

# *The Areopagus*

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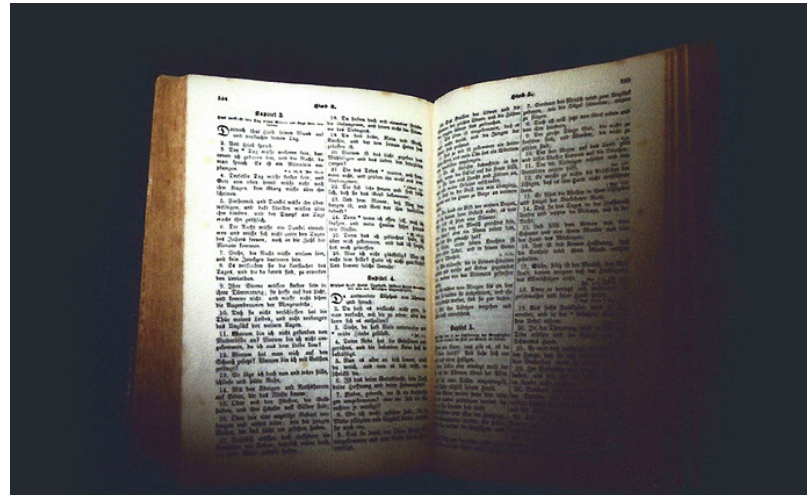
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# The Areopagus







# 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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## 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**



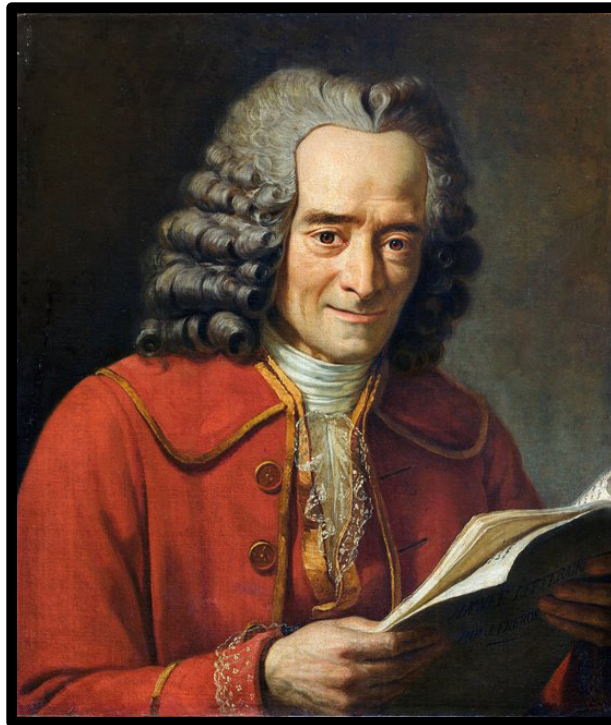
# Biblical Textual Criticism

## 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:**

- 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

### The Challenge:

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



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Introduction

### The Challenge:

- (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; and 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, and 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, and 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

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# Biblical Textual Criticism

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### **The Conservative/Liberal Divide:**

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- (2) Is the Bible historically reliable?
- (3) Is the Bible doctrinally and morally authoritative?

# 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?

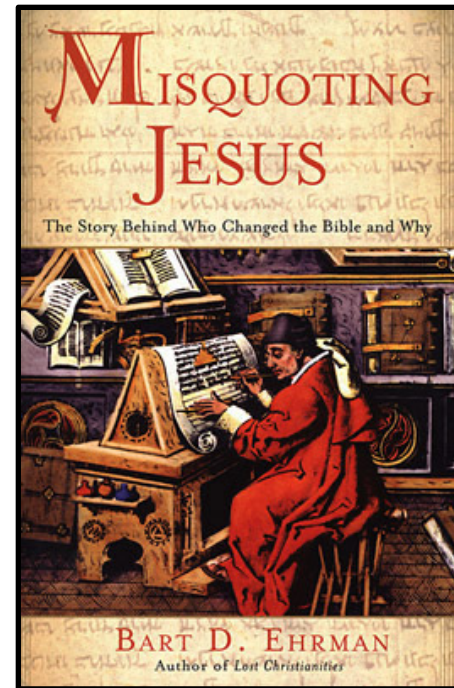
- The issue of textual variants.
- How significant are the textual variants, and do they alter our understanding of the nature of Christ or any core Christian doctrine?



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Case for Biblical Deconstructionism Bart Ehrman.

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



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism

### The Ultimate Issue:

- Has our understanding of the nature of Christ or any essential core doctrine of the Bible been affected?



# Biblical Textual Criticism

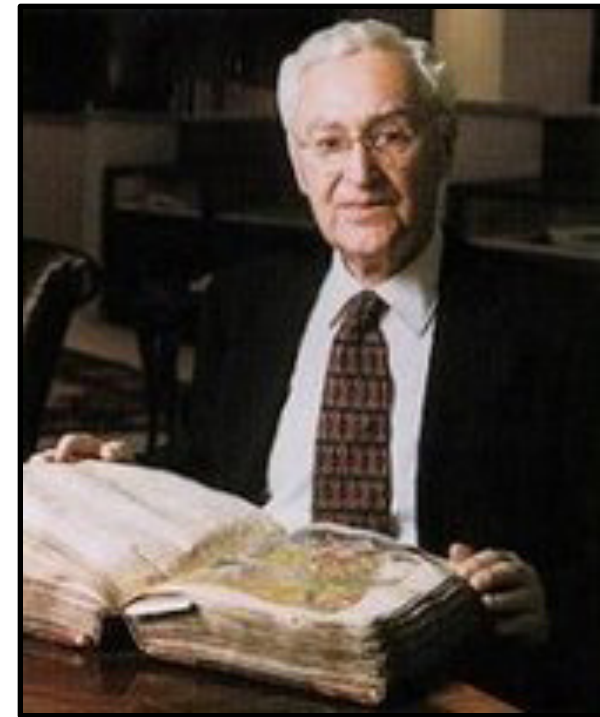
## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Issue of No Original Manuscripts.

- Ehrman: We can, with reasonable accuracy, be assured that our earliest manuscripts are “very closely related to what the author originally wrote.” [284]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Issue of No Original Manuscripts.

- Bruce Metzger: “What the New Testament has in its favor is the unprecedented multiplicity of copies that have survived....” [285]





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Case for Careful Copying.

- The Massoretic scribes.



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Case for Careful Copying.

- The Massoretic scribes.
- Bart Ehrman: “The copying of early Christian texts was by and large a ‘conservative’ process. The scribes were intent on ‘conserving’ the textual tradition they were passing on. Their ultimate concern was not to modify the tradition, but to preserve it.... Most scribes, no doubt, tried to do a faithful job in making sure that the text they reproduced was the same text they inherited.” [177]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism “Thousands of Textual Variants.”

- Technically correct... but misleading.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism “Thousands of Textual Variants.”

- Bruce Metzger: “The number sounds big, but it’s a bit misleading because of the way variants are counted. If a single word is misspelled in 2,000 manuscripts, that’s counted as 2,000 variants....

“Even if we lost all the Greek manuscripts and the early translations, we could still reproduce the contents of the New Testament from the multiplicity of quotations... in the early Church Fathers.” [287]

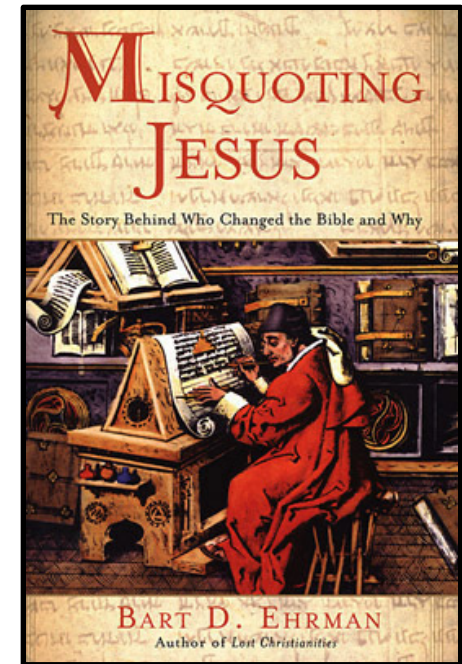


# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism

### EX: Textual Variants in *Misquoting Jesus*.

- The first edition of *Misquoting Jesus* had 16 errors (i.e., misspellings, punctuation, etc.) in the text.
- The book sold about 100,000 copies.

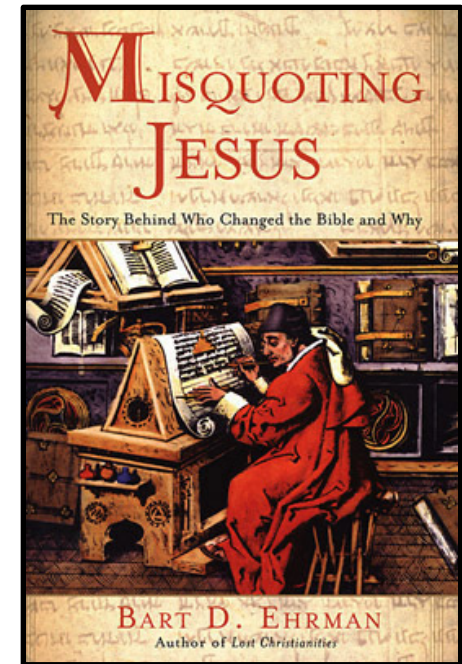


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## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism

### EX: Textual Variants in *Misquoting Jesus*.

- The first edition of *Misquoting Jesus* had 16 errors (i.e., misspellings, punctuation, etc.) in the text.
- The book sold about 100,000 copies.
- Therefore, there are 1.6 million errors in the book!

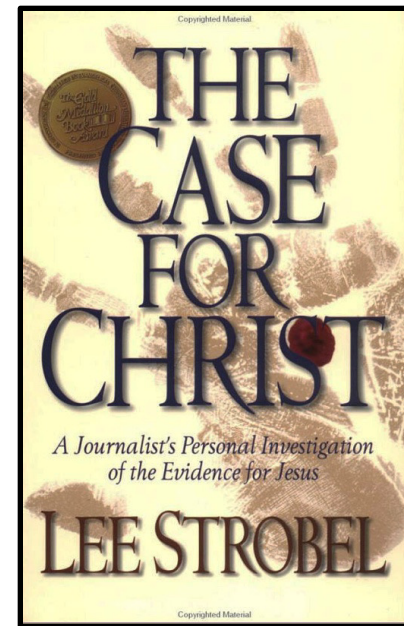


# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Variants – the Bottom-line:

- Lee Strobel: “How many biblical doctrines are in jeopardy because of [textual] variants?”

Bruce Metzger: “I don’t know of any doctrine that is in jeopardy.”  
[287]





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Witness of the Church Fathers.

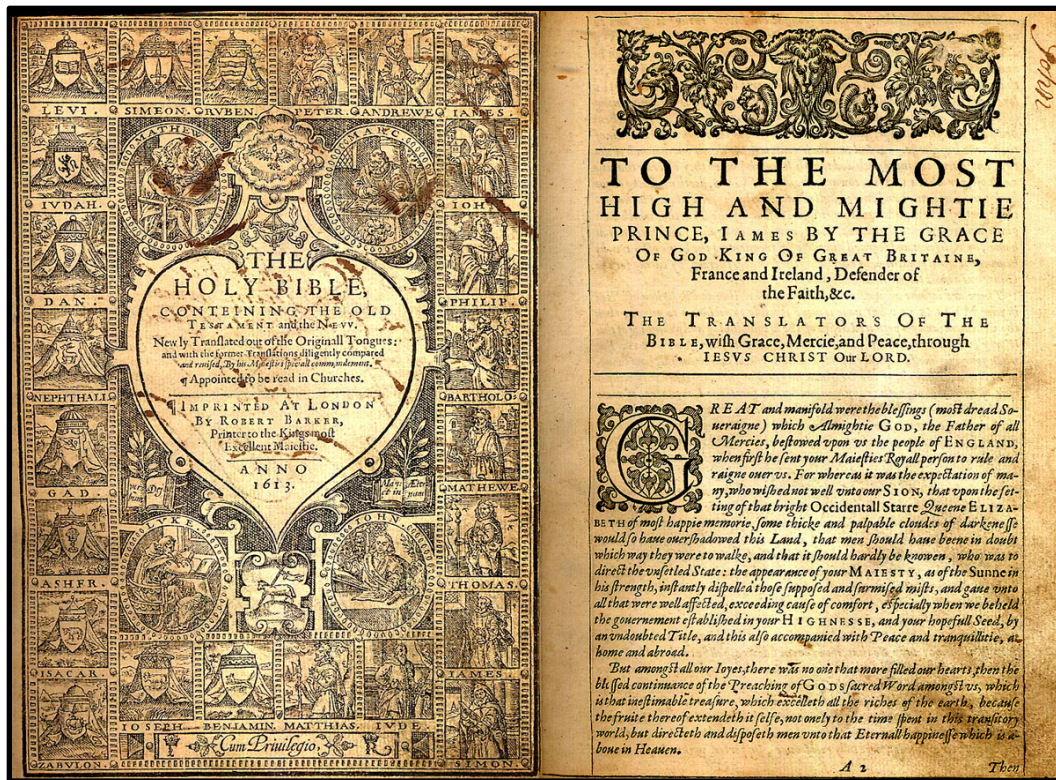
- More than a million citations of the NT.
- Bruce Metzger: Much of the New Testament could be reconstructed from the commentaries by the Church Fathers. [287]





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism The Issue of the King James Bible.



King James Bible – Title and dedication pages

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:11 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- Ehrman: “Most scholars think that it was probably a well-known story circulating in the oral tradition about Jesus, which at some point was added in the margin of a manuscript.” [289]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:11 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- (2) Mark 16:9-20 – The Long Ending of Mark.
  - Three options for the abrupt ending of the Gospel of Mark:
    - (1) It was intentional.
    - (2) It was never finished.
    - (3) The last leaf of the original manuscript was lost.\*

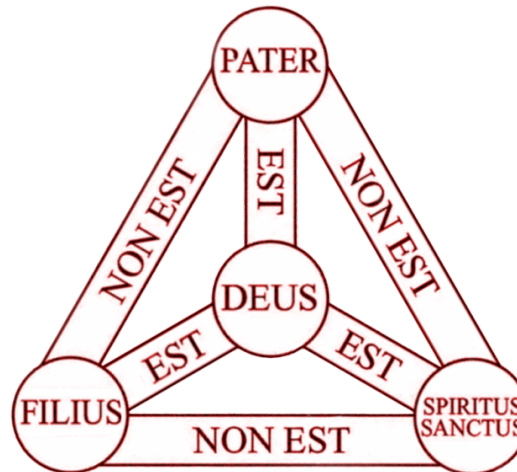
\* NOTE: Some scholars believe the original Gospel of Mark included both a prologue and an epilogue that were lost.



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:11 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- (2) Mark 16:9-20 – The Long Ending of Mark.
- (3) I John 5:7-8 – The “Johannine Comma.”
  - The case for the Trinity.





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:11 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- (2) Mark 16:9-20 – The Long Ending of Mark.
- (3) I John 5:7-8 – The “Johannine Comma.”
- (4) Mark 1:41 – Mark’s “Angry Jesus.”
  - Codex Bezae is bizarre.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Textual Accretions.

- (1) John 7:53-8:11 – The “Pericope Adulterae.”
- (2) Mark 16:9-20 – The Long Ending of Mark.
- (3) I John 5:7-8 – The “Johannine Comma.”
- (4) Mark 1:41 – Mark’s “Angry Jesus.”
- (5) Luke 22:39-46 – Luke’s “Imperturbable Jesus.”
  - The chiasmus theory.
  - A unique episode in Jesus’ life.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Case Closed.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “There is, of course, a basic logical inconsistency in Ehrman’s whole argument: If he is correct that we can have no idea what the original texts said, then how would he know that these passages (and others) have been altered?

“Despite all of Ehrman’s provocative and sensationalistic claims, his book is underwhelming, to say the least. He utterly fails...

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Case Closed.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “...to prove his case, and he never proves that changes in the texts altered any basic Christian doctrines or our understanding of Jesus.” [292]



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism A Lesson To Be Learned.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “Ironically, Bart Ehrman has done the church a favor by bringing to the forefront – and helping to popularize – such a vitally important issue as Biblical textual criticism. This is long overdue, and one lesson to be learned from the controversy is that the gap between the church and the academy must be closed. To paraphrase the venerable church historian Jaroslav Pelikan...

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism A Lesson To Be Learned.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “... ‘The church [should always be] more than a school, but the church should never be less than a school.’  
“Christians need to be educated on the tough apologetical issues of our day. Instead of trying to shield Christians from these controversies – and in the process reducing Christian education to the lowest-common-denominator, church leaders should be...

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism A Lesson To Be Learned.

- Jeffrey Breshears: “... preparing Christian young people and adults to actively engage these issues intelligently and effectively.”

[293ff]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Deconstructing Biblical Deconstructionism Good News!

- Jeffrey Breshears: “Finally, much Good News emerges from this controversy. If this is the best evidence the skeptics can produce for deconstructing the Bible, Christians can rest assured that we have a very solid basis for believing that the Bible we read is trustworthy, and that it has been accurately preserved and transmitted through the centuries.” [294]



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## PART 2 THE TRANSMISSION PROCESS



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### The *Autographa*.

- Were the New Testament authors literate?
- The issue of scribal secretaries (*amanuenses*).
- Ref. Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (NYU Press, 2000).
- Tertullian (c. 203): Some of Paul's "authentic writings" are still held in Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, and Thessalonica.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Biblical Transmission and Quality Control.

- To err is human.
- Textual changes and *stemma*.
- The copying profession.
  - Bruce Metzger: “Sitting in the workroom of a scriptorium,... trained scribes, each equipped with parchment, pens, and ink, would write a copy of the book being produced as the reader, or lector, slowly read aloud... In this way, as many copies could be produced simultaneously as there were scribes were working in the scriptorium.” [298]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Biblical Transmission and Quality Control.

- Proofreading and correctors.
- A “praiseworthy industry.”
  - Cassiodorus (5<sup>th</sup> century): “By reading the divine Scriptures [the scribe] wholesomely instructs his own mind, and by copying the precepts of the Lord he spreads them far and wide. What happy application, what praiseworthy industry... to fight the Devil’s insidious wiles with pen and ink! For every word of the Lord written by the scribe is a wound inflicted on Satan.” [299]



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Biblical Transmission and Quality Control.

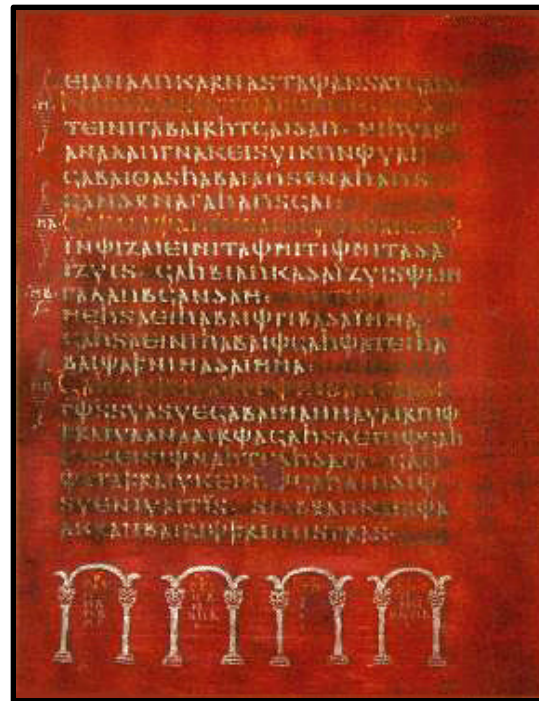
- Proofreading and correctors.
- A colophon to an early Coptic manuscript:
  - “There is no scribe who will not pass away, but what his hands have written will remain forever. Write nothing with your hand but that which you will be pleased to see at the resurrection.... May the Lord God Jesus Christ cause this holy copy to avail for the saving of the soul of the wretched man who wrote it.” [299]

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

## Biblical Transmission and Quality Control.

- The art of biblical copying.



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Textual Variants: Accidental Changes.

- Causes of accidental changes:
  - Poor eyesight.
  - Poor hearing.
  - Fatigue and lack of concentration.
  - Errors in spelling, grammar, etc.
- More than 99% of variants are insignificant.
  - No variants affect our understanding of the character and nature of Christ, the Gospel message, or any basic Christian doctrine.



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Textual Variants: Intentional Changes.

- Between A.D. 100-1500 about 2,500 words were added to the New Testament (about 2% of the 138,000 words in the text).



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process

### Textual Variants: Intentional Changes.

- Between A.D. 100-1500 about 2,500 words were added to the New Testament (about 2% of the 138,000 words in the text).
- Reasons for intentional changes:
  - Clarifying the text.
  - Harmonizing parallel passages.
  - Rectifying historical or geographical issues
  - Expanding or enriching the text.
    - EX: The alternate endings of Mark.
  - Theologically-motivated changes.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## The Transmission Process Infamous Bibles.

- The “Wicked Bible” (or “Sinner’s Bible”).
  - Ex. 20:14 – *“Thou shalt commit adultery.”*
- The “Sin on Bible.”
  - John 8:11: *“Go and sin on more.”*
- The “Fool’s Bible.”
  - Psalm 14:1 – *“The fool hath said in his heart there is a God.”*
- The “Prostitute’s Bible.”
  - Footnote to Prov. 2:16 in the NET Bible of 2001: A 1-800 call number.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## PART 3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIBLICAL TEXTUAL CRITICISM



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## PART 4 THE METHODOLOGY OF BIBLICAL TEXTUAL CRITICISM





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## POST-SCRIPT



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- The history of biblical transmission has been a complicated process.
- Consider: What matters most – the (literal) words of the God in the original language (Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek) or the essential truths that were conveyed?
- What ultimately matters is retaining the seminal essence and intention of God's revealed message.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- The Septuagint – the “Bible” of the early church – was not a word-for-word (verbal/plenary) translation of the Hebrew Scriptures but a functional equivalent.
- Likewise, all modern translations are (more-or-less) functional equivalents.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- To what extent has the Holy Spirit been involved in the preservation and transmission of the Bible through the centuries?



# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- To what extent has the Holy Spirit been involved in the preservation and transmission of the Bible through the centuries?
  - To the extent that the Holy Spirit initially inspired the biblical texts themselves.
  - To the extent that the Holy Spirit works symbiotically and synergistically within us to transform our heart and mind.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit.**

- To what extent has the Holy Spirit been involved in the preservation and transmission of the Bible through the centuries?
  - To the extent that the Holy Spirit initially inspired the biblical texts themselves.
  - To the extent that the Holy Spirit works symbiotically and synergistically within us to transform our heart and mind.
- While not overriding or violating our will, God providentially accomplishes his will.

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- “The bottom line is that the art and science of biblical textual criticism provides ample evidence that the Holy Spirit has accurately preserved God’s message to humanity.... Just as no historical fact or archaeological discovery has ever refuted or contradicted the Bible, no copying errors or textual variants in the manuscripts have altered any core biblical doctrine or our understanding of the character and redemptive work of Jesus Christ....

# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### The Role of the Holy Spirit.

- “That is what matters, and in that regard we can rest assured that when we read the Bible, we are reading what the Holy Spirit originally inspired the authors to write.” [326]





# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### A Testimony to the Living Word of God.

- “We can only comprehend the ultimate reality of the Bible to the extent that our heart and mind have been quickened by the Holy Spirit – and in accord with the spiritual perception that we are granted that enables us to recognize the truth that we encounter in Scripture....

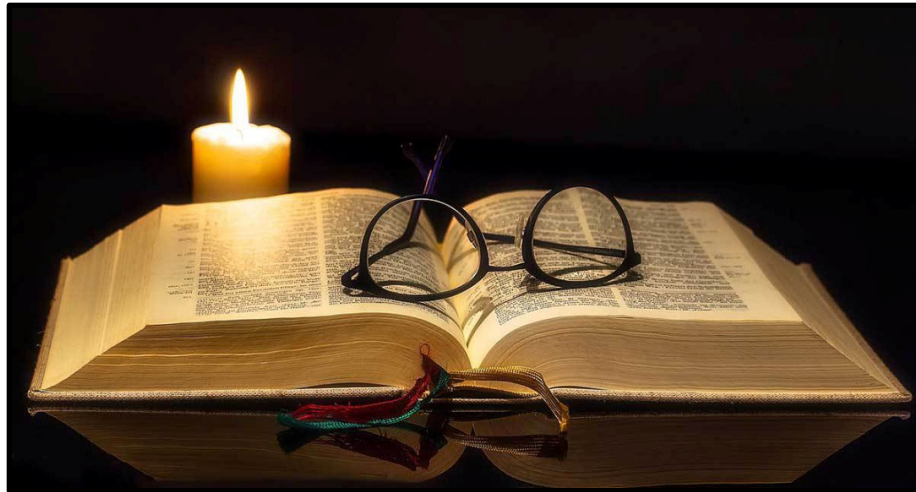
# Biblical Textual Criticism

## Post-Script

### A Testimony to the Living Word of God.

- “... But for those who read the Bible through illuminated eyes and allow its message to transform their heart and mind, it truly is a lamp to their feet and a light for their path.”

[15]





ἐκαστου ημων υπαρχοντα εκαστου ημων υπαρχοντα εν αυτω γαρ ζωμεν και κινουμεθα και εσμεν





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