



INSPIRATION AND PROVIDENCE

**THE REVELATION, TRANSMISSION
INTEGRITY & CANONICITY OF SCRIPTURE**

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consequences of Materials

- Works of antiquity had to be copied and shared to be preserved.
- There are limitations with materials regarding convenience and durability – Clay Tablets, Stone, Bones, Wood, Leather, Metal, Potsherds, Papyrus, Parchment.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consequences of Materials

- The writing of the New Testament:
 - **3 John 13; 2 John 12** – ink, pen, and paper.
 - *chartēs* – ““a sheet of paper made of strips of papyrus” (whence Eng., “paper”), Eng., “chart,” “charter,” etc.” (VINE)
 - Convenient, but not durable.
 - **2 Timothy 4:13** – parchments.
 - *membrana* – Latin origin (“membrane”) (STRONG)
 - Greater durability, more expensive.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consequences of Materials

- Autographs – “from *autos* ‘self’ + *graphos* ‘written’.”
 - Paul dictated his letters using an amanuensis (cf. **Romans 16:22**) – “a literary or artistic assistant, in particular one who takes dictation or copies manuscripts.”
 - **1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18; Philemon 19**
 - Would review writing, and sign off – **2 Thessalonians 3:17; Galatians 6:11**
 - Due to frailty of material, we only have copies of copies, no autographs.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consequences of Materials

- Copies – **Colossians 4:16**
 - Example: Polycarp of Smyrna to the Philippians (110-140 A.D.):
 - “The letters of Ignatius which were sent to us by him, and others as many as we had by us, we send unto you, according as ye gave charge;” (Polycarp 13:2) (THE EPISTLE OF POLYCARP, Translated by J.B. Lightfoot)

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Consequences of Materials

- Copies – **Colossians 4:16**
 - Example: Polycarp of Smyrna to the Philippians (110-140 A.D.):
 - “In this way we believe the letters of the Apostles were circulated. Each congregation would hear that a letter was received by a certain church and they in turn would ask for a copy. After receiving it, they in turn would send copies to others who requested them. There is no reason to doubt that this applied to all of the books of the New Testament.”
(Mattox, F.W., *The Eternal Kingdom*, 98)

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Integrity – A Comparison

- Integrity – “(2) the state of being whole and undivided”
(New Oxford American Dictionary)

“The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt. It is a curious fact that historians have often been much readier to trust the New Testament records than have many theologians. Somehow or other, there are people who regard a ‘sacred book’ as *ipso facto* under suspicion, and demand much more corroborative evidence for such a work than they would for an ordinary secular or pagan writing. From the viewpoint of the historian, the same standards must be applied to both.

But we do not quarrel with those who want more evidence for the New Testament than for other writings — firstly, because the universal claims which the New Testament makes upon mankind are so absolute, and the character and works of its chief Figure so unparalleled, that we want to be as sure of its truth as we possibly can; and secondly, because in point of fact there is much more evidence for the New Testament than for other ancient writings of comparable date.”

(Bruce, F.F., *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, e-book, IntersVarsity Press (IVP) – UK, 2018)

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time Between Original and Earliest Extant Copy	Number of Manuscripts
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 years	10
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 years	7
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1000 years	20
Pliny	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 years	7
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 years	193
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1300 years	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400 years	8
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400 years	49
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 years	643
New Testament	45-100 A.D.	130 A.D.	< 100 years	5795

Author	Date Written	Earliest	Approximate	Number of
<p>Including other manuscripts such as ancient translations the New Testament boasts of 24,000+ manuscripts!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latin Vulgate – 4th/5th centuries • Syriac versions – Old Syriac (3rd/4th centuries), Peshitta (5th century) • Coptic – 3rd century • Armenian – 5th century • Georgian – 5th century • Ethiopic – 4th/5th century 				
New Testament	45-100 A.D.	150 A.D.	< 100 years	3755

Author

Date Written

Earliest

Approximate

Number of

In addition to these manuscripts are “Patristic Writings” in which scripture is quoted frequently:

Writer	Date of Writing	Total Quotations
Justin Martyr	Fl. 133 A.D.	330
Irenaeus	Fl. 180 A.D.	1,819
Clement of Alexandria	150-212 A.D.	2,406
Origen	185-254 A.D.	17,922
Tertullian	160-220 A.D.	7,258
Hippolytus	170-235 A.D.	1,378
Eusebius	270-340 A.D.	5,176
Total		36,289

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New Testament

45-100 A.D.

150 A.D.

< 100 years

3755

Author	Date Written	Earliest	Approximate	Number of
<p>In addition to these manuscripts are “Patristic Writings” in which scripture is quoted frequently:</p> <p>“[Scholars say,] So extensive are the patristic citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient to reconstruct practically the entire New Testament.” (Miller, Dave, <i>Has the Bible Been Corrupted?</i>)</p>				
<p>C P T P S E D A H N</p> <p>New Testament</p>	<p>45-100 A.D.</p>	<p>150 A.D.</p>	<p>< 100 years</p>	<p>3755</p>

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

The Lie We are Told

- We don't have the original copies (autographs) so we cannot trust that we have the original text.
- There are thousands of mistakes in the text of scripture meaning it has been corrupted. We cannot trust it.
 - NOTE: "textual variants" – estimated anywhere between 120,000 to 750,000. (Seems alarming until understanding the nature of the variants.)

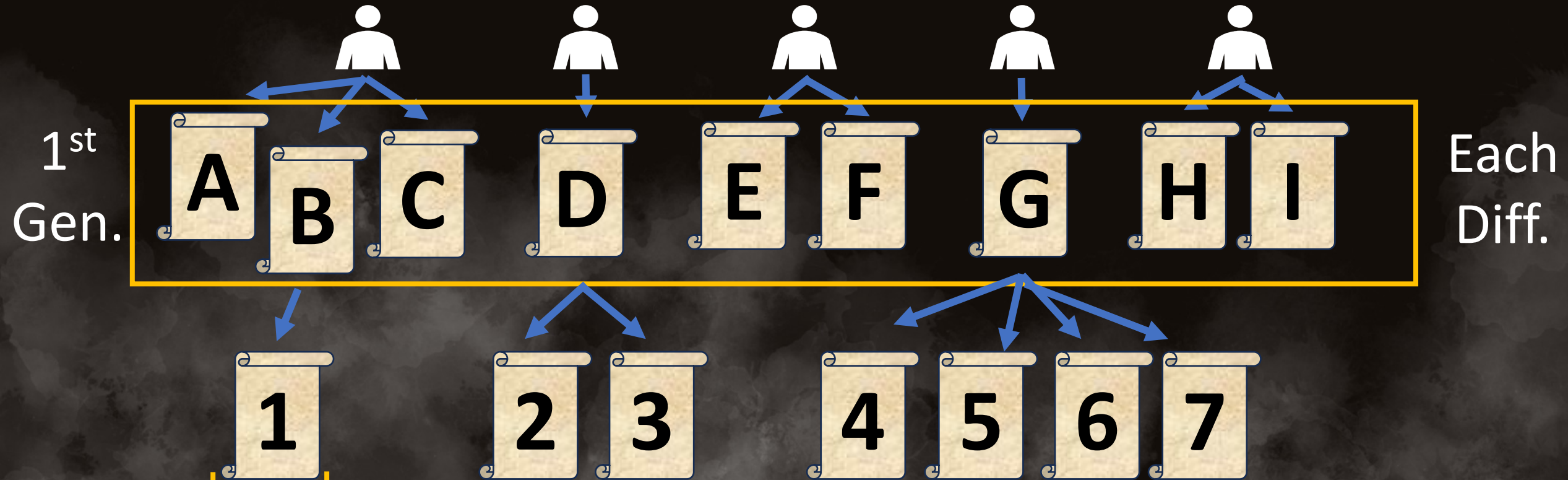
HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Human fallibility – the only method of transmitting scripture was copying by hand – no two manuscripts are the exact same.
 - Misspellings, inverted letters, words left out, etc.
 - Each difference constitutes a textual variant.

Romans

(Autograph)



Limited by copy "B" – contains same variants, and any new variants.

Each variant, both original and copied, counts as a "textual variant."

“The various readings consist mainly in differences of Greek orthography; in the form of words not affecting the essential meaning; in the insertion or omission of words not essential to the sense; in the use of one synonym for another; and in the transposition of words whose order in the sentence is immaterial.”

(McGarvey, J.W., *Evidences of Christianity*, 9)

“all the authority and value possessed by these books when they were first written belong to them still.” (ibid., 12)

“The proportion of words virtually accepted on all hands as raised above doubt is very great, not less, on a rough computation, than seven-eighths of the whole. The remaining eighth, therefore, formed in great part by changes of order and other trivialities, constitutes the whole area of criticism...setting aside differences in orthography, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt only make up about one-sixtieth of the New Testament. In this second estimate, the proportion of comparatively trivial variations is beyond measure larger than in the former, so that the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation is but a small fraction of the whole residuary variation, and can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text.”

(Wescott and Hort, *Introduction to Greek New Testament*, 2)

“It is true indeed that the thousands of variants make no difference of substance to the main thrust of the New Testament. By the singular care and providence of God, the New Testament text (and the Old Testament text too, for that matter) has come down to us in such essential purity that even the most uncritical edition of the original, or the most incompetent or even the most biased translation of such an edition, cannot effectively obscure the Word of God which the Bible proclaims, or neutralize its saving power.”

(Bruce, F.F., *Understanding Biblical Criticism*, e-book, Kingsley Books, 2017)

“The case is like that of a certain will. A gentleman left a large estate entailed to his descendants of the third generation, and it was not to be divided until a majority of them should be of age. During the interval many copies of the will were circulated among parties interested, many of these being copies of copies. In the meantime the office of record in which the original was filed was burned with all its contents. When the time for division drew near, a prying attorney gave out among the heirs the report that no two existing copies were alike. This alarmed them all and set them busily at work to ascertain the truth of the report. On comparing copy with copy they found the report true, but on close inspection it was discovered that the differences consisted in errors in spelling or grammatical construction; some mistakes in figures corrected by the written numbers; and some other differences not easily accounted for; but that in none of the copies did these mistakes affect the rights of the heirs.

In the essential matters for which the will was written the representations of all the copies were precisely the same. The result was that they divided the estate with perfect satisfaction to all, and they were more certain that they had executed the will of their grandfather than if the original copy had been alone preserved; for it might have been tampered with in the interest of a single heir; but the copies, defective though they were, could not have been. So with the New Testament. The discovery of errors in the copies excited alarm leading to inquiry, which developed the fact that he who has the most imperfect copy has in it all that the original contained of doctrine, duty and privilege.”

(McGarvey, J.W., *Evidences of Christianity*, 12).

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Unintentional Errors:
 - Momentary Inattention
 - Diversion of attention from the words to the subject matter.
 - Writing from dictation.

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Unintentional Errors:
 - Homoeoteleuton – “an occurrence in writing of the same or similar endings near together (as in neighboring clauses or lines) whether happening by chance or done for rhythmical effect” (Merriam-Webster)

Homoeoteleuton – John 17:15

οὐκ ἔρωτῶ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ
κόσμου ἀλλ' ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ

- “I do not ask that Thou mayest take them out of the world, but that Thou mayest keep them out of the evil.” (John 17:15, YLT).
- Codex Vaticanus – “I do not ask that Thou mayest take them out of the ~~world, but that Thou mayest keep them out of the~~ evil.”

Homoeoteleuton – Luke 10:31-32

κατὰ συγκυρίαν δὲ ἱερεὺς τις κατέβαινε ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν

ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Λευίτης γενόμενος κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρῆλθεν

- “Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.” (Luke 10:31-32, NKJV).
- Codex Sinaiticus – “Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ~~Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.~~”

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Unintentional Errors:
 - Change of pronunciation
 - Trusting to memory
 - Absence of spaces and punctuation

INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWAS
WITHGODANDTHEWORDWASGODHEWASINTHEBEGI
NNINGWITHGODALLTHINGSWEREMADETHROUGHHI
MANDWITHOUTHIMNOTHINGWASMADETHATWASMA
ADEINHIMWASLIFEANDTHELIFEWASTHELIGHTOFMEN
ANDTHELIGHTSHINESINTHEDARKNESSANDTHE DARKN
ESSDIDNOTCOMPREHENDIT

John 1:1-5

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Unintentional Errors:
 - Change of pronunciation
 - Trusting to memory
 - Absence of spaces and punctuation
 - Scribal glosses/corrections

Scribal glosses/corrections – John 5:3-4

“In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]” (NASB)

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Intentional Errors:
 - To correct a supposed mistake.
 - To secure fullness of expression (harmonize).

To secure fullness of expression (harmonize).

- **Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17** – “*to repentance*” not in the original.
 - It is in **Luke 5:32**
- **Matthew 37:35** – prophetic quotation not in the original.
 - It is in **John 19:24**

To secure fullness of expression (harmonize).

- **Luke 1:28** – *“blessed are you among women”* is not in the original.
 - It is in **verse 42**
- **Acts 9:3-6** – *“it is hard for you to kick against the goads”* is not in the original.
 - It is in **Acts 26:14**
- Words added due to familiar association –
Matthew 26:3 (*“the scribes”*); **27:41** (some add *“the Pharisees”*)

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Causes of Textual Variants

- Intentional Errors:
 - To correct a supposed mistake.
 - To secure fullness of expression (harmonize).
 - To support a doctrine – “There is only a very small number of variations which can be suspected of a doctrinal origin; and fortunately none of these affects materially the doctrine of the Scripture as a whole on the subject involved.”

(McGarvey, J.W., *Evidences of Christianity*, 17)

To support a doctrine.

- **Matthew 24:36** – “*nor the Son*” – in the best manuscripts.
- Omitted in some by scribes who could not reconcile Jesus’ ignorance with His divinity.
- It is in **Mark 13:32**

To support a doctrine.

- **Luke 2:43** – *“his parents”* was changed in some manuscripts to protect the virgin birth.
- *“His parents did not know it”* (ESV)
 - *“and his parents knew it not;”* (ASV)
 - *“But His parents were unaware of it,”* (NASB)
- *“And Joseph and His mother did not know it;”* (NKJV)
- *“being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph”* (**Luke 3:23**).

To support a doctrine.

- **1 John 5:7-8** – *“in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth:”* – is only found in very few later manuscripts.
 - “Historically, the words appear to have been originally included in an exegesis by Cyprian, and to have made their way, via a copyist, into the margin of the text, and then, later, into the text itself.” (Woods, Guy N., Commentary on 1 John)
 - Perhaps added to defend doctrine of Trinity.
 - Doctrine supported by scripture elsewhere – **2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11**

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CORRUPTED?

Deciphering the Original Reading

- More difficult reading is preferred.
- Shorter reading is preferred.
- Dissident reading is preferred.
- Generally, the reading from the oldest manuscript is correct.

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INTEGRITY & CANONICITY OF SCRIPTURE**

