the Liberal, New Evangelical, and Fundamentalist Myth that You Should Not Hear, Receive, and Believe All the Numbers of*

ise in Psalm 12:6-7, if the vowels were originally part of the text and then dropped out? Why, it would seem that God was not able to keep His promise!

Walton seized upon the supposed Ezra origin of the written points as a strong reason for the novelty of the points. Walton writes:

The most of those that stand for the antiquity of the points, ascribe the first beginning of them to Esdras [Ezra], as Buxtorf and others. Now if the text might be read certainly, and without ambiguity, though without points, from the time of Moses to Esdras [Ezra], why might it not likewise be continued and preserved as well after Esdras [Ezra] his time as it was before?<sup>30</sup>

Walton makes a good observation here. The argument runs thusly: if there were no points before Ezra and people could understand the Bible, then why could not they continue to read it without the points? However, taking into account Deuteronomy 27:8 and other verses (Exodus 4:22; 24:4; 34:27; Deuteronomy 11:18-20; Judges 12:6; Psalm 19:7; 93:5; 111:7; 119:89, 105, 152, 160; 138:2; Proverbs 6:23; 22:20,21; Isaiah 30:8; 40:8; Jeremiah 36:1,2; Habakkuk 2:2)<sup>31</sup>, it is evident that the points were not first written by Ezra, but by the writers of Scripture themselves.

Though Moses the Punctuator, Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. (see later), and John Owen (see later), all held to the view that Ezra wrote the points and inserted them in the text; the author, nonetheless, lists these men under the *autographa* position because it seems that they held to

---

*Scripture* (Newington, CT: Emmanuel Baptist Theological Press, 2003), 142-145. Also, see Strouse's article "The Permanent Preservation of God's Words" in *Emmanuel Baptist Theological Journal* 2 (Fall/Winter 2006): 27-36.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Walton, *The Considerator Considered: or, a brief view of certain Considerations upon the Biblia Polyglotta, the Prolegomena and Appendix thereof* (London: Roycroft, 1659), 216.

<sup>31</sup> For an exposition on these and other verses and how they prove that God inspired the vowels, see Chapter Four, "Biblical Considerations."

the inspiration of the points, which is something that is lacking in the other two positions.

### **David Kimḥi – 13<sup>th</sup> century and 1540, 1545, 1550**

Kimḥi was “one of the most distinguished Jewish writers of the Middle Ages” and was a “great exponent of Hebrew grammar and lexicography.”<sup>32</sup> He was born in 1160 and died about 1240,<sup>33</sup> therefore, his writings date back to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. According to Burnett, Kimḥi in his book *Miklol* stated: “The vowel points had been given on Mount Sinai.”<sup>34</sup> The above dates of 1540, 1545, and 1550 reflect when his work was published at various times and in various places, but as he was born in 1160 and died about 1240,<sup>35</sup> his view existed some three hundred years prior to 1550.

### **Johannes Isaac Levita – 1559**

In 1559, Levita wrote *Defensio Veritatis Hebraicae Sacrarum Scripturarum, adversus Libros tres Reveren. D. Wilhelmi Lindani S. T. Doctoris, quos de optimo Scripturas interpretandi genere inscripsit*,<sup>36</sup> that is, “The Defense of the Truth of the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrew, against three Books of the Reverend D. Wilhelmus Lindanus S. T. Doctor, in which he wrote concerning an honest method of interpreting the Scriptures.” Lindanus, “a Roman Catholic prelate,”<sup>37</sup> wrote

---

<sup>32</sup> “Kimchi, David” in *Cyclopedia*, V:80.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Burnett, 213, citing David Kimḥi, *מכלול* (Venice, n. p., 1550), f. 25b. Burnett gives the date for this book as 1550, but McClintock and Strong give the date for a Venice edition as 1545 and a Latin Paris edition published by Guidacier in 1540 (“Kimchi, David” in *Cyclopedia*, V:80,81).

<sup>35</sup> “Kimchi, David” in *Cyclopedia*, V:80.

<sup>36</sup> Burnett, 207. Burnett gives the place of publishing as Cologne and the publisher as Jacob Soterem.

<sup>37</sup> “Linda or Lindanus” in *Cyclopedia*, V:437.

his work in 1558, in which he attacked the Hebrew text of the Bible<sup>38</sup> and in which he made use of Elias Levita's arguments,<sup>39</sup> a proponent of the novelty of the vowel points.<sup>40</sup>

Isaac Levita was a Jew who converted to Catholicism<sup>41</sup> and his book was "a blistering response to Lindanus" wherein "he stressed that the vowel points were essential to understanding the meaning of the Hebrew Bible text, noting that, 'He that reads the Scriptures without the points is like a man that rides a horse *achalinos*, without a bridle'.<sup>42</sup>

#### **Antoine Rudolphe Chevalier – 1560**

In 1560, Chevalier, a French theologian and professor of Hebrew,<sup>43</sup> published *Rudimenta Hebr. Ling. Accurata Methodo Conscripta*, that is, "Early Lessons of the Hebrew Language by a Carefully Written Method," where in chapter 4, according to John Owen's translation of the Latin, he wrote:

As for the antiquity of the vowels and accents, I am of their opinion who maintain the Hebrew language, as the exact pattern of all others, to have been plainly written with them from the beginning; seeing that they who are otherwise minded do not only make doubtful the authority of the Scriptures, but, in my judgment, wholly pluck it up by the

---

<sup>38</sup> "Isaac Levita" in *Cyclopedia*, IV:673.

<sup>39</sup> Burnett, 206, citing Wilhelmus Lindanus, *De optimo Scripturas genere* (Cologne: Maternum Cholinum, 1558)..

<sup>40</sup> "Levita challenged the traditional Jewish view that the consonantal text and its vocalization were given by God to Moses when he received the Law on Mount Sinai" (Ibid., 205).

<sup>41</sup> "Isaac Levita" in *Cyclopedia*, IV:673.

<sup>42</sup> Burnett, 207, quoting "Eum, qui sine punctis et accentibus Scripturam legit, similem esse homini equitanti equum *achalinoton* effrenem," from Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 10 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1885), 1:146 (book 1, chap. 15).

<sup>43</sup> "Chevalier, Antoine Rudolphe" in *Cyclopedia*, XI:923.

roots, for without the vowels and notes of distinction it hath nothing firm and certain.<sup>44</sup>

Chevalier gives an excellent argument, an argument that receives further treatment in Chapters Two, Three, and Four of this book.

### **Azariah De' Rossi – 1574-1575**

De' Rossi was a Jewish scholar who wrote *The Light of the Eyes* in 1574-1575.<sup>45</sup> Chapter fifty-nine of section four is “on the antiquity of the vowel points and the accents of the holy tongue.”<sup>46</sup> De' Rossi wrote chapter fifty-nine as a response to the earlier Jewish scholar Elias Levita's contention that the Masoretes, that is, the Tiberian Jews<sup>47</sup> at about 600 A.D., instituted and formalized the vowels. De' Rossi gives historical evidence for the existence of the points before 600 A.D. Concerning the antiquity of the vowel points, De' Rossi writes:

The opinion of those who claim that the vowels of the letters of our holy tongue, namely, the Hebrew script, were invented at Sinai or in the days of Ezra but did not exist prior to that time, according to my limited understanding, appears to be nonsensical. This view is corroborated by a comparative study. For when we examine all other known languages, we find that the letters have notations of sound and pronun-

---

<sup>44</sup> John Owen, “Of the Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text of the Scripture; with Considerations on the Prolegomena and Appendix to the Late ‘Biblia Polyglotta’ ” in vol. 16 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), 371. Owen refers to Chevalier by the name of Radulphus Cevallerius.

<sup>45</sup> “Rossi, Azariah (Ben Moses) de,” in *Cyclopedia*, IX:137.

<sup>46</sup> Azariah De' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes: Translated from the Hebrew with an introduction and annotations by Joanna Weinberg* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 699. Buxtorf, Jr. in 1648 translated into Latin Chapter 59 along with chapters 9 and 42 and included them in his *Tractatus de Antiquitate Punctorum*, that is, “Discussion concerning Ancient Points” (“Rossi, Azariah (Ben Moses) de,” in *Cyclopedia*, IX:138).

<sup>47</sup> De' Rossi, 700. The author presents a more detailed look at Elias Levita later in this introductory chapter in the section on the accommodation position

ciation. These are either indicated by actual letters as is the case with Italian, Latin, Greek used in our countries, and also in Armenian and Persian. . . . Alternatively, there are points, lines, markers which are put above, below, and in the middle, as in Hebrew, which was the first language to have this system.<sup>48</sup>

In a discussion of Deuteronomy 27:8, “And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly,” De’ Rossi argues that if the words on the stones had “not been vocalized, the reader would have been unable to understand them and who could have explained them to him as he stood there at the river’s side?”<sup>49</sup> Clearly, De’ Rossi believed the points to be ancient and part of the law that Moses gave to Israel.

#### **William Fulke – 1583**

According to McClintock and Strong, Fulke, a Puritan theologian,<sup>50</sup> rebutted the view that the Hebrew vowels are of recent origin. He did so in his 1583 work entitled *Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue, against the Manifold Cavils, Frivolous Quarrels, and Impudent Slanders of Gregory Martin, one of the Readers of Popish Divinity in the Traitorous Seminary of Rheims*. Gregory Martin, a Roman Catholic, in *A Discovery of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretics of our Days* charged that the Protestant Bibles followed the comparatively recent invention of the Hebrew vowel points. Fulke refuted Martin’s view by writing that since

our Saviour hath promised that never a particle of the law shall perish, we may understand the same also of the prophets, who have not received the vowels of the latter Jews, but even of the prophets them-

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 703.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 704.

<sup>50</sup> “Fulke, William, D. D.” in *Cyclopedia*, III:690.

selves, howsoever, that heathenish opinion pleaseth you and other papists.<sup>51</sup>

Fulke indicates that the prophets themselves supplied their own vowels to their own writings and that the Jews at a later date did not supply them. He also seems to indicate that it is his belief that the Mosaic Law also had the vowels from the start.

### Guilielmus Eyrius – 1607

In 1652, James Ussher wrote a short book to which he appended a letter from Eyrius. Eyrius had written the letter to Ussher some forty-five years earlier; therefore, the date of his letter is 1607. The full title of Ussher's book is *De Textus Hebraici Veteris Testamenti Variantibus Lectionibus Ad Ludovicum Cappellum Epistola: Cui addita est et Consimilis Argumenti altera, ante annos XLV à Guilielmo Eyrio ad eundem Jacobum data, Epistola*,<sup>52</sup> that is, "Concerning the writing variations of the text of the Hebrew Old Testament in reply to Louis Capellus' Epistle: to which is added also of a similar argument another epistle from Guilelmus Eyrius 45 years before the same Jacobus [James Ussher] presented his." From page 25 where Eyrius' epistle begins, it is clear that he was a close friend of Ussher's when Ussher was the theology professor at Dublin.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> "Vowel-Points" in *Cyclopedia*, X:821,822, citing Fulke, *Defence of the Sincere and True Translations of the Holy Scriptures into the English Tongue, against the Manifold Cavils, Frivolous Quarrels, and Impudent Slanders of Gregory Martin, one of the Readers of Popish Divinity in the Traitorous Seminary of Rheims* (London: n.p., 1583, reprinted Cambridge: Parker Society, 1843), 578.

<sup>52</sup> James Ussher, *De Textus Hebraici Veteris Testamenti Variantibus Lectionibus Ad Ludovicum Cappellum Epistola: Cui addita est et Consimilis Argumenti altera, ante annos XLV à Guilielmo Eyrio ad eundem Jacobum data, Epistola* (London: J. Flesher, 1652), title page.

<sup>53</sup> "Spectatissimo viro ac amico suo singulari, M. Jacobo Ussherio Theologiae Professore apud Dublinenses" (*Ibid.*, 25).

In Eyrius' letter he gives a series of propositions, one of which is: "Hebraica veteris Instrumendi scriptura iisdem vocalium & accentuum notis, quibus hodie utimur, antiquitus tradita,"<sup>54</sup> which roughly translates as, "The old Hebrew Scripture document is with the same marks of vowels and accents, which today we are using, is from of old an item of traditional knowledge." In other words, Eyrius espouses the view that the vowels and accents of the Hebrew were not a recent invention. The fact that according to the title of the book Eyrius' argument is similar to Ussher's argument means that Ussher was of the same opinion.

#### **Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. – 1609**

In 1609, Buxtorf, a Hebrew professor, wrote *Thesaurus Grammaticus Linguae Sanctae Hebraeae*, that is, "A Grammatical Collection of the Sacred Hebrew Language." In the 1609 edition of this work, he provided "a defense of the age and integrity of the vowel points."<sup>55</sup> He gave "a long excursus" wherein

he provided a summary of [Elias] Levita's arguments for a post-talmudic dating of the vowel points, offered arguments for the antiquity of the vowel points drawn from Jewish tradition and Amandus Polanus' *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae*<sup>56</sup> [see below] together with his own reflections on the necessity for inspired vowel points, and then gave a point by point rebuttal of Levita's arguments.<sup>57</sup>

Subsequent editions of *Thesaurus Grammaticus* did not contain the excursus; however, many of the arguments in the first edition of *Thesaurus Grammaticus* reappear in *Tiberias sive Commentarius Maso-*

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>55</sup> Burnett, 210.

<sup>56</sup> The author dates Polanus' work at 1617, but from this quote, it seems that an earlier edition of the work existed, however, the author has not been able to find a date for it.

<sup>57</sup> Burnett, 212.

*rethicus*<sup>58</sup> (see further). Buxtorf's 1609 edition of *Thesaurus Grammaticus* is a very rare Latin work. Only two libraries in the United States (Brown University and University of Pennsylvania) have it. The author was able to secure photocopies of certain pages from the University of Pennsylvania.

### **Valentin Schindler – 1612**

Schindler died in 1604, but his *Lexicon Pentaglott* was not published until 1612, with a fourth edition appearing in 1695.<sup>59</sup> John Gill citing column 1792 of this work concerning the word *shibboleth* in Judges 12:6 writes: "Schindler is of the opinion that from hence it appears, that the point on the right and left hand of װ, was then in use and so by consequence the other points also."<sup>60</sup>

### **Amandus Polanus Von Polandsdorf – 1617**

He wrote *Syntagma theologiae Christianae*, that is, "Writings of Christian Theology," in which he espoused:

The points belonged to the original revelation of the Word to Moses and the Prophets and were produced simultaneously with the consonants of the Law, summing up the argument with the rabbinic maxim, "puncta vocalia sunt animae syllabarum et vocum atque adeo vivae pronunciationis."<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> "Schindler, Valentin" in *Cyclopedia*, IX:410.

<sup>60</sup> Gill, *Dissertation*, 253.

<sup>61</sup> Richard A. Muller, "The debate over the vowel points and the crisis in orthodox theology" in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 10 (Spring 1980): 58, quoting "Illa Elias Levitae narratio, historiae verae fidem non meretur. Nam evidentibus argumentis constat, puncta vocalis et puncta distinguentia quae accentus vocantur, in libris Veteris Testamenti non esse demum a Judaeis Tyberiadis excogitata, sed ab ipso Mose et Prophetis adscripta. . . . puncta vocalia sunt animae syllabarum et vocum atque adeo vivae pronunciationis" from Amandus Polanus von Polandsdorf, *Syntagma theologiae Christianae* (Geneva, 1617), Lxxxvii (p. 75, col. 2).

The Latin rabbinic maxim roughly translates as “the vowel points are the souls of the syllables and of the words and so are the lives of the pronunciations.” According to Burnett,

At the heart of Polanus’ position is the notion that “adequate written representation of words required some sort of vowel symbol.” He made heavy use of Johannes Isaac Levita’s *Defensio*, reproducing in outline form many of his arguments. He also used Pierre Chevallier’s notes in Antoine Chevallier’s *Rudimenta*.<sup>62</sup>

### **Johannes Buxtorf, Sr. – 1620**

In 1620, Buxtorf defended the antiquity and inspiration of the vowel points in *Tiberias sive Commentarius Masorethicus*<sup>63</sup>, that is, “Tiberias or a Masoretic Commentary,” wherein, according to Pick, Buxtorf “made use of De’ Rossi’s arguments.”<sup>64</sup> Many of the arguments that Buxtorf made in his 1609 *Thesaurus Grammaticus Linguae Sanctae Hebraeae* in favor of the antiquity and inspiration of the vowel points appear in *Tiberias*.<sup>65</sup> Burnett states:

*Tiberias* was written not only to serve as a textbook on the Masora, but also to refute [Elias] Levita’s position on the age of the vowel points. Buxtorf devoted six chapters (3-9) in the first part to describing Levita’s arguments, supplying relevant historical description and offering elaborate rebuttals. Then in the next two chapters (10-11) he explained his own position, that the men of the Great Synagogue were responsible for adding the accents and vowel points.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Burnett, 209, citing Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of the Lutheran Reformers: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 308, and Amandus Polanus von Polandsdorf, *Syntagma Theologiae Christianae* (Geneva: Jacob Stoer, 1617) Lxxvii..

<sup>63</sup> B. Pick, “The Vowel-Points Controversy in the XVI, XVII, and XVIII Centuries” in *The Princeton Review* 6 (January 1877), 166.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Burnett, 212.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

Again, the author in the discussion under Moses the Punctuator presented information on some difficulties with saying that Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue provided the points,<sup>67</sup> as opposed to saying that each writer gave his own points. But Buxtorf did hold to the inspiration of the points and for that reason, the author lists him here. Indeed, in the last two chapters of *Tiberias*, Buxtorf argued “for the religious necessity of divinely inspired vowel points.” Buxtorf reasoned: “If the vocalization of the Hebrew were solely a work of human intellect rather than an intrinsic part of the inspired biblical text then the result would be a plethora of questions about individual verses which together could undermine the authority of the Word of God.”<sup>68</sup> Concerning “a plethora of questions about individual verses which together could undermine the authority of the Word of God,” the reader should see Chapter Three of this work, wherein the author demonstrates that without inspired vowel points almost every verse of the Old Testament would be unreliable and, therefore, lack authority.

### **John Weemes – 1623 and 1630**

In 1623 and 1630, Weemes published his first and second editions of *The Christian Synagogue, Wherein is contained the diverse Reading, The right Pointing, Translation, and Collation of Scripture with Scripture*.<sup>69</sup> In this book, he wrote: “The points and accents are naturally bred with the Scriptures, delivered by God to Moyses out of Mount Sinai, and so on to posteritie.”<sup>70</sup> In his third edition, issued in

---

<sup>67</sup> Burnett states: “The Men of the Great Synagogue were, according to Jewish tradition, a group of scholars and prophets led by Ezra the Scribe in the early years after the Jews’ return from the Babylonian Captivity” (Burnett, 223).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>69</sup> Muller, 64.

<sup>70</sup> John Weemes, *The Christian Synagogue: Wherein is contained the diverse Reading, The right Pointing, Translation, and Collation of Scripture with Scripture* (London: T. and B. Gates, 1630), 37.

1636, he changed his view to say that Moses gave the vowels at Sinai, but that they were added to the text by the Masoretes.<sup>71</sup> For problems associated with the view that the Masoretes added the vowels, see the discussion on the accommodation position.

### **John Lightfoot – 1629<sup>72</sup>**

Lightfoot in refuting the idea that the Tiberian Jews, that is, the Masoretes, developed the points, said, “ ‘The pointing of the Bible savours of the work of the Holy Spirit, not the work of lost, blinded besotted men.’ ”<sup>73</sup> Lightfoot also stated:

Some there be, that think the vowels of the Hebrew were not invented for many years after Christ. Which to me seemeth to be all one, as to deny sinews to a body: or to keep an infant unswaddled, and to suffer him to turn and bend any way, till he grow out of fashion. For mine own satisfaction I am fully resolved, that the letters and the vowels of the Hebrew were, -as the soul and body of a child, - knit together at their conception and beginning; and that they had both one another.<sup>74</sup>

McClintock and Strong, quoting Chambers, relate: “ ‘Lightfoot was a very learned Hebraist for his time, but he was not free from the unscientific crotchets of the period, holding, for example, the inspiration of the vowel-points.’ ”<sup>75</sup> Such is the ridicule that some heap upon those who hold to the inspiration of the vowel points and ridicule such

---

<sup>71</sup> Muller, 65, quoting “the letters in the Scripture have two sorts of points, either in valor or in figure; the points in valor were from the beginning delivered by Moses in mount Sinai, but the figures of them were found out afterwards by the Mazarites, and no consonant can bee pronounced without them” from John Weemes, *The Christian Synagogue* in *The Workes of Mr. J. Weemes*, 3 vols. (London: n. p., 1636), I:48.

<sup>72</sup> John Lightfoot, “The Epistle Dedicatory” in vol. 4 of *The Whole Works of the Rev. John Lightfoot, D. D.* (London: J. F. Dove, 1822), iv.

<sup>73</sup> Ginsburg, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth*, 58. Ginsburg footnotes this quote of Lightfoot as coming from page 73 of volume 2 of the 1684 edition of Lightfoot’s Works.

<sup>74</sup> Lightfoot, iv:50.

<sup>75</sup> “Lightfoot, John (1)” in *Cyclopedia*, V:426.

as this may deter others from holding to the *autographa* position. Such criticism, in the case of Lightfoot, is unfair and unfounded. Lightfoot would have had access to the arguments of Elias Levita, Cappellus, and Walton, all of whom advocated a position of the Masoretic writing of the points. Lightfoot, however, rejected their arguments and held to an *autographa* position for the points.

### **Johannes Buxtorf, Jr. – 1648**

Buxtorf, Jr. published in 1648 *Tractatus de punctorum vocalium, et accentuum, in libris Veteris Testamenti Hebraicis, origine, antiquate, et auctoritate: oppositus arcano punctationis revelato, Ludovici Cappelli*, that is, “Treatise on the origin, antiquity, and authority of the vowel points and accents in the Hebrew Scripture of the Old Testament: opposed to the mystery of the points unveiled, by Louis Cappellus.”<sup>76</sup> The last words reveal that Buxtorf wrote this in opposition to *The Mystery of the Points Unveiled* of Louis Cappellus, who published it anonymously in 1624<sup>77</sup> and who took the opposite view in the debate on the points. Buxtorf’s work is available worldwide in only twelve libraries.

### **Gisbert Voetius – 1648–1699**

From 1648 to 1699 Voetius published parts I-V of *Selectarum disputationum theologicarum*, that is, “Disputation of Theological Selections.” In part I, page 33 according to Muller, he espoused the view that the inspiration and the divine authority of Scripture went “beyond the sense of the scripture to the individual words, indeed to their letters and even to the tiny ‘jots and tittles’ of the system of vocalization.”<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> Pick, 167. Pick gives an English title to Buxtorf’s work, but it seems to be his translation of the Latin title. The author has failed to locate any English translation of this work.

<sup>77</sup> Muller, 59.

<sup>78</sup> Muller, 62,63.

Heppes referring to the same page from Voetius writes: “Even the *puncta vocalia* [vowel points] in the OT are inspired. On the other hand the ‘marginal readings’ (τὸ κέρι) are not to be regarded as authentic.”<sup>79</sup> While Muller seems to question Voetius’ view, does not the divine authority of Scripture depend upon the very jots and tittles, for is this not what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:18? And is not the Bible verbally (II Peter 1:21) and plenary inspired (II Timothy 3:16)? Indeed, the inspiration and authority of Scripture does rest upon the very words, right down to the jots and tittles.

### **James Ussher – 1652**

According to Muller, Ussher held to the Mosaic origin of the vowel points.<sup>80</sup> In light of this, he may also have believed that they were inscripturated at the same time that Moses wrote. Ussher wrote *De Textus Hebraici Veteris Testamenti Variantibus Lectionibus Ad Ludovicum Cappellum Epistola*,<sup>81</sup> that is, “Concerning the writing variations of the text of the Hebrew Old Testament in reply to Louis Capellus’ Epistle.” According to Muller, Louis Capellus took the view that the Masoretes added the points.<sup>82</sup> In Ussher’s book is a letter from Eyrius, which takes the same position as Ussher (see earlier). In the letter, Eyrius espouses the position that the points that were then in use in his day, were the same points that were in the Hebrew Scripture of old.

---

<sup>79</sup> Heinrich Heppes, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from Sources*, revised and edited Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950), 27.

<sup>80</sup> Muller, 56.

<sup>81</sup> James Ussher, *De Textus Hebraici Veteris Testamenti Variantibus Lectionibus Ad Ludovicum Cappellum Epistola* (London: J. Flesher, 1652), title page.

<sup>82</sup> Muller, 56.

### **John Owen – 1659**

John Owen believed that the vowels were completed by “the men of the great synagogue, Ezra and his companions, guided therein by the infallible direction of the Spirit of God.”<sup>83</sup> Owen intimates that these men were moved by the Spirit of God (II Peter 1:21) to add the vowels and, therefore, these vowels were inspired and fully authoritative. See earlier under Buxtorf, Sr. and Moses the Punctuator for some weaknesses of Owen’s position.

### **Matthias Wasmuth – 1664, 1669**

Matthias Wasmuth was “a German doctor and professor of theology.”<sup>84</sup> With the publication of *Vindiciae Hebr. Script.* in 1664, that is, “A Vindication of the Hebrew Scripture,” he supported the views of Buxtorf.<sup>85</sup> In addition to this book, in 1669 he published *Pro Sanct. Hebr. Texta Vindiciarum Anti-Cappell-Walton; Pars i, qua Originalis Authentia Divina tam Accentuum et Vocalium quam at Ipsorum Literarum . . . Asseritur; Pars ii, qua Necessary Accentuum Usus, etc., Demonstratur*,<sup>86</sup> that is, “Of Vindications in behalf of the Holy Hebrew Text against Cappell-Walton; part 1, that the original divine authenticity is preserved to the extent of accents and of vowels as much as of the letters themselves; part 2, that the necessary use of accents, etc. is demonstrated.” Herein Wasmuth was arguing for the preservation of the original accents, vowels, and letters, indicating his belief that the accents, vowels, and letters that were present in his time were the very vowels, accents, and letters of the *autographa*. Furthermore, he was arguing against the views of Cappell, that is, Cappellus,

---

<sup>83</sup> Owen, 371.

<sup>84</sup> “Wasmuth” in *Cyclopedia*, XII:885.

<sup>85</sup> “Vowel-Points” in *Cyclopedia*, X:822.

<sup>86</sup> “Wasmuth” in *Cyclopedia*, XII:885.

and Walton, both of whom advocated the novelty of the vowel points (see later under the accommodation position).

### Joseph Cooper – 1673

Joseph Cooper, an English nonconformist minister,<sup>87</sup> in 1673 published a book in favor of the antiquity of the vowel points, לתורה או סיני מפתח בית משה או סיני *Hoc est Domus Mosaicae Clavis, sive Legis Sepimentum: In quo punctorum Hebraicorum adstruitur antiquitas: Eaque omnia, cum accentualia tum vocalia, ipsis literis fuisse coaeva, argumentis, undique petitis, demonstratur*,<sup>88</sup> that is, “The Key of the House of Moses or The Hedge of the Law, here is The Key of Moses’ House, or the Law’s Hedge: wherein the antiquity of the points of the Hebrew is built: and this all collectively, not only the accents but also the vowels, with the letters themselves to have existed at the same time, with arguments, and from every point of view with the goal of moving toward the specified point, is demonstrated.” Clearly, he believed that the points existed at the same time as the letters.

### Formula Consensus Helvetica – 1675

The *Formula Consensus* is the last doctrinal confession of the Reformed Church of Switzerland. Concerning the vowel points, it states:

In particular, do we accept the Hebrew codex of the Old Testament, which comes to us from the hands of the Jewish Church, to which were formerly committed the “Oracles of God”; and we firmly maintain it, not only as to the consonants, but also as to the vowels, *sive ipsa punc-*

---

<sup>87</sup> “Cooper, Joseph (1)” in *Cyclopedia*, XII: 103.

<sup>88</sup> Joseph Cooper, לתורה או סיני מפתח בית משה או סיני *Hoc est Domus Mosaicae Clavis, sive Legis Sepimentum: In quo punctorum Hebraicorum adstruitur antiquitas: Eaque omnia, cum accentualia tum vocalia, ipsis literis fuisse coaeva, argumentis, undique petitis, demonstratur. Quae vero in contrarium ab Elia Levita Primipilo, Ludovia Capelli, D. Doctore Waltone . . .* (London: T. R., 1673), title page.

*ta*, the very points; the words as well as the things, as *theopneutos*—God-breathed—part of our faith, not only, but our very life.<sup>89</sup>

Certainly, the words of the Bible are a Christian’s very life, for “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4) and to know the words for certain, the vowels are essential.

### **Francois Turretin - 1696**

In 1696, Turretin, who was “one of the originators of the *Helvetic Consensus* [that is, *Formula Consensus Helvetica*],”<sup>90</sup> wrote *Institutes of Elentic Theology* wherein he makes several statements about the points. In one place he writes:

In order to weaken the authenticity (*authentian*) of the Hebrew edition, our opponents have recourse to the “newness of the points” (in vain, as if the punctuation was only a human invention devised by the Masorettes and therefore founded upon human authority, not upon divine and infallible authority; and that it can be changed at pleasure without risk and so always leave the meaning of a passage uncertain and doubtful).<sup>91</sup>

Turretin makes an excellent point. It is a point that the author will repeat in more detail later in Chapter Three.

In another statement, Turretin writes:

Suffer us briefly to say that we have always thought the truer and safer way to keep the authenticity (*authentian*) of the original text safe and sound against the cavils of all profane persons and heretics whatever

---

<sup>89</sup> George Sayles Bishop, “The Inspiration of the Hebrew Letters and Vowel Points” in *Plains Baptist Challenger* L (July 1991), 47.

<sup>90</sup> “Turretini” in *Cyclopedia*, X:599.

<sup>91</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elentic Theology*, 3 vols., trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1992), I:115.

and to put the principle of faith upon a sure and immovable basis, is that which holds the points to be of divine origin.<sup>92</sup>

This is another excellent observation by Turretin. Indeed, the Lord has given to saints a sure foundation for their faith (Psalm 93:5; 111:7), but without the points it is anything but sure.

### **Samuel Clark –1698, 1699**

Samuel Clark defended the antiquity and the inspiration of the vowel points in *An Exercitation Concerning the Original of the Chapters and Verses in the Bible*.<sup>93</sup> In 1699, Clark wrote *The Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Asserted in Two Discourses: The former shewing The Nature and Extent of the Inspiration vouchsafed by the Holy Ghost to the Penmen of the Scriptures, and the distinct share of each therein. The latter shewing the Divine Authority of the Vowels and Accents in the Hebrew Text; by new and intrinsic Arguments: in a Discourse concerning the Division of the Bible into Chapters and Verses*.<sup>94</sup> The writer has been able to examine only the preface of this work in which Clark wrote:

Besides this late debate [about inspiration], there has been another controversy of longer standing, which has been hotly canvast [that is, debated] and contested pro and con between the most learned pens on both sides, which has a great influence upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures also, viz. about the original of the vowels and accents in the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament.<sup>95</sup>

Clark's statement indicates that as of 1699 the debate about the vowels had been long-standing and seemingly still on going. Clark also cor-

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>93</sup> Pick, 167.

<sup>94</sup> Samuel Clark, *The Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures Asserted in Two Discourses* (London: St. Paul's Church-yard, 1699), title page.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., preface.

rectly recognizes the impact that the vowels have on the authority of the Scriptures.

### **Johann Gottlob Carpzov – 1721, 1723**

Carpzov was from “a family which was one of the most distinguished of the 17<sup>th</sup> century for theological learning.”<sup>96</sup> Johann “was the most eminent of the family” and from 1719 to 1730, he was the “professor of Oriental literature at Leipzig.”<sup>97</sup> During these years he wrote *Introductio ad libros canonicos bibliorum V. T. omnes* (1721), that is, “An Introduction to All the Canonical Books of the Biblical Old Testament” and *Critica Sacra V. T.* (1723), that is, “Old Testament Sacred Criticism.” According to Noordtzy, in these books, Carpzov “declares the accents and vowel points to be just as old as the text itself, denies textual errors, and declares that the writers of the Bible owe all their knowledge to verbal inspiration.”<sup>98</sup>

### **Pierre Guarin – 1724**

Guarin was a French Hebraist who had a lively controversy with Masclef.<sup>99</sup> Masclef’s chief work was “the *Grammatica Hebraica, a punctis aliisque inventis Massorethicis libera*, still considered one of the best works of the kind; it embodies an elaborate argument against the use of the vowelpoints.”<sup>100</sup> The title of the work indicates that Masclef believed that the Masoretes invented the points. In response

---

<sup>96</sup> “Carpzov, Johann Gottlob” in *Cyclopedia*, II:129.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, II:130.

<sup>98</sup> A. Noordtzy, “The Old Testament Problem: Part 1” trans. Miner B. Stearn, in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 97 (Oct. 1940), 463.

<sup>99</sup> “Guarin” in *Cyclopedia*, III:1025.

<sup>100</sup> “Masclef,” in *Cyclopedia*, V:857.

to Masclef's work, Guarin wrote "a defense of the points"<sup>101</sup> in 1724 when he "wrote *Grammatica Hebraica et Chaldaeobiblicum*."<sup>102</sup>

### **Peter Whitfield - 1748**

In *A dissertation on the Hebrew vowel-points. Shewing that they are an original and essential part of the language*, Peter Whitfield presents nine arguments for the inspiration and authority of the vowel points. Whitfield's work is a fine book. Whitfield, however, allows for scribal errors in the Traditional Text when he states of irregularities in punctuation, that is, irregularities in the vowel pointing: "They do, indeed, appear to me, to be nothing more than errors of the transcribers," which he suggests might have been corrected "by changing the points in the text."<sup>103</sup> In other words, Whitfield believes that the vowels are inspired, but not perfectly preserved. Such a position is incongruent with the teaching that the Lord has perfectly preserved His Words (Psalm 12:6,7). Despite Whitfield not holding to perfect preservation, he does offer some solid support along original arguments to show that the vowel points are inspired, and, therefore, it is a valuable book and one from which the author will quote at length.

### **John Gill – 1767**

Gill in *A Dissertation concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel Points, and Accents* writes: "Others believe that they [i.e., the vowels] were *ab origine* [from the beginning], and were invented by *Adam* together with the letters, or however that they were coeval with the letters, and in use as soon as they were: which

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> "Guarin" in *Cyclopedia*, III:1025.

<sup>103</sup> Peter Whitfield, *A dissertation on the Hebrew vowel-points. Shewing that they are an original and essential part of the language* (Liverpoole: Peter Whitfield, 1748), 122.

account is most probable.”<sup>104</sup> While Gill presents many fine arguments for the antiquity of the vowels, he, however, allows for scribal errors in the Traditional Hebrew Text when he writes: “I am not so great an enthusiast, for the integrity of the present printed *Hebrew* copy, as to imagine, that it is entirely clear of the mistakes of transcribers in all places.”<sup>105</sup> However, such is not the position that Jesus took in regard to His copy of the Old Testament, for He regarded it as the truth (John 17:17). Again, despite not holding to perfect preservation, Gill’s work is a valuable contribution to the subject at hand.

In a memoir about Gill are these comments concerning Gill’s work:

This masterly effort of profound research, which would have shewn our author to be a prodigy of reading and literature, had he never published a syllable on any other subject, “was written” by him “at his leisure hours, for his own amusement, not with any design, at first, to publish it to the world; but by way of essay to try how far back the antiquity of the things treated of in it could be carried.” But the confidence which, about this time, some writers had expressed, “as if the victory was proclaimed on their side,” prevailed on him to send it into the world.<sup>106</sup>

The memoir continues by saying, “When this elaborate work came before the public it was treated with candour and ingenuity by the *Critical Reviewers*; who, though they could not agree with every thing in it, particularly concerning the authority of the points, yet allowed the work was executed with great industry, sagacity, and learning.”<sup>107</sup> The

---

<sup>104</sup> Gill, *Dissertation*, 137.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx, xxxi.

<sup>106</sup> John Rippon, “A Brief Memoir of The Life and Writings of the Reverend and Learned John Gill, D. D.” in vol. 1 of *An Exposition of the Old Testament* by John Gill, (London: Mathews and Leigh, 1810, reprinted Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc., 1989), lxi.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

*Monthly Reviewers*, however, took a different approach toward Gill’s work, as Rippon notes:

In the notice which the *Monthly Reviewers* took of this Dissertation, the Doctor [Gill] perceived so clearly their *ignorance* of the subject, and such a vein of dulness, and ill nature, running through the whole of what they say, that he thought their remarks too low for his attention, and acted according to the spirit of his resolution in the *Preface* to the work – “Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honour to animadvert upon what I have written, I am sure of being treated with candour and decency; but should I be attacked by sciolists [pretentious scholars], I expect nothing but petulance, supercilious airs, and opprobrious language—such will be righteously treated with neglect and contempt.”<sup>108</sup>

The last comment indicates the contempt and ridicule that comes from some quarters if one announces his position in favor of the inspiration and antiquity of the points.

#### **James Robertson – 1770**

In 1770, Robertson, Professor of Oriental languages at University of Edinburgh,<sup>109</sup> wrote *Clavis Pentateuchi, sive Analysis omnium vocum hebraicarum suo ordine in Pentateucho Moseos occurrentium: una cum versione latina et anglica: notis criticis et philologicis adjectis; in quibus, ex lingua arabica, Judaeorum moribus, et doctorum itinerariis, plurium locorum S. S. sensus eruitur, novaque versione illustratur. In usum juventutis academicae edinburgenae. Cui praemittuntur dissertationes duae; I. De antiquitate linguae arabicae, ejusque convenientia cum lingua hebraea, etc. II. De genuina punctorum vocalium antiquitate, contra clariss. Capellum, Waltonum, Masclefum, Hutchinsonium,*<sup>110</sup> that is, “The key of the Pentateuch of the analysis of

---

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, lxii.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> James Robertson, *Clavis Pentateuchi, sive Analysis omnium vocum hebraicarum suo ordine in Pentateucho Moseos occurrentium: una cum versione latina et anglica: notis criticis et philologicis adjectis; in quibus, ex lingua arabica, Ju-*

every Hebrew word in its order of occurrence in the Mosaic Pentateuch: one with a Latin and an English version, with critical notes and with literary insertions in which, out of the Arabic language, customs of the Jews, and journeys of doctors, the sense of more places S. S. is brought to light, and a new version is illustrated. For the use of the youth of the academy of Edinburgh. To which are set forward two dissertations: I. Concerning the antiquity of the Arabic language, and of its agreement with the Hebrew language, etc. II. Concerning the genuine antiquity of the vowel points contrary to the honorable Capellus, Walton, Masclef, Hutchinson.” Of particular interest is the second dissertation wherein Robertson discusses the antiquity of the vowel points. In the second dissertation he espouses a view that is contrary to that of Capellus, Walton, Masclef, and Hutchinson, all of whom advanced the view of the novelty of the points.<sup>111</sup> The 1770 edition of Robertson’s work contains these dissertations, but some subsequent editions do not contain them.

In his book, Robertson refers to the work of Gill and writes: “ ‘Vir Doctissimus Joannes Gill, et qui in Rabbiniis scriptis versatissimus esse videtur, in Dissertatione suâ de punctorum vocalium antiquitate, summâ cum industriâ et doctrinâ, ne vestigium quoddam masoretharum, ut pote punctorum vocalium auctorum, in totâ historiâ Judaicâ, a nata Christo ad annum 1037, addesse affirmat, probatque,’

---

*daeorum moribus, et doctorum itinerariis, plurium locorum S. S. sensus erûitur, novaeque versione illustratur. In usum juventutis academicae edinburgensae. Cui praemittuntur dissertationes duae; I. De antiquitate linguae arabicae, ejusque convenientia cum lingua hebraea, etc. II. De genuina punctorum vocalium antiquitate, contra clariss. Capellum, Waltonum, Masclefum, Hutchinsonium* (Edinburg: R. Fleming and P. and A. Neill, 1770), title page.

<sup>111</sup> For more information on Cappellus and Walton, see the next section on the accommodation position. Concerning Masclef, see earlier in this section under Guarin. The Hutchinson to whom Robertson refers may have been John Hutchinson (1674-1737) who “laid great stress on the evidence of Hebrew etymology, and asserted that the Scriptures are not to be understood and interpreted in a literal, but in a typical sense, and according to the radical import of the Hebrew expressions” (“Hutchinson, John 2” in *Cyclopedia*, IV:425,426).

<sup>112</sup> which roughly translates as, “The most learned man John Gill, and who in Rabbinic writings is the most versatile to be seen, in his Dissertation concerning the antiquity of the vowel points, foremost of its kind with diligence and learning, they [i.e., the vowel points] are not just an imprint of the Masorettes, it is possible they are vowel points of the authors, in all Jewish history, before Christ was born up to the year 1037, he affirms, and he proves.” Robertson’s agreed with Gill’s *Dissertation*.

### **Adam Benedict Spitzner – 1791**

Spitzner was “a Protestant clergyman of Germany,” who in 1791 wrote *Vindiciae Originis et Auctoritatis Divinae Punctorum Vocalium et Accentuum in Libris Sacris Veteris Testamenti*,<sup>113</sup> that is, “Vindications of the origin and of the authority of the Divine Vowel Points and Accents in the Sacred Books of the Old Testament.” The subtitle indicates that these vindications oppose Elias Levita and Louis Capellus.<sup>114</sup>

### **John Moncrieff - 1833**

In 1833, Moncrieff published *An Essay on the Antiquity and Utility of the Hebrew Vowel-Points; with an Introduction Stating the Importance of the Question, and the Proper Manner of Discussing it – Likewise showing the Principal Advantages of Reading with the Points, and that the Difficulties have been Improperly Magnified. An Appendix is Added, Giving a Concise View of the Vowel-Points,*

---

<sup>112</sup> Rippon, lxii. The Memoir indicates that Robertson’s treatment of Gill’s *Dissertation* was different from that of the *Monthly Reviewers* (see discussion under Gill above).

<sup>113</sup> “Spitzner, Adam Benedict” in *Cyclopedia*, IX: 960.

<sup>114</sup> “Ubi Imprimis ea Diluuntur quae post Eliam Levitam Ludovicus Capellus in Arcano Punctationis eiusque Vindiciis Opposuit” (Ibid.).