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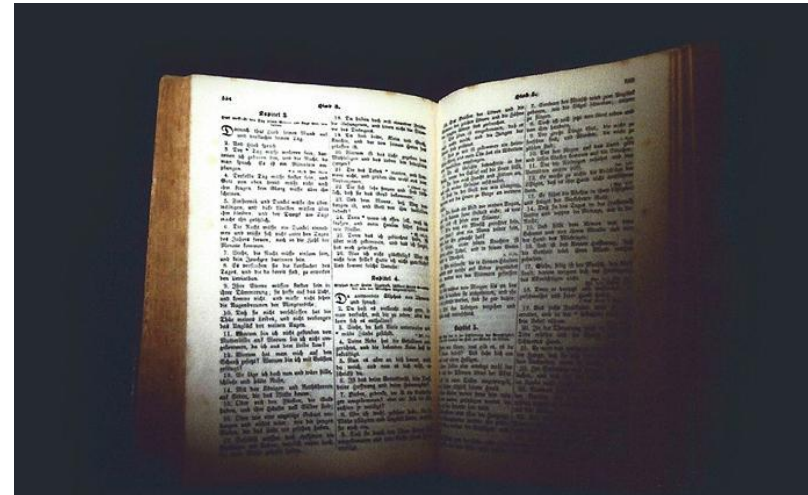
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INTRODUCTION TO *Bibliology*

What Every Christian Should Know About the
Origins, Composition, Inspiration, Interpretation,
Canonization, and Transmission of the Bible

Jefrey D. Breshears

Introduction To Bibliology

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A Brief Seminar in Bibliology

- 1 General Overview of Bibliology**
- 2 Three Views on the Bible** (Chapter 1)
 - Traditional/Conservative
 - Modernistic/Liberal (“Progressive”)
 - Neo-Orthodox
- 3 The Divine Inspiration of Scripture** (Chapter 3)
 - Three ‘Bad’ Arguments
 - Five Good Arguments
- 4 New Testament Canonization** (Chapter 5)
 - Why were certain books included or excluded from the New Testament canon?

A Brief Seminar in Bibliology

- 5 Biblical Textual Criticism – Part 1** (Chapter 7)
The case for Biblical deconstruction
- 6 Biblical Textual Criticism – Part 2** (Chapter 7)
Deconstructing the arguments of deconstructionists
- 7 The Composition of the Bible and the Earliest Extant Manuscripts** (Chapter 6)
What are our most ancient and best manuscripts?

7

Biblical Textual Criticism

**Has the Bible Been Accurately
Preserved and Transmitted
Through the Centuries?**



Biblical Textual Criticism

INTRODUCTION

1. THE CASE FOR BIBLICAL DECONSTRUCTIONISM... AND RECONSTRUCTIONISM

2. THE TRANSMISSION PROCESS

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIBLICAL TEXTUAL CRITICISM

4. THE METHODOLOGY OF BIBLICAL TEXTUAL CRITICISM

POST-SCRIPT

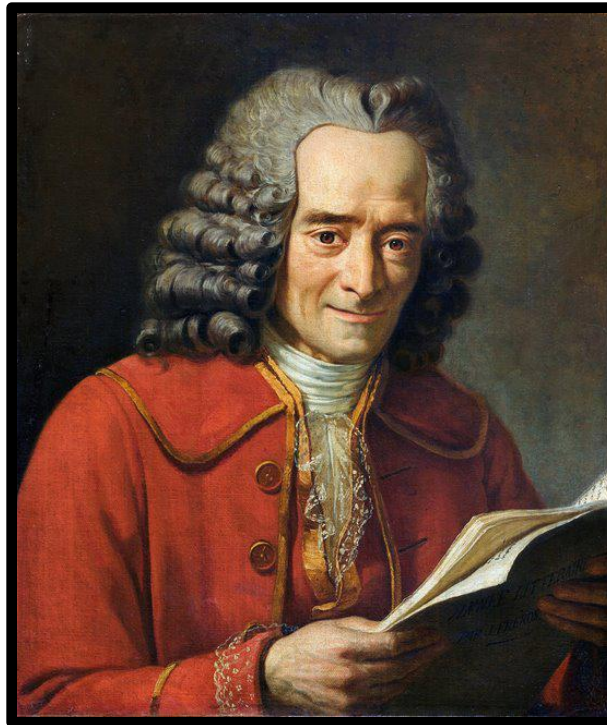
Biblical Textual Criticism

INTRODUCTION



Biblical Textual Criticism

*“If we would destroy the Christian religion,
we must first of all destroy man’s belief
in the Bible.” – Voltaire*



Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

The Seminal Question:

- When you read the Bible – or hear it referred to as ‘divinely-inspired’ or ‘the Word of God’ – how do you know that what you’re reading is what the authors of the Bible originally wrote? [269]

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Biblical Textual Criticism:

- Biblical textual criticism (or analysis) is a legitimate area of scholarship.
- Biblical textual criticism is the art and science of comparing the variant readings in biblical manuscripts so as to restore, as closely as possible, the original wording in the original text. [269]

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Why Is Biblical Textual Criticism So Vital?

- (1) None of the original biblical texts has survived.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Why Is Biblical Textual Criticism So Vital?

- (1) None of the original biblical texts has survived.
- (2) All existing copies contain variant readings.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Biblical Textual Criticism and Apologetics.

(1) The Christian faith makes exclusive truth-claims which, if valid, render it the only true belief system; but if false, render it a fraud.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Biblical Textual Criticism and Apologetics.

- (1) The Christian faith makes exclusive truth-claims which, if valid, render it the only true belief system, but if false, render it a fraud.
- (2) These truth claims depend upon the credibility of the Bible.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Biblical Textual Criticism and Apologetics.

- (1) The Christian faith makes exclusive truth-claims which, if valid, render it the only true belief system, but if false, render it a fraud.
- (2) These truth claims depend upon the credibility of the Bible.
- (3) If the Bible has been corrupted over the centuries, the Christian faith is on shaky ground.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

The Conservative/Liberal Divide:

(1) Was the Bible supernaturally-inspired?

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

The Conservative/Liberal Divide:

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- (2) Is the Bible historically reliable?

Biblical Textual Criticism

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Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

The Conservative/Liberal Divide:

- (1) Was the Bible supernaturally-inspired?
- (2) Is the Bible historically reliable?
- (3) Is the Bible doctrinally and morally authoritative?
- (4) Has the Bible been accurately preserved and transmitted through the centuries?

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

What Truly Matters?

- The issue of textual variants.
- The sources:
 - Poor eyesight;
 - Poor hearing;
 - Fatigue and lack of concentration;
- Intentional variations:
 - Clarifying the text;
 - Correct syntax, grammar and spelling;
 - Harmonizing parallel passages;
 - Theological motivations.

Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

What Truly Matters?

- The issue of textual variants.
- How significant are these textual variants, and do they alter our understanding of the nature of Christ or any core Christian doctrine?

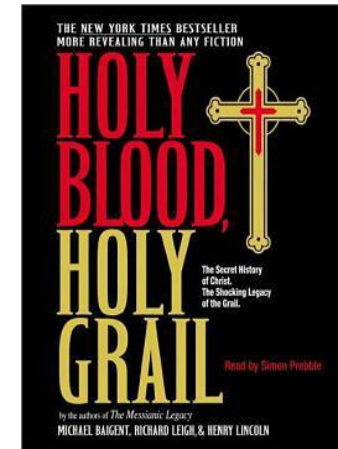
Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Pop Historical Revisionism.

- “In A.D. 303... the pagan emperor Diocletian had undertaken to destroy all Christian writings that could be found. As a result documents... all but vanished.

When Constantine commissioned new versions of these documents, it enabled the custodians of orthodoxy to revise, edit, and rewrite the material as they saw fit, in accordance with their tenets....

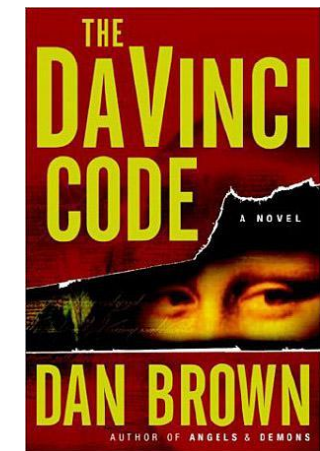
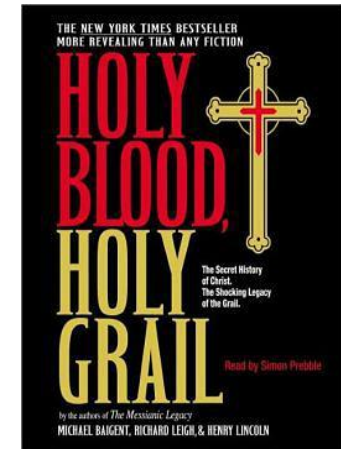


Biblical Textual Criticism

Introduction

Pop Historical Revisionism.

- “... It was at this point that most of the crucial alterations in the New Testament were probably made and Jesus assumed the unique status he has enjoyed ever since.”
-- Michael Baigent, et al., *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (1983).
- Dan Brown, *The DaVinci Code* (2003).



Biblical Textual Criticism

PART 1

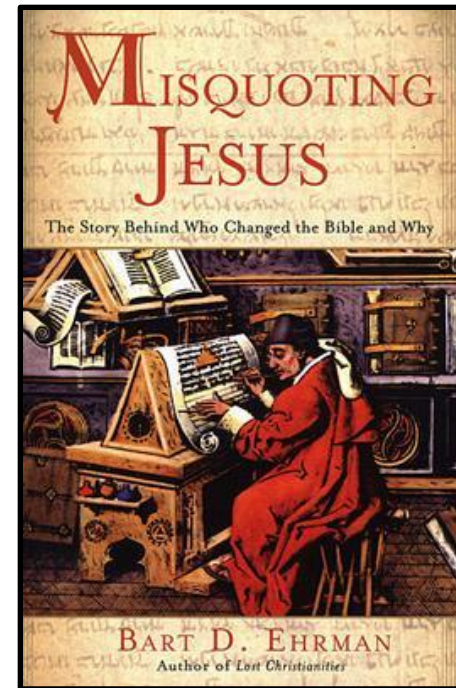
THE CASE FOR BIBLICAL DECONSTRUCTIONISM... AND RECONSTRUCTIONISM



Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism Bart Ehrman.

- *Misquoting Jesus* (Harper/San Francisco, 2006).



Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

Bart Ehrman.

- *Publisher's Weekly*: “Readers might never read the gospels or Paul’s letters the same way again.

“Ehrman makes the provocative case that many of our cherished biblical stories and widely held beliefs concerning the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, and the divine origins of the Bible itself stem from both intentional and accidental alterations by scribes that dramatically affected all subsequent versions.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of No Original Manuscripts.

- Ehrman: “How does it help us to say that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God if in fact we don’t have the words that God inerrantly inspired, only the words copied by scribes – sometimes correctly but sometimes incorrectly?...

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of No Original Manuscripts.

- Ehrman: “... What good does it say that the autographs [i.e., the original texts] were inspired? We don’t have the originals! We have only error–ridden copies, and the vast majority of these are centuries removed from the originals.” [275]

Biblical Textual Criticism

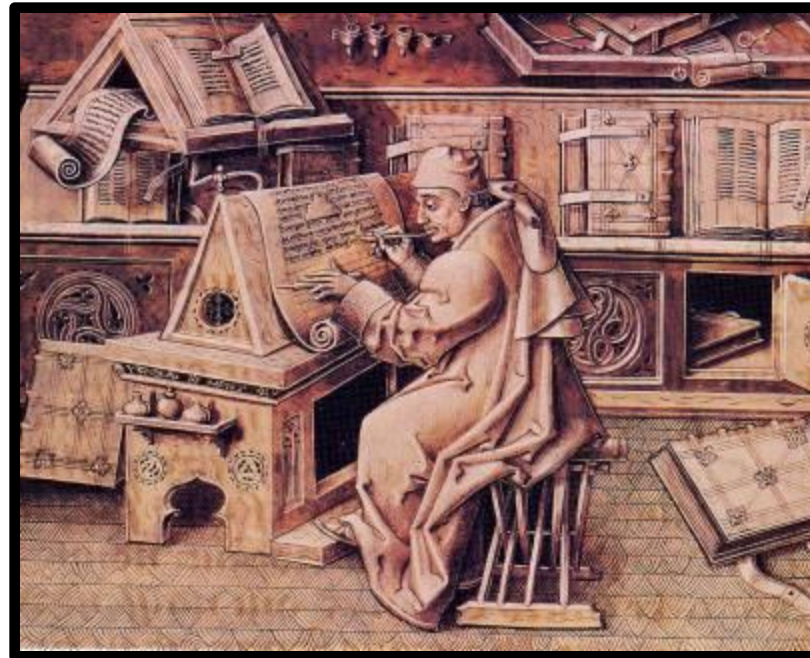
The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- *Scriptio continua.*
 - IN ANCIENT GREEK SCRIPT MOST WORDS RUN TOGETHER AND SOME ARE ABBREVIATED WITH NO SPACE BETWEEN THEM NO CAPITAL LETTERS AND NO PUNCTUATION MARKS ETC

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- *Scriptio continua.*
- Amateur copyists.



Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- Copying errors in ancient manuscripts.
 - John the Elder: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book. If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from the book of this prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and the holy city, which are described in this book.”
-- Rev. 22:18-19

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- Copying errors in ancient manuscripts.
 - Irenaeus (c. 160): “ I adjure you who shall copy this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by his glorious advent when he comes to judge the living and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe, and correct it carefully against this manuscript from which you copy; and also that you transcribe this adjuration and insert it in the copy.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism **The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.**

- Copying errors in ancient manuscripts.
 - Origen (c. 220): “The differences among the manuscripts have become great, either through the negligence of some copyists or through the perverse audacity of others; they either neglect to check over what they have transcribed, or, in the process of checking, they make additions or deletions as they please.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- Copying errors in ancient manuscripts.
 - Rufinus (c. 400): “Truly in the presence of God the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I solemnly warn everyone who may either transcribe or read these books, by his belief in the kingdom to come, by the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, and by that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, that, as he would not possess for an eternal inheritance that place where there is...

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Hand-Copied Manuscripts.

- Copying errors in ancient manuscripts.
 - Rufinus (c. 400): “... weeping and gnashing of teeth and where the fire is not quenched and their spirit does not die, he add nothing to what is written and take nothing away from it, and make no insertion or alteration, but that he compare his transcription with the copies from which he made it.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:12 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- (2) Mark 16:9ff – The “Long Ending” of Mark.
- Bart Ehrman: These are merely two examples of “thousands of places in which the manuscripts of the New Testament came to be changed by scribes.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism

The Problem of Textual Accretions.

- John 21 “appears to be a later add on” and “an afterthought.”
- John 1:1-18 originally came from a different source.
- Ehrman: Nevertheless, “all our Greek manuscripts contain the passages in question.” (!)

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism Tampering with Theology.

(1) I John 5:7-8 – The “Johannine Comma.”

- “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”
- KJV: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.”

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism Tampering with Theology.

(2) Mark 1:41 – Mark’s “Angry Jesus.”

- Jesus heals a leper.
- “Jesus, filled with compassion,” healed the man and pronounced him “clean”.
- Codex Bezae (c. 450): Jesus became “angry”.
- Ehrman: Jesus apparently had a temper (that the other gospels conceal) – which alters our perception of Jesus as perfectly in control of his emotions.

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism Tampering with Theology.

(3) Luke 22:39-46 – Luke’s “Imperturbable Jesus.”

- Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane.
 - In his “agony” Jesus “sweat” “drops” of blood (v. 44).
 - Ehrman: “Nowhere else in Luke’s Gospel is Jesus portrayed in this way.”
- The *chiasmus* factor: Verse 44 is suspect because it interrupts the literary flow of the passage.

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism “Thousands of Textual Variants.”

- Ehrman: “The more I studied the manuscript tradition of the New Testament, the more I realized just how radically the text had been altered over the years at the hands of scribes.” [280]

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism “Thousands of Textual Variants.”

- Ehrman: There are “thousands of places in which the manuscripts of the New Testament came to be changed by scribes....”

There are about 130,000 words in the NT, yet there are perhaps 300,000-400,000 variants in our manuscripts.

Regardless of the exact number: “There are more variations among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament!” [280]

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism The Collapse of Faith.

- Ehrman: “As I realized... even if God had inspired the original words, we don’t have the original words. So the doctrine of inspiration was in a sense irrelevant to the Bible as we have it, since the words God reputedly inspired had been changed and, in some cases, lost....

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism The Collapse of Faith.

- Ehrman: "... The only reason for God to inspire the Bible would be so that his people would have his actual words; but if he really wanted people to have his actual words, surely he would have miraculously preserved those words, just as he had miraculously inspired them in the first place. Given that he didn't preserve the words, the conclusion seemed inescapable to me that he hadn't gone to the trouble of inspiring them." [281-82]

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism The Collapse of Faith.

- Ehrman: “I was basing my entire life on the literal meaning of the Bible, but then I started realizing that the Bible isn’t divinely-inspired – it’s a very human book.” [282]

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism High Stakes.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “In *Misquoting Jesus*, Bart Ehrman offers a radical deconstructionist critique of the divine inspiration, historical reliability, and doctrinal authority of the Bible.

“*Misquoting Jesus* is a recent Bestseller on the *New York Times* Best Seller list, and it might be one of the most influential religious books of the past 25 years. But if Ehrman’s allegations are true, the Bible has been...

Biblical Textual Criticism

The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism High Stakes.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “... so thoroughly corrupted as to render it totally unreliable, and by extension the Christian faith is essentially a fraud.” [282]

Radical Bible surgery





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