

**REASON & FAITH APOLOGETICS
RESOURCE**

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

AN INTRODUCTION



VINCENT SMITH

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Answering popular Questions about God

Chapter 1

Bible New Testament historicity

“It subjects itself to historical criticism. it puts itself at risk. It speaks of times, places, and people that you can investigate to disprove or verify its authenticity.

The primary text documents of ancient religions including Islam are not historical narratives they are talking head theology. E.g., in the gospel of Thomas, there are no places, times and historical figures that you can compare it to for historical value. You must ask where the historical data is”.

Daniel Wallace

What is T.C. Textual Criticism?

The goal of Textual Criticism is to find the original text of the author which may be lost or destroyed.

Is T.C. Textual Criticism necessary?

Won't be needed if

1. The books or the authors were available.
2. If copies were perfect.

Is T.C. Textual Criticism helpful?

It helps with the historical reliability of scripture.

It discredits or credits some text as credible.

It may be used to increase the trustworthiness of scripture.

Autographs or originals

The originals are God-breathed (expired/inspired). God through the Holy Spirit revealed his word to the writers. We no longer have the originals. There are no original texts of any classical writer of antiquity. We only have copies of copies, and many are fragmentary. Some fragments are the size of a credit card.

All copies of religious and other books have errors.

We have more copies of the New Testament than well know manuscripts. It's the most attested manuscript of antiquity. Some were written as early as 50 A.D. e.g. the letter of first Corinthians. Paul stayed with Roman Jews (who were expelled in AD 49 or 50 and world history confirms the expulsion of the Jews around that time. He wrote the letter from Ephesus where he spent about 3 yrs. A date for **Acts 18:1-18** is derived from mentioning proconsul Gallio in 18:12 and the existence of an inscription found at Delphi and published in **1905**, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claudius'_expulsion_of_Jews_from_Rome preserving

a letter from Claudius concerning Gallio.
Also, Emperor Claudius reigned from 24
January 41 AD– to 13 October 54 AD

Comparing the Bible manuscripts to manuscripts of other well-known persons.

AUTHOR	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1000 yrs.	10
Livy	59 B.C.-A.D.17			20
Plato (Tetralogies)	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (Annals of Rome)	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1000 yrs.	20
Pliny the Younger (History)	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (History)	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 yrs.	8
Suetonius (De Vita Caesarum)	A.D. 75-160	A.D. 950	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (History)	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1300 yrs.	8
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1400 yrs.	193
Catullus	54 B.C.	A.D. 1500	1600 yrs.	3
Euripides	480-406 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1500 yrs.	9
Demosthenes	383-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1300 yrs.	200+
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1400 yrs.	49*
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	A.D. 900	1200 yrs.	10
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs.	643
New Testament	A.D.50-100	A.D. 125	25yrs.	over 24,000
+ all from one copy.				
* of any one work.				

The Gallic Wars of Cezar occurred in 50AD
but the time between the originals and the
copy we have is 900 years after his death.
How different is this from the original, how

many errors occurred and how many copies upon copies were made?

Do we have the original Bible text?

No, we don't. It is believed they have all biodegraded. We have thousands of copies. We can trust the copies. We know what the original says.

Old Testament

The first 5 books (Torah or Pentateuch) would have been canonized by Moses and the whole O.T. would be canonized after returning from Babylon (by Ezra) about AD 400-500 years before Jesus' birth.

What writing surface did Moses write on?

Answer: Clay had formerly been material to inscribe cuneiform writing on, that's because there was a rich supply of clay near the Euphrates river in Mesopotamia. But Moses wasn't in Mesopotamia he was in Sinai where clay was hard to obtain.

Moses had a new form of writing at his disposal, he no longer needed the syllable-based cuneiform script, he could use the alphabet, so he didn't need clay, all he needed was a surface that could be inscribed in some way. In 1400 BC leather was one of the preferred materials for writing. We know that Moses had animals with him because Pharaoh said, "Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go" (Exod 12:32). Moses, and the Israelites, were acquainted with Egyptian materials for writing. The longest Ancient Egyptian text ever found, is an 8-foot 2-inch leather manuscript dating from 2300 – 2000 BC. That's well before Moses' time.

R.K. Harrison, Prof. of Old Testament, suggests that the ancient Jewish tradition of the Torah always being written upon leather (vellum, or sheepskin) is probably correct and the original material of its transmission was leather.

We do find that 80% of the Dead Sea Scrolls are written on leather and parchment, the remaining 20% on papyrus and one copper scroll

What is a CODEX? (See picture 1)

Codices (plural) are complete books of both the old and New Testaments. They are believed to be invented in the 1st century AD. It is a book-like structure that is, anything bound on one side (left) and pages flipped from the other side (e.g., the right to left).

Picture 1 below.



Most NT MSS include portions or fragments of NT books, if portions of the parchment have been lost, there are four significant manuscript witnesses that contain the entire text of the Bible. These codices (or entire “books”) include [Codex Sinaiticus](#), [Codex Vaticanus](#), [Codex Alexandrinus](#), and [Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus](#).

What are POPYRI? (See picture 2)

The English word Paper comes from Popyri, meaning baby skin because it is smooth. The green skin is removed and the strips of long of the white inside are cut. The sweet sugar and water are pressed/squeezed out until they are thin. They are soaked in water for 3 days and then laid crisscrossed (hatched) with the outer ones running vertically and the others running horizontally. They are stuck together by the sugar inside. A heavy weight is placed on top and they are left to dry for 3 days. The dried product looks like one roll of paper. After writing, the long

scroll of papyri reeds rolled from outside in and with the last chapters folded in first so when reading the first chapter is seen first. Writing is on the inside of the horizontal reeds in the directions of the reeds because it is difficult to write on the outside against the vertical reeds. [How To Make Papyrus Paper](#)



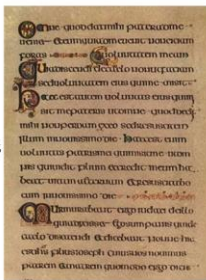
Picture 2

Handwriting-Capitals & Common letters

Up until the ninth century, Greek texts were written entirely in upper-case letters, referred to as **uncials**. During the ninth and tenth centuries, **minuscules** came to replace the older style. These text types helped the textual researchers determine the age of the manuscripts.

Uncial – was used from the 4th to 8th centuries AD.

Majuscule – WRITTEN IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS



Miniscule – written in all lower-case letters used during the 9th & 10th Centuries.



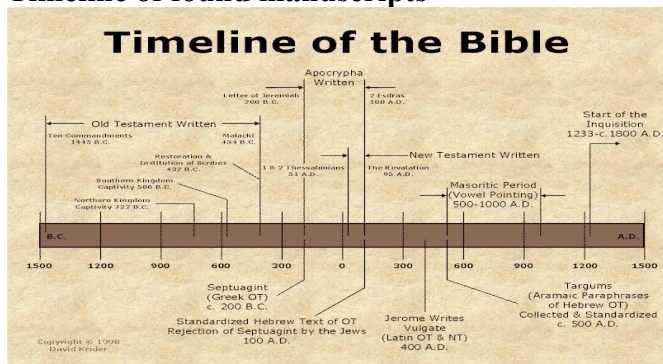
Doctrine of preservation

Textus receptus. The doctrine says that Textus Receptus (the Majority text) was used by **Erasmus in 1505** to compile the

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New Testament into Greek from about 500 older New Testament incomplete copies. The text was from the Greek Vulgate. He believed the Greeks did not corrupt their texts. It is argued that this was the text God gave us and not the other Manuscript copies.

Timeline of found manuscripts



NT writers quote the Septuagint over the Masoretic Text (Hebrew Bible) approximately 75 per cent of the time.

Dead sea scrolls or Qumran scrolls.

Papyri: (Hebrew OT) 150 BCE to 70 AD.

These contain the Hebrew & Aramaic OLD TESTAMENT ONLY, Except Esther and a small portion of Daniel are missing.

Masoretic-OT: (Hebrew) written in 826 A.D

Before the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered the Masoretic text was considered the most authoritative text of the OT. Oldest extant Hebrew Bible.

Codex Sinaiticus/ Mount Sinai. Greek OT & NT: B300 AD

Codex Sinaiticus is supposed to be older than the Byzantine Group of texts Erasmus used to translate to the NT Greek

[Tischendorf discovered the Codex Sinaiticus in a monastery in Mount Sinai in 1859]. It differs from the Byzantine texts (according to Hort & Wescott 1881). This text was written on a thin sheepskin, not Papyrus.

Codex Vaticanus- this is a complete copy of the Greek OT & NT written between 300-325 AD: it was kept in the Vatican library:

It was therefore written before the meeting of Bishops at the Council of Nicaea AD 325 which Constantine attended. Therefore, the Greek Old & New Testament canons were in place before the council. Jerome used this Greek Codex Vaticanus in his modernizing of the old Latin Manuscripts to the Latin Vulgate (common Latin). Together the Codex Vaticanus & Codex Sinaiticus are called the **Alexandrian texts**.

Did the Nicaea council create the New Testament?

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AD 110 the Church believed there were only 4 gospels and in AD 175 Irenaeus declared there were only 4 gospels this was 150yrs before Nicaea.

The council of Nicaea did not determine what should go into the Bible. No evidence of this whatsoever. The content of the debate was the nature of God not which books are approved or not approved. So, there was no creation of the New Testament or Old Testament.

AD 200 the Church recognised 20 of the 27 New Testament books.

Eusebius one year before the council of Nicaea, wrote Ecclesiastical History and in it, he mentions the canonical books 4 gospels, Acts, Paul's letters, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation.

The only influence by Constantine was on ordering 50 Bibles that's it. It seems that the books that were recognised were not put into one big book or volume until Constantine ordered the publication of the Bible. So, the

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New Testament existed as separate books but was later compiled as one book. So, to be clear Constantine did not choose what goes into the volume he simply ordered copies of it. What should be in and what should be out was already decided years before by God and agreed on by Church leaders.

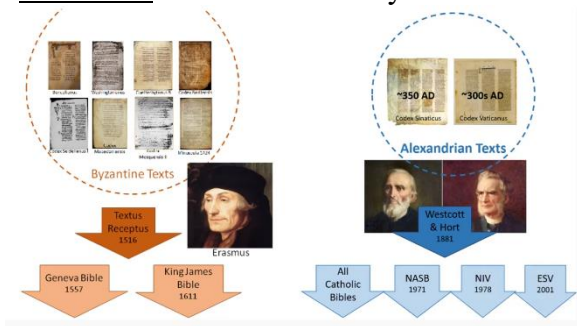
Latin Vulgate/ Common Latin: 382 AD

Latin OT & NT: Vatican library:

47 yrs later, Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus I to upgrade the Gospels from Old Latin (*Vetus Latina*) to modern/common Gospels (*Vulgate Latina*). The Vulgate is usually credited as being the first translation of the Old Testament into Latin directly from the **Hebrew Tanakh** rather than from the Greek Septuagint.

Alexandrinus Greek OT & NT:

Written in Alexandria -Egypt 400-440 AD.
Greek Old Testament and Greek New Testament. Member of the Byzantine texts.



Textus Receptus/ received text. Greek NT. 1516 ([see picture 3. below])

Greek New Testament was printed by Erasmus using the modern printing press.

Used as translation base for King James.

Erasmus used texts that were written between the 5th and 9th centuries, these are not as old as the Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. If Byzantine is correct, then Alexandrian text is

simple errors. If the Alexandrian text is correct, then Byzantine contains intentional lies meant to deceive the Christians for years.

[picture 3]



Wescort and Hort said the Alexandrian texts (see [fig.3] below) were older manuscripts than the ones Erasmus used, and they differ (they leave out chunks of script that Erasmus's Byzantine Bible has in). New Bibles were published using Alexandrian text.

Therefore, some say King James is the correct one because it has things Alexandrian texts do not have in. This is

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why the NIV and JW translations which used the Alexandrian texts are called demonic by some.

Scholars in favour of the critical text of the bible, view the Codex Sinaiticus to be one of the greatest Greek texts of the [New Testament](#) and the codex is a celebrated historical treasure by many modern scholars, along with that of the [Codex Vaticanus](#). Most supporters of the [Received Text](#) reject the Codex as a corruption of the scriptures. Until the discovery by [Tischendorf](#) of the Sinaiticus text, the [Codex Vaticanus](#) was unrivalled. [\[picture 4\]](#)

The debate between Byzantine and Alexandrian

The Bible is not corrupt, but both New Testament copies (Alex & Byz) are corrupt should we use any? They are not corrupted like the Book of Mormon, Gnostic or Qur'an. These religions claim the reason they and their books exist is because the Bible is corrupt. The

problem with these other books is that they're based off of the same Bible, they bring new gospels, new creation stories, totally different Old Testament stories and in some cases new gods.

The level of corruption of the two NT copies is about minor differences. The doctrine is the same. However, some prefer one over the other. There is also a rule, that the older text gets preference.

BYZANTINE [PROS]

Why support the Byzantine texts? Many manuscripts. Although many different texts, they are about 90% in agreement. First and second-century Church fathers quoted Byzantine text. Vulgate used Byzantine text (*some are older than Alexandrian but not extant*)

ALEXANDRIAN [PROS]

Their current extant text is older than the extant Byzantine text.

Chapter 2

What is a variant?

Why so many variances?

Example: The more spelling errors the more variances. The more copies of the spelling error the more variances.

Over 99% of all variants are...

- 1]not meaningful
- 2]not viable
- 3]Both

Viable but not meaningful variants: (NONSENSE VARIABLES)

Differences in spelling

- the name for “John” in Greek: Ioannes or Ioanes
- moveable ‘nu’ (letter N)...

Viable but not meaningful variants:

Word order differences

How many ways are there to say:

“Joseph loves Mary” in Greek?

This can be said over 1000 times in Greek without substantially changing the meaning, the number of textual variants for the NT is meaningless. What counts is the nature of the variants.

Meaningful but not viable (i.e., a poor chance of being authentic)



Meaningful and viable (good chance of being authentic).

Among the 400,000 textual variants in NT MSS, over 99% make virtually no difference at all.

Less than 1% are both meaningful & viable.

Chapter 3

WHAT IS THE NAME OF GOD

God has many names. In the Old Testament He is known as **YHWH / YAHWEH /**

JEHOVAH [*yah-way / ji-hoh-veh*]: “LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4; Daniel 9:14)

YAHWEH-JIREH [*yah-way-ji-reh*]: “The Lord Will Provide” (Genesis 22:14) –

YAHWEH-RAPHA [*yah-way-raw-faw*]: “The Lord Who Heals” (Exodus 15:26) –

YAHWEH-NISSI [*yah-way-nee-see*]: “The Lord Our Banner” (Exodus 17:15) Exodus 17.

YAHWEH-SHALOM [*yah-way-shah-lohm*]: "The Lord Our Peace" (Judges 6:24).

The word Jehovah or Yahweh?

Vowel points – When the Jews went to Babylon, the Masoretic Jews added vowel points so that non-Jews and Jews who grew up in Babylon could read the text because the Babylonians used vowels. So instead of writing in vowels, they used dots that indicated where the Babylonian vowels will be pronounced. No one today seems to know which Babylonian vowels they referred to. When the Jews got to the letters Y, H, W and H they put 3 vowels from another word Adonai **to remind them to say Adonai because they did not pronounce the YHWH.** The European scholars did not know what the **three vowel points** meant and put them between the YHWH e.g., YaHoWaH came up with Jehovah. So, Jehovah is a made-up word. These vowels were added between the 5th-10th century AD

by the Masoretes (Masoretic texts) found near the Dead Sea. John Wycliffe was the first to translate it to **Yahovah** and Anglicans were the first to use **Jehovah**.

Hebrew (Strong's #3068) YEHOVAH יהוה			Hebrew (Strong's #136) ADONAY אֲדֹנָי		
י	Yod	Y	א	Aleph	glottal stop
ה	Simple Sheva	E	אֲ	Hataf patah	A
ה	He	H	ד	Dalet	D
ו	Holam	O	וֹ	Holam	O
ו	Vav	V	נ	Nun	N
ה	He	H	י	Yod	Y

Spelling of Tetragrammaton and connected forms in the Masoretic Hebrew text (vowel points in red).

YHWH intended to be pronounced as Adonai:

יְהוָה

In the best Biblical manuscripts and scholarly editions:

יְהוָה

Adonai, with its slightly different vowel points:

אֲדֹנָי

Note that when the prefixed prepositions לְ and בְ are attached to יְהוָה the šewa vowel diacritic becomes pataḥ – , normal when preceding a consonant with ḥateph-pataḥ – (rather than becoming hireq . , normal when preceding a consonant with another šewa) – בִּיהוָה

YHWH intended to be pronounced as Elohim:

יְהוָה

In the best Biblical manuscripts and scholarly editions:

יְהוָה

Elohim itself:

אֱלֹהִים

Chapter 4

TEXTS WE HAVE TODAY

Dead sea scrolls or Qumran scrolls.

Out of the roughly 800 manuscripts found at Qumran, 220 are from the Tanakh [*The Hebrew Bible, which is also called the Tanakh, or sometimes the Mikra, is the canonical collection of Hebrew scriptures, including the Torah*]. Every book of the Tanakh is represented except for the Book of Esther; however, most are fragmentary. Notably, there are two scrolls of the Book of Isaiah, one complete and one around 75% complete. These manuscripts generally date between 150 BCE to 70 CE.

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Until the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1948), the oldest extant Hebrew manuscript was about dated to the year AD 900. Since the Hebrew Old Testament was completed about 400 BC (initiated by Ezra after Jews returned from Babylon) there was a time gap of 1300 years. The exciting news is that when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found two important things were discovered. First, the scrolls were well preserved having been carefully sealed and placed in a jar in a dry climate c. AD 68 before the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70). While the scrolls were sealed in AD 68, some of the actual scrolls dated back to 125

BC. Most of the **Dead Sea biblical manuscripts were dated as being written between 200 BC** and 68 AD. **What all of this meant is that instead of relying upon copied manuscripts 900 years old**, Hebrew scholars could look at manuscripts closer to the historic events. They could also see how well the copyists have preserved the texts which is the second great discovery. Thanks to the work of the Talmudists (AD 100-500) with their strict rules for copying the Scriptures, and thanks to the work of the Massoretes (AD 500-900, from *massora*, "*Tradition*") the Hebrew texts were very well preserved. The evidence proved that the

Bible had been transmitted with the minutest accuracy. *“The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched by other places that speak more clearly.”* (***The Baptist Confession of Faith Of 1689***, Chapter 1, Section 9; study 2 Pet. 1:20,21; Acts 15:15,16)

Textus Receptus (Greek texts of the New Testament).

There is a great deal of misinformation regarding the origins of the Textus

Receptus. This is especially true of the manner in which [Desiderius Erasmus](#) gave us his original Greek New Testament which was published in **1516**. It was this work which went on to become the foundation of the Textus Receptus. It's a consensus text. There were many copies of the New Testament that he gathered and made on the text.

Erasmus did not invent the Textus Receptus, but simply put together a collection of what was already the vast majority of New Testament Manuscripts in the Byzantine tradition.

The first Greek New Testament to be collated was the **Complutensian Polyglot** in (1514), but it was not published until eight years later, but Erasmus's was the second Greek New Testament which was printed and published in (1516).

More than Half-Dozen Manuscripts

The fact that Erasmus had only a handful of manuscripts during his preparation of the 1516 edition is irrelevant to the reliability of the text underlying his manuscript. First, no scholar disputes the fact that Erasmus had studied variant readings of the New Testament throughout his life before

publishing the Textus Receptus. The study of variant readings in the Greek New Testament did not begin with Erasmus but with scholars such as Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) and John Colet (1467-1519), and even as far back as Jerome (347-420). Although Erasmus spent only two years in front of a handful of Greek manuscripts to compose his first edition, his knowledge concerning the Greek New Testament and its variants did not come solely from looking at these few manuscripts in the two-year period.

There is a strong parallel between Hilkiah (**Hilkiah the high priest** who found the "book of the law" (2 Kings 22:8) or the "book of the covenant" (2 Kings 23:2)) who found the Old Testament writings and Desiderius Erasmus, the originator of the Textus Receptus. Both were men of high repute and rank. Both were upright while their contemporaries were apostates. Both caused God's words to be published after a time of spiritual darkness. Both were catalysts of a great spiritual awakening. The Textus Receptus was to the Reformation what Hilkiah's discovery was to the revival in Josiah's days. Modern textual critics need

to learn what the Bible says about textual transmission. If God wants his words to be published for a time of spiritual awakening, he can do so through even just one manuscript.

Printings of the Textus Receptus

Erasmus was the author of five published editions from 1516 to 1535, the 1516 edition being the very first Textus Receptus.

Old Testament text discovered

The Bible describes a time when **Hilkiah the high priest** found the "book of the law"

(2 Kings 22:8) or the "book of the covenant" (2 Kings 23:2) in the house of the LORD during the reign of Josiah. **The book of the law, whether it was just the five books of Moses or a collection of all the biblical books written up until that time, had to be rediscovered during Josiah's reign because the previous wicked generations under Manasseh and Amon had eradicated the book of the law from the land.** This eradication of the biblical books was so widespread that even the high priest did not possess them until he discovered them in the temple.

This **book found by Hilkiyah became the ancestral copy of all the Hebrew manuscripts that exist today.** One could speculate that Hilkiyah found other manuscripts in other places over time, but that would be speculation since the Bible does not say so. The Bible clearly portrays this single copy found in the temple as the sole catalyst for the great spiritual revival during Josiah's time and the rediscovery of God's words for subsequent generations.

Ezra, a direct descendant of Hilkiyah (Ezra 7:1), canonized the Old Testament and transmitted it to future generations. Ezra's Old Testament was surely based

on Hilkiah's copy found in the temple.

The readings of this copy eventually diverged into the various **Old Testament** streams extant **today**, such as the (1) **Masoretic**, (2) **Dead Sea Scrolls**, (3) **Samaritan** and (4) **LXX**. Whether or not Hilkiah or Ezra found other manuscripts besides the one found in the temple during Josiah's reign, the Bible is clear that the number of manuscripts does not matter as long as God providentially provides the manuscripts for a time of spiritual revival. King Josiah saw the hand of God in preserving this single copy and never doubted its authenticity or integrity. He

caused the words of this single copy to be read to the people (**2 Kings 23:2**).

Codex Vaticanus

The manuscripts were “found” in 1481 in the Vatican library in Rome, where it is currently held, and from whence it received its name. It is written on expensive vellum, a fine parchment originally from the skin of the calf or antelope. Some authorities claim that it was one of a batch of 50 Bibles ordered from Egypt by the Roman Emperor Constantine; hence its beautiful appearance and the expensive skins which

were used for its pages. A section of the codex containing 1 Esdras 2:1-8

Codex Vaticanus originally contained a virtually complete copy of the Septuagint ("LXX"), lacking only 1-4 Maccabees and the Prayer of Manasseh.

The original 20 leaves containing Genesis 1:1–46:28a (31 leaves) and Psalm 105:27–137:6b have been lost and were replaced by pages transcribed by a later hand in the 15th century.^[10] 2

Kings 2:5–7, 10-13 are also lost because of a tear on one of the pages. The order of the Old Testament books in the Codex is as follows: Genesis to 2 Chronicles as

normal; 1 Esdras; 2 Esdras (Ezra-Nehemiah); the Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs; Job; Wisdom; Ecclesiasticus; Esther; Judith; Tobit; the minor prophets from Hosea to Malachi; Isaiah; Jeremiah; Baruch; Lamentations and the Epistle of Jeremiah; Ezekiel and Daniel. This order differs from that followed in Codex Alexandrinus.^[12]

The extant New Testament of the Vaticanus contains the Gospels, Acts, the General Epistles, the Pauline Epistles, and the Epistle to the Hebrews (up to Hebrews 9:14, καθαρῶν); it is lacking 1 and 2

Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. These missing leaves were supplemented by a 15th-century minuscule hand (folios 760–768) and are catalogued separately as the minuscule Codex 1957.^[3] Possibly some apocryphal books from the New Testament were included at the end (as in codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus), as it is also possible that Revelation was not included.

Alexandrian text

The name Alexandrian text-type comes from the Codex Alexandrinus, an ancient manuscript pictured above.

The Alexandrian text-type

is one of several text types found among New Testament manuscripts. It is the text type favoured by textual critics and it is the basis for modern Bible translations. The name of the text type comes from Codex Alexandrinus, a manuscript of this type.

Over 5,800 New Testament manuscripts have been classified into four groups by text type. Besides Codex Alexandrinus, the other types are the Western, Caesarean, and Byzantine. Compared to these later text types, Alexandrian readings tend to be abrupt, use fewer words, show greater variation among the synoptic gospels, and

have readings that are considered difficult. Later scribes tended to polish scripture and tried to improve its literary style. Glosses would occasionally be added as verses during the process of copying a Bible by hand. From the ninth century onward, most surviving manuscripts are of the Byzantine type.^[1]

The King James Version and other Reformation-era Bibles are translated from Textus Receptus, a Greek text created by Erasmus and based on various manuscripts of the Byzantine type. In 1721, Richard Bentley outlined a project to create a revised

Greek text based on Alexandrinus.^[2]This project was completed by Karl Lachmann in 1850. B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort of Cambridge published a text based on Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus in 1881. *Novum Testamentum Graece* by Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland, now in its 28th edition, generally follows the text of Westcott and Hort.

The Septuagint

Following the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 BC, the Jews were scattered throughout the Middle East. Many never returned home as one empire after

another dominated the land of Palestine. Because of this Diaspora, the scattered Jews (cp. James 1:1) need a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures in the new international language. During the reign of King Ptolemy Philadelphia of Egypt (285-246 BC), seventy (LXX) scholars gathered in Alexandria, Egypt to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. The LXX, being very close to the Massoretic Text (AD 916) we have today, helped to confirm the reliability of the transmission of the Scriptures through the years. Other documents could be appealed to for verification of the genuineness of the Old Testament

manuscripts and their reliability of being faithfully transmitted down through the centuries.

- ✂ *The Samaritan Text* (fifth century BC). This document contains the *Pentateuch*.

- ✂ *The Targums* (c. AD 500 onward; lit. "*interpretation*"). These documents contain paraphrases of the Old Testament based upon the Hebrew text. Some of the major Targums date to 60 and 30 BC: The Targum of Onkelas and the Targum of Jonathon Ben Uzziel.

✂ *The Mishnah* (AD 200; lit. "explanation, teaching"). These documents contain Jewish traditions and explanations of the oral law. They are written in Hebrew and have been called "*The Second Law*."

Manuscripts (minuscule & uncials)

Up until the **ninth century [the 1800s]**, Greek texts were written entirely in upper-case letters, referred to as **uncials**. During the ninth and tenth centuries, **minuscules** came to replace the older style. Most Greek uncial manuscripts were recopied in this

period and their parchment leaves were typically scraped clean for re-use. Consequently, surviving Greek New Testament manuscripts from before the ninth century are relatively rare, but nine (over half of the total that survives) witness a more-or-less pure Alexandrian text. These include the oldest near-complete manuscripts of the New Testament: [Codex Vaticanus](#) Graecus 1209 and [Codex Sinaiticus](#) (believed to date from the early fourth century).

Several substantial papyrus manuscripts of portions of the New Testament survive from

earlier still, and those that can be ascribed a text-type, such as P

$\{\mathit{P}\}$ 66 and P

$\{\mathit{P}\}$ 75

from the second to the third century, also tend to witness to the Alexandrian text.

The earliest [Coptic versions of the Bible](#) (into a [Sahidic](#) variety of the late second century) use the Alexandrian text as a Greek base, although other second and third-century translations (into [Latin](#) and [Syriac](#)) tend rather conform to the [Western text type](#). Although the overwhelming majority of

later minuscule manuscripts conform to the Byzantine text-type; detailed study has, from time to time, identified individual minuscules that transmit the alternative Alexandrian text. Around 17 such manuscripts have been discovered so far and so the Alexandrian text-type is witnessed by around 30 surviving manuscripts, by no means all of which are associated with [Egypt](#) although, in that area, Alexandrian witnesses are the most prevalent.

It was used by Clement of Alexandria, Athanasius of Alexandria, and Cyril of Alexandria.

Papyrus

(/pə'paɪrəs/ pə-PYE-rəs) is a material similar to thick paper that was used in ancient times as a writing surface. It was made from the pith of the papyrus plant, *Cyperus papyrus*, a wetland sedge.

Papyrus (plural: *papyri*) can also refer to a document written on sheets of such material, joined together side by side and rolled up into a scroll, an early form of a book.

Papyrus is first known to have been used in Egypt (at least as far back as the First Dynasty), as the papyrus plant was once

abundant across the Nile Delta. It was also used throughout the Mediterranean region and in the Kingdom of Kush. Apart from writing material, ancient Egyptians employed papyrus in the construction of other artefacts, such as reed boats, mats, rope, sandals, and baskets.

Chapter 5

The rationale for the Canon

There are spurious claims from other books that say things about Jesus that are inconsistent with the canon of books (Bible) or claim to have hidden information. To help unbelievers understand why we have selected certain books (canon) here is a list of things to know.

[1] **Apostle**- was it written by an apostle.

[2] **Consistency**- the New Testament books present sufficient evidence that consistently describes a particular character or person.

The other book has no other

witnesses/books corroborating its story. All other books deviate from this large body of evidence and testimonies.

[3] **Perfectly matched prophecy**-The information in the recognised body of scripture is consistent with the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament especially the purity of the sacrificed lamb. The books we have, teach a perfect saviour unblemished (un-sinful) and resurrected. This is consistent with God's prophecy.

[4] **Trustworthiness and inspired by God**
If these epistles were written by Apostles, then the epistles are trustworthy for Jesus endowed with his spirit and commanded

them himself to evangelise whether it be writings or preaching in person. If they have his spirit, then we know what they wrote was inspired. Books written by unknown sources are not trustworthy and cannot be elevated to the same level as men Christ sent personally. We cannot put our faith in books written by every and anybody they may be sending you straight to hell. Have faith in the apostles

[5] **Truth-**We can therefore agree that the truth of God is captured within the New Testament books we have.

[6] **Authentic**- they have the ring of truth.

[The internal witness of the text who is strong evidence for its canonicity].

[7] **Ancient**- it used from the earliest times.

[The church fathers rejected much of the ratings because there were two new (not old) to be apostolic. Athanasius in 300s AD listed the canonical books he said “these are the books received by us as belonging to the canon). In other words, these were the books in use across the Roman Empire].

[8] **Accepted**- Were most of the Churches using it? *[almost all of the testament books (at least 22 of 27 for sure) were in use probably before 150 AD].*

[9] **Accurate**- is it going form to the orthodox teaching in the churches. *There was widespread agreement across the Christian churches as to the content of the message. Irenaeus asked if a particular rating was consistent with what the church taught. This is what ruled out the gnostic ratings because they were contrary to the consistent teaching of the church.*

It is believed that the manuscripts we have are dated hundreds of years after the originals were written therefore this must mean that we have thousands of errors. but this is not the case. The Dead Sea scrolls 1947. Keep one contained an entire

prophecy of Isaiah it was dated around 150 BC. The earliest copy (Masoretic) that we had at that point was dated 950AD about 1000 years between the two.

What were the earliest canons?

150 AD Muratorian Canon—24 of 27 books

180 AD Irenaeus of Lyons 23 of 27

240 AD Origen of Alexandria 27

325 AD Eusebius of Caesarea –22+5

367 AD Athanasius of Alexandria 27

397 AD council of Carthage

These are just the canons or collections of books but before they were collected there were circulated earlier long before 150 AD.

Why did it take so long?

The originals were not written in one volume.

Paul did not write all of his books at the same time in one place in one church. For example, Paul went to one country I wrote a letter two years later after visiting another country another letter maybe three years later he visited another country I wrote another letter and so on and so on so over several years maybe 15 to 20 years of ministry Paul would have written all of his letters. if you were to collect all of Paul's letters you would have to wait until 15 to 20 years had passed before you can get them all.

The whole did not know his letters were going to be collected as a book.

The originals were scattered across the whole empire.

The Christian world was scattered as far as Britain Africa Europe Asia Arabia. so obviously it would have taken time together all of the apostle's writings into one book.

The scrolls were huge.

Luke's gospel would require 30 feet of scroll 200 ft for the whole New Testament. So, to put all of that even in a book (Codex) would have been too huge and heavy to carry around.

1st century Christians expected the immediate return of Christ.

So, because of this no one planned for the church to be wrong for a long time and therefore no one had the foresight to think to collect and preserve the writings of the apostles. It was only after the persecution that came after the 68 AD that the preservation of the Gospel message in Church writings would become necessary.

No supreme bishop or Head Church.

For 500 years the church did not have a supreme Bishop who told them which books belonged to the Canon. Later the Church of

Rome decided to throw its weight around the Canon that was already in place.

The early leaders assumed the authority of the gospels and the apostles.

No one had to tell the church that they had to quote from the letters of the apostles and the gospels their authority was self-evident. Although the apostles did not write Mark Luke Jude and Hebrews it was agreed by the church that when Papias who were alive at the time of the apostles said that Mark wrote under the guidance of Peter and Luke with a written under the guidance of Paul. Jude was the brother of Jesus and it was common

although not universal to accept Paul as the writer of Hebrews.

Citations