

APOLOGETICS

# *RELIABILITY OF THE SCRIPTURES*

AUTHORITY, CANON, CRITICISM, VERSIONS, & DEFENSE

---

name

---

phone / email

## PREFACE

*The formation of this course, *The Reliability of the Scriptures*, started following two classes required for graduate level work at Talbot Seminary in the fall of 2021 and 2022. Simultaneously, conversations in coffee shops, small groups, and on You-Tube channels were circulating regarding the topic of Biblical authority and reliability. Eventually this course was edited and expanded over the following years into multiple teaching sessions. Many thanks to the students, friends, and theologians that provided valuable feedback and shaped the course content. A special thanks to Mark Burris—who provided much needed edits and oversight to this content. Also, the work of numerous Biblical scholars, including Robert Cupp, Norm Geisler, Daniel Wallace, Bruce Metzger, Sean McDowell, and Michael Kruger are reflected in this course and have each been extensively cited. Their related publications in the bibliography are highly recommended to the interested student.*

*The value of this course, *The Reliability of the Scriptures*, is to offer historical evidence, scholarly criticism, and a clear understanding of how we actually obtained our Bibles. This knowledge will in turn, provide valuable preparation for apologetic discourses and give each student a richer understanding of the Biblical foundations for our faith. May God richly bless you in your studies on this topic.*

Ted Lennard  
The Training Center  
Spring, 2026

© 2025 Fellowship Bible Church of Northwest Arkansas | The Training Center

Scriptures taken from NIV unless otherwise noted THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Curriculum may be copied and used for personal and ministry purposes as long as content remains unchanged.

## **OUTLINE**

Introduction.....	4
<b>Session One</b>	
Doctrine of the Scripture.....	9
<b>Session Two</b>	
The Reliability of the Bible.....	23
<b>Session Three</b>	
The Development of the Biblical Canon.....	37
<b>Session Four</b>	
Textual Criticism and Variants.....	57
<b>Session Five</b>	
What Bible Translation Should I Use?.....	75
<b>Session Six</b>	
Everyday Apologetics.....	103
Appendices.....	111
Timelines.....	127
Bibliography.....	133

# INTRODUCTION

## I. COURSE SUMMARY

The Reliability of the Scriptures class is a six-week interactive apologetics course that explores common questions surrounding the Bible. Session one looks at important concepts such as revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, and authority. Session two gives multiple reasons why the Bible is reliable with emphasis on the surviving manuscripts. Session three evaluates the development of the canon of our Bible answering the question, “How did we get the books in our Bible?” Session four investigates the discipline of textual criticism which helps to understand the variances in the Biblical text and how ancient documents allow us to learn about the original writings. Session five evaluates the historical transmission of the Biblical text ultimately culminating in our different English Bible versions. This course concludes in session six with dialogue on how to have meaningful conversations about the Bible with others who may disagree with its authority. At the conclusion of the course, you will discover there is convincing theological and historical evidence that give us great confidence that the Bible is God’s revealed Word to us.

## II. COURSE OVERVIEW

### SESSION 1: Doctrine of the Scripture

An introduction to the Doctrine of Scripture will be discussed relative to the concepts of authority, revelation, inspiration, and inerrancy. The question, “What does it mean for the Bible to be inspired?” and “How do I understand the idea of Biblical authority in my life?” will be addressed. Many of the terms used in common churches and Bible discussions will be defined and highlighted within the scope of orthodox Christianity. Cultural controversies, arguments, and counter-arguments involving these terms will be discussed.

### SESSION 2: The Reliability of the Bible

Factors that influence the reliability of the Bible will be explored. The question, “How do we know the Bible is reliable and trustworthy?” will be answered. The evidence is simply overwhelming. Reasons that will be discussed include the self-authenticating power of the Scriptures themselves, its cohesiveness throughout the Biblical story, consistent belief

throughout the centuries, existing Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts, the principle of embarrassment in the text, and validating patristic citations.

### **SESSION 3: The Development of the Biblical Canon**

The canonization of the Old Testament and New Testament will be examined. The question, “How did we get the books in our Bible?” will be answered. The principles of apostolicity, catholicity, and orthodoxy will be defined in light of individual New Testament book selection. Common misconceptions about this process will be debunked and the idea that an organic process led by the Holy Spirit—in addition to affirmation by theologians and church councils, will be demonstrated.

### **SESSION 4: Textual Criticism and Variants**

This session will discuss the important work of textual scholars through the discipline of textual criticism. Questions addressed include “Are there mistakes in the Bible?” and “How do we know the Bible we read today reflects the words of the original authors?” In addition, general principles of the transmission of the text over the centuries will be reviewed.

### **SESSION 5: What Bible Translation Should I Use?**

This session will investigate the numerous options of Bibles that are available to the English-speaking world. Questions such as “Is one Bible better than the other?” and “Which Bible should I read?” will be answered. The lineage of each of our common Bibles—Textus Receptus, Majority Text, or Critical Text, will be noted and the basic principles of selection—word-for-word, thought-for-thought, and idea-for-idea, will be explored.

### **SESSION 6: Everyday Apologetics: Bringing the Bible into Meaningful Conversations**

This session guides the student in the practical application of the course content in common everyday conversations. This lively, interactive time will allow for the student to formulate a five-minute reliability of the Bible argument, experience one-on-one discussions, observe role-playing, and participate in case studies. Biblical principles from Colossians 4:6 and 1 Peter 3:15 will be applied to each of the arguments. This session is intended to merge the academic study of Bibliology to everyday apologetics and meaningful conversations.

### III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

#### SESSION 1

- Explain the two types of revelation. What are each of their subtypes?
- Describe the divine flow of inspiration.
- Explain the meaning of inerrancy. What is its logical flow?

#### SESSION 2

- List five ways the Bible is reliable.
- Explain the importance of the Aleppo and Leningrad Codices to the trustworthiness of the Bible.
- Draw a timeline that contains the second, third, and fourth century New Testament fragments and manuscripts.

#### SESSION 3

- List the three major criteria for a book's inclusion into the New Testament canon.
- Explain the flow of major events for the development of the Old Testament canon.
- Describe important events in the development of the New Testament canon. What role did councils have in the process?

#### SESSION 4

- Explain how existing New Testament manuscripts allow scholars to understand the autographs.
- Explain the concept of textual variants. How does the nature of these variants effect our confidence in the Scripture?
- Describe the different text-types within Greek manuscripts. What role do each of these play in future English translations?

## **SESSION 5**

- Diagram a timeline that contains the historical transmission of the Biblical text.
- What are the three types of competing primary New Testament sources? Explain how these sources are reflected in our English versions.
- List and explain the three general types of Bible versions.

## **SESSION 6**

- Present your personalized five-minute argument for the reliability of the Scripture.
- How does 1 Peter 3:15 and Colossians 4:6 shape the tone of your response?
- Explain how textual criticism supports the validity of the autographa and therefore, supports the content of our English Bibles and its authority.



SESSION ONE

*DOCTRINE OF  
THE BIBLE*

## SESSION ONE

# DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE

### I. STATE OF THE BIBLE

- A. American Bible Society Study 2021 <sup>1</sup>
- B. Gallup Poll, 2022 <sup>2</sup>

### II. FOUNDATIONAL VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

- A. Fellowship Bible Church Position.
  - 1. “We believe that the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God, in whole and in part, error-free in the original writings and the supreme authority of faith and practice for the believer in Jesus Christ.”
- B. Scriptures: Inspired authoritative text without error.
- C. Doctrine of Scripture should be grounded in our Doctrine of God.
- D. **Sola Scriptura** <sup>3</sup> (Scripture alone. Bible has the final say in all matters it addresses. Scripture has the final authority to judge doctrine, but not the only resource) .. not Solo Scriptura (Just me and my Bible; Subjects theology to the whims of subjectivism and is divisive because there is no room for theological disagreements.)
- E. **Psalms 119 shows us what to believe, what to feel, and what to do with the Word of God.** (Out of 176 verses – all but three speak of the word of God; includes many synonyms for the Word of God).
- F. **Scripture is the Word of God** (not “contains” or “becomes”).

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/sotb-2021/>.

<sup>2</sup> Gallup Poll, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394262/fewer-bible-literal-word-god.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Lawson Murray, *Sola Scriptura or Solo Scriptura?* Jump into the Word; Bible Engagement Blog, 4/21/2020, <https://www.jumpintotheword.com/2020/04/21/sola-scriptura-or-solo-scriptura/>.

### III. THE BIBLE: God's Revelation to Us

#### A. Revelation Defined

1. "To unveil" or "to disclose" or "to make something known previously secret."<sup>4 5</sup>
2. Infers "content"
  - a. God's unveiling or disclosing of Himself to mankind.
  - b. God is communicating His message to man.
  - c. Revelation may occur in a single, instantaneous act, or it may extend over a long period of time. This revelation may be perceived by man in various degrees of fullness.
  - d. Only through God's revelation of Himself can there be accurate and propositional statements about Him. He discloses truth about Himself that man would otherwise not know.

#### B. Two Types of Revelation

1. General (unwritten) Revelation
  - a. God is revealing Himself in creation (nature), history, and conscience.
  - b. "All that man knows intuitively is revealed to him." He knows through his intellect, which is the "workmanship of God."<sup>6</sup>
  - c. Limited value: "General revelation can reveal the existence of God; suggest some of His attributes (power, majesty, glory, goodness), but it cannot save. This requires further 'special revelation.'"<sup>7</sup>
  - d. Purpose: To provide mankind with sufficient light about God to make him responsible.
  - e. All mankind, all places, all times, all cultures have equal access to General Revelation.
  - f. Types of General Revelation
    1. In Creation (Nature)
      - a. God reveals Himself in the material creation (cosmos, human body, etc.)

<sup>4</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages. (Romans 16:25, ESV)

<sup>5</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:30-32, ESV)

<sup>6</sup> William GT Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Third Edition, Alan W. Gomes (ed), (Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing, 2003), 85.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Cupp, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.

- b. Psalms 19:1-6 <sup>8</sup>
  - vs 2: Continuous—“day to day” and “night to night”
  - vs 3: Wordless—“no speech, nor are there words”
  - vs 4: Worldwide—“all the earth” and “end of the world”
- c. Romans 1:18-21 <sup>9</sup>, Job 12:7-9 <sup>10</sup>, Ps 8:1-3 <sup>11</sup>, Other. <sup>12</sup>
- 2. In History <sup>13</sup>
  - a. God’s fingerprints are everywhere.
  - b. Providential control of human history <sup>14</sup>
- 3. In Conscience <sup>15</sup>
  - a. God has placed intuitional knowledge of Himself inside the hearts of a man.
  - b. Moral law is built within us. You just know when something is not right.
- 4. In Beauty and Music <sup>16</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, <sup>5</sup> which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. <sup>6</sup> Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalms 19:1-6, ESV)

<sup>9</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:18-21, ESV)

<sup>10</sup> But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you; <sup>8</sup> or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. <sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? (Job 12:7-9, ESV)

<sup>11</sup> O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup> Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. <sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place (Psalms 8:1-3, ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 40:12-14, 26; Acts 14:15-17; Col 1:16-17; Psalms 97:6.

<sup>13</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. (Acts 17:24-27, NIV)

<sup>14</sup> ‘The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.’ (Daniel 4:17, NIV)

<sup>15</sup> For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup> on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16, ESV)

<sup>16</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10, NIV)

## 2. Special Revelation

- a. God makes Himself specifically known to specific people at special times.
- b. God has “opened the curtain more fully.”
- c. God is revealing Himself through Christ and the Scriptures.<sup>17 18</sup>
- d. The pinnacle of God’s revelation is the unveiling of Himself through Christ.<sup>19 20</sup>
- e. Two types of Special Revelation
  1. Jesus Christ (Living Word)
  2. The Scriptures (Written Word)<sup>21</sup>
  3. Combination of Living Word and Written Word (see “The Word of God: Two Living Relations” in Appendix A).
    - a. The Fullness of Revelation occurs when Living and Written Words combine.

## IV. **THE BIBLE:** God’s Inspired Word to Us

### A. Inspiration Defined

1. Method by which content becomes written revelation: Inspiration preserves and guarantees the accuracy of the revelation of God; otherwise the revelation of God may come into question.
2. “The Holy Spirit’s superintending over the writers so that while writing according to their own styles and personalities, the result was God’s Word written – authoritative, trustworthy, and free from error in the original autographs.”<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2, ESV)

<sup>18</sup> Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (John 14:8-9, ESV)

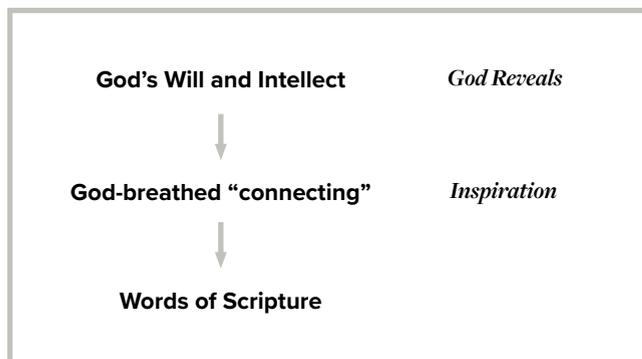
<sup>19</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known. (John 1:18, ESV)

<sup>20</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. (Col 1:15, ESV)

<sup>21</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;<sup>8</sup> the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;<sup>9</sup> the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.<sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.<sup>12</sup> Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults.<sup>13</sup> Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:7-20, ESV)

<sup>22</sup> Paul P. Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, 161.

3. "Inspiration is not sanctification. It is the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind for the purpose of conveying religious truth to mankind."<sup>23</sup>
4. "The influence of the Holy Spirit upon a human person whereby he is infallibly moved and guided in all his statements while under this influence."<sup>24</sup>
5. Inspiration extends to the original text (autographs; autographa). "Copies and translations of the Bible do not possess original inspiration, but they have a derived inspiration insofar as they are faithful copies of the autographs."<sup>25</sup>
6. God is the source. Scripture is inspired by God—not the apostles or prophets.
7. Inspiration connects the intellect and will of God to the Words of Scripture. You are connecting what is coming from God (revelation or content) as the authority to the Words of Scripture.
8. The idea is that God divinely influenced the human authors of the Bible in such a way that what they recorded was the exact Word of God. "Inspiration" means "God-breathed." This means that the Bible truly is the Word of God.
9. "Spirit-moved men wrote God-breathed words that are divinely authoritative for Christian faith and practice."<sup>26</sup>
10. Everything flows from Inspiration.



<sup>23</sup> William GT Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Third Edition, Alan W. Gomes (ed), (Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing, 2003), 98.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>25</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, "The Character of the Bible" in *From God to Us, How we got our Bibles*, (Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2012), 19.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

11. See Primary Biblical Texts on Inspiration (Appendix B).
12. See Proofs of Inspiration (Appendix C). God's Will and Intellect  
God reveals God-breathed "connecting" inspiration words of  
Scripture

## **B. The Divine Flow of Inspiration**

1. Divine Causality—Prophetic Agency—Written Authority.<sup>27</sup>
  - a. Divine Causality
    1. God revealed, and spokespersons of God recorded the truths that God revealed. God is the ultimate source and original cause of Biblical truth. This is the most fundamental factor.
  - b. Prophetic Agency
    1. The words the prophets wrote were the Words of God, but also the words of humans. Men used their own literary styles and personalities to convey God's Words. They were not automatons.
    2. Men were the immediate cause, but God was the ultimate cause.
    3. The Bible did not originate from mankind, representing our understanding of the divine, but rather from God to us.
  - c. Written Authority
    1. Scriptures are the final word on all matters of morals, doctrines, theology, and ethics.

## **C. Six Basic Elements to Inspiration**<sup>28</sup>

- a. The Bible has Divine origin.
- b. The Bible came through human agency.
- c. The Bible is a written authority.
- d. The Bible's authority is in the autographs.
- e. The Bible's original text is inerrant.
- f. The Bible has final authority.

<sup>27</sup> Geisler and Nix, 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Cupp, 2013.

#### D. Biblical View of Inspiration

1. Verbal, Plenary Inspiration
  - a. Verbal—the very words themselves (not just ideas) of Scripture; every single word in the Scripture is the exact Word of God.
  - b. Plenary - complete or full; all of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17); extends to all parts and subject matters of Scripture (not just parts)
    1. God used the intellect, skills, and personalities of fallible men to write down what was divine and infallible (concurvise operation).<sup>29</sup>
    2. Whole (Matt 5:17, 2 Tim 3:16), parts (John 12:14-16), words (Matt 4:4), letters (Matt 5:18).
    3. “They dared not to announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in his whole sanctuary.”<sup>30</sup>
    4. When the authors wrote they “breathed-out” the words of God. In this scenario, the writings maintain the writer’s personalities. Think how many wrote differently, but the words are exactly God’s words.

#### E. Faulty views of Inspiration

1. An artist who develops insight into their next work of art
2. A speaker or teacher who “inspires” their audience
3. Modernist view - believes people (i.e. Paul, Moses, Jesus) had superior insight in the matters of God for their day and time, but that we are better today.
4. See *False Views of Inspiration* (Appendix D).

---

#### ***How could any authoritative book be authored by such lowly people?***

***“The fact that inspiration is instruction, not sanctification, and that revelation is an objective information from God which does not depend on subjective characteristics in the person chosen as the medium of communication explains how it is that a volume containing the most profound views of God and man that have yet been published on earth could have been produced among a people comparatively low in knowledge, civilization and culture.”***<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, (Wheaton, IL, Crossway, 2014), 37.

<sup>30</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1541, Book 1, Chapter 7, Section 4.

<sup>31</sup> William GT Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Third Edition, Alan W. Gomes (ed), (Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing, 2003), 99.

## V. **THE BIBLE:** God's Authoritative Word to Us

### A. **Authority Defined**

1. "Primary authority is that of truth itself."<sup>32</sup>
2. A result of God's revelation and inspiration to us
3. "Having the Bible as the source of your worldview... and trusting God to provide the answers to the big questions in life."<sup>33</sup>
4. The last word always goes to the Word of God—not science, not human experience, not church councils.
5. The Bible provides the answer.
6. What the Bible says—God says.
7. The Scriptures have the authority to command our conscience and bind our belief.<sup>34</sup>
8. God's Word is enough.
9. Joshua 1:8 should not leave your mind.<sup>35</sup>

### B. **The Scripture's Authority Conveys its Sufficiency**

1. Scripture contains everything we need for knowledge of salvation and godly living.
2. "Scripture is clear enough to make us responsible for carrying out our present responsibilities to God."<sup>36</sup>
3. "It takes away any excuses for disobedience. No one can say God has not revealed enough for us to be saved or to live a life pleasing to him."<sup>37</sup> We do not need to add or subtract from it.
4. Supports Sola Scriptura (not Solo Scriptura); tradition does not have equal say to the Scriptures.
5. We do not add to or subtract from it. (Rev 22:18-19; Deut 4:2, 12:32) We do not try to make it better or change to align with our views and we do not remove portions if culture demands.
6. "The sacred and divinely inspired Scriptures are sufficient for the exposition of the truth."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, Revised Edition, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Josh McDowell, "What is Biblical Authority and Why is it so Critical Today? Interview with Josh McDowell," in SeanMcDowell.org, 8/15/16, <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/what-is-biblical-authority-and-why-is-it-so-critical-for-the-church-today-interview-with-josh-mcdowell>.

<sup>34</sup> Kevin Lewis, *Elenctic Theology: Bibliology: Contemporary Challenges to Scripture, Part 1*, The Institute for Theology & Law, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZe\\_ola-66j8&list=PLqQBFAFqyVdQ1uc8ENyKhsDpkilBTdr&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZe_ola-66j8&list=PLqQBFAFqyVdQ1uc8ENyKhsDpkilBTdr&index=2).

<sup>35</sup> Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; mediate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8; NIV)

<sup>36</sup> John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010, 226.

<sup>37</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word*, (Wheaton, IL, Crossway, 2014), 45.

<sup>38</sup> Athanasius, "Against the Heathen," Part 1, 1.3. Accessed on 7/23/2025, from New Advent, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2801.htm>.

7. The biblical attribute most quickly doubted by believers (i.e. If only we could have something more than the Scripture; all would be better).
8. God's Word is final.

## VI. **THE BIBLE:** God's Inerrant Word to Us

### A. **Inerrancy Defined**

1. "When all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences."<sup>39</sup>

### B. **Copies: Inerrancy extends as long as it has been faithfully copied, translated, and passed down.**

### C. **"There is an internal, philosophical, and theological coherence and logic to inerrancy."**<sup>40</sup>

### D. **"Scripture did not come from the will of man; it came from God and if it is God's Word, then it must all be true, for in Him, there can be no error or deceit."**<sup>41</sup>

### E. **"The Bible makes no mistakes, can be understood, cannot be overturned, and is the most important word in your life, the most relevant thing you can read each day."**<sup>42</sup>

### F. **Logic of Inerrancy**<sup>43</sup>

1. God cannot err.
2. The Bible is God's Word.
3. Therefore, the Bible cannot err.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Feinberg, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," *Inerrancy*, Norman Geisler, (ed), (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1980), 294.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Cupp, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> DeYoung, 39.

<sup>42</sup> DeYoung, 16.

<sup>43</sup> Cupp, 2013.

### G. Ryrie's Logic of Inerrancy <sup>44</sup>

1. God is true.
2. Scripture is "breathed-out" by God.
3. Therefore, Scriptures are true.

"Finding a half-way house where some things in the Bible are true and other things (as we have judged them) are not is an impossibility." <sup>45</sup>

### H. Reasons to believe in Inerrancy <sup>46</sup>

1. God's character demands inerrancy. <sup>47</sup>
2. The Bible teaches inerrancy. <sup>48</sup>
3. Jesus affirms inerrancy. <sup>49</sup>
4. The Church over history has believed in inerrancy.

### I. Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy <sup>50</sup>

*"We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ. We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church."* <sup>51</sup>

– Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy.

<sup>44</sup> Charles Ryrie as quoted by Robert Cupp, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.

<sup>45</sup> DeYoung, 39.

<sup>46</sup> Cupp, 38.

<sup>47</sup> John 17:17, Psalms 119:160, Proverbs 30:5, Titus 1:2.

<sup>48</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Peter 1:21.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 4:1-11; 22:23-33; 5:17-18.

<sup>50</sup> International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, 1978, [https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI\\_1.pdf](https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy*, Article XIX, 1978, [https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI\\_1.pdf](https://library.dts.edu/Pages/TL/Special/ICBI_1.pdf).

“I find the whole American evangelical fixation on inerrancy and its bitter infighting so weird because outside of American evangelical subculture, among the global churches, no one treats inerrancy as the number one issue that separates the good guys from the bad guys.”<sup>52</sup>

– MICHAEL BIRD

## VII. SUMMARY

### A. Key concepts in the topics of Revelation, Inspiration Authority, and Inerrancy<sup>53</sup>

1. God electively revealed Himself to us through general and special revelation.
2. God-breathed Inspiration connected His will and intellect to the words of Scripture.
3. God’s Inspiration extends to both *verbal* (each word in every verse) and *plenary* (all Scripture).
4. The authoritative aspect of the Scripture means God Himself provided all the content.
5. Inerrancy means without any error or perfectly written.
6. Infallibility means the Scriptures are completely trustworthy, dependable and reliable.

<sup>52</sup> Michael F Bird, “What Is the Inerrancy Debate and How Should We Think about It?” *ZA Blog*, Oct 12, 2021, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/what-is-the-inerrancy-debate-and-how-should-we-think-about-it>

<sup>53</sup> Harold Wilmington, [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=questions\\_101](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=questions_101).

## VIII. STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Explain in your own words the difference between general revelation and special revelation. List one or two Scripture verses that help understand each definition.
  
- B. Explain the concept of Biblical inspiration. Why is this important in discussing the reliability of Scripture?
  
- C. If the Bible is authoritative over our lives, how does it change the way we live?
  
- D. How would you reconcile the doctrine of inerrancy with our English Bible that has been translated from the original languages?
  
- E. What is the Christian response to those who argue that God has not revealed Himself to those in remote places?

Explain this response as part of question E.

*If you reject what you have, do you get more light?*

*If you accept what you have, will you receive more light?*

*Do you desire more? What would God do?*<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Robert Cupp, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.



SESSION TWO

*RELIABILITY OF  
THE BIBLE*

## SESSION TWO

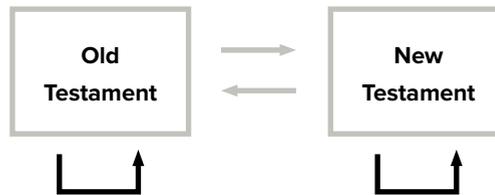
# RELIABILITY OF THE BIBLE

### I. RELIABILITY DEFINED

- A. The quality of being trustworthy
- B. Consistently good in its quality
- C. Rational pattern of predictability
- D. Multi-faceted reasoning

### II. REASONS THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

#### A. The Bible *Itself* Says It



1. Old Testament affirms itself <sup>55 56</sup>
2. Old Testament affirms New Testament
  - a. Messianic prophesies
  - b. Foreshadowing
  - c. Christophanies
3. New Testament affirms Old Testament <sup>57 58 59</sup>
  - a. Jesus describes the Scriptures <sup>60 61 62 63 64</sup>
  - b. Jesus pre-authenticates the New Testament <sup>65 66</sup>
4. New Testament affirms itself <sup>67 68 69 70</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Robert Cupp, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.

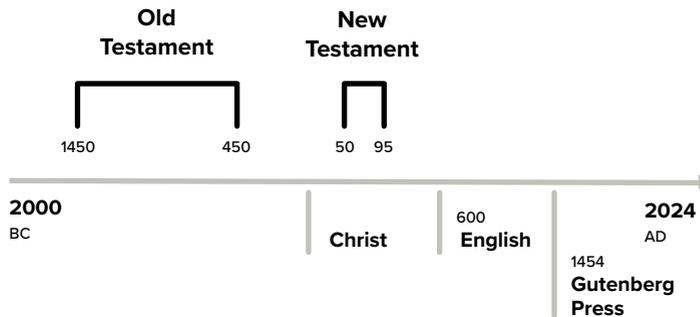
<sup>55</sup> "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever." (Isaiah 40:8, NIV)

<sup>56</sup> "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalms 119:105, ESV)

## B. Cohesiveness of the Biblical content

1. Written over a 1500-year time period
2. More than 40 authors
3. Sixty-six books
4. Three languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)
5. Three continents (Europe, Asia, Africa)
6. A single message

## C. Subject to Consistent Belief over the Last 2000 Years



### TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating the writings of the Old and New Testament.

Note the comparative time of the origin of the English language and the invention of the Gutenberg Press.

<sup>57</sup> "For this reason also the wisdom of God said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and some they will persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the house of God; yes, I tell you, it shall be charged against this generation'" (Luke 11:49-51, NASB).

<sup>58</sup> "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27, NIV).

<sup>59</sup> " This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms" (TANAKH – Torah, Prophet & Writings) (Luke 24:44, NIV).

<sup>60</sup> "The scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35, ESV).

<sup>61</sup> "The command of God" (Matthew 15:3, NIV).

<sup>62</sup> "Word of God" (Mark 7:13, NIV).

<sup>63</sup> Described as indestructible in Matthew 5:18.

<sup>64</sup> "Have you not read what God said to you?" (Matthew 22:31, NIV).

<sup>65</sup> "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26, NIV).

<sup>66</sup> "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you" (John 16:12-14, NIV).

<sup>67</sup> "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16, NIV)

<sup>68</sup> "But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, ESV).

<sup>69</sup> "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mark 13:31, NIV).

<sup>70</sup> "The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the Word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:24-25, NKJV).

1. 1st Clement of Rome (100)
2. Augustine (412)
3. Thomas Aquinas (1270)
4. John Calvin (1536)
5. J.P. Moreland, D.A. Carson (2025)

#### D. Embarrassing Details add Credibility to its Content

1. *Principle of Embarrassment* defined: A criterion that looks at ancient writings to see if there are hard, embarrassing, or unfavorable details about the author(s) or with the story's purpose. If such details exist, positive conclusions can be made about the integrity of the author(s).
2. Examples
  - a. Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2)
  - b. The disciples not understanding the teachings of Jesus (Mark 4:1-12)
  - c. The three disciples falling asleep at Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46)
  - d. The crucifixion of Jesus as a criminal (Mark 15:21-41)
  - e. Women discovering the empty tomb (John 20)

#### E. Surviving Manuscripts

1. Manuscripts
  - a. Manuscript Defined – handwritten copy generally dated prior to the invention of the printing press.
  - b. Autographa (Originals, Autographs, Exit text, Ausgang Text, Urtext, Autographic text form) – Document that left the author's hands as it was dispatched to its primary reader and is no longer under the author's control
2. Important Old Testament Manuscripts
  - a. Kettef Hinnom <sup>71</sup>
    1. Earliest extant fragment of biblical text in existence (late seventh or early sixth century BC)

<sup>71</sup> Armstrong Institute Staff, *Kettef Hinnom Scrolls*, June 24, 2018, <https://armstronginstitute.org/45-kettef-hinnom-scrolls>.

2. Benediction <sup>72 73</sup>
    - a. Numbers 6:24-26
    - b. Deuteronomy 7:9
  3. Two small silver scrolls—about one inch wide, with an inscription
  4. Exact wording contained in the Hebrew Bible
  5. Discovered in 1979 in a Jerusalem family tomb dated to the time of Jeremiah
  6. On display at The Israel Museum in Jerusalem <sup>74</sup>
- b. Dead Sea Scrolls (200BC-100AD)
1. Ancient manuscripts discovered between 1947 -1956 in eleven caves near Khirbet Qumran, on the shores of the Dead Sea
  2. Contains fragments from every OT book except Esther
  3. Contains the entire book of Isaiah (Great Isaiah Scroll), <sup>75</sup>—oldest OT book in existence
  4. On display at The Israel Museum in Jerusalem <sup>76</sup>
- c. Aleppo Codex <sup>77</sup> (930AD)
1. Oldest known manuscript of the Hebrew Bible (OT)
  2. Seventy-five percent remains—missing entire Torah except 11 pages of Deuteronomy
  3. Smuggled out of Syria in 1947 following the Arab-Israeli war
  4. Work of scribes (Masoretes) in Tiberias, Israel, on the Sea of Galilee in about 930 AD
  5. On display at The Israel Museum in Jerusalem <sup>78</sup>
- d. Leningrad Codex (1010 AD)
1. Oldest *complete* manuscript of the Hebrew Bible (OT)

<sup>72</sup> "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you." (Num 6:24-26, NIV).

<sup>73</sup> "Who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments" (Deuteronomy 7:9, KJV).

<sup>74</sup> "Priestly Benediction" on amulets, *The Israel Museum*, Accessed on 5/19/2025, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/198069-0>.

<sup>75</sup> The Digital Dead Sea Scrolls, *The Israel Museum*, Accessed on 5/19/25, <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>.

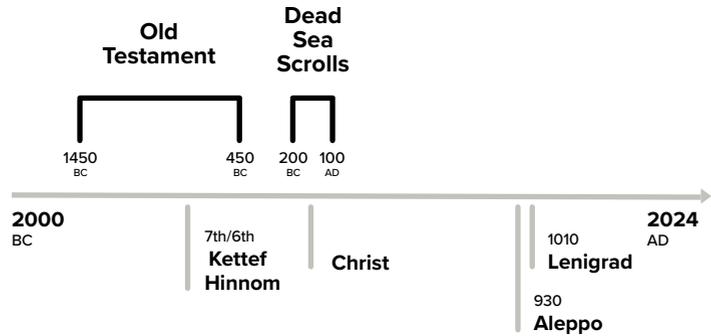
<sup>76</sup> "The Dead Seas Scrolls," *The Israel Museum*, Accessed on 5/19/25, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/wings/shrine-book/dead-sea-scrolls#>.

<sup>77</sup> Aleppo codex online, <https://barhama.com/ajaxzoom/viewer/viewer.php?zoomDir=/pic/AleppoWM/&example=viewer5>.

<sup>78</sup> "The Aleppo Codex," *The Israel Museum*, Accessed on 5/19/25, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/226966-0>.

## TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating the surviving Old Testament manuscripts in relationship to the original.



3. Reason for limited Old Testament manuscripts
  - a. Jewish Scribes (Supreme Guardians)
    1. Soferim (500BC-100BC)
    2. Tannaim (100BC-100AD)
    3. Amoraim (100AD-500AD)
    4. Masorettes (500-900 AD)
      - Masters of Tradition
      - Hebrew text became known as “Masoretic” text.
  - b. Text was “unalterable.”
  - c. Newer copies preferred—same or better than previous copy
  - d. Jewish scribes gave older copies a ceremonial burial.
  - e. Scribes’ motive was to prevent improper use.
  - f. Many manuscripts have decayed, been destroyed, or are undiscovered.
4. Important New Testament surviving Greek manuscripts<sup>80 81</sup>
  - a. Major Manuscripts

<sup>79</sup> The National Library of Russia, <https://nlr.ru/eng>.

<sup>80</sup> Daniel Wallace, The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, <https://www.csntm.org/about-us/>.

<sup>81</sup> Official list of New Testament manuscripts is maintained at The Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF, Münster, Germany) in an authoritative catalog, the Kurzgefasste Liste. <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>.

1. Codex Vaticanus <sup>82</sup> (B or 03) (350 AD)
  - a. The most important manuscript of the Bible and thus the most important document in the world <sup>83</sup>
  - b. Contains 759 of 820 leaves—almost all of both the Septuagint (OT in Greek) and NT in Greek. (nearly complete)
  - c. OT (617 sheets) lacks first twenty leaves of Genesis; also lacks two books of Maccabees
  - d. NT (142 sheets) lacks 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation (stops at Hebrews 9:13)
  - e. Compare to P75 (200 AD) – text almost exact
  - f. Crucial source for textual criticism—assists scholars in evaluating the early Greek NT and Septuagint
  - g. Used as a base text in the 1881 Westcott and Hort Greek NT edition and many modern day Greek New Testaments
  - h. Written in uncial (or magistral) script (rounded, capital letters) on parchment in a three-column format without word division, punctuation, or pages, by two or three different scribes
  - i. Alexandrian text type
  - j. On display in The Vatican Library in Rome <sup>84</sup>
  
2. Codex Sinaiticus <sup>85</sup> (01) (350-400 AD)
  - a. Contains 400 of 730 total leaves—all of the Greek NT and about half of the Septuagint (Greek OT)
  - b. OT: lacks Genesis 1:1-46:28; Ex 1:1-24:7, Lev 20:27-22:30, Numbers 5:26-7:20, 1 Chron. 9:27-19:17, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther
  - c. Lacks 1 and 2 Maccabees (apocryphal books)
  - d. Also contains *The Epistle of Barnabas* and portions of *The Shepherd of Hermas*
  - e. NT: Oldest complete manuscript of the Greek NT that predates the 9th century <sup>86</sup>
  - f. Highly valued by Bible scholars in their efforts to reconstruct the original biblical text

<sup>82</sup> Codex Vaticanus, Vatican Digital Library, [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.1209](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209).

<sup>83</sup> Daniel Wallace, "Majuscules," *Textual Criticism Course*, Credo House, Accessed on 5/29/25, 2013, 9:13.

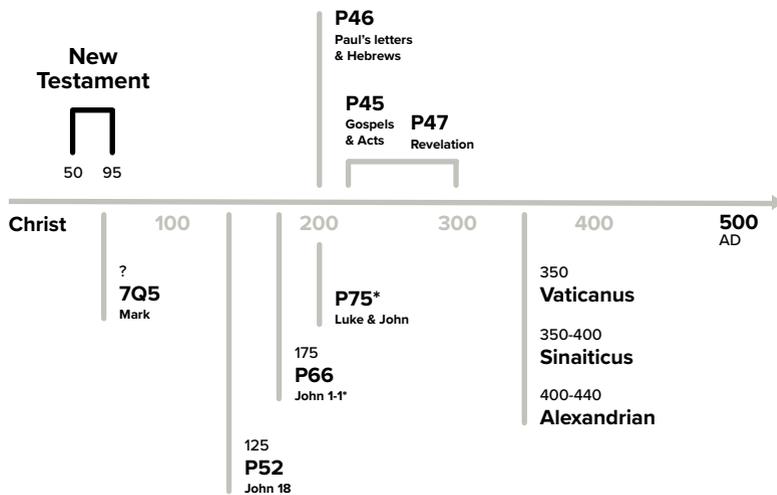
<sup>84</sup> Codex Vaticanus online, [https://biblicalstudiesonline.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/codex-vaticanus-online/#:~:text=Codex%20Vaticanus%20\(B\)%2C%20containing,available%20by%20the%20Vatican%20Library.](https://biblicalstudiesonline.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/codex-vaticanus-online/#:~:text=Codex%20Vaticanus%20(B)%2C%20containing,available%20by%20the%20Vatican%20Library.)

<sup>85</sup> Codex Sinaiticus, <https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>

<sup>86</sup> "See the Manuscript" Codex Sinaiticus, <https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx>

- g. On display in four places: 347 leaves in The British Library; 43 leaves in the Library of the University of Leipzig; parts of three leaves in the National Library of Russia; 12+ leaves remain in the Saint Catherine's Monastery
3. Codex Alexandrinus (A) (400AD)
    - a. Contains 773 of 822 leaves of the Greek OT (Septuagint) and NT
    - b. OT: 630 leaves; lacks Gen 1:1 – 46:28, 1 Sam 12:17-14:9, Ps 49:20-79:11
    - c. NT: 143 leaves; lacks Matt 1:1-25:6, John 6:50-8:52, 2 Cor. 4:13-12:6; also includes John 7:53-8:11 (adulterer story)
    - d. Also contains 1 Clement and portions of 2 Clement
    - e. On display in The British Library
- b. Important New Testament Fragments
    1. Papyri (127)
    2. Collectively accounts for about 43% of the NT
    3. Some within 100 years of the original writings
    4. Earliest witness to the NT text
    5. P52 (John Rylands)
      - a. John 18:31-33, 37-38
      - b. Dating 100-150 AD (125 AD)
      - c. "When P52 was written the ink of John's Gospel was barely dry" (written within decades of the original)
      - d. Purchased in 1920 in Egypt
      - e. John – written about 90 AD
      - f. Located in The John Rylands Library (Manchester, England)

6. P45, 46, 47 (Chester Beatty)<sup>87</sup>
  - a. P45 (3rd C AD): Gospels and Acts
  - b. P45 – Oldest Mark’s Gospel
  - c. P46 (200 AD): Paul’s letters and Hebrews
  - d. P46 – Oldest of Paul’s letters; 86/104 leaves remaining
  - e. P47 (3rd C AD); Revelation (oldest in existence)
  - f. Located in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland<sup>88</sup>
  
7. P66, P75 (Bodmer Papyri)
  - a. P66 (175 AD): John’s Gospel (1st 14 chapters + fragments)
  - b. P66: Geneva, Switzerland
  - c. P75 (200 AD): Luke and John
  - d. P75 – 3rd most important manuscript in the world
  - e. Text almost exact with Vaticanus (350 AD)
  - f. Located in Rome, Italy
  
8. 7Q5 (Dead Sea Scrolls)
  - a. Mark 6:52-53
  - b. Date – under intense debate (50-68 AD?)



**TIMELINE**

Timeline demonstrating the surviving fragments and early manuscripts of the New Testament in relationship to the original.

<sup>87</sup> Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition, (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2003), 117-118.

- c. Reasons for the limited number of New Testament manuscripts
  - 1. Papyrus decay <sup>89</sup>
  - 2. Persecution
  - 3. Undiscovered

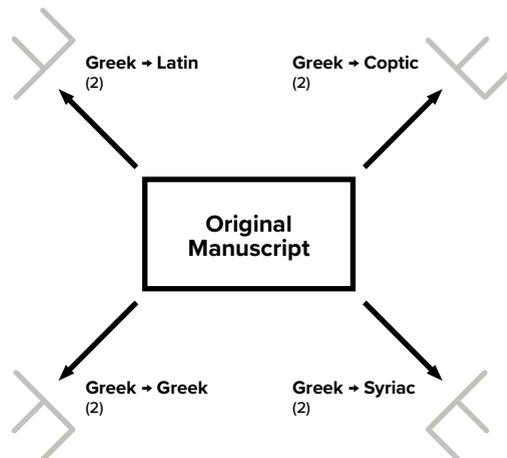
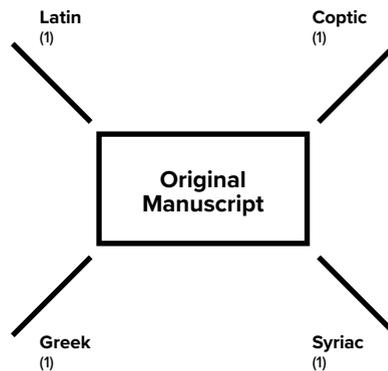
5. Concept of Multiplicity of Manuscripts

- a. Reconstructs the original work
- b. Preserves the original text
- c. The more manuscripts available – the greater chance to reconstruct the original
- d. As time goes on (and more manuscripts become available we get closer to the original)

**DIAGRAM**

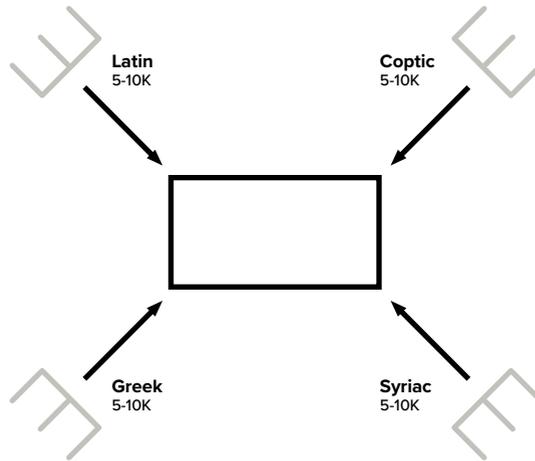
Diagrammatic example of the concept of multiplicity of manuscripts.

Note how when the originals disappear, there are extensive copies that can be used to restore the originals.



<sup>88</sup> Chester Beatty Library, <https://chesterbeatty.ie>.

<sup>89</sup> Daniel Wallace, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, Textual Criticism Credo Courses, 2013, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>



**QUESTION**

How tall would stacks of existing New Testament manuscripts compare to existing classic ancient literature? <sup>96</sup>

New Testament

1 Mile High

Classic Literature

4 Feet High

- e. The number of New Testament manuscripts in existence <sup>90</sup>
  - 1. Greater than 25,000 <sup>91 92</sup>
    - a. Greek <sup>93 94</sup> (5800)
    - b. Latin (More than 10K) <sup>95</sup>
    - c. Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, Gothic, Arabic, Hebrew, Slavic (5-10K)
- f. Comparison of NT manuscripts to ancient literature

<sup>90</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, "How Tall Would a Stack of New Testament Manuscripts Be?" Blog, January 1, 2023. [https://danielbwallace.com/2023/01/01/how-tall-would-a-stack-of-new-testament-manuscripts-be/?fbclid=IwAR1GAmDiPgo6CKzrbImEE1Ai0d8JY9pzy7L2\\_c3Eh9LtsRh1YuSrnNTZcSU](https://danielbwallace.com/2023/01/01/how-tall-would-a-stack-of-new-testament-manuscripts-be/?fbclid=IwAR1GAmDiPgo6CKzrbImEE1Ai0d8JY9pzy7L2_c3Eh9LtsRh1YuSrnNTZcSU).

<sup>91</sup> Norman Geisler, *The Big Book of Christian Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2012), 398.

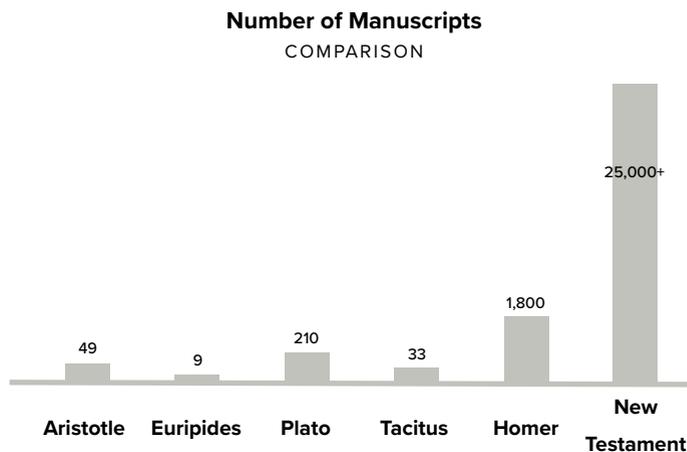
<sup>92</sup> The Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF, Münster, Germany) maintains the authoritative catalog, the Kurzgefasste Liste, <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>.

<sup>93</sup> Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Fourth Edition, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2005), 50.

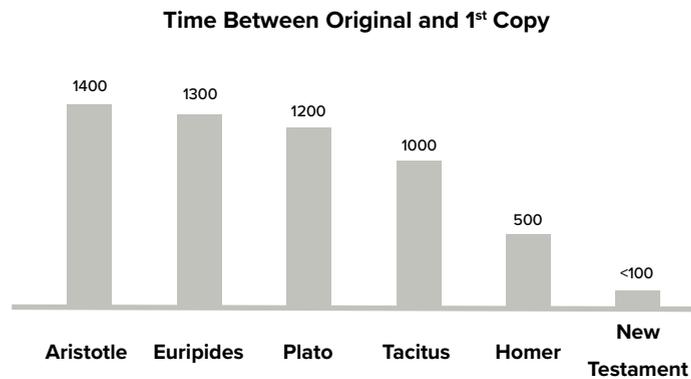
<sup>94</sup> Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible*, (Chicago, Moody, 2012), 247.

<sup>95</sup> Daniel Wallace, "The Number of Variants, Textual Criticism Credo Courses," 2013, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.



1. Greater than 43% of all verses in the NT have been found in the papyri within 125 years of its completion.
  2. 0% of any writings in the classical texts have been found within 125 years of its original.
  3. 3x more NT manuscripts in 200 years compared to average classical author has in 2000 years
- g. Comparison of time between originals and the first manuscript



### INSIGHT

“The reason we have a lot of variances is because we have a lot of manuscripts.”<sup>101</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Wallace, *The Number of Variants*, Textual Criticism Credo Courses, 2013, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>

<sup>98</sup> Bart Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: Harper, 2005), 252-3.

<sup>99</sup> Geisler, *The Big Book of Christian Apologetics*, 481.

<sup>100</sup> Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 248.

<sup>101</sup> Daniel Wallace, *The Number of Variants*, Textual Criticism Credo Courses, 2013, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>

### 6. Variances in the New Testament

- a. 400K textual variants; > 99.75% make no difference at all (70% of these are spelling differences)<sup>97</sup>
- b. Less than 1/4th of 1% (0.25%) of all variants are both meaningful and viable.
- c. Variations of only 12 of a page (out of 500) in the NT among all discovered manuscripts
- d. No cardinal doctrines are jeopardized.
- e. “Essential Christian beliefs are not effected by textual variances in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.”<sup>98</sup>
- f. “Most changes have to do with form, not content. They are grammatical, not theological.”<sup>99</sup>
- g. Our New Testament is >99% textually pure.<sup>100</sup> In the entire text of 20,000 lines, only 40 lines are in doubt (about 400 words), and none affect any significant doctrine.

## F. Patristic Citations

1. “As I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except eleven verses.” (Sir David Dalrymple, 1726-1792).
2. Church Fathers do quote most of the New Testament (1 Clement, Tertullian, Origen).
3. Greater than one million quotations <sup>102</sup>
4. Problems: They don’t introduce the quote as Scripture, but just say it (often hard to recognize).
5. No chapters until Langton 1227 AD
6. Geneva translation 1557 (verses and chapters)
7. Irenaeus (Against Heresies) 180 AD
8. From the non-canonical works of Ignatius and Polycarp (students of John) and the non-canonical work of Clement (student of Paul) we can determine the following:
  - a. Jesus was predicted by the Old Testament as described in the New Testament.
  - b. Jesus is divine as described in the New Testament.
  - c. Jesus taught His disciples as described in the New Testament.
  - d. Jesus worked miracles as described in the New Testament.
  - e. Jesus was born of a virgin as described in the New Testament.
  - f. Jesus lived, ministered, was crucified and died as described in the New Testament.
  - g. Jesus rose from the dead and demonstrated His deity as described in the New Testament.

### ◆ **INSIGHT**

*“Indeed, so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament” <sup>103</sup>*

<sup>102</sup> Wallace.

<sup>103</sup> Metzger and Ehrman, 126.

### III. MORE REASONS THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

- A. Archeological evidence.
- B. Extra Biblical or ancient literature.
- C. Fulfillment of prophecy.

### IV. SUMMARY

- A. The Old and New Testament affirms itself and the other.
- B. Consistent belief in the Bible over 2,000 years adds to belief in its reliability.
- C. The integrity of the author is affirmed when embarrassing details exist in the writing.
- E. The Leningrad Codex is the oldest complete Old Testament manuscript in existence (dated 1010 AD).
- F. The Sinaiticus Codex is the oldest complete New Testament manuscript in existence (dated 350 AD).
- G. The majority of the Bible can be reproduced by using only patristic citations—some say all, but eleven verses.

### V. STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. How would you explain to a non-believer the reliability of the Bible? Select 3-4 of the reasons listed above and expand upon their rationale in your own words.
- B. Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls so important to our understanding of the Old Testament? How do these manuscripts add credibility to the trustworthiness of the Bible?

- C. Explain the similarities and differences between the Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and the Sinaiticus Codices. Why are these manuscripts so important to the reliability of the Bible?
  
- D. How many New Testament manuscripts are in existence? Explain how this number relates to our understanding of the autographa.



SESSION THREE

*DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE  
BIBLICAL CANON*

## SESSION THREE

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIBLICAL CANON

## I. CANON DEFINED

- A. The Word originates from the Hebrew word, *kaneh*, meaning “measuring rod,” and the Greek word, *kanon*, meaning “rod” or “ruler.” We refer to it as the “rule of faith.”<sup>104</sup>

GALATIANS 6:16; NIV

“Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.”

- B. A canonical book “measures up” to a standard of Holy Scripture and is considered the authoritative Word of God.

- C. A process by which the Scriptures received their acceptance<sup>105</sup>

- D. Definitions<sup>106</sup>

1. Exclusive definition: canon only exists when one has a closed, final, fixed list (4th or 5th Century).
2. Functional definition: suggests we have a canon as soon as a book is used as Scripture by early Christians (Canon established in the early 2nd Century)
3. Ontological definition: the books God gave His corporate church (Divine perspective). Canon established when the books are written.

## II. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE CANON

- A. Holy Spirit guided the entire process.

- B. Oral tradition played an important role especially in the OT.

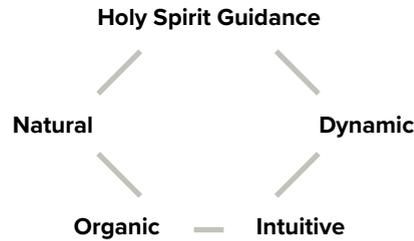
<sup>104</sup> Normal L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God To Us, How We Got Our Bible*, (Chicago, Moody, 2012), 87.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>106</sup> Michael J. Kruger, “10 Common Misconceptions about the NT Canon,” Blog on Canon Fodder, 3/28/12. <https://michaeljkruger.com/10-misconceptions-about-the-nt-canon-1-the-term-canon-can-only-refer-to-a-fixed-closed-list-of-books/>

- C. Concept of *widespread consensus*, not an official proclamation
- D. Canon “consciousness” slowly developed
- E. Tendency was exclusion, not inclusion.
- F. Content of the early church belief and teaching from the very beginning was emphasized.
- G. Recognition or establishment: The church recognized or discovered the books of the canon rather than establishing or creating them.
- H. Three types of books to be considered for canonization
  1. Protocanonical (*proto* (Greek) meaning first) books: Canonized with minimal debate.
  2. Deuterocanonical (*deuteron* (Greek) meaning second) books: Books that have been doubted; called *Apocrypha* (“hidden” or “secret,” Greek) by Protestants.
  3. Pseudepigrapha (*Pseudo* – false; *epigraphain* – inscribe) = to write falsely: attempts to imitate Scripture under false names.
- I. The canon is *not* determined, regulated, or judged by the church or built on the church.
- J. The canon *is* discovered, witnessed, and recognized (deemed authoritative) by the church. It serves as the foundation of the church.
- K. A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the church. It is accepted by the church because it is the Word of God. Many misconceptions exist.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Michael Kruger, “Canon Fodder,” <https://michaelkruger.com/new-blog-series10-common-misconceptions-about-the-nt-canon/>.



### III. CRITERIA FOR INDIVIDUAL BOOK INCLUSION

#### A. Geisler and Nix <sup>108</sup>

1. Was it written by a prophet of God?  
Principle of Authority: Implicit or explicit Divine authority (...thus says the Lord..." or "the word of the Lord came unto me...")
2. Did the writer have credentials from God? (i.e. spirit-moved spokespersons or prophets)
3. Did the writer tell the truth about God, man..? (hallmark of inspiration was authenticity; a reason many apocryphal books were rejected)
4. Did it possess the life-transforming power of God?  
"The word of God is living and active." (Heb 4:12) and is useful "for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
5. Was it received or accepted by the people of God for whom it was originally written? (Limits in communication and transportation in ancient times required additional time and effort on church fathers to determine its recognition.)

#### B. Sean McDowell <sup>109</sup>

1. Was the book written by a prophet of God?
2. Was the writer confirmed by acts of God?
  - a. Moses performed miracles as proof of his divine calling (Exodus 4:1-9).
  - b. Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).
  - c. The apostles performed miracles at the start of the early church (Acts 3:1-9).

<sup>108</sup> Geisler and Nix, 93-96.

<sup>109</sup> Sean McDowell, "Who Decided What Books to Include in the Bible?" 5 Principles. SeanMcDowell.org, Feb. 28, 2018, <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/who-decided-what-books-to-include-in-the-bible-5-principles>

3. Did its message tell the truth about God?
4. Does it come with the power of God (i.e. transforming message)?
5. Was it accepted by the people of God?

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 NIV

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

#### IV. DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

##### A. Storytelling and oral tradition dating back to its origin—2500 BC

1. When Abraham was called by God
2. God's interaction with Abraham's family and people in ancient Israel
3. Moses at Mt. Sinai
4. Torah commonly memorized by priests and scribes

##### B. Recording of events

1. Creation
2. Call of Abraham
3. Exodus in Egypt, wilderness wandering, promised land settlement; development of government with laws

##### C. Sayings of prophets

1. Written while alive or posthumously

##### D. Recording of wisdom figures

1. Solomon
2. Proverbs

## E. Collections of Writings

1. Written Torah originated during the Babylonian exile (586 BC).
2. Other writings followed—prophets, recording of the kings, chronicles, and wisdom literature—finalized in the centuries that followed the Babylonian exile.

## F. Jewish recognition that “the voice of God had ceased to speak directly” as noted in rabbinical writings (400 BC).

- G. **Ben Sira** (The Book of Sirach, Wisdom of Sirach, Sirach, Book of Ecclesiasticus) is the earliest reference to the canon of the Hebrew Bible (175-200 BC), translated into Greek (132 BC) by his grandson who wrote a prologue to his translation that contained the earliest reference to a three-part division of the Hebrew OT. This suggests a fixed or highly respected core canon.

*“Many great teachings have been handed down to us through the Law, the Prophets, and the other books that followed them.”*

– Sirach’s Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, 132 BC

## H. Dead Sea Scrolls

1. No specific list, but evidence of all books of the OT affirmed except Esther (200 BC-100 AD)

## I. Compare contents to the Leningrad Codex (1000 AD)

## J. Jesus refers to the Old Testament books as “Scripture” and affirm the Old Testament (1st century).<sup>110 111 112 113 114</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures (Matthew 21:42).

<sup>111</sup> He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45).

<sup>112</sup> Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matt 22:29).

<sup>113</sup> “But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matt 26:54).

<sup>114</sup> “That the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation” (Luke 11:50-51).

- K. Jesus and His Apostles quoted from or alluded to every OT book except Esther (1st century).
  
- L. Philo of Alexandria attests to traditional list and divides OT into three sections—law, writings, and prophets (38 AD).

*“And in every house there is a sacred shrine which is called the holy place, and the monastery in which they [Therapeutae] retire by themselves and perform all the mysteries of a holy life, bringing in nothing, neither meat, nor drink, nor anything else which is indispensable towards supplying the necessities of the body, but studying in that place the laws and the sacred oracles of God enunciated by the holy prophets, and hymns, and psalms, and all kinds of other things by reason of which knowledge and piety are increased and brought to perfection.”*<sup>115</sup>

– Philo of Alexandria

M. Jamnia Conference (90 AD)

1. New spiritual center after the fall of the 2nd Temple
  
2. No binding canonical decisions made, but rather 24 OT books already in place were affirmed.<sup>116</sup>
  
3. Rejection of the Apocrypha was alleged.

N. Flavius Josephus (93-94 AD) (Jewish historian)

1. *“From Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased”*<sup>117</sup>  
– Artaxerxes 464-424 BC.

2. *“It follows that we do not possess myriads of inconsistent books, conflicting with each other. Our books, those which are justly accredited, are but 22... which contain all the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death... the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.”*<sup>118</sup> (Ruth-Judges and Jeremiah-Lamentations combined)

<sup>115</sup> Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 3(25).

<sup>116</sup> Robert C. Newman, *The Council of Jamnia and the Old Testament Canon*, Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1983. Accessed on 3/24/24 <https://www.newmanlib.libri.org/RRs/RR013/13jamnia.html>

<sup>117</sup> Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.8.

3. Validates 22 books (TaNakh) contained within presumed canon

**O. Seder Olam Rabbah**

1. *“Until then [the coming of Alexander the Great and the end of the empire of the Persians] the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit. From then on, incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise”*<sup>119</sup> (160 AD).

**P. Melito’s list (170 AD).**

1. Earliest list.
2. All OT books except Esther included
3. No Apocryphal books

**Q. Tosepta Sotah**

1. *“With the death of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi the latter prophets, the Holy Spirit ceased out of Israel”*<sup>120</sup> (late 2nd century).

**R. Origen and Jerome listed OT books (3rd century)**

**S. Council of Trent (1546)**

1. Roman Catholics approved Catholic canon - 46 OT books.

**V. THE FINAL OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS IN THE CANON**

**A. Esther**

1. The name of God is not found in this book, but the “hand” of God is evident as He protected the Jews from total destruction.
2. Ultimately, the absence of God’s name alone is not an adequate reason to deny canonicity.

**B. Ecclesiastes**

“The Church did not create the canon, but came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authenticating quality of certain documents.”<sup>121</sup>

– BRUCE METZGER

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Seder Olam Rabbah, 30.

<sup>120</sup> Tosepta Sotah 13.2, accessed on 3/25/24, [https://www.sefaria.org/Tosefta\\_Sotah.13.4?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Tosefta_Sotah.13.4?lang=bi)

<sup>121</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance*, (Oxford, Oxford Press, 1997), 287.

1. Objections to this book are related to its negative and skeptical tone (i.e. “Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.”<sup>122</sup>).
2. However, Solomon is showing that all people need God and that the world cannot provide ultimate satisfaction. Thus it is positive and edifying.

#### C. Song of Solomon

1. Objections to this book center on its alleged sensuality.
2. However, its primary message is to highlight the importance of marriage and is deeply spiritual. Its inspiration was never subject to doubt.

#### D. Ezekiel

1. Ezekiel’s inspiration was never doubted, but arguments against its canonicity included the interpretation that it spoke against the Mosaic Law.

#### E. Proverbs

1. Some believed the interpretation of passages from this book contradicted other intra-biblical passages.
2. However, using proper hermeneutics, these contradictions were eliminated.

### VI. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

#### A. Additional Criteria of New Testament Canonicity<sup>123</sup>

1. Apostolicity (Authorship)
  - a. Apostolic origin; Apostles’ fingerprints, colleagues of the apostles, influence, or personal writing (i.e. Matthew, John, Paul, Peter as authors); close associates: Mark (Peter); Luke (Paul) Jude and James (1/2 brothers with Christ); only those who had witnessed the events or had recorded eyewitness testimony.
  - b. If the Apostles wrote it, the book is in the canon.

<sup>122</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:2

<sup>123</sup> Mike Licona and Lee Martin McDonald, YouTube Channel, “How Was the New Testament Canon Formed?” Part 1 of 2, Oct 15, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_55JSD0CbvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_55JSD0CbvM)

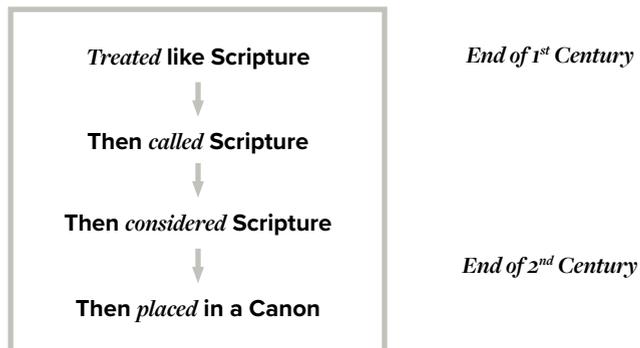
- c. Apostolic authority implied: “They were devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship” (Acts 2:42 NET)
2. Catholicity
    - a. Universal use or widely accepted
    - b. Books not limited to specific areas or people
    - c. Origen first described; Eusebius describes
  3. Orthodoxy
    - a. Content in each book must contain core traditional teaching of Christianity.
    - b. Continuity of the message, flow from the OT; consistent with other books

JOHN 14:26

“But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I said to you”

#### B. Overview of the Steps to New Testament Canonization <sup>124</sup>

1. Jesus: His words and actions: 1st canon of the early church  
“If Jesus said it, it was Scripture; Jesus was the final authority.” <sup>125</sup>
2. Gospels: Focus on Jesus  
Think of the quotes that say ... Jesus said...
3. Post-Apostolic Times (after the apostles’ death):
  - a. At least seven of Paul’s letters were circulating by the end of the 1st century.
  - b. The Gospels and seven of Paul’s letters were being *treated* like Scripture, *called* Scripture, and *considered* Scripture by the end of the 2nd Century.



<sup>124</sup> Metzger, Canon of the New Testament, 287.

<sup>125</sup> “To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord)...” (1 Corinthians 7:10).

4. Many books were *called* Scripture long before they were put into a complete list or canon.
5. Other books that were *called* Scripture were rejected in the final canon (i.e. Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, Shepherd of Hermas, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Epistle of Clement).
6. New Testament books never disputed
  - a. Matthew—earliest and cited more than the other Gospels
  - b. Mark, Luke, and John (after Irenaeus)
    1. There was temporary dispute by Tertullian (before Irenaeus 200AD). Tertullian chided Marcion because he cited Luke rather than an apostolic author (i.e. Matthew or John). He questioned Mark and Luke.

*“The church no more gave us the canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us the canon, just as God gave us gravity, by the inquisitive process of discovery.”*<sup>126</sup>

– J.I. Packer

### C. Timeline Development of the New Testament Canon

1. Initial Writings and Canonical Awareness (1st Century)
  - a. The New Testament texts were written during this period. (50-95 AD)
  - b. Early recognition of certain writings as “Scripture” begins.
    1. Paul refers to the Gospel of Luke as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18).
    2. Peter refers to Paul’s letters as Scripture (2 Peter 3:16).
2. Early Church Reception and Reaction (2nd Century)
  - a. Key Church Fathers (e.g., Polycarp, Justin Martyr) refer to apostolic writings as “sacred Scripture” or “memoirs of the apostles.”
    1. Polycarp (125 AD) refers to Ephesians as “sacred Scripture” when writing to the church at Philippi.

<sup>126</sup> J.I. Packer, *God Speaks to Man*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 81.

“And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read.”<sup>132</sup>

– JUSTIN MARTYR

2. Justin Martyr quotes from the Gospels 17 times.
  - b. Marcion’s heretical canon (144 AD) rejects the Old Testament and limits New Testament books, prompting the Church to clarify the canon.
    1. Accepted 10 letters of Paul (Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, (called Laodiceans) Philippians, Colossians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, Philemon) and Luke
  - c. Muratorian Fragment (170 AD) provides one of the earliest lists: 22 of the eventual 27 books as canonical.<sup>127 128</sup>
    1. L.A. Muratori discovered and published the list in 1740.
    2. Contains Luke (3rd Gospel), Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, Paul’s 13 letters, Jude, 1st and 2nd John, and Revelation
    3. Also included the Wisdom of Solomon and the Apocalypse of Peter with the statement, “some of our people” do not want these read in church.<sup>129</sup>
    4. Excludes the Shepherd of Hermas (140 AD) written “quite lately in our time in the city of Rome”<sup>130</sup>
  - d. Irenaeus (180 AD) affirms four Gospels as authoritative using the phrase “four pillars.”
  - e. Chester Beatty Fragment (P45) dated to 200 AD<sup>131</sup>
    1. Gospels and Acts
    2. Oldest Mark’s Gospel
    3. No dispute over the 4th Gospel or Luke’s authorship of Acts
3. Expansion and Debate (3rd Century)
- a. Origen (185–253 AD) recognizes most of the current New Testament canon.
    1. Four Gospels, Acts, Pauls’ 13 letters, 1 Peter, 1 John, Jude, Revelation (250 AD)
  - b. Affirms 27 books but expresses hesitations about Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2–3 John (He does quote Hebrews multiple times.)
  - c. His metaphor in *Homilies on Joshua* symbolically includes all 27 books and may be the earliest list of 27/27. (He compares the NT authors with the trumpets of Christ).
  - d. Origen’s 3rd century New Testament is very similar to ours today.

<sup>127</sup> The Muratorian Fragment, <https://trinityfellowshipiu.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/the-muratorian-fragment.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup> Bible-researcher.com, <https://www.bible-researcher.com/muratorian.html>.

<sup>129</sup> The Muratorian Fragment as quoted in Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition, (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2003), 157.

<sup>130</sup> Justin Martyr, *The First Apology of Justin*, Public Domain, LXVII.1, <https://www.basilica.ca/documents/2016/10/St.%20Justin%20Martyr-The%20First%20Apology%20of%20Justin.pdf>.

<sup>131</sup> The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, [https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA\\_P45](https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P45).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

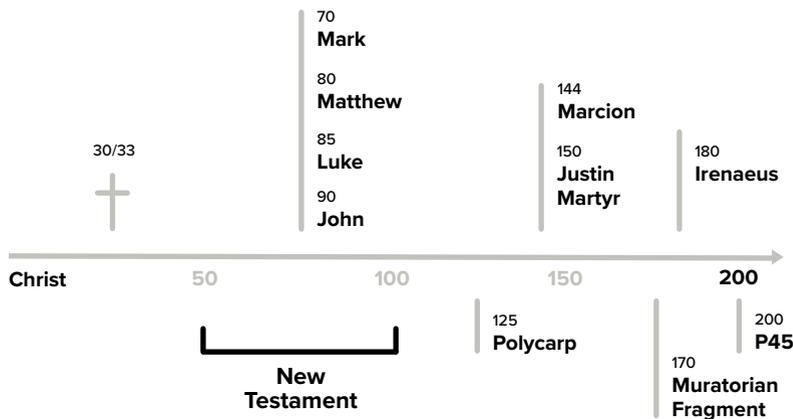
e. Origen's list and the Muratorian Fragment are highly similar.

*"It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars."*<sup>133</sup>

– Irenaeus

*"But when our Lord Jesus Christ comes, whose arrival that prior son of Nun designated, he sends priests, his apostles, bearing "trumpets hammered thin," the magnificent and heavenly instruction of proclamation. Matthew first sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel; Mark also; Luke and John each played their own priestly trumpets. Even Peter cries out with trumpets in two of his epistles; also James and Jude. In addition, John also sounds the trumpet through his epistles, and Luke, as he describes the Acts of the Apostles. And now that last one comes, the one who said, "I think God displays us apostles last," and in fourteen of his epistles, thundering with trumpets, he casts down the walls of Jericho and all the devices of idolatry and dogmas of philosophers, all the way to the foundations."*<sup>134</sup>

– Origen



#### TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating important New Testament Canonization Events or People (0-200)

<sup>133</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*.

<sup>134</sup> Origen, *The Fathers of the Church, Homilies of Joshua*, Barbara J Bruce (transl), Cynthia White (ed), (Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America Press, 2002), 74-75. (accessed through [https://books.google.com/books?id=Y-q6reMY6KMUC&pg=PA74&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=Y-q6reMY6KMUC&pg=PA74&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false))

### SPECIAL THANKS...

to Thor Magnus Odland, for his contribution to and for reviewing this section regarding councils and the canon

4. Classification and Codification (4th Century)
  - a. Eusebius
    1. “Father of Church History”
    2. Wrote Ecclesiastical History (340 AD) which recognized 27/27 books (similar to Origen)
  - b. Eusebius categorizes texts (320-330 AD).
    1. Universally accepted
      - a. Four Gospels, Acts, 14 letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, Revelation
    2. Disputed, but recognized by the majority
      - a. James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2nd and 3rd John
    3. Rejected books or Apocryphal
      - a. Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Teachings of the Apostles
  - c. Church councils or prominent Theologians
    1. Council of Nicaea (325 AD) focuses on Christ’s nature—not canon formation. A canon could not form until the nature of Christ was understood.<sup>135</sup>
    2. Cyril of Jerusalem (350) 26/27 books; wanted Thomas
    3. Laodicea Synod (363 AD) affirms most books (26/27); excludes Thomas.
    4. Athanasius of Alexandria (367 AD) lists all 27 New Testament books in his Festal (Paschal) Letter 39, identical to ours today. His list becomes widely accepted.
    5. Final Standardization of the Canon
      - a. Council of Hippo
        1. 393 AD
        2. Accepted 27 books of the New Testament
      - b. Council of Carthage (Third)
        1. 397 AD
        2. Accepted 27 books of the New Testament

*“It was resolved that nothing should be read in church under the name of divine Scriptures except the canonical writings. The canonical Scriptures are these...”*

– Canon 24, Council of Carthage, 397 AD

<sup>135</sup> Mike Licona and Lee Martin McDonald, YouTube Channel, “How Was the New Testament Canon Formed?” Part 1 of 2, Oct 15, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_55JSD0CbvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_55JSD0CbvM)

6. Gregory of Nazianus (AD 329-389) 27/27 (+/- Revelation)

*“These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these.”*<sup>136</sup>

– Athanasius of Alexandria, 367.

6. Continued Use and Recognition (5th Century)

a. African Canons (393-419) 27/27

1. North Africa’s early church legacy timeline (Appendix E).
2. Primary significance: Established a model of local conciliar authority and canonical autonomy that would influence later Western church governance and legal structures

b. Jerome (394) 27/27

c. Augustine (395-400) 27/27

d. Carthage Synod (396) 26/27 (doubted Revelation)

e. Carthage Synod (419) 27/27

f. The canon gained near-universal acceptance by the end of the 4th century and remains consistent through Church history.

g. Other dates—Council of Trent (1545)

*“But now count also [the books] of the New Mystery; Matthew indeed wrote for the Hebrews the wonderful works of Christ and Mark for Italy, Luke for Greece, John, the great preacher, for all, walking in heaven. Then the Acts of the wise apostles, and fourteen Epistles of Paul, and seven Catholic [Epistles], of which James is one, Two of Peter, three of John again, and Jude’s is the seventh, You have all. If there is any besides these, it is not among the genuine [books].”*

– The Canon of Gregory Nazianus<sup>138</sup>

◆ **INSIGHT**

Once 27 books were established there has been no movement in Christianity to add or remove any books.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Paschal (Festal) Letter 39, AD 367, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2806039.htm>

<sup>137</sup> Geisler and Nix, 131.

<sup>138</sup> The Development of the Canon of the New Testament, (382-390 AD), [www.ntcanon.org/Gregory.canon.shtml](http://www.ntcanon.org/Gregory.canon.shtml)

## VII. THE FINAL NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS IN THE CANON

### A. Hebrews

1. Anonymous author
2. Late acceptance by Latin Christians
3. Orthodox in content

### B. James

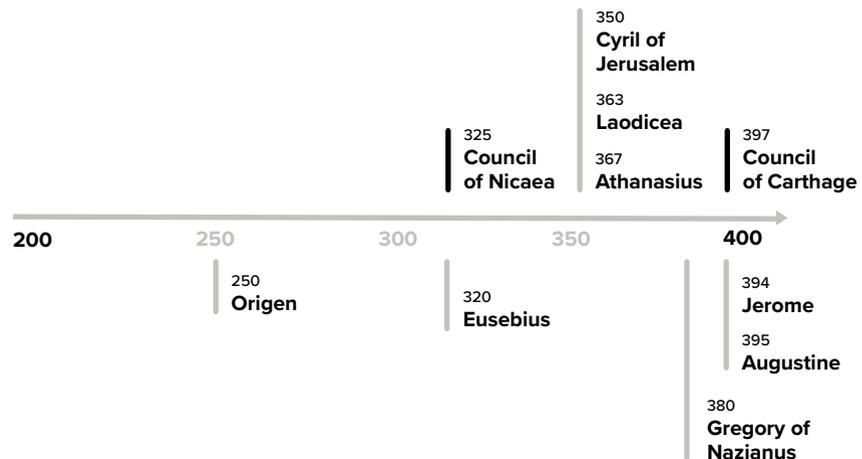
1. Emphasis on works: Did it contradict Paul's teaching on justification by faith and not by works?
2. Not theological emphasis, but practical: Fills gap between the doctrine and practice of Christianity.

### C. 2nd Peter

1. Question of authorship due to stylistic differences between 2nd Peter and 1st Peter
2. Differences explained by Peter's use of amanuensis (secretary).
3. Content similar to Jude

#### TIMELINE

Timeline demonstrating important New Testament Canonization (200-400)



#### INSIGHT

No Ecumenical Council or Committee was ever commissioned to determine the canon of the Bible

**D. 2nd and 3rd John**

1. Author not specifically stated; called “the elder”
2. Both letters addressed to individuals
3. Both letters very brief
4. Neither letter has much theological content.

**E. Jude**

1. Brief letter – accepted everywhere except Parthia (modern day Iran)
2. Questioned about use of the apocryphal Book of Enoch (Note: Paul quoted from pagan philosophers in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:2. A writer can cite non-canonical writings to illustrate a point.)

**F. Revelation**

1. Apocalyptic nature
2. Almost instant recognition everywhere except Parthia

**VIII. SUMMARY**

- A. OT and NT canon principles: Written by a prophet of God, with credentials from God, telling the truth about God, accepted by the people of God, and exhibiting the transforming power of God
- B. OT canon likely determined by 400 BC, but further affirmed at the Jamnia Conference (90 AD) and through 1st Century writings of Josephus, and Malito list (170AD); New Testament writers affirm TaNaK (24 books = our 39 books)
- C. Criteria for New Testament canonization: apostolicity, catholicity, and orthodoxy

- D. The Muratorian Fragment (170 AD) is one of the earliest lists of the New Testament canon (22/27 books), possibly Origen (250 AD) 27/27, while Athanasius' list (367 AD) is the earliest complete list (27/27).
  
- E. No universal ecumenical council defined the canon.
  
- F. Regarding the Apocrypha, protestants reject it (in part) because these books were not contained in the Hebrew Bible. Catholics accept (in part) because these books were contained in the Septuagint.

#### **IX. STUDY QUESTIONS**

- A. Why does it matter that we have a Biblical canon?
  
- B. Explain the differences between the Hebrew OT, Protestant OT, Roman Catholic OT, and Orthodox OT? Are there differences in the NT for these groups?
  
- C. Did a group of ancient theologians unilaterally determine the book selection in our Bibles (i.e. Council of Nicaea)? Explain.
  
- D. Did Protestants remove seven books from their Bible during the middle ages? Did Roman Catholics add seven books to their Bible during the middle ages? Explain the controversy.
  
- E. Explain the difference between "protocanonical" and "deuterocanonical" books?

- F. Trace the key writings, events and people involved in the canonization of the New Testament. How about the Old Testament?
- G. How is the Holy Spirit at work during the canonization process of our Bibles? How would this differ from the concept of “canon consciousness”?



SESSION FOUR

*TEXTUAL CRITICISM  
AND VARIANTS*

## SESSION FOUR

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND VARIANTS

## I. INTRODUCTION TO TEXTUAL CRITICISM

### A. Textual Criticism Defined

1. The study of the copies of any handwritten document whose original is unknown or no longer exists for the primary purpose of the exact wording of the original <sup>139</sup>
2. The practice of reconstruction of the copies <sup>140</sup>
3. Textual criticism provides assurance that the Bible available today accurately reflects what the Apostles and their associates wrote in the NT and what the prophets and holy men wrote in the OT.
4. Not a process of criticizing the Bible, but rather reconstruct the original

### B. The Goals of Textual Criticism

1. Primary goal of New Testament textual criticism—like all other literature — must be the recovery of the wording of the autographic text or to know the content of the originals.
2. Secondary goal is to better understand the ancient church at various times and places. <sup>141</sup>
  - a. Educational to see what was considered their authoritative Scripture
  - b. Changes to the text in various places and time provide insights into scribal intentions.
  - c. Preferred manuscripts develop over time (i.e. Latin Vulgate, KJV) and reflect cultural shifts.
  - d. Non-canonical manuscripts and other writings emerge that help clarify New Testament manuscripts.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel Wallace, Introduction to the New Testament, Credo Courses, 2013, 15:35.

<sup>140</sup> Jonathan Morrow, *Questioning the Bible: 11 Major Challenges to the Bible's Authority*, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014, 94.

C. **Fundamental Questions Regarding Textual Criticism** <sup>142</sup>

1. How many manuscripts are available to examine?
2. How early are the manuscripts to be examined?
3. How important are the textual variants contained within the available manuscripts?

D. **Necessity of Textual Criticism**

1. Manuscript differences exist, but can be understood.
  - a. Six to ten differences per chapter exist among the two closest early NT manuscripts. (Multiply that by 260 NT chapters—over 2000 differences among these manuscripts).
2. Many manuscripts seldom agree with each other resulting in a sizeable number of differences.
3. The originals are non-existent and manuscripts differ— explanation and understanding is required.
5. Explains any challenges by skeptics that mistakes or errors are in the Bible
6. If we still had the originals, textual criticism would be unnecessary.
7. If all copies (manuscripts) were exactly the same, textual criticism would be unnecessary.

II. **DEFINING THE ORIGINAL TEXT**

A. **Original text**—the final text when it is dispatched from the author to its recipients; the last form of the text under control by the author. <sup>143</sup>

B. **Synonyms for the original text**

1. Autographic text; Autographa; Autographs
2. Ausgang text

<sup>141</sup> Wallace, 30:22.

<sup>142</sup> Morrow, 95.

<sup>143</sup> Wallace, 12:25.

3. Exit text
4. Urtext

**C. Rejected definitions of the original text**

1. Predecessor text form (working draft)—the form of the text before it was published; the working text of the author
2. Canonical text form—the form of the text when the book was considered as Scripture... i.e. Mark 16:9-20... Did the early church consider Mark canonical only if they included those verses OR only if they excluded those verses? Was it the book itself even though textual variants were unresolved?
3. Interpretive text form—the form of the text unique to a given locale with interpretative alterations until the time of the printing press

**D. Frequency of the original text in other ancient documents**

1. Ancient originals mostly non-existent
  - a. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—only five early copies
  - b. Non-Literature—a few original types remain
    1. Letters between a husband and wife
    2. Son writes to his dad about the battlefield

**III. MATERIAL AND METHODS IN MAKING ANCIENT BOOKS**

**A. General Considerations**

1. Stone – Clay – Wood/Wax – Metals – Ostraca – Papyrus – Parchment -- Paper

**B. Papyrus**

1. Plants unique to Egypt
2. Formed earliest manuscripts of New Testament (2nd-8th centuries)
3. Propensity to decay limits existing papyri.

4. Method: Beat fibers; soak in water for 7-14 days; longer the soak the darker and more elegant papyrus becomes

### C. Parchment

1. Animal skin; very fine parchment is velum
2. Dates from late 2nd -16th century
3. Vast majority of our existing manuscripts
4. Most durable
5. Method: Rigorous process of drying and stretching—hair side (darker)—flesh side (lighter).
6. Characteristics
  - a. Thin vs. Ultra-thin—almost translucent (i.e. like Bible paper)
  - b. Parchment—Holes often present (from stretching)
  - c. Velum—Finest parchment had no holes
  - d. Velum is usually bleached lighter
  - e. For both: scribe would mix egg whites to cover and protect the text.
  - f. Exposed hair follicles indicate animal type and location (deer, sheep, goat).
    1. Codex Sinaiticus would have required 350 sheep.
    2. Palimpsests developed due to cost and required number of animals.
  - g. Rats ate animal skin and evidence noted on existing manuscripts

### D. Paper

1. Chinese invented paper and brought it to Egypt.
2. Dates from 9th -16th century

3. Paper manuscripts discovered in storage room in St. Catherine monastery in Sinai Egypt
4. Least durable
  - a. Worms eat wood and paper.
  - b. Water damage often present
  - c. Manuscripts may exhibit worm holes or water damage.

#### IV. TEXTUAL VARIANTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

##### A. Textual Variants Defined

1. Any location in the text where at least one manuscript being studied deviates from the source text (vorlage) or that there is not uniformity of wording <sup>144</sup>
2. The deviation may be a letter, word, spelling, phrase, or sentence difference.
3. Regardless of how many manuscripts share the same variance (one or 100), it still only counts as one variant. <sup>145</sup>

##### B. Counting Textual Variants

1. If we had only one manuscript there would be no variances—it can't disagree with itself, but there is no assurance that it goes back to the original—regardless of age. Two manuscripts can be compared.
2. Example of proper counting of variants (John 4:1)
  - a. "When Jesus knew..." or "When the Lord knew..."
  - b. *Jesus knew*—Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus
  - c. *The Lord knew*—Bezae, Washingtonianus
  - d. A single textual variant—*Jesus or the Lord*
  - e. If there are 100 manuscripts that each contain this difference, it counts as only one variant. The number of manuscripts does not matter.

<sup>144</sup> Morrow, 98.

<sup>145</sup> Wallace, 23:59.

3. Incorrect counting of variants
  - a. It is *not* the [difference noted] x [number of manuscripts].
  - b. Number of manuscripts is *almost* completely irrelevant. There must be at least one manuscript that disagrees with another. It's not the number of manuscripts that count, but the change in wording.<sup>146</sup>

### C. Number of Textual Variants

1. Best estimate: 400K textual variants in the New Testament (300K-500K)<sup>147</sup> (138,162 words in Greek NT)<sup>148</sup>
2. Out of about 500 pages in the Greek New Testament, the manuscript variations represent only about half of a page.<sup>149</sup>
3. "No two manuscripts are exactly alike."<sup>150</sup>
4. We have more textual variants than we have words in the Greek New Testament—2.5 variants for every word.
5. The reason we have a lot of textual variances is because we have a lot of manuscripts.<sup>151</sup>
6. 400K variants improves the chance of establishing the exact wording of the original NT text.<sup>152</sup>
7. Variants explain other variants; that's how we can explain the original text.<sup>153</sup>

### ◆ INSIGHT

- Only 60 Greek manuscripts cover the whole NT.<sup>156</sup>
- Ave. Greek NT manuscript is ~ 450 pages—most have gaps.<sup>157</sup>
- Each Greek NT (~140K words)<sup>158</sup>
  - Majority Text (TR)—141K word
  - Nestle-Aland Text (UBS)—138, 162 words.
- NT manuscripts grew *only* 2% over 1400 years.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Wallace, 12:51.

<sup>147</sup> Wallace, 12:03.

<sup>148</sup> Morrow, 98.

<sup>149</sup> Got Questions . <https://www.gotquestions.org/Codex-Sinaiticus-Vaticanus.html>.

<sup>150</sup> Wallace, 2:46.

<sup>151</sup> Wallace, 5:30.

<sup>152</sup> Wallace, 12:59.

<sup>153</sup> Wallace, 12:14.

<sup>154</sup> Wallace, 14:03-14:45.

<sup>155</sup> The Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF, Münster, Germany) maintains the authoritative catalog, the Kurzgefaste Liste. <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>.

---

### Existing New Testament Manuscripts

<b>5,824</b>	Greek New Testaments. <sup>154 155</sup> Gospels (2000) Paul's letters (800-850) Acts and Catholic letters (650) Revelation (325)	<b>5-10K</b>	Syriac, Georgian, Gothic, Armenian, Aramaic, Hebrew, Old Slavonic, Arabic
		<b>3-4K</b>	Coptic
<b>&gt;10K</b>	Latin	<b>20-25K</b>	New Testament Manuscripts

*“We could reproduce the words of the New Testament based on the writings of the church fathers... many, many times over.”<sup>160</sup>*

#### D. Nature of Textual Variants

1. Nature dictates importance, not just the number.
2. Are they meaningful and viable?
  - a. Meaningful—changes the meaning of the text
  - b. Viable— sufficient pedigree to potentially represent the wording of the original (i.e. may be found in one important manuscript but no other manuscripts, therefore, implausible)
3. Four Groups of Textual variances
  - a. Not meaningful, but viable
    1. Spelling differences—most common textual variance
      - a. > 70% of all textual variances
      - b. It does not affect our theology.
      - c. Examples: John or Johnn or Jon
    2. Word order differences
      - a. Jesus loves Paul; Jesus Paul Loves; Loves Paul Jesus, Paul loves Jesus. Greek would read it only one way—Jesus loves Paul.
      - b. It does not affect the essential meaning.
    3. Proper names
      - a. Article used before the name
      - b. Example in Luke 2: the Joseph and the Mary went looking for the Jesus; “The” occurs 20K times in Greek NT—most common word.<sup>161</sup>
      - c. Alternative phrases or combinations
        1. Joseph and the Mary were looking for the Jesus.
        2. The Joseph and Mary were looking for Jesus.
      - d. More than 1200 ways (variances) to say John loves Mary in Greek; four hundred variances per word without any change in meaning.
  - b. Meaningful, but not viable (spelling differences, word order) (poor chance of being authentic)
  - c. Not meaningful or viable
  - d. Meaningful and viable

<sup>160</sup> Wallace, 18:11.

<sup>161</sup> Wallace, 8:08.

1. 1/4th of 1% of all textual variances<sup>162</sup>
  2. Good chance of being authentic
  3. Examples: Romans 8:2; Phil. 1:14 (see below)
4. First 3 groups: >99% of all textual variances fit this category and make no difference at all.

*"I don't care if we have 400K or 400M textual variants. What counts is the nature of the variance. 99% effect nothing."<sup>163</sup>*

– Daniel Wallace

## V. EMERGENCE OF LOCAL TEXT FORMS

### A. Text-Type Defined

1. Group of manuscripts that have a pattern of readings seen in that group of manuscripts that are different from a pattern of reading seen in other manuscripts (i.e. local originals)
2. Characteristic of a specific geographical region
3. Contains distinctive readings due to theological tendencies, scribal habits, and transmission environments that can be traced to different regions

### B. Four different text types

1. Alexandrian (Alexandria, Egypt)
  - a. Most accurate copying center in the ancient world
  - b. Classical texts produced in Alexandria
  - c. Earliest manuscripts (2nd -4th centuries)
  - d. Careful tradition; most reliable and closest to the original due to minimal scribal expansion or doctrinal alteration
  - e. Most popular until 9th century
  - f. Concise and difficult
  - g. Examples: P75, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus
  - h. Basis of most modern critical editions
  - i. Nestle-Aland (United Bible Societies) critical editions are based largely on Alexandrian manuscripts.

<sup>162</sup> Wallace, 21:45.

<sup>163</sup> Wallace, 14:41.

- j. Modern texts
  - 1. ESV (English Standard Version)
  - 2. NIV (New International Version)
  - 3. NASB (New American Standard Bible)
  - 4. NRSV (New Revised Standard Version)
  - 5. CSB (Christian Standard Bible)
  - 6. NET
  - 7. Not KJV, NKJV
  
- 2. Western text (Roman, N. Africa)
  - a. 2nd – 5th centuries
  - b. Early fathers quote the western text form.
  - c. Very widespread
  - d. No official edition
  - e. Not a careful tradition, but its early— must take this in consideration
  - f. Tendency to expand, rephrase, or paraphrase and therefore not considered as close to the original
  - g. Not considered the most reliable for establishing the original Greek
  - h. Relatively few manuscripts (used to create the Vulgate)
  - i. “love of paraphrase”
  - j. Used to translate Latin Vulgate
  
- 3. Byzantine text (Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey and Greece)
  - a. Later text form: none before the 4th century. (late 3rd – 9th Century); no church fathers who used Byzantine text before the 4th century; most popular by 9th C
  - b. Heavily edited and uniform
  - c. Polished and harmonized
  - d. Very liturgical text form, used in churches
  - e. Byzantine manuscripts were more numerous and accessible during the Renaissance/Reformation.

- h. Ninety percent of all Greek NT manuscripts are Byzantine and come from the 9th century or later.
- i. Earliest Byzantine manuscripts with Paul's letters in 9th C
- j. Examples: Textus Receptus; late manuscripts
- k. Versions
  - 1. KJV (King James Version)
  - 2. NKJV (New King James Version)
  - 3. MEV (Modern English Version)
- 4. Caesarean text (Israel)
  - a. Hypothesized textual tradition
  - b. Mixed features that don't fit well into other types.
  - c. Almost completely absorbed by the Byzantines

### C. Examples of Text Types in Scripture

- 1. Luke 24:53- "they were in the temple blessing God."
  - a. Alexandrian texts: say "blessing God."
  - b. Western texts: say "praising God."
  - c. Byzantine texts: say "blessing and praising God." It conflates the text since it came later than Alexandrian and Western texts and suggests it is a secondary text form.

## VI. SCRIBAL CORRUPTION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

### A. Unintentional corruption

- 1. Vast majority of errors
- 2. Easiest to detect
- 3. Scribes did not know they were creating errors.
- 4. Types of unintentional errors
  - a. Sight
  - b. Memory
    - 1. Responsible for the substitution of synonyms, transposition of words and letters and the assimilation of one passage to another <sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Wallace, 27:29.

- c. Hearing
  - 1. Reading was usually out loud.
  - 2. Scribe would look at the text, read it out loud, remember it, and write it. If read or remembered incorrectly, writing would be incorrect. Hearing for himself was important.
- d. Judgment
  - 1. Marginal notes—questions such as, “Did the scribe mean to put notes as a verse or to be a commentary?” (if in doubt you don’t leave it out. You put it in the text).
  - 2. Example: John 5:3-5 KJV... impotent folks... vs 3b and 4... scribes saw a marginal note... the angels stirred up the waters... so the scribe put that in the text... If that is true... then the principle... God helps those who help themselves comes out! Questionable principle, but it is in the King James (29:25)
  - 3. Example: John 3:13 KJV... Is Jesus talking or is John narrating?...” The son of man is still in heaven...” ... or did a scribe put in... “He is still in heaven right now”?
- e. Fatigue
  - 1. After six hours of copying text, anyone is prone to making nonsense changes to the text.
- f. Carelessness
  - 1. Scribe confused letters—Most are capital (magistral) letters since all of NT manuscripts through the 8th century were capital letters.
  - 2. Most of these types of errors originated prior to the minuscule (small letters) manuscripts (Metzger, 6:34)
  - 3. Original NT manuscripts were probably not written in capital letters, but rather in cursive letters.
  - 4. Broad rule: When someone is writing to someone in greater authority, they write in magistral script (capital letters). When writing to lesser authority they use cursive script.
  - 5. What kind of script would Paul use when writing to his churches? If he wanted to show humility he may use magistral script (i.e. Philemon). If he was upset (i.e. Galatians, 2nd Corinthians), he may have used cursive.<sup>165</sup>
  - 6. Metathesis (transposition of letters)—switches order of letters, words, or phrases. (i.e. codex Bazo— transposes nine words)

<sup>165</sup> Wallace, 14:40.

7. Categories of mistakes
  - a. Is it an addition, omission, substitution, or transposition?
  - b. Is it a total rewrite? (Codex Beza). Compare to P75 where scribe writes one letter or two at a time resulting in very few transpositions.

## B. Intentional errors

1. Seven categories
  - a. Spelling
  - b. Grammar
    1. Scribe may change because they think the grammar was changed by a previous scribe.
    2. Tendency to conform the grammar of the Greek to better Greek
    3. Byzantine scribes would correct the grammar of these manuscripts to conform to a higher register of Greek (attic Greek—Greek that existed in its golden era up until the time Alexander the Great conquered the world).
  - c. Harmonization
    1. Correction of apparent discrepancies
    2. Especially prevalent in the Gospels
      - a. All Gospel manuscripts of any substantial length have harmonizations <sup>166</sup> (evidence that scribes had a high view of Scripture and were orthodox).
      - b. Common when quoting from the OT as most scribes did not know Hebrew
    3. Scribes understood the “near” context of the writing, but not the broad argument by the author.
    4. OT quotations would be conformed to the Septuagint—the form the scribes knew.
    5. Contextual parallels—something in the immediate context where the scribe wants to conform to what was said earlier in the text

### ◆ *INSIGHT*

Does the scribe’s knowledge of Greek change things? Some would say those who didn’t know Greek were less likely to change anything because they did not know how.

<sup>166</sup> Wallace, 11:10.

- d. Conflations
  1. Combination of two readings to make a new reading
  2. Example: Luke 24:53
    - “they were continual in the temple blessing God”
    - “they were continual in the temple praising God”?
    - “they were continual in the temple blessing and praising God”
  
- e. Explanatory glosses
  1. To clarify the text—not trying to change the meaning, but add enriching material for clarification
  2. Example: Marks 6-8
    - a. Scribes add the name of Jesus.
  3. Example: Ephesians 4:9
    - a. “He ascended...” or “he *first* also descended.”
  
- f. Doctrinal motivated changes.
  1. No cardinal doctrines have been affected.
  2. Example: Rom 8:1, “No condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus. (21:08). Later there was an addition *and you are not to walk according to the flesh...*”
  
- g. Addition of enriching material
  1. A phrase here and there
  2. Western text of Acts has 8% more material than the Alexandrian text of Acts (equivalent to three extra chapters) (94% agreement between them all).
  3. “Amen” added to the end of every NT book

---

*“Scribes who thought were more dangerous than those who wished to be faithful in copying what laid before them. Many of the alterations which may be classified as intentional were no doubt introduced in good faith by copyists who believed that they were correcting an error or in facility of language which had previously crept into the sacred text and needed to be rectified.”*<sup>167</sup>

– Bruce Metzger

<sup>167</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th Edition, 2005, 131.

## VII. FAMOUS TEXTUAL PROBLEMS

### A. Foundational questions to answer

1. Are the textual problems authentic?
2. Do any textual problems affect any doctrines?

### B. Examples of textual problems <sup>168</sup>

1. Mark 16:9-20
  - a. Long or intermediate endings to Mark
  - b. Eusebius and Jerome knew of essentially no Greek manuscripts with either of these endings.
  - c. Several manuscripts contain marginal comments noting that earlier Greek manuscripts lacked this ending.
  - d. Internal evidence suggests both endings are of secondary nature (vocabulary, style, and syntax are non-Markan).
  - e. All of these reasons suggest that scribes added these longer endings (either to enrich the material or to soften the abrupt ending).
  - f. Reasons for an abrupt ending
    1. Mark intentionally stopped at verse 8 (most likely explanation).
    2. Mark was never completed.
    3. The last leaf of the manuscript was lost before copying.
2. John 7:53 – 8:11
  - a. Woman caught in adultery (pericope adulterae)
  - b. Absent in the earliest and best manuscripts. (Codex Sinaiticus, Vaticanus (4th C) and P66 and P75 (3rd century)
  - c. Scholars unanimously believe it was not in the original John.
  - d. Viewed as a “floating” text in numerous manuscripts where it appears in different locations (after John 7:36, John 21:25, John 8:12, Luke 21:38, or Luke 24:53)
  - e. Almost all early manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-form omit the passage.

<sup>168</sup> See NET Bible footnote explanations.

- f. Most Western (D only) and Byzantine text-forms include the passage (contained in 5th century Codices (Bezae, Alexandrinus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, Washingtonianus).
  - g. Internal evidence (style, grammar, vocabulary) suggests non-Johannine origin (some believe Lukan); however, strong arguments in favor on internal basis.
  - h. Weight of evidence goes with the external evidence of manuscripts.
3. Romans 8:2
- a. “For the law of spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.” (ESV)
  - b. Most manuscripts have “me” instead of “you.” Other manuscripts have “us.” This is a meaningful and viable variant.
  - c. What did Paul really mean? “Us” is probably not authentic, but we struggle with this verse. Difference is *meth* or *seth* in Greek.
4. Philippians 1:14
- a. “and most of the brothers and sisters, having confidence in the Lord because of my imprisonment, now more than ever dare to speak *the word* fearlessly.” (NET). What word do they speak Paul? Give us clarity.
  - b. Our best manuscripts (Alexandrian) add “of God” after “word.”
  - c. Other manuscripts have “of the Lord” after “word” (these are western manuscripts—not our best, but are earlier that don’t have either one (meaning “of God” or “of the Lord”)
  - d. Omission is hard to explain (either intentional or unintentional).
5. 1 John 5:7-8. (Trinitarian Formula or Comma Johanneum)
- a. Found in the KJV; absent in most others
  - b. Not an argument against the Trinity (plenty of evidence), but rather, just not authentic

<sup>7</sup> *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* <sup>8</sup> And

there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (KJV)

<sup>7</sup> For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. (ESV)

- c. Absent in the First and Second editions of Erasmus
- d. Luther used 2nd edition of Erasmus (1519) in his German translation. No German translations contain this verse; an Inter-English problem.
- e. Erasmus did not believe this verse was original; absent in Greek manuscripts he used.
- f. Erasmus added in 3rd edition (1522) due to pressure from the church and the sudden appearance of a Greek manuscript that contained the verse (Codex Montfortianus, 1519; Oxford). Critics claim the Trinity was invented because of this verse.
- g. Found today in only nine late Greek manuscripts

## VIII. SUMMARY

- A. New Testament textual criticism is the study of the available manuscripts whose original no longer exists for the primary purpose of reproducing the exact wording of the original.
- B. The original text or autographa is the final text when it is dispatched from the author to its recipients— the last form of the text under control by the author
- C. The three common materials used for writing in the past were papyrus, parchment, and paper.
- D. There are 400K textual variances recorded in the New Testament manuscripts.
- E. Local text forms emerged which serve as the basis of our existing manuscripts. These include the Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine forms.

- F. Scribes change the text – unintentionally, which is the most common type of change, and intentionally. Most intentional changes were due to piety or desire for clarification and a major criterion for determining the original wording.

#### **IX. STUDY QUESTIONS**

- A. Open the Gospel of Mark to chapter 1. Now copy this chapter by hand. Could you do it without any mistakes? How long did it take? How would it be to copy the entire book of Mark?
  
- B. Explain how textual criticism differs from the “telephone” game.
  
- C. Most scholars believe there are over 400,000 textual variants in the New Testament. Is this large number a good or bad reflection of these manuscripts? Explain your answer.
  
- D. List the four different text forms. What are their differences? Why is it important to understand each of these forms?
  
- E. How would you explain what happened to the ending of Mark?

SESSION FIVE

*WHAT BIBLE  
TRANSLATION  
SHOULD I USE?*

## SESSION FIVE

# WHAT BIBLE TRANSLATION SHOULD I USE?

## I. INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL TRANSLATIONS

### A. Translation defined

1. The rendering of meaning from one language (source or vorlage) into another language (receptor text), with the goal of maintaining the intent of the original message.<sup>169</sup>

### B. Principles of Bible Translation

1. Purpose of Bible translation
  - a. Life transformation through the Word of God regardless of language<sup>170 171</sup>
2. Qualities of a good Bible translation<sup>172</sup>
  - a. Accurate—conveys the same meaning as the original
  - b. Clear—easy to understand
  - c. Natural—reflects the natural use of the local language
  - d. Accessible—promotes engagement by its readers
3. Types of Bible translations
  - a. Formal equivalence (word for word)
    1. Staying close to the words and structures of the original, even if this means the result is less natural or wooden
  - b. Dynamic equivalence (thought for thought)
    1. Expressing the ideas of the original in the most natural way possible, even if this means using different words and structures than the original
  - c. Paraphrase (idea for idea)
    1. Rephrasing in modern, easy-to-understand terms
4. Selecting a translation that works best

<sup>169</sup> Jeremiah Coogan, "Myths about Early Translations," in *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism*, Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry (eds), (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 278.

<sup>170</sup> Pioneer Bible Translators, "From Bible Translation to Life Transformation," Accessed on 5/26/25, <https://pioneerbible.org/about/>.

<sup>171</sup> Wycliffe Bible Translators, "About Bible Translation," Accessed on 5/26/25, <https://wycliffe.org.uk/about/faqs>.

<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*

- a. Determine your reading preference and level.
- b. Determine your reading purpose (personal, study, teaching, etc.).
- c. Determine which option (word-word; thought-thought; paraphrase) meets above purpose.
- d. Acknowledge that each translation has the power to transform your life as God can speak through any translation.

### C. Core Truths about the Bible in Translation

1. We can trust the Bible even in translation.
  - a. God’s Word is living and active.<sup>174</sup>
  - b. God’s Word will accomplish its purpose.<sup>175</sup>
2. Translation is a part of God’s plan for His Word.
  - a. The Bible translates dialogue (Acts 22:2).
  - b. The Bible translates itself, with hundreds of quotations in translation (seven translated quotations in Hebrews 1 alone).
  - c. People from every language and people group will praise God together.<sup>176</sup>
3. Translation is more than substituting equivalent words in order—languages often use very different words, expressions, and sentence structures to convey the same ideas.
4. Translations are necessary because all languages change in time.
5. Every translation of the Bible has been condemned by someone as soon as it rolled off the press.

## II. HISTORICAL TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

### A. Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)

1. Jews dispersed beyond Israel—Hebrew and Aramaic were replaced by Greek following the conquest of Alexander the Great (330 BC).
2. Greek became the universal language.

### ◆ INSIGHT

*“Any idea in one language can be communicated in any other language, but each translation makes choices of what to focus on.”<sup>173</sup>*

<sup>173</sup> Tyler Heston, “Bible Translations” lecture in Legacy Series, Fellowship Bible Church, Rogers, AR, April 4, 2024.

<sup>174</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12, NIV).

<sup>175</sup> So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:11, NIV).

<sup>176</sup> After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands (Revelations 7:9, NIV).

3. Oldest surviving Hebrew Old Testaments (Masoretic)
  - a. Aleppo Codex (930 AD)—3/4 remain
  - b. Leningrad Codex (1010 AD)—complete
4. Source text (Masoretic) for later versions
5. Dead Sea Scrolls highly similar to Aleppo and Leningrad

**B. Greek Septuagint (Old Testament)**

1. Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (250 BC)—Septuagint (“Seventy” or LXX); seventy-two scholars participated in its writing which took 72 days <sup>177</sup>
2. First translation ever made of the Hebrew Scriptures <sup>178</sup>
3. When the Bible is quoted in the NT, it is almost always from the Septuagint version. <sup>179</sup> However, some are from Hebrew version.
4. Early church’s only source of the Old Testament (in their language) <sup>180</sup>
5. Greek manuscripts of the Septuagint developed; 2400 surviving manuscripts
6. Hexapla <sup>181</sup>
  - a. Origen’s attempt to purify all existing Greek versions of the Septuagint (3rd century)
  - b. Six parallel column comparison to the Hebrew OT
  - c. Six columns: Hebrew Text; Hebrew text transliterated into Greek characters; severely literalistic Greek (Aquila, 140) who attempted to reproduce individual Hebrew words exactly; Symmachus; Septuagint; Theodotion.
7. Authoritative biblical text of the OT for the contemporary Greek Orthodox Church
8. Dead Sea Scrolls similar to Septuagint
9. Ultimately the Septuagint was condemned by Talmudic (Jewish) scholars—late manuscripts were limited to Christian scribes.

<sup>177</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation, Ancient and English Versions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 14.

<sup>178</sup> Metzger, 18.

<sup>179</sup> Metzger, 18.

<sup>180</sup> Metzger, 18.

<sup>181</sup> Metzger, 19.

10. Old Testament differences between Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox believers. See *Old Testament Comparison* (Appendix F)

### C. Important Surviving Greek New Testament Manuscripts

1. Codex Vaticanus (350 AD)
  - a. Important source text for Erasmus and Textus Recepticus
  - b. Important source text for the 1881 Westcott and Hort Greek NT edition
2. Codex Sinaiticus (350-400 AD)
  - a. Oldest complete copy of the Greek New Testament
  - b. Highly valued by Bible scholars in their efforts to reconstruct the original biblical text
3. Codex Alexandrinus (400 AD)

### D. Latin Vulgate (Jerome)

1. Significance
  - a. Poorly translated Latin versions were appearing as Latin had replaced Greek as the clerical and people's language.
  - b. Jerome translated the whole Bible into Latin (Hebrew OT and Greek NT)—commissioned by Pope Damasus I.
  - c. The official Bible for the Western Church for 1,000 yrs.
  - d. Translated over 23 years (382-404)
  - e. Included the Apocrypha, but Jerome was adamant these books were not canonical and limited only to edification. See *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* (Appendix G).
  - f. All subsequent medieval Western Bible use was based on the Vulgate.
2. About Jerome
  - a. "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" reveals something of his passion.<sup>182</sup>
  - b. Spent 35 years learning Hebrew in Bethlehem

### ◆ INSIGHT

Both the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls reveal an amazing consistency with the Masoretic Text.

<sup>182</sup> Wycliffe Bible Translators, "A Brief History of Bible Translation," Accessed on 5/6/25, <https://wycliffe.org.uk/story/a-brief-history-of-bible-translation>.

## E. Middle English

1. Translations of portions of the Bible into English (800- 900s)

## F. John Wycliffe (1325-1384)

1. Significance
  - a. First complete English translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate, not original Hebrew or Greek (translation of a translation) (1382)
  - b. Latin does not have the definite article (like the Greeks) which is found 20k times in the Greek NT and is vital for understanding the text. (Latin word order and idioms used)
  - c. Word for word translation from the Latin. Meaning of the original is not communicated clearly. Difficult to read.
  - d. Two editions: 1382 and 1395
  - e. 1408— Reading the English Bible (or translation) outlawed (for the next 130 years— no other English Bible).
  - d. Latin Bible was not to be replaced or altered. Wycliffe was bold.
2. About Wycliffe
  - a. A champion of the people and often called the “Morning Star of the Reformation;” famous English priest and Oxford Scholar.
  - b. Believed the Bible was our ultimate authority and not papal authority
  - c. Indirectly began to break down power structures in the political-religious Catholic Church
  - d. Wycliffe bibles were handwritten and took one year to copy. Thousands of copies were made.
  - e. Distribution methods were primitive. His followers (Lollards) spread these translations despite official opposition.
  - h. “Pastors should live lives of simplicity and holiness”, he taught, “shepherding their flocks (people)—not plundering them.”
  - i. Died of a stroke in 1384— In 1415 the Pope declared him a heretic and ordered his bones to be dug up, burned, and scattered into the river.

## G. Erasmus of Rotterdam <sup>183</sup>

1. Roman Catholic Priest (committed catholic)
2. Best Greek scholar in the 16th century (didn't learn Greek until his 30's)
3. Latin Bible was the standard for Holy Scripture in W. Europe.
4. First Edition (1516), Revised Latin (one side) with Greek (other side); called *Novum Instrumentum omne*. A starting point for the Textus Receptus (first to be published, but not the first to be printed)
5. Seven Greek partial NT manuscripts used dated from 10th-15th centuries (only one Greek manuscript that contained Revelation that was just a commentary); Much of Revelation had to be "retranslated" from Latin into Greek and had no Greek manuscript support.
6. Second Edition (1519)
7. Third Edition (1520) included Comma Johanneum <sup>184</sup> used by the King James translators.
8. Used the best Byzantine manuscripts as a source text at the time
9. No cardinal doctrines were jeopardized by its shortcomings.

## H. William Tyndale (1494-1536)

1. Significance
  - a. English translation of the NT from Greek (1525); grandfather of all Bibles
  - b. Significantly improved accuracy
  - c. New Testament—complete; Old Testament—only Pentateuch and Jonah
  - d. Used Erasmus 3rd edition (1522) as a source
  - e. His translation formed the backbone of later English Bibles.
  - f. Heavily influenced the King James Version; about 90% of the 1611 KJV is Tyndale (with its beautiful expressions).
  - g. Five New Testament editions completed
  - h. Tindale wrote the NT foundation of our English Bible today.

## ◆ INSIGHT

Italian, French, Spanish, and Dutch Bibles began to appear in the 1400's.

<sup>183</sup> Martin Heide, "Erasmus and the Search for the Original Text of the New Testament," *Text & Canon Institute*, Feb. 7, 2023, <https://textandcanon.org/erasmus-and-the-search-for-the-original-text-of-the-new-testament/>.

<sup>184</sup> "For there are three that bear record [in heaven, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth], Spirit, and water, and blood, and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:7–8) (Erasmus' third edition and contained in the Codex Montfortianus dated 1520).

## 2. About Tyndale

- a. Fluent in eight languages including Greek and Hebrew
- b. 15K printed copies of Tyndall's NT smuggled into England; illegal to read the Bible in any language beside Latin.
- c. Early leader of the reformation; fled to Germany; betrayed; imprisoned x 15 months then strangled and burned at the stake (1536) for heresy, but his linguistic legacy endured
- d. As he died he cried out, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes" (King Henry VIII).
- e. True father of the English Bible

## I. **Guttenberg Press (1440)**

1. Johannes Gutenberg:1440 invented the printing press
2. Revolutionized Bible distribution
3. The first printed English New Testament (Tyndale's) was produced in 1526.
4. Printing allowed for wider access and standardization of texts.
5. Gutenberg Bible - most valuable book in the world; first book ever printed.

## J. **Coverdale Bible (1535)**

1. Coverdale (Tyndale's assistant) finished Tyndale's OT.
2. First complete Bible printed in English
3. Luther's German, several Latin texts, Tyndale's OT portion in English?
4. Placed Apocrypha at the end of the OT rather than dispersed in the OT.

## K. **Matthews Bible (1537)**

1. Combined Coverdale OT and Tyndale's NT; (both were Tyndale's work); plus 2000 notes: (controversial)

2. John Rogers (Matthews bible); 1537 Revised Tyndale's NT, Coverdale, notes from Tyndale's OT and his own editorial notes
3. Also called the "Wife beater's" Bible because of how 1 Peter 3:7 is interpreted (Her husband may beat the fear of God into her.)
4. Made in large print

**L. The Great Bible (1539).**

1. Bible reading was at an all-time high in England.
2. Edited by Coverdale-based on the Matthews Bible; removed Matthews notes
3. Second revision of Tyndale (after Matthews Bible)
4. Very large size bible
5. Basically Tyndale's Bible plus the OT completed by Coverdale
6. Authorized by King Henry the 8th based mostly on the Tyndale Bible; broke ties with the Roman church because the pope refused to grant him a divorce; so he started the Church of England (Anglican church); married his mistress; commissioned Miles Coverdale to publish the Mathews Bible without the notes; the Great Bible; every church needed a bible; 1539
7. First Bible authorized for public use: Everyone was caught up in reading this new delight; approved to be read.
8. First Bible to be used in the church services of the Church of England (still too expensive due to size)

**M. The Geneva Bible (1560)**

1. Produced by English Protestant exiles in Geneva, it was the first English Bible with numbered verses and extensive marginal notes. Hugely popular, it was used by Shakespeare and the Pilgrims but disliked by the monarchy for its anti-authoritarian notes. Geneva Bible. (1557-NT). (1560 - whole) William Whittington (Calvin's brother in law)
2. Written in Latin letter so everyone could read small size. Verse divisions were used for the first time. Also first study Bible - notes in the margins and had footnotes; basis of the KJV

3. First English Bible to be translated entirely from the Greek and Hebrew.
4. First translation done by committee; still relied heavily on Tyndale's work as a base properly regarded as the 3rd revision of Tyndale; calvinistic in its notes.
5. First English Bible to use chapter and verse divisions
6. First Bible that used italics for words not in the original text
7. Alternative Bible - the Geneva Bible; contained equally treasonable annotations
8. Kings called Tyrants
9. Very different; text was based on the Textus Receptus (not Vulgate)
10. Created by Calvinists (thoroughly protestant)
11. Mass produced and therefore readily available and used
12. First to start putting words in italics that were not in the original language. (NASB uses italics when the words are absent... compared to the original.)
13. Anglican Bishops were not happy with this Bible because of the threat that it may undermine their authority. They produced the Bishop's Bible.

**N. Bishops Bible (1568)**

1. Authorized by Queen Elizabeth I
2. Situation in England: Bishops Bible read from the pulpit, but the Geneva Bible was read in the pews.
3. Primary text for the KJV (Rough Draft of the KJV)
  - a. Why so good? Richness in the words; scholarship
  - b. Psalm 77
  - c. Failure when it came out.; printer left off word; wicked Bible
  - d. Civil war broke out.
  - e. Puritan vs kings and bishops; no place for a royal Bible



**TIMELINE**

Historical Transmission of English Bible Versions (1300-1700)

**O. Douay-Rheims Bible**

1. New Testament (1582); Old Testament (1609-1610)
2. English Catholic Scholars in exile (Douay and Rheims, France)
3. First complete English Catholic Bible (translated from Vulgate)

**P. King James Bible (1611)**

1. Cultural Climate
  - a. Deeply divided people; rival factions; Puritans vs Episcopalians (Church of England)
  - b. Puritans desired Scripture only—no stained glass, ornaments or sign of Catholicism; believed Church of England was in violation of Scripture
  - c. Religious divisions threatened the King.
  - d. Hampton Conference in England (1604)
  - e. Puritans suggested a new Bible version, a “King’s Bible for a King’s church.”
  - f. King James Bible 1604 commissioned to unify the church
  - g. 47 scholars collaborated; first example of collaboration
  - h. 1611. KJ Bible
    1. Noted versions: Ruth 3:15 typo. Printing wasn’t refined. “He went into the city.” Others said, “She went into the city.” Collectively called “he” Bibles and “she” Bibles (first edition); huge Bibles; printed and chained to the pulpits (later printed smaller)

2. Authorized version; most printed book in history; reigned x 250 years. First 150 years went through four major revisions. You would not be able to read due to changes in the language.
  3. In the preface it was stated that no version was perfect. Translators said in the preface that the Bible translation by its very nature required “Repeated revision and correction.”
2. King James I Translation Requirements
    - a. No marginal notes except explanation of Greek or Hebrew
    - b. Must use Bishops Bible
    - c. Keep ecclesiastical words (i.e. Church, not congregation; baptism, not wash)
    - d. Exclude Puritan words (i.e. bishops) 23:54 Rules strangled puritans model.
    - e. Rigorous scholarship was encouraged.
    - f. Downside:
      1. Prayer is forgotten.
      2. Holy Spirit work is minimized.
      3. God’s work is controlled.
  3. Results
    - a. Solved the problem between the Bishop’s Bible (Anglicans) and Geneva Bible (Puritans)
    - b. KJV stood for stability and came into prominence; better translation for style than for its accuracy.
    - c. Drew heavily from the Bishop’s Bible, Geneva Bible, and Tyndale’s work (90% of Tyndale’s NT was in the 1611 KJV)
    - d. Writing was elegant, ceremonial, hierarchical, sacramental—not what the Puritans desired. (250 English idioms originate in KJV); (i.e. Psalms 23)
    - e. Based on original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts (as opposed to using a translation)
    - f. Word-for-word translation.

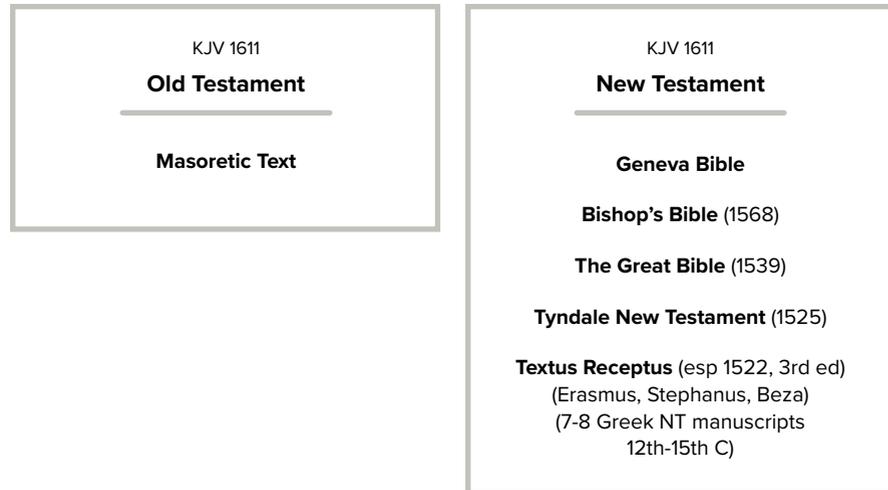
- g. Most popular Bible for 300 years: God has used this translations for millions.
  - h. This translation paved the way for many more later translations in English.
  - i. Versions: 1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769 (100K changes (many trivial) made between 1611-1769)
  - j. 1769 Oxford version— updated and standardized; updated English; 10s of thousands of revisions to the 1611 text; most minor changes in spelling and punctuation (This is the version most have in America. That text has remained unchanged since that time. Even this one looks like a foreign language to modern readers.)
  - k. All living languages change over time. We can clearly express the original meaning of the Bible in today’s English.
    - a. “Single greatest monument to the English language.” <sup>185</sup>
    - b. “Most beautiful book in the world;” <sup>186</sup> ... style and cadence.. memorization
4. Retrospective Greek base text comparison
- a. Basis was Textus Receptus (combined Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza).
  - b. Erasmus used 7-8 Greek manuscripts with Revelation mostly absent causing him to back-translate from the Latin.
  - c. Erasmus 3rd edition used by KJ translators
  - d. Since Textus Receptus completed, > 1000 Greek manuscripts have been discovered. No theological updates needed, but small changes in wording help better understand the original authors. More modern translations are able to use these better texts.
  - e. There are some verses that did not appear in earlier manuscripts (i.e. Angels stirring the water. John 5:4).
5. Problems
- a. Translation is over 400 years old.
  - b. Textual basis is inferior.
  - c. Translators themselves said no translation is perfect.

◆ **INSIGHT**

A translation cannot be exactly like the original language. If it were, you would not need the copy. It is simply a logical impossibility—like a “married bachelor” or a “square triangle.” It is a nonsensical contradiction.

<sup>185</sup> Wallace, “The Greek Text Behind the KJV” in *Textual Criticism*, Credo Courses, 1:00.

<sup>186</sup> Wallace, 2:00.



### III. COMPETING PRIMARY NEW TESTAMENT SOURCES <sup>187</sup>

#### A. Textus Receptus (TR)

1. Any Greek NT that is essentially derived from Erasmus' text; <sup>188</sup> any Greek NT published before 1831.
2. Broader term that includes the Greek NT editions from Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza (could be any of these); more than 30 editions of TR (hundreds of differences among them)
3. Believes Erasmus' work best reflects the original and is free from error
4. Based on late Byzantine manuscripts (12th century and later)
5. Versions: KJV, NKJV
6. Only has about 5K textual differences from our standard critical text today (only 2% growth over 1400 years). No essential doctrines at stake, same ones who signed KJ doctrines could do it today with the modern texts. No one has changed their doctrinal statements because they changed Bibles.
7. Is only the TR inspired? (KJ advocates say yes) ... but is Erasmus inspired? (catholic priest)? He writes last part of Revelation by back translation; is that inspired?
8. Luther used Erasmus' second edition (no Trinitarian formula). TR-only advocates may claim only English Bibles are accurate (not German).
9. TR- advocates are universally protestants, not Catholics.

<sup>187</sup> "Majority Text vs. Critical Text vs. Textus Receptus – Textual Criticism 101," *Berean Patriot*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.bereanpatriot.com/majority-text-vs-critical-text-vs-textus-receptus-textual-criticism-101/>.

<sup>188</sup> Wallace, "Textus Receptus, Doctrine of Preservation (Part 1)," *Textual Criticism*, *Credo Courses*, 1:06.

## B. Majority Text

1. Believes where the text is in question, the majority of all manuscripts (regardless of date) best reflects the original
2. Uses a mathematical majority rule
3. Use only Greek manuscripts (not Coptic, not Latin, etc.)
4. Byzantine text (9th-15th centuries)
5. No version offspring; closest mention are the footnotes in the NKJV

## C. Critical Text

1. Believes oldest manuscripts and Alexandrian manuscripts should be used where the text is in question. "Earlier is better."
2. Heavy reliance on Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus; therefore serve as the foundations for almost every modern NT edition (2nd-4th centuries)
3. Originates from Westcott and Hort's 1881; "The New Testament in Original Greek" or simply "Westcott and Hort"
4. Updated version by Nestle (1898) *Novum Testamentum Graece*.
5. Revised 1901
6. Revised again (Kurt Aland and his wife), the Nestle-Aland "*Novum Testamentum Graece*" (The New Testament in Greek), often abbreviated NA; multiple revisions (now NA28 as of 2020)
7. NA28 essentially unchanged from original Westcott and Hort 1881
8. Modern, most accurate; dethroned TR
9. All modern versions use critical text (not KJV or NKJV)

### ◆ **INSIGHT**

*"We do not need to bend our brains to explain away the errors of the Received Text."* <sup>189</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Martin Heide, "Erasmus and the Search for the Original Text of the New Testament," *Text & Canon Institute*, Feb. 7, 2023, <https://textandcanon.org/erasmus-and-the-search-for-the-original-text-of-the-new-testament/>.

**INSIGHT**

*"We do not need to bend our brains to explain away the errors of the Received Text."*  
189

Byzantine Text-Types <b>Textus Receptus</b>	<b>Majority Text</b>	Alexandrian Text-Types <b>Critical Text</b>
<p><b>1516</b> Erasmus (Desiderius): 1st published Greek NT</p> <p>(Greek-Latin Diglot) (From Miniscule 1, 2, 7, 817, 2814, 2815, 2816; from 12th C to 15th C) Where text was missing, he took Latin Vulgate and back-translated into the Greek. 3/1/1516 (or Novum Instrumentum)</p>	<p>Hodges &amp; Farstad 1982, 1985.</p>	<p>1881 Westcott-Hort Text (Codex Vaticanus &amp; Sinaiticus)</p>
<p><b>1519</b> (Miniscule 33 added)</p>	<p>Robinson &amp; Pierpont 1991, 2005, 2018</p>	<p>Nestle 1898 - Novum Testamentum Graece</p>
<p><b>1522</b> 3rd Edition KJ translators used (Codex Montfortianus added); added Comma Johanneum</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>NKJV Footnotes</p>	<p>Nestle-Aland (NA 1898-2012) (NA 28-2012)</p>
<p>Stephanus (Robert Estienne) .. took 1522 Erasmus. Codex D (5th Century), Codex L (8th Century), Minuscules 8, 42, and 237 (11th century), 9, 38, 111, 120, 398, 2298, and 2817 (12th Century) 4 and 6 (13th century) and 5 (14th Century), and another 16th Century printed text known as the Complutensian Polyglot (1514)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>United Bible Society (UBS1 1966 – UBS5 2014) (matches NA28)</p>
<p><b>1550</b> first to list textual variances in 15 diff. manu.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>English Revised Version/RV</p>
<p><b>1551</b> *Added variant endings *Added verses.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>American Standard Version</p>
<p><b>1598</b> Theodore Beza (Calvin Associate) *Introduced a few wrong phrases; (Western text) Added Codex Claromontanus *11 editions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Revised Standard Version (RSV)</p>
<p>(1589 Beza text: KJ mostly used) 1825, 1873 Oxford TR (almost identical to 1550)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>NRSV</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>NRSV-Updated</p>
<p>King James Versions 1611-1873</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>ESV</p>
<p>New King James Version</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>NASB - 1971</p>
<p>Modern English Version</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>The Living Bible (TLB) 1971 NLT 1996</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>New International Version (NIV)</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>New English Trans. (NET) 2005</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>The Message 2002</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Christian Standard Bible (CSB)</p>

## IV. TRANSLATION METHODS AND PHILOSOPHIES

### A. General Practices

1. Every translation of the Bible has been condemned by someone as soon as it rolled off the press.
2. Other religions struggle with translations. For example, the only true Qur'an is in Arabic—all others are commentaries.
3. There is no translation without interpretation (you can't translate idioms and make them the same or even use the same word order). Two languages don't match the same (not even same word order)!
4. If each man is accountable to God then each man needs a Bible in his own language.
5. Objectives for English Translations over time: Elegance (1534-1885) vs. Accuracy (started with the Revised Version in 1881 NT: 1885 whole Bible until 1984) vs. Readability<sup>190</sup> (might not be stated)
6. All translation is interpretation. It is impossible to separate.

### B. Types of Translations

1. Formal equivalence (word for word)
  - a. Stay close to the words and structures of the original, even if this means the result is less natural.
  - b. Must remain as closely to the original Hebrew and Greek as possible; a literal transfer; word for word; the original words into English; greatest accuracy? (real problems with this method - some words do not have an English equivalent. The word order and entire sentence structure don't match. It becomes wooden and unnatural. Comprehension and readability are difficult).
  - c. KJV, NASB, RSV, NKJV, NASU, ESV, NIV, NAB, TNIV, NJB
2. Dynamic equivalence (thought for thought)
  - a. Express the ideas of the original in the most natural way possible, even if this means using different words and structures than the original.

### ◆ INSIGHT

KJV advocates...  
to Critical-Text advocates  
"You only have 90% of the  
word of God."

Critical-Text advocates  
respond....  
"No, You have 110% of the  
word of God."

<sup>190</sup> Daniel Wallace, Dan Wallace's  
"Top 5 Bible Translations,"  
on Mike Licona's podcast,  
8/20/2020, 0:27

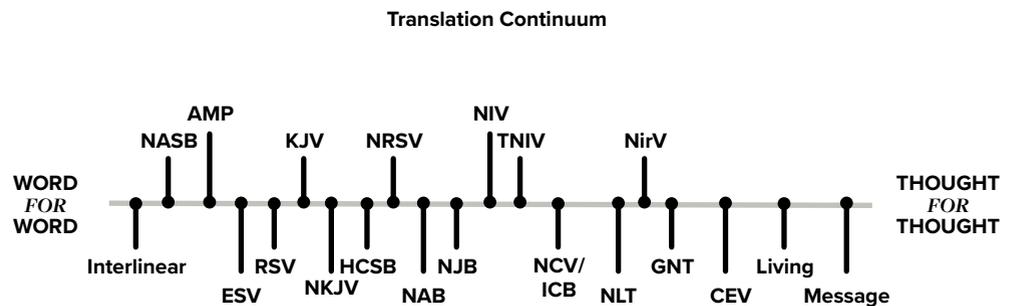
- b. Transfer the message: exact thought and emotions of the original text. At the end they believe this method is more accurate and understandable.
  - c. NIV, NRSV, GNB, JB, NEB, LB, NAB, NLT
3. Paraphrase or free (idea for idea)
- a. Living Bible
  - b. The Message
  - c. Phillips Translation
  - d. The Living Bible (TLB)

**C. Choice of a Version**

1. If possible use three types from different parts of the spectrum.
2. If only one option available—centrist position (NIV or ESV)
3. Study multiple translations to get full understanding of God’s Word
4. Different translations make different choices about how they balance dynamic and formal equivalence.
5. Optimal translations come from the original language.

**CONTINUUM**

This continuum shows how different Bible translations fit into the word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation philosophies.



## V. COMPARISON OF MAJOR ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

### ◆ INSIGHT

*“He who translates a biblical verse literally is a liar, but he who elaborates on it is a blasphemer.”<sup>191</sup>*

### A. Textus Receptus Lineage

1. KJV
  - a. would not use for its accuracy, but would use for its literary beauty
  - b. beautiful; rich wording
  - c. We should all have a copy.
2. New King James Version (NKJV) 1982
  - a. Updated modern English vocabular and grammar while preserving traditional KJ style (replaces “thee” and “thou” with “you”)
  - b. Uses Textus Receptus textual basis
  - c. References Majority text and Critical text in footnotes
  - d. Used as Greek Orthodox Study Bible (used by Eastern Christians)
  - e. Wallace’s least favorite; keeps all of the worst features of the KJV and gets rid of the best
  - f. KJV goal was not to be literal, but style (NKJV goal was to be literal!.. therefore much less elegant
  - g. Retains Textus Receptus (worst of all possible worlds)
3. Modern English Version (MEV); 2014
  - a. Textus Receptus based
  - b. Even more contemporary than the NKJV, but faithful to the KJ text

### B. Critical Text Lineage

1. English Revised Version (ERV) or Revised Version (RV)
  - a. Revision of the King James (translation lineage of KJV, but not the textual lineage)
  - b. First major English translation to shift away from the textus receptus 1881 (NT) 1885 (OT)... UK

<sup>191</sup> Tosephta, Megillah 4.41, ed. M.S. Zuckerman (Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1937), 228.

- c. Committee translation (1st since the KJV)
  - d. “Conquest of King Truth over King James”
  - e. Unpalatable English
  - f. Maybe more accurate than the KJV, but the English was as wooden and stiff and not natural as you could get (except maybe the New World Translation).
2. American Standard Version
- a. American Version of the ERV (1901); done by the American members of the RV translation team; had to wait 14 years after the RV to publish
  - b. Formal literal translation (word for word)... *not elegant; not readable; (although more accurate and far more readable than the RV done 16 years earlier)*
  - c. Accurate, but “stiff;” italics when words were added; added Jehovah in place of YAWY; also they used thee and thou. It became known for God over time.
  - d. Three branches:
    - 1) 1952. Revised Standard Version (RSV)
      - a. First truly ecumenical translation produced by scholars from several different denominations (i.e. Protestants, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish Rabbis); published by the National Council of Churches (mainline churches)
      - b. Eliminated “thee” and thou”
      - c. Controversial; Why? How it translated Isaiah 7:14, “Young woman” used rather than “virgin”
      - d. Many rejected this translation leading to NASB.
      - e. Matt 19:23... It will be hard for a rich “man” to enter the kingdom of heaven.
    - A) 1989: New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) replaced RSV
      - Published by National Council of Churches
      - Preferred by most mainline denominations (more liberal .. Methodist, Episcopal, etc.), NOT evangelicals (Baptists or Pentecostals) and academics

- gender neutral (differs from RSV) Matt 19:23; It will be hard for a rich “person” to enter the kingdom of heaven.
  - For Ecumenical reading and for cross-checking scholarly opinion
  - Great translation “although it moved into the direction of “gender inclusiveness too much.”<sup>192</sup>
  - Metzger took over chairmanship; mix of scholars approved by the Vatican and denominational scholars (not an evangelical bias)
- B) NRSV Updated Edition: year? Controversy! 1 Cor 6:9-10, “neither male prostitutes nor men who engage in illicit sex will inherit the kingdom of God.
- C) English Standard Version (ESV) 2001
1. Conservative revision of the 1952 Revised Standard Version (RSV); 2001 ESV first edition
  2. Formal equivalence (more literal); faithful to original text.
  3. Partly developed in response to gender-neutral translations (i.e. later versions of the NRSV), ESV was committed to retaining masculine pronouns consistent with the original language.
  4. Restored “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 that had been changed to “young woman” in RSV
  5. Purchased the rights to the RSV and bypassed the NRSV
  6. Conservative alternative to the more liberal NRSV
  7. Updates: 2007, 2011, 2016 (“permanent text”)
  8. Widely used by evangelicals for its accuracy and literary quality
  9. Best for “understated elegance;” more updated than the RSV

<sup>192</sup> Wallace, 16:26

- 2) 1971. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
  - a. Designed to update language of ASV, but keep its literal translation
  - b. People did not like 1952 RSV because in Isaiah 7:14, it spoke of a “young maiden” rather than a “virgin.”
  - c. Most literal translation of all English versions (word for word)
  - d. Small caps indicated Old Testament quotes (only version).
  - e. Kept “thee,” “thou,” “art” when addressing God (removed in 1995 update).
  - f. Literal translation: 1 Cor 6:9-10 “Neither *effeminate* nor *homosexuals* will inherit the kingdom of God.” Later editions updated for clarity with *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*.
  - g. updated in 1995 and 2020 (removed “thee,” “thou,” and “art”)
  - h. Very difficult to read due to its literal or “wooden” translation

3) The Living Bible (TLB) 1971

- paraphrase (not translation) of the ASV (done by Kenneth Taylor)
  - easy to read; contemporary, everyday English
  - based on the ASV (not original language)
1. New Living Translation (NLT) 1996
    - Used Kenneth Taylor’s Living Bible as a starting point
    - Used dynamic equivalence; phrase by phrase
    - more readable
    - Revision of the Living Bible
    - Evangelical preference
    - Not study purposes (word/word)

C. **Independent Versions** (completely new) – Critical Text Lineage

1. New International Version (NIV)

- a. Best-selling Bible

- b. Evangelicals call for a new edition; no prior translation; fresh translation from critical text lineage; evangelical preference
  - c. Used dynamic equivalence; phrase by phrase
  - d. More readable; conversational; appeal to broad global audience
  - e. Best for readability and accuracy
  - f. Scholarship is outstanding; terrific translation; examined very closely
  - g. Based on critical text
  - h. Emphasis on clarity, natural English, and accurate meaning. 1978 first edition.
  - i. 1984 NIV: You bring in areas of judgment and debate (Gal 5:7) Good thought; sometimes; add thoughts that were not there; 1 Cor 4:9. 2011 NIV; flesh not sarks; gender neutral (bending to culture)
  - j. Wallace says best for readability
2. Catholic Bibles
- a. Have deuterocanonical books
  - b. OT translated from both Masoretic with Septuagint influence
  - c. NT translated from critical texts and Latin vulgate (for liturgy)
  - d. Douay-Rheims (1582-1610)
    - 1. Textual basis: Latin vulgate
    - 2. Reactionary to Protestant translations
  - e. New American Bible (NAB) 1970
    - 1. Only English Bible authorized by the Catholic church to be read during mass
    - 2. Official US Catholic Bible
    - 3. Textual basis: critical text
  - f. New American Bible – Revised Edition (NAB-RE) 2011
    - 1. Recommended by Catholic church for personal use (most widely used)
    - 2. NAB updated

3. Good News Translation (GNT) (Today's English Version) 1966
  - a. Simple, accessible English
  - b. Dynamic equivalence
  
4. Holman Christian Standard Bible (Christian Standard Bible) or CSB 2004
  - a. Published by and popular among Southern Baptists
  - b. Critical text basis
  - c. Optimal equivalence (equal word/word and thought/thought)
  - d. 2017 revision; HCSB to just CSB (removed "Yahweh" for "Lord")
  - e. Good translation. .. just not the best
  - f. Driven by Southern Baptists, but other scholars worked on it (broad-based)
  
5. New English Translation (NET) 2005
  - a. 60K translation notes
  - b. Critical Text base
  - c. Faithful to the original meaning (not the original form)
  - d. Extremely accurate translation; great study Bible
  - e. In some respect, it has become the "translators' translation."
  - f. Look at favorite verse, then look at footnotes about it.
  - g. For study and accuracy... hands down the best
  
6. The Message 2002
  - a. Loose paraphrase, not considered a formal translation; highly readable; emotional tone
  - b. Eugene Peterson- author
  - c. Meant for devotional reading, not academic study
  - d. Critical text base; worked from Hebrew and Greek texts
  
7. New English Bible (NEB) (1970)
  - a. British Bible using modern literary English
  - b. Dynamic Equivalence

- c. Critical Text basis
  - d. Revised English Bible (REB) 1989
    - 1. Updated Biblical scholarship from NEB
    - 2. Clear and reverent
8. New World Translation 1950, 1960, 2013
- a. Jehovah Witness Translation—the anonymous work of the “New World Bible Translation Committee”
  - b. Most stiff and wooden translation in existence
  - c. “just not English”
  - d. Serious problems; bad at points; translate according to their theology, not Greek
  - e. Most word/word translation except where they disagree with the theology, then it becomes paraphrastic
  - f. The first intentional, systematic effort at producing a complete version of the Bible that is edited and revised for the specific purpose of agreeing with a group’s doctrine
  - g. Many call this a “perversion” and not a “translation.”
  - h. Sectarian translation; not valuable.

## VI. SUMMARY

- A. God can speak fully in any language and time, and He delights in diversity. We are grateful to the Lord for the abundance of Bible resources available in English. All believers should utilize the abundance of excellent resources we have in English, including many great translations, to get a clearer understanding of God’s amazing Word.
- B. Pray for and consider supporting Bible translation for languages that do not have it yet. Remember that, by God’s grace, we can trust our Bible in translation.

## VII. STUDY QUESTIONS

- A. Compare the three following translations of Psalms 119:9-16:

### PSALM 119:9-16 NKJV

- <sup>9</sup> How can a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed according to Your word.
- <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I have sought You;  
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
- <sup>11</sup> Your word I have hidden in my heart,  
That I might not sin against You.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessed are You, O Lord!  
Teach me Your statutes.
- <sup>13</sup> With my lips I have declared  
All the judgments of Your mouth.
- <sup>14</sup> I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,  
As much as in all riches.
- <sup>15</sup> I will meditate on Your precepts,  
And contemplate Your ways.
- <sup>16</sup> I will delight myself in Your statutes;  
I will not forget Your word.

### PSALM 119:9-16 TLB

- <sup>9</sup> How can a young man stay pure? By reading your Word and following its rules. <sup>10</sup> I have tried my best to find you—don't let me wander off from your instructions. <sup>11</sup> I have thought much about your words and stored them in my heart so that they would hold me back from sin.
- <sup>12</sup> Blessed Lord, teach me your rules. <sup>13</sup> I have recited your laws <sup>14</sup> and rejoiced in them more than in riches. <sup>15</sup> I will meditate upon them and give them my full respect. <sup>16</sup> I will delight in them and not forget them.

### PSALM 119:9-16 (*The Last Night of our Lord, by Doug Van Dorn*)

Best way to keep a young man's way pure? By guarding it according to your word. Be thou the quest of my whole heart; let me not wander from your commandments. Buried deep in my heart, your word shall keep me from sinning against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! By these lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. Boldly I delight in the way of your testimonies, as much as in all riches. Burrowing deep, I meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways. Buoyantly I delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

1. Which phrases are most similar/different across the three translations?
2. What aspects of the original does each translation highlight?
3. Find at least one insight from each translation that is hard to see in the others.

B. Read the following passages below and then answer the questions.

**Old English**

Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum, si þin nama gehalgod. Tobecume þin rice. Gewurþe ðin willa on eorðan swa swa on heofonum. Urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg. And forgyf us ure gyltas swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum. And ne gelæd þu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele. Sopllice.

**Middle English** (*Wycliffe's 1384 translation*)

Oure fadir that art in heuenes, Halewid be thi name; Thi kyngdoom come to; Be thi wille don, in erthe as in heuene. Yyue to vs this dai oure breed ouer othir substaunce, and foryyue to vs oure dettis, as we foryyuen to oure dettouris; and lede vs not in to temptacioun, but delyuere vs fro yuel. Amen.

**Early Modern English** (*KJV, 1611*)

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

**More Recent Modern English** (*NLT, 2015*)

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but



SESSION SIX

*EVERYDAY  
APOLOGETICS*

SESSION SIX

# *EVERYDAY APOLOGETICS*

BRINGING THE BIBLE INTO MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

**I. REVIEW AND INTEGRATION OF ARGUMENTS FOR THE BIBLE**

**A. Review the main points from Sessions 1–5:**

1. Revelation, Inspiration, Inerrancy, and Authority
2. Reliability of the Bible
3. The Development of the Biblical Canon
4. Textual Criticism
5. Bible Versions

**II. FRAMING THE CONVERSATION**

**A. Conversation starters: How to initiate a discussion about the Bible**

1. Ask thoughtful questions.
2. Listen sincerely to objections, questions, and doubts.
3. Identify those in the conversation with other worldviews, religious positions, and sacred texts.
4. Find common ground in the conversation.

**III. PRESENTATION OF THE PRIMARY ARGUMENT**

**A. Articulate a clear and concise defense of the Bible:**

1. Write out your own reason that you believe the Bible is authoritative and can be stated in under five minutes.
2. Explain the importance of the Bible theologically.
3. Explain the importance of the Bible historically.
4. How would your answer change between a skeptic, seeker, or believer?

#### IV. ROLE-PLAY AND CASE STUDIES

- A. **Divide into pairs or groups:**
  - 1. One plays a skeptic or curious friend.
  - 2. The other gives a defense using one or more approaches (i.e. Reliability of the Bible, proof of Inspiration of the Bible, etc.).
  
- B. **Rotate roles to practice different responses**
  
- C. **Provide sample case studies** (i.e., “Your friend says the Bible is full of errors,” or “A teacher says the Bible is no longer applicable in today’s modern world.”)
  
- D. **Build your own five-minute defense of the Bible argument and share with the class.**

#### V. NAVIGATING COMMON CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIONS

- A. **Biblical Principles**
  - 1. With truth and love as Christ demonstrates (John 6-7) <sup>193</sup>
  - 2. Listening with the intent to understand (not just reply) <sup>194 195</sup>
  - 3. “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:6).
  - 4. “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).
  - 5. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).
  
- B. **Dealing with emotional objections** (e.g., hurt by religion)
  
- C. **When not to argue: Discerning spiritual readiness**

<sup>193</sup> David Keehn, “Responding to Objections with Truth and Love,” The Good Book Blog, August 31, 2015, accessed on 6/16/2024, <https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2015/responding-to-objections-with-truth-and-love>.

<sup>194</sup> The Humanitas Forum on Christianity and Culture, “The Virtue of Listening – because there are no little people”. Feb. 3, 2015, accessed on 6/16/24, <https://humanitas.org/?p=3229>.

<sup>195</sup> Francis Schaeffer’s response is a good model, as quoted from The Humanitas Forum on Christianity and Culture, “The Virtue of Listening – because there are no little people”. Feb. 3, 2015, accessed on 6/16/24, <https://humanitas.org/?p=3229>. “If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and then the last 5 minutes I will share something of the truth.”

#### D. Redirecting to the Gospel

### VI. CASE STUDIES

#### A. A Conversation with William

You're attending a dinner party at a friend's house two weeks before Christmas. The discussion turns to the meaning of Christmas. Someone mentions the meaning of Christmas is the birth of Jesus as told in the Bible. Your friend, William, a thoughtful and studious agnostic, says,

"I have read the Bible and it is full of discrepancies and is hard to understand. It is just an ancient book that has limited historical value. I just don't think there is good historical evidence to believe that Jesus was anything more than a good teacher. In fact, over time the stories have just become legend. I'm not trying to be hostile to Christians, but it just seems like anyone who believes in the Bible is just old-fashioned."

William turns to you and says, "Do you believe the Bible is actually true? If so, how can you believe in such an ancient book?"

#### Questions:

Write 2-3 sentences on how you would initially respond to William and set the tone of your answer?

Write a brief outline on how you would explain the reliability of the Bible to William in 4-5 minutes

How would you conclude the discussion with William?

#### B. A Conversation with Omar

You are at your place of employment and a Muslim co-worker, Omar, wants to discuss the books in the Bible. He is intelligent, kind, and a devout Muslim, but suggests that the books in the Bible were randomly selected by early church leaders and are simply corrupt.

You confidently respond with an explanation of the canon. Omar respectfully disagrees with your position and states the Bible cannot be trusted.

### **Questions**

How would you define the canon and its role in our Old and New Testaments?

Explain to Omar the three principles of how the New Testament books made it into the canon of Scripture?

How would you conclude your discussion with Omar?

### **C. Conversation with a High School Friend**

You are at your high school reunion weekend celebration and having lunch with six old friends. It comes out during the conversation that Sharon, a former children's worker at her evangelical church, has deconstructed her faith. She states she had questions about the Bible that no one could answer, stating, "No one could explain the errors in the Bible or tell me how we can trust that the Bible we have today is accurate. It's like the telephone game—it all changes over time and you don't know what to believe." Sharon knows you are a Christian and turns to you and asks with a sarcastic tone, "How do you explain all the mistakes in the Bible?"

### **Questions**

How do you maintain your composure with Sharon? How do you think through the concept of textual criticism clearly? Write 2-3 sentences on how you would immediately respond with respect, but confidence?

Write 4-5 sentences describing at least three reasons to believe that the Bible is inerrant or without errors.

What personal encouragement could you give to those interested at the lunch table in learning more about this topic? List two resources that would be helpful to them.

**D. Front door conversation with a Jehovah's Witness.**

Your doorbell rings and two young adult women introduce themselves as witnesses for the local Jehovah's Witness church. They are both friendly and persuasive. The conversation quickly turns to reading Scripture. The conversation turns to the deity of Christ.

**Questions**

The two young women quote John 1:1 (New World Translation) which states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." How do you respond?

What Bible translation do you use and why? List the name of your favorite translation and list three reasons why you use this one.

Write out John 1:1 from your translation. How does it differ from the one stated above from the New World Translation?

**E. A Difficult Conversation with Cynthia**

Cynthia has been a long-time childhood friend, but her insistence on using only the King James Bible has strained your friendship. She is insistent that the KJV is the only true and reliable version of the Bible.

**Questions**

Write 2-3 sentences on how you would initially respond to Cynthia and set the tone of your answer?

How would you explain to Cynthia the textual basis of the King James Version?

How does that differ from today's modern English versions?

What aspect of your Bible study would the King James Version be helpful? What version(s) might be preferred for exegetical Bible study and why?

## VII. RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

- A. Recommended books, websites, or podcasts for further growth
  
- B. Write your own "Bible defense" as a personal apologetic tool.
  
- C. Engage in one meaningful conversation about the Bible this week.



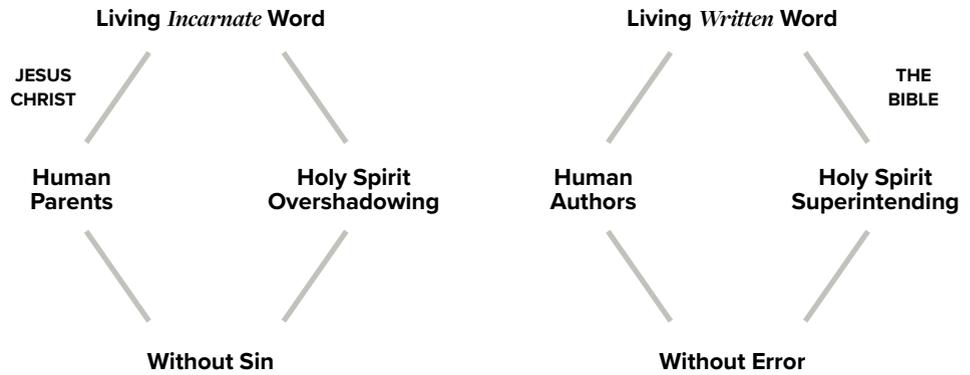
# *APPENDICES*

# APPENDIX A

## THE WORD OF GOD

### TWO LIVING REVELATIONS <sup>196</sup>

Special Revelation



<sup>196</sup> Paul P. Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, Revised and Expanded, (Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2014), 170.

# APPENDIX B

## PRIMARY BIBLICAL TEXTS ON INSPIRATION

### 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 NIV

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

1. “*God-breathed*” originates from the Greek word, *theopneustos*, that can be translated “inspired.” This association is unique in Scripture. It also means “God-spirated” or “breathed out by God.” It appears to mean the bringing into existence of something, especially that the Scripture came out from God as words come out of us by the exhalation of breath.<sup>197</sup>

### 2 PETER 1:21 ESV

“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

1. “*Carried along*” or superintending; ancient language – like wind that hits the sails of a ship and moves the ship in a specific direction. God is guiding the process. The “ship” ends up exactly where God wants. The Bible is exactly what He wants.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 2:13 NIV

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words *taught by the Spirit*, explaining spiritual realities with spirit-taught words.

1. Words taught by the Spirit are Divinely inspired words.
2. The Scriptures are inspired – *not* the human authors.

<sup>197</sup> Cupp, 36.

# APPENDIX C

## PROOFS OF INSPIRATION <sup>198</sup>

1. Bible, itself, claims to be Inspired.
  - a. “You can’t establish the supreme authority of your supreme authority by going to some other lesser authority” <sup>199</sup>
  - b. “Scripture itself is alone competent to judge our doctrine of Scripture” <sup>200</sup>
  - c. No ordinary book
  - d. 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Corinthians 2:13.
  
2. Survival of the Bible
  - a. The Bible has survived over two millennial of criticism, scrutiny, and violent attack—philosophical, military, and religious.
  - b. A few oppressors of the Bible
    1. Antiochus Epiphanes, 175 BC.
    2. Diocletian and Roman Empire (284 – 305 AD)
    3. Roman Catholic Church (middle ages) worked to keep people from personal Bible reading.
    4. Philosophers and writers question the Bible’s authority and inspiration (17th-19th centuries).
      - a. Voltaire “A hundred years from my death the Bible will be a museum piece.” <sup>201</sup> Twenty-five years after Voltaire’s death his home was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and used as a warehouse to distribute Bibles.
  
3. Uniqueness of the Bible
  - a. Many holy teachings become irrelevant. (i.e. Zoroastrianism, Shinto (ancient Japanese religion), unlike the Bible.
  - b. Compare to the Qur’an which protects itself against scrutiny and contains many inconsistencies.
  
4. Unique in Beauty and Insight
  - a. Depth in a class by itself. Deep enough for the most learned scholar, but yet simple enough for a child.
  
5. Unique in Unity
  - a. Sixty-six books; 1600+ years; 40 authors; 3 continents; different

<sup>198</sup> Mike Mazzalongo, “6 Proofs of Inspiration,” *Understanding Your Religion*, BibleTalk.tv, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8n0re-PAsQQ&list=PLvYBAquZ0mO-FUcoHNUpYV5AzVWHTgC-Q47&index=5>.

<sup>199</sup> DeYoung, 23.

<sup>200</sup> J. I. Packer, as quoted by Kevin DeYoung in *Taking God at His Word*, (Wheaton, Ill, Crossway, 2014), 23.

<sup>201</sup> Daniel Merritt, “Voltaire’s Prediction, Home, and the Bible Society: Truth or Myth? Further Evidence of Verification,” Blog, Cross Examined.org, August 18, 2019, <https://crossexamined.org/voltaires-prediction-home-and-the-bible-society-truth-or-myth-further-evidence-of-verification/>.

times, cultures; most authors unknown to each other; Yet, tells one story without contradiction or confusion (as if only one author).

6. Unique in Universality

- a. Most read, translated, and sold book in history. Universal appeal over 1900 years. No other book can claim as many readers in as many countries, in as many languages, for as many years. No other book has been found to be so unique in style, content, and unity.
- b. Worldwide believers can talk about the Bible and unite.

7. Life Transformation

- a. Modern pragmatic argument—something is true or good because it works.
- b. Principles in the Bible work and produce happy and peaceful lives. (Nothing else works better); Consider countries without Christianity as its foundation. Compare any person or nation not following the Bible.
- c. Think “Love your neighbor as yourself” and “Love your enemy.”

8. Fulfilled Prophecy

- a. Men cannot predict future events accurately.
- b. Only God can be 100% accurate in predicting future events. (i.e. Isaiah 44:28... city was rebuilt; Isaiah lived in 700 BC Cyrus... was a king... he ruled 150 years AFTER Isaiah... Isaiah predicts it... like you predicting who the US President will be in 150 years).
- c. 100s of prophecies in the OT. 61 are direct fulfilled prophecies about Jesus. (lineage Jer 23:5); time he appears (Daniel); place of birth (Micha 5:2) titles and his power Isaiah 9:6-7; Reason he would come; How he would die (Isaiah 42-52)
- d. Accurate Fulfillment of Prophecy Points to a Divine Source. A supernatural power is at work.
- e. Only Holy Book of all the major religions that contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecy confirmed by history.

9. Other

- a. Historical accuracy
  - 1. If the Bible has been shown to be accurate in small details, shouldn't we be able to trust it in bigger themes?
  - 2. Sometimes, all the pieces of the puzzle have not been discovered.

# APPENDIX D

## FALSE VIEWS OF INSPIRATION <sup>202 203</sup>

### 1. Dictation (Divine Dictation) or Mechanical Theory:

God speaks. Writer passively transcribes like a secretary or stenographer. "Take a memo." (Jeremiah 30:2; Exodus 20:1)

Objections: (i.e. Pentateuch – Moses is the compiler; Luke 1:1-4, Luke researches... etc.) Prophetic books read like their lives. Different writing styles suggest the authors were not mere automatons. Style of the books were not uniform. (i.e. John (simple) vs Luke (more sophisticated)).

\*The Qur'an was claimed to have been transmitted in this fashion from Allah through the angel Gabriel to Muhammad.

### 2. Partial or Dynamic Inspiration:

Only parts of Scripture are Inspired (parts related to faith and practice). God preserves the message of salvation amid other material that may be erroneous.

Objections: What parts of the Bible are Inspired and what parts contain errors? How can doctrine be separated from history? How can the Bible be deemed trustworthy?

### 3. Conceptual Inspiration:

Only the concepts or ideas of the writers are inspired and not the words. The author wrote the idea in his own words. There can be no errors in the Scripture since the author wrote in his own words and were not superintended by God. The Bible is not the Word of God, but contains the Word of God.

Objections: Both Jesus (Matt 5:18) and Paul (1 Thess 2:13) affirmed verbal inspiration.

### 4. Neo-orthodox view:

God is so different from us we cannot know Him unless through direct revelation. (not through general revelation, etc.) Denies Scripture is the Word of God, but rather claims it is only a witness to Jesus. The words in Scripture are fallible written by fallible men. (only inspired when God uses words at times to speak to people)

<sup>202</sup> Cupp, 34.

<sup>203</sup> Paul P. Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology*, 162-164.

Objections: How is this any different than God using any books?

5. **Spiritual Illumination View:**

Suggests that some Christians have greater spiritual insight than others, and thus when illuminated by the Holy Spirit may author inspired Scripture. It is the authors, not the writings that are inspired.

6. **Limited Inspiration:**

(opposite of dictation theory); Scripture is mostly man's work with limited help from God. God guided the human authors, but these authors had freedom to express themselves in their writings (even allowing for historical errors). God guided the human authors but allowed them freedom to express themselves in their works, even to the point of allowing factual and historical errors. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit prevented doctrinal errors.

Objections: How do we know doctrine is true? The reliability of the Bible becomes suspect.

7. **Natural inspiration:**

The Bible is just a human production - nothing else. The authors were simply men with unusual ability (religious insight, who wrote books like anyone else.)

Objections: Why aren't there more books like it written?

# APPENDIX E

## NORTH AFRICA'S EARLY CHURCH LEGACY TIMELINE <sup>204</sup>

Date	Place	Key Contributions
150-220	Carthage	Tertullian creates Latin theological vocabulary (Trinity, substance).
200-250	Carthage & region	Rapid Christian growth, early Latin translations of Scripture.
249-258	Carthage	Cyprian strengthens episcopal unity, deals with apostasy & penance.
345-348	Carthage	Council under Gratus tackles rebaptism & clerical rules.
370-430	Hippo	Augustine's theology: original sin, grace, <i>City of God</i> , <i>Confessions</i> .
393	Hippo	Synod affirms the 27-books as the NT.
397	Carthage	Council formally ratifies NT canon for the first time.
418	Carthage	Council condemns Pelagianism.
419	Carthage	Council compiles African Code of Canons, asserts local church rights.

<sup>204</sup> Thor Odland, Scholarly discussions, teachings and travel to Carthage, Tunisia, 2025.

# APPENDIX F

## OLD TESTAMENT COMPARISON <sup>205</sup>

### I. HEBREW BIBLE (TaNaKh)

#### A. Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim

#### B. Twenty-four books in the Hebrew Bible equals 39 books in the Protestant Bible; No vowels and thus, much shorter.

#### C. Torah (Law)

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

#### DEUTERONOMY 34:10

No prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.

#### D. Nevi'im (Prophets)

1. Joshua
2. Judges
3. Samuel
  - a. First and Second Samuel were divided because the book could not fit on one scroll.
4. Kings
  - a. First and Second Kings.
5. Isaiah
6. Jeremiah
7. Ezekiel
8. The Twelve (12 minor prophets)

#### MALACHI 3:18

“And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.”

(Look back at the Torah and then look forward at how God deals with the righteous and wicked)

<sup>205</sup> The Bible Museum,  
Washington, DC, 2025.

E. **Ketuvim** (Writings)

Opens with Psalms 1:1 “how blessed is the person who doesn’t walk in the ways of the sinner” ... opens with mirror to the verse at the end of Malachi.

EMET (Truth)

1. Psalms
2. Proverbs EMET (Truth)
3. Job

Five Scrolls (Read during important Jewish Feasts)

4. Songs of Songs
5. Ruth
6. Lamentations Five Scrolls
7. Ecclesiastes
8. Esther
9. Daniel

(Ezra and Nehemiah)

10. Ezra/Nehemiah

(First/Second Chronicles)

11. Chronicles

Ends with a decree where Cyrus the Great ... says he is appointed to build a Temple in Jerusalem ... anticipates completion ... more to come.

II. **PROTESTANT OLD TESTAMENT**

A. **39 books**

B. Often ask, “Why did Catholics add seven books?”

C. Some versions contain the Apocrypha.

III. **CATHOLIC OLD TESTAMENT**

A. **46 books** (39 books + 7 books + 2 additions.)

- B. **Often ask, “Why did the Protestants remove seven books from the Bible?”**
  
- C. **Seven Apocryphal books**
  - 1. Tobit, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and Baruch including the Letter of Jeremiah.
  
- D. **Additions to Esther and Daniel**
  - 1. Additions to Esther—six short parts and additions to Daniel— three or four parts: “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”

#### IV. **ORTHODOX OLD TESTAMENT**

- A. **Eastern Orthodox - 53 books (39 books + 14 books + 3 additions)**
  - 1. Same as catholic + may contain 3rd and 4th Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh (at end of 2nd Chronicles), I Esdras, II Esdras, Odes (prayers or psalms), and an additional psalm, Psalm 151
  - 2. Russian – 56 books (39 books + 17 books + 4 additions)
  - 3. Greek
    - a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms).
    - b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon).
    - c. Ezra (2 Esdras)
    - d. Apocryphal books
      - 1. 1 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah.
    - e. Additions
      - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
      - 2. Daniel with additions, “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”
      - 3. Esther with additions.
  - 4. Slavonic

- a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms).
  - b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon). 2nd Chronicles includes Prayer of Manasseh.
  - c. Ezra (1 Esdras)
  - d. Apocryphal books
    - 1. 2 Esdras (1 Esdras), 3 Esdras (2 Esdras) Tobit, Judith, 1, 2, 3 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah.
  - e. Additions
    - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
    - 2. Daniel with additions, “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”
    - 3. Esther with additions.
5. Georgian
- a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms).
  - b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon). 2nd Chronicles includes Prayer of Manasseh.
  - c. Ezra (Esdras)
  - d. Apocryphal books listed as “Non-Canonical Books (Historically Important)”
    - 1. 2 Esdras (1 Esdras), 3 Esdras (2 Esdras) Tobit, Judith, 1, 2, 3, 4 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah.
  - e. Additions
    - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
    - 2. Daniel with additions, “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”
    - 3. Esther with additions
6. Romanian
- a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms).

- b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon).
- c. Ezra (1 Esdras)
- d. Nehemiah (2 Esdras)
- e. Apocryphal books
  - 1. 3 Esdras (1 Esdras) Tobit, Judith, 1, 2, 3 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Manasseh, Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children, Susanna, Bell and the Dragon.
- f. Additions
  - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
  - 2. Esther with additions.

## B. Oriental Orthodox Old Testament

- 1. Coptic
  - a. Apocryphal books
    - 1. Tobit, Judith, 1, 2, Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch including the Letter of Jeremiah,
  - b. Additions
    - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
    - 2. Daniel with additions, "Susanna," "Prayer of Azariah" +/- "Song of the Three Holy Children," and "Bel and the Dragon."
    - 3. Esther with additions.
- 2. Ethiopic
  - a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms)
  - b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon).
  - c. Proverbs (Proverbs 1-24); Tagsas (Proverbs 25-31)
  - d. Apocryphal books
    - 1. 1 Esdras/Ezra Sutuel (2 Esdras), 2 Esdras (1 Esdras), 3 Esdras (Ezra and Nehemiah) Judith, Tobit, 1 Maqabeyan, 2-3 Maqabeyan, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Jubilee, Enoch, Prophecy Against Pashur, Ethiopic 4 Baruch, Josippon.

- e. Additions
  - 1. Esther with additions
  - 2. Psalms (includes 151 and additions)
  - 3. Daniel with additions, “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”
  - 4. 2nd Chronicles includes Prayer of Manasseh.
  - 5. Song of Songs/Solomon with additions.
  
- 3. Syriac
  - a. 1st and 2nd Kings (combined as “Kings”).
  - b. Apocryphal books
    - 1. Tobit, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Apocalypse of Baruch (2 Baruch), 4 Ezra (2 Esdras).
    - 2. Susanna and Judith added to a new section “Book of Women” that includes Ruth and Esther.
  - c. Additions
    - 1. Psalms (includes 151)
    - 2. Daniel with additions (“Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”)
  
- 4. Armenian
  - a. 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings (1, 2, 3, 4 Kingdoms)
  - b. 1st and 2nd Chronicles (1st and 2nd Paralipomenon).
  - c. Apocryphal books
    - 1. 1 Esdras, Judith, Tobit, 1, 2, 3 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch.
  - d. Additions
    - 1. Esther with additions
    - 2. Psalms (includes 151)
    - 3. Daniel with additions, “Susanna,” “Prayer of Azariah” +/- “Song of the Three Holy Children,” and “Bel and the Dragon.”

**V. ASSYRIAN OLD TESTAMENT**

- A. **39 books** (same as Hebrew Bible)
  
- B. **No Apocryphal books**

**VI. SAMARITAN BIBLE**

- A. **Contains only the Torah.**

# APPENDIX G

## APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

### I. APOCRYPHA DEFINED

- A. Means “hidden” or “secret” (from the Greek).
- B. Referred to as Deuterocanonical or “second canon” of Scripture.
- C. Written during the 400 silent years (400 BC – 1st century)
  - 1. Fifteen books between 300 BC – 100 BC and Esdras in 100 AD.
  - 2. Fourteen books if the Letter of Jeremiah and Baruch are combined.
  - 3. Eleven books considered Scripture by Roman Catholic church. When added to the OT they make up only seven extra books because the others are added to existing books.
- D. Apocrypha record some of the history and religious stories during the silent years
- E. Total writing of the Apocrypha is about the size of the NT.
- F. Apocrypha included essays, poems, and historical accounts that circulated in the synagogues of the early churches. They were often mixed with OT books.
- G. Luther (1534) moved the apocrypha to the back of the Bible. He felt they were useful but not equal to the sacred scriptures. Afterwards many protestants omitted them in future translations.
- H. Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1546) listed apocryphal books and included them in their Catholic Bibles—usually 14 books.

- I. Jerome included the apocrypha in the Latin vulgate, but made it clear these books were only church books to be read for edification and not canonical books.

## II. REASONS THE APOCRYPHA ARE NOT IN THE PROTESTANT BIBLE

- A. New Testament does not mention the apocrypha
- B. Christ and the apostles do not recognize.
- C. The Jews never accepted the Apocrypha as scripture. It is not in the Hebrew Bible.
- D. The Apocrypha never claims to be inspired (“Thus saith the Lord” etc.) – In fact, 1 Maccabees 9:27 denies it.
- E. The Apocrypha is never quoted as authoritative in scriptures. (Although Hebrews 11:35-38 alludes to historical events recorded in 2 Maccabees 6:18-7:42).
- F. **Matthew 23:35** – Jesus implied that the close of the Old Testament scripture was the death of Zechariah (400 B.C.). This excludes any books written after Malachi and before the New Testament.
- G. **Resulting controversial theology**
  1. Give money to atone sins
  2. Praying for the dead (and giving money to atone for their sins)
  3. Praying to saints in heaven and asking them for prayer
  4. Purgatory
- H. **Rejected by Jerome and Luther, but accepted by Council of Rome (383) and reaffirmed by the Council of Trent (1546)**

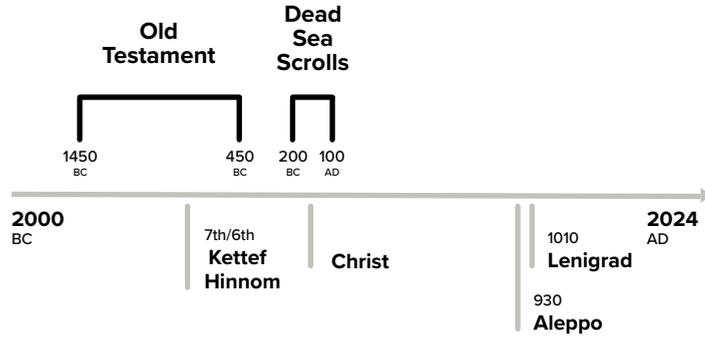
### III. PSEUDEPIGRAPHA DEFINED

- A. **Pseudo – false; epigraphein – inscribe; means to write falsely;**  
(attempts to imitate Scripture under false names)
  
- B. **May be called Old Testament pseudepigrapha** (intertestamental period) or **New Testament pseudepigrapha** (2nd Century AD +)
  
- C. **A few examples.**
  - 1. Testament of Hezekiah.
  - 2. The Vision of Isaiah, the Books of Enoch, the Secrets of Enoch, the Book of Noah, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the Rest of the Words of Baruch, the Psalter of Solomon, the Odes of Solomon, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Testament of Adam, the Testament of Abraham, the Testament of Job, the Apocalypse of Ezra, the Prayer of Joseph, Elijah the Prophet, Zechariah the Prophet, Zechariah: Father of John, the Itinerary of Paul, the Acts of Paul, the Apocalypse of Paul, the Itinerary of Peter, the Itinerary of Thomas, the Gospel according to Thomas, the History of James, the Apocalypse of Peter, and the Epistles of Barnabas.
  
- D. **Stories associated with Apostles:** The writers often attributed these books to the apostles (i.e. Gospels of Peter or Thomas) Improved readership; Books may contain Jesus' childhood stories or doctrinal problems. No serious scholar considered them as canon.
  
- E. **Devotional value and insights of Christian leaders > 1st Century.** (i.e. Shepherd of Hermas, Didache, etc.). May be helpful spiritually and historically. No serious scholar considered them as canon.

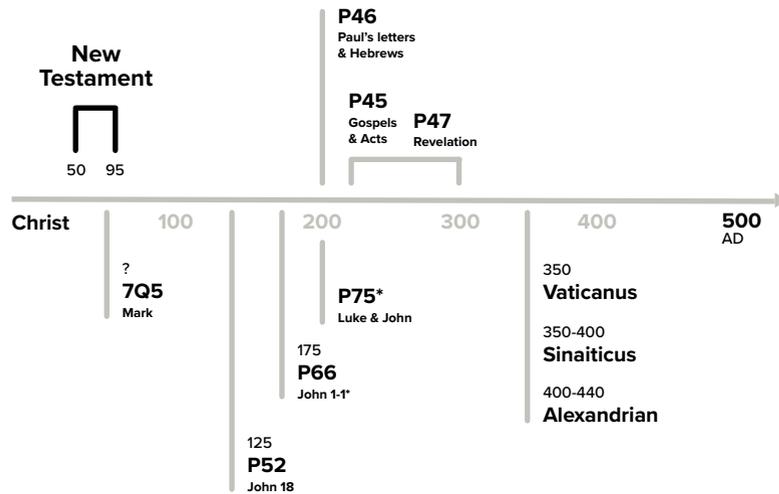
# *TIMELINES*

# TIMELINES

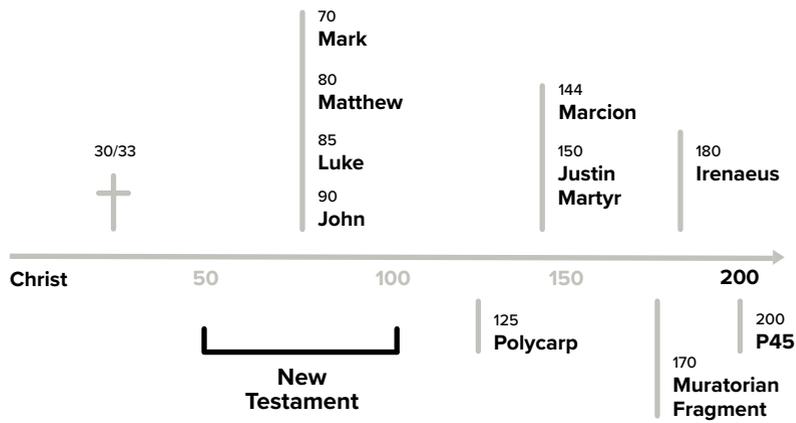
## SURVIVING OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS



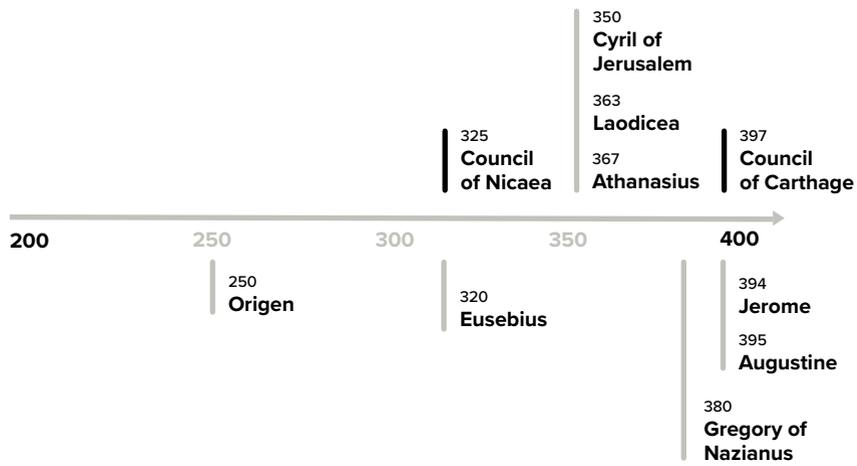
## SURVIVING NEW TESTAMENT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS



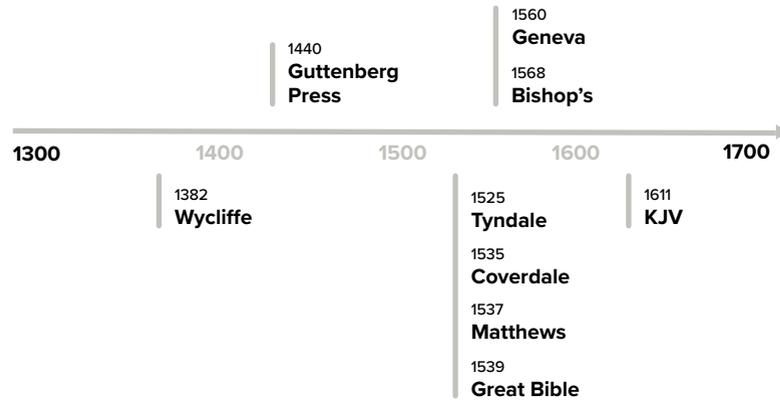
## NEW TESTAMENT CANONIZATION: 0-200 AD



## NEW TESTAMENT CANONIZATION: 200-400 AD



## HISTORICAL TRANSMISSION OF ENGLISH BIBLE VERSIONS (1300-1700)



# *BIBLIOGRAPHY*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

# SESSION ONE

Athanasius, "Against the Heathen," from *New Advent*, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2801.htm>.

Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1541.

Cupp, Robert, "Bibliology" in *We Believe*, Fellowship Bible Church, 2013.

DeYoung, Kevin, *Taking God At His Word*, Wheaton, IL, Crossway, 2014.

Dodd, C.H., *The Authority of the Bible*, Revised Edition, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960.

Enns, Paul P., *Moody Handbook of Theology*.

Feinberg, Paul, "The Meaning of Inerrancy," *Inerrancy*, Norman Geisler, (ed), Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1980.

Frame, John M., *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010.

Gallup Poll, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/394262/fewer-bible-literal-word-god.aspx#:~:text=Americans%27%20views%20of%20the%20Bible%2C%20trend%20from%201976%20to%202022,moral%20precepts%20recorded%20by%20man>.

Geisler, Norman L., and Nix, William E., "The Character of the Bible" in *From God to Us, How we got our Bibles*, Chicago, Moody Publishers, 2012.

Lewis, Kevin, *Elenctic Theology: Bibliology: Contemporary Challenges to Scripture, Part 1*, The Institute for Theology & Law, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZe\\_ola66j8&list=PLqQBFAFqyVdQ1uc8ENykhSdpkiilBTdr&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZe_ola66j8&list=PLqQBFAFqyVdQ1uc8ENykhSdpkiilBTdr&index=2).

Lewis, Kevin, *Scripture: Authority, Canon, Criticism*, Biola lectures, 2021.

McDowell, Josh, in “What is Biblical Authority and Why is it so Critical Today? Interview with Josh McDowell,” in SeanMcDowell.org, 8/15/16, <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/what-is-biblical-authority-and-why-is-it-so-critical-for-the-church-today-interview-with-josh-mcdowell>.

Murray, Lawson, *Sola Scriptura or Solo Scriptura?* Jump into the Word; Bible Engagement Blog, 4/21/2020, <https://www.jumpintotheword.com/2020/04/21/sola-scriptura-or-solo-scriptura/>.

Shedd, William GT, *Dogmatic Theology*, Third Edition, Alan W. Gomes (ed), Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing, 2003.

Wilmington, Harold, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article-1054&context=questions> 101.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

# SESSION TWO

Allepo Codex online, <https://barhama.com/ajaxzoom/viewer/viewer.php?zoomDir=/pic/AleppoWM/ &example=viewer5>.

Armstrong Institute Staff, *Ketef Hinnom Scrolls*, June 24, 2018, <https://armstronginstitute.org/45-ketef-hinnom-scrolls>.

Chester Beatty Library, <https://chesterbeatty.ie>.

Codex Vaticanus online, [https://biblicalstudiesonline.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/codex-vaticanus-online/#:~:text=Codex%20Vaticanus%20\(B\)%2C%20containing,available%20by%20the%20Vatican%20Library](https://biblicalstudiesonline.wordpress.com/2015/02/17/codex-vaticanus-online/#:~:text=Codex%20Vaticanus%20(B)%2C%20containing,available%20by%20the%20Vatican%20Library).

Codex Sinaiticus, <https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>

Codex Sinaiticus, “See the Manuscript,” <https://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx>

Ehrman, Bart, *Misquoting Jesus*, New York: Harper, 2005.

Geisler, Norman, *The Big Book of Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2012.

———, Nix, William E., *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible*, Chicago, Moody, 2012.

Lightfoot, Neil R., *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2003.

Metzger, Bruce M., and Ehrman, Bart D., *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Fourth Edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 2005.

The Israel Museum, “The Allepo Codex,” <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/226966-0>.

———. “The Dead Seas Scrolls,” <https://www.imj.org.il/en/wings/shrine-book/dead-sea-scrolls#>.

———. “The Digital Dead Sea Scrolls,” <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>.

———. “Priestly Benediction” on Amulets, <https://www.imj.org.il/en/collections/198069-0>.

The National Library of Russia, <https://nlr.ru/eng>.

Vatican Digital Library, Codex Vaticanus, , [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.1209](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209).

Wallace, Daniel, *How Tall Would a Stack of New Testament Manuscripts Be?* Blog, January 1, 2023. [https://danielbwallace.com/2023/01/01/how-tall-would-a-stack-of-new-testament-manuscripts-be/?fbclid=IwAR1GAmDiPgo6CKzrbImEE1Ai0d8JY9pzy7L2\\_c3Eh9LtsRh1YuSrnNTZcSU](https://danielbwallace.com/2023/01/01/how-tall-would-a-stack-of-new-testament-manuscripts-be/?fbclid=IwAR1GAmDiPgo6CKzrbImEE1Ai0d8JY9pzy7L2_c3Eh9LtsRh1YuSrnNTZcSU).

———. “Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Textual Criticism, Credo Courses, 2013*, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>.

———. “Majuscules,” *Textual Criticism*, Credo House, 2013.

———. The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, <https://www.csntm.org/about-us/>.

———. “The Number of Variants,” *Textual Criticism*, Credo Courses, 2013, <https://www.credocourses.com/product/textual-criticism/>.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

# SESSION THREE

Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E., *From God To Us, How We Got Our Bible*, Chicago, Moody, 2012.

Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*.

Kruger, Michael J., *10 Common Misconceptions about the NT Canon*, Blog on Canon Fodder, 3/28/12. <https://michaeljkruger.com/10-misconceptions-about-the-nt-canon-1-the-term-canon-can-only-refer-to-a-fixed-closed-list-of-books/>.

Licona, Mike, and McDonald, Lee Martin, YouTube Channel, *How Was the New Testament Canon Formed? Part 1 of 2*, Oct 15, 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_55JSD0CbvM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_55JSD0CbvM).

Martyr, Justin, *The First Apology of Justin*, Public Domain, LXVII.1, <https://www.basilica.ca/documents/2016/10/St.%20Justin%20Martyr-The%20First%20Apology%20of%20Justin.pdf>.

McDowell, Sean, *Who Decided What Books to Include in the Bible? 5 Principles*. SeanMcDowell.org, Feb. 28, 2018, <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/who-decided-what-books-to-include-in-the-bible-5-principles>.

Metzger, Bruce, *The Canon of New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance*, Oxford, Oxford Press, 1997.

Newman, Robert, *The Council of Jamnia and the Old Testament Canon*, Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1983. <https://www.newmanlib.ibri.org/RRs/RR013/13jamnia.html>.

Origen, *The Fathers of the Church, Homilies of Joshua*, Barbara J Bruce (transl), Cynthia White (ed), Washington, DC, The Catholic University of America Press, 2002, accessed through [https://books.google.com/books?id=Yq6reMY6KMUC&pg=PA74&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=Yq6reMY6KMUC&pg=PA74&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=1#v=onepage&q&f=false).

Packer, J.I., *God Speaks to Man: Revelation and the Bible*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965.

Paschal Letter 39, <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2806039.htm>

Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 3(25).

Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.8.

Seder Olam Rabbah, 30.

Tosefta Sotah 13.2, accessed on 3/25/24, [https://www.sefaria.org/Tosefta\\_Sotah.13.4?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Tosefta_Sotah.13.4?lang=bi).

The Development of the New Testament Canon, <http://www.ntcanon.org/Marcion.shtml>.

The Muratorian Fragment, <https://trinityfellowshipiu.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/the-muratorian-fragment.pdf>.

The Muratorian Fragment as quoted in Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books, 2003.

The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, [https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA\\_P45](https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_P45)

The Development of the Canon of the New Testament, <http://www.ntcanon.org/Gregory.canon.shtml>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*SESSION FOUR*

Daniel Wallace, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Credo Courses, 2013.

Jonathan Morrow, *Questioning the Bible: 11 Major Challenges to the Bible's Authority*, Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.

Got Questions, <https://www.gotquestions.org/Codex-Sinaiticus-Vaticanus.html>.

The Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF, Münster, Germany) maintains the authoritative catalog, the Kurzgefasste Liste. <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>.

Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th Edition, 2005.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

# SESSION FIVE

Jeremiah Coogan, “Myths about Early Translations,” in *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism*, Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry (eds), Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019.

Pioneer Bible Translators, “From Bible Translation to Life Transformation,” <https://pioneerbible.org/about/>.

Wycliffe Bible Translators, “About Bible Translation,” <https://wycliffe.org.uk/about/faqs>.

Tyler Heston, “Bible Translations” Lecture in Legacy Series, Fellowship Bible Church, Rogers, AR, April 4, 2024.

Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation, Ancient and English Versions*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Wycliffe Bible Translators, “A Brief History of Bible Translation,” <https://wycliffe.org.uk/story/a-brief-history-of-bible-translation>.

Martin Heide, “Erasmus and the Search for the Original Text of the New Testament,” *Text & Canon Institute*, Feb. 7, 2023, <https://textandcanon.org/erasmus-and-the-search-for-the-original-text-of-the-new-testament/>.

Wallace, “The Greek Text Behind the KJV” in *Textual Criticism*, Credo Courses.

“Majority Text vs. Critical Text vs. Textus Receptus – Textual Criticism 101,” *Berean Patriot*, March 18, 2020, <https://www.bereanpatriot.com/majority-text-vs-critical-text-vs-textus-receptus-textual-criticism-101/>.

Wallace, “Textus Receptus, Doctrine of Preservation (Part 1),” *Textual Criticism*, Credo Courses.

Daniel Wallace, Dan Wallace’s Top 5 Bible Translations, on Mike Licona’s podcast, 8/20/2020.

Tosephta, Megillah 4.41, ed. M.S. Zuckerman, Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1937.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

*SESSION SIX*

David Keehn, "Responding to Objections with Truth and Love," The Good Book Blog, August 31, 2015, <https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2015/responding-to-objections-with-truth-and-love>.

The Humanitas Forum on Christianity and Culture, The Virtue of Listening – because there are no little people. Feb. 3, 2015, <https://humanitas.org/?p=3229>.