

Forgeries in the New Testament

Written by Administrator

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The Christian New Testament is comprised of 27 books. They have been translated from koine Greek. This New Testament is sanctioned by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Church and all Protestants. It is however rejected by Eastern Christians of the Near East and India, the Church of the East, the Roman Catholic Church in the East, the Monophysites, and Indian Christians. The Assyrian Church, or as it is known, the ancient Apostolic and Catholic Church of the East, was one of the major Christian churches in the world.

Not until the 14th century was the church rivalled by any other church. It was the most powerful branch of Christendom in the Near East, Palestine, Arabia, Lebanon, Iran, India and elsewhere. The churches of the East rejected the Greek New Testament which is comprised of 27 books. The Eastern Church recognizes only the Peshitta – Aramaic text of the New Testament. The Peshitta New Testament is comprised of only 22 books. Excluded are 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude and Revelation.

Even in the Western churches these books were rejected for several centuries until they were finally incorporated in the canon. Peshitta manuscripts are very ancient indeed. Some scholars insist that the Greek New Testament was actually translated from Aramaic Peshitta. Most scholars however believe that at least Luke, Acts and the epistles of Paul were originally written in Greek. There are only a handful of Peshitta manuscripts available today. On the other hand, there are thousands of Greek manuscripts. But these manuscripts differ significantly one from another. There is virtually no sentence in the New Testament that does not have at least several variant readings. In the *Lion Encyclopedia of the Bible* on p. 66, subtitle How the New Testament came Down to Us we read:

“Scholars are faced with many thousands of different ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. They have to decide which of these are most trustworthy and which have preserved the most accurate version of the original. The New Testament was originally written down in Greek. Scholars have many thousands of Greek manuscripts to which they can refer. In addition they possess early translations of the New Testament – in Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, and other languages.”

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Please note. This Christian encyclopedia plainly states that scholars possess many thousands of Greek manuscripts. It likewise acknowledges the fact that these manuscripts are different, conflicting. The encyclopedia states that scholars must decide which of these manuscripts most accurately preserve the original. When you are fully aware of these facts it is quite natural and logical to ask the question: just which one of all these manuscripts actually comprise the so-called infallible Word of God? *Collier's Encyclopedia* Vol. 17 on p. 466, gives us the following information:

“The original manuscripts of the New Testament have disappeared. Three sources of information exist today for our knowledge of the text of these: Greek manuscripts dating from the second and succeeding centuries, early translations into other languages [primarily Syriac, Latin and Coptic], and quotations from the New Testament made by early ecclesiastical writers. The Greek documents are classified either according to the material on which they were written [papyrus, parchment or vellum, and ostraca], or according to the style of script of the writing [uncial and minuscule]. There have been catalogued more than fifty Greek papyrus fragments of the New Testament; more than two hundred uncial manuscripts; and about four thousand Greek minuscule manuscripts...The earliest manuscripts, in accord with contemporary customs of writing, have neither marks of punctuation nor spaces between words and sentences. In multiplying copies of the New Testament to supply the needs of a growing Church, scribes introduced many corruptions into the text...The variant readings which thus originated are very numerous; if each variant in every manuscript is counted, the total is about two hundred thousand.”

Collier's Encyclopedia Vol. 4 on pp. 132-134, states:

“The earliest printed edition of the Polyglot, was completed in Spain in 1514. However, it was not issued until after the publication in 1516 of a Greek New Testament edited by the great Dutch scholar and humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam. Erasmus' text was hastily prepared from late and often inaccurate manuscripts, and in places he changed the Greek to conform with the Latin Vulgate. Nevertheless his text became the basis for many further Greek editions, and it was the one translated by the early Protestant Reformers.

From 1546 to 1551 the Parisian scholar and printer Robert Estienne issued a series of Greek New Testaments containing Erasmus' text with marginal variant readings from the Complutensian Polyglot and other sources. Estienne was the inventor of the system of dividing the chapters of the New Testament into numbered verses. His 1551 edition became the basic

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Greek text for later English translations, including the King James Version...Today there are over 5000 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 manuscripts of the ancient versions, and 80,000 New Testament quotations in the writings of the Church fathers. Nobody knows how many different readings of the same passage they contain. More than 30,000 different readings were discovered in one examination of 150 manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke. There is probably not one sentence in the New Testament that does not have several variants.”

For the sake of those who are not very well informed on the subject, certain things need to be clarified. The first thing we must realize is the fact that we do not possess the original manuscripts called autographa – whether they were written in Greek or Hebrew. The next thing we need to realize is the fact that the Greek manuscripts in the hands of Bible scholars are uncial [written in capital letters] and miniscule [written in small letters]. We also need to be aware of the fact that the Greek manuscripts were written with no marks, punctuation, or separation of words. The modern scholars have edited and compiled these texts and have also separated the words according to their understanding and whim. They have also inserted punctuation – often in a manner to uphold certain traditional doctrines of the Christian Church.

The oldest Greek form does not have a space between words or punctuation of any type. This is a crucial fact to realize, because certain words have not been correctly separated by certain scholars. This is one of the reasons why we have so many different Bible versions. The most important thing to realize is the fact that not even one of the bibles available has been actually translated directly from one single Greek manuscript. All English bibles have been translated from one of the Greek texts compiled by an editor. The editor would examine different Greek manuscripts and then choose and decide what material to take from what manuscript. The editor must decide for himself which texts are closest to the original writings.

The first compiled Greek-Latin text was printed between 1514 and 1517 c.e. This text was known as Complutensium Diaglot. Then in 1516 c.e. Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus published his first edition of the compiled Greek text. This text was prepared in haste and contained many errors. This initial text was somewhat corrected through the following four editions between 1519 and 1535 c.e. The third edition of Stephanus’ Greek text [issued in 1550] became in principal the Received Text [Textus Receptus], upon which the King James translators were based in 1611. After Erasmus, a great number of scholars have applied themselves to the task of constructing a reliable Greek text of the mass of variant readings. This fact is plainly admitted by virtually all Bible scholars and can be read in almost all Bible prefaces. In the introduction of the Interlinear Greek-English New Testament by Alfred Marshall on p. 5, we find the following information:

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“The text of the Greek New Testament has come down to us in various manuscripts, printing not being invented until the 15th century [Erasmus published his Greek New Testament in 1516]. Some of these manuscripts are more important than others [age is not necessarily determinative of importance]. The study of the various manuscripts copies, and the assessment of their individual value in attempting to reconstruct the original as nearly as possible, constitutes the science of textual criticism. For those who wish to study this seriously there are many books available; it is sufficient to say here that, after Erasmus, a great number of scholars have, over a long period, applied themselves to the task of constructing a reliable text out of the mass of various readings which have arisen from copying and making copies from copies of the old manuscripts. Such scholars as Mill, Stephens, Griebach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford, and many more. The Authorized Version of 1611 follows what is known as the Received Text [Textus Receptus, or T.R.]. But this is now generally recognized as unreliable; also, since it was compiled in 1550 by Stephens [or Stephanus] many further manuscripts have come to light.”

Not even one of these scholars had simply taken one particular Greek manuscript from which to make their translation. Rather, they adopted the principle of “pick and choose” and also the principal of “textual criticism” and even of “higher criticism”. From the mass of variant readings they have compiled their own Greek text from which others have made translations into other languages. Wescott and Hort have probably come closest to one single manuscript – that of Codex Vaticanus. In the introduction of the New English Bible on p. 7, we find this amazing information:

“It is just three hundred and fifty years since King James’ men put out what we have come to know as the Authorized Version. Two hundred and seventy years later the New Testament was revised. The Revised Version, which appeared in 1881, marked a new departure especially in that it abandoned the so called Received Text, which had reigned ever since printed editions of the New Testament began, but which the advance of textual criticism had antiquated.

During the eighty years which had passed since that time, textual criticism has not stood still. There is not, however, at the present time any critical text which would command the same degree of general acceptance as the Reviser’ text did in its day. The present translators therefore could do no other than consider variant readings on their own merits, and, having weighed the evidence for themselves, select for translation in each passage the reading which to the best of their judgement seemed most likely to represent what the author wrote. The translators are well aware that their judgement is at best provisional, but they believe the text they have followed to be an improvement on that underlying the earlier translations.”

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Do you realize the tremendous significance of this admission? The translators of the New English Bible admit that they sifted through the mass of contradicting Greek texts and manuscripts – selecting each passage from whatever source they thought most accurately preserved the original. Different translators choose different texts and therefore their translations will naturally differ. Which of them all is actually fully inspired? In the preface of the Good News Bible we are told:

“The basic text for the New Testament is The Greek New Testament published by the United Bible Societies [3rd edition 1975], but in a few instances that translation is based on a variant reading supported by one or more Greek manuscripts.”

In the preface of the New International Version on p. 7, we read the following:

“The Greek text used in translating the New Testament was an eclectic one. No other piece of ancient literature has such an abundance of witnesses as does the New Testament. Where existing manuscripts differ, the translators made their choice of readings according to accepted principles of the New Testament textual criticism.”

Just what is textual criticism? The word *criticism* denotes, primarily, a judgement, or an act of judging; its derivation from Greek verb "krino" meaning: to discern, or to try, or pass judgement upon, or to determine. The textual criticism is a method which the Bible scholars apply to determine which manuscripts or part thereof are fraud and which genuine. These textual critics sift through thousands of Greek manuscripts and countless variant readings, in order to compile the text which they think is the best and most reliable.

Different scholars choose different material. Thus even the Greek texts they themselves compile are at odds with each other. For example, the Greek text compiled by Stephanus on which the King James Bible is based differs in some 6000 places from the text compiled by two Anglican scholars Westcott and Hort. Most modern bibles are based in principal on the text of Westcott and Hort. When you become aware of all these facts then you realize how complex the issue really is. Then you realize that if you yourself were to make a translation from Greek manuscripts, the task would be enormous and difficult. You yourself would be faced with a dilemma as to which passages to accept and which to discard. Knowing all this, can you still claim that the New Testament as we have it is really infallible? Christians obviously can. Virtually all Christian denominations insist that every word of the New Testament is actually

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“God breathed.” Josh Mc Dowell, a great Christian apologist is a typical example of this Christian view. In his book *A Ready Defence* on p. 23, he states:

“To be considered to have come from an all-powerful God, a book must meet certain requirements. First, it must be transmitted to us so that we may have an exact representation of what God said and did. Also, it must be correct when it deals with historical personages and events. A book that confuses names, dates and events has no right to claim it comes from an infallible God. Furthermore, any revelation from God should be without any scientific absurdities which would betray that it came by mere human authorship. At the very least, any work coming from God must meet the above requirements. The Bible does this and much, much more. The text of the Bible has been transmitted accurately. In fact, there is more evidence for the reliability of the text of the New Testament as an accurate reflection of what was initially written than there is for any ten pieces of classical literature put together...with the abundance of existing manuscripts [handwritten copies] of the New Testament [more than 25,000], we know nothing has been lost through the transmission of the text.”

Josh Mc Dowell must be out of his mind to make such a statement. He is well aware of how we received our New Testament. He is also well aware of the errors and serious problems found in the Bible. His statement is not based on any real facts but rather on a biased religious conviction. There are myriads of conflicting readings but in here we are primarily interested how the orthodox Christian scribes forged many original readings in order to bolster the anti adoptionist view of the Ebionites and to substantiate the orthodox view of Jesus' pre-existence and his divinity. We can begin with the fact how these lying scribes tried to hide the fact that Joseph was actually the biological father of Jesus. There were manuscripts which emphatically show that Joseph was Jesus' biological father. The Syriac or Aramaic manuscript discovered in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai gives the following version of Matthew 1:16:

“Jacob begot Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed the virgin Mary, begot Jesus, who is called the Christ.”

Then in verse 25 we are told the following:

“and he [Joseph] had no relations with her [Mary] until she bore to him a son.”

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Compare this with the King James Bible, based on the Textus Receptus:

“And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son.”

Various manuscripts show how the Orthodox scribes have corrupted the original renderings whenever we are told that Joseph was the father of Jesus or where the phrase “the parents” of Jesus occur in the earlier manuscripts. In Luke 2:33, some manuscripts read:

“father and mother began to marvel.”

But majority of the manuscripts read:

“Joseph and his mother.”

In Luke 2:48 one important but fragmentary Greek manuscript C^{vid} and two Old Latin manuscripts β and e read:

“Your relatives and I have been grieved.”

Other manuscripts [a b ff² g¹ l r¹ and syr^c read:

“We have been grieved.”

The earlier reading was:

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“Your father and I have been grieved.”

This is the reading even in the Textus Receptus and the King James Bible. Why such variations if not because someone wanted to remove the idea of the Ebionite adoptionist teaching concerning Jesus? When Jesus stayed behind in the temple, his parents did not know it. They assumed that he went to Galilee with their relatives and friends. The original reading was:

“his parents knew it not, ”

but this was changed in other manuscripts to

“Joseph and his mother knew it not.”

The Textus Receptus and the King James Bible are based on this version of Luke.

In the speech of Peter [Acts 2] he stated that Jesus was to come “from the loins of David – clearly implying that through Joseph [the royal line] he would be David's biological descendant. But this was changed to “from the heart of David ” in Codex Bezae it^d. In John 1:13 we read:

“But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ”

Please note the plural “who were born,” implying that all those who are born of God are God's children. But this was later changed in Old Latin manuscript to singular

“

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who was born.
”

This change had to take place before the end of the second century for the Church Father Irenaeus was aware of this and argued that the text referred to Jesus. Tertulian later also argued in favor of the singular rendering in order to counter the Ebionite adoptionist view. In John 1:14 the earlier reading was:

“the word became flesh,” but this was later changed to “God became flesh.” In John 1:18 the earlier reading was “the only begotten son,” but this was later changed to read variously as “the unique God,” “the only begotten God” and “God the only son.”

In John 19:40 we are told that Nicodemus and Joseph wrapped the “body of Jesus.” This was later changed to the
“
body of God
”

[Codex Alexandrinus]. In Luke 2:26 we are told that the Holy Spirit told Simeon that he will not die until he sees the
“
Lord's Christ.
”

Old Latin MS ff
2

changes this to
“

Christ, namely God.
”

In Luke 9:20 Peter acknowledged Jesus as
“

Christ of God,
”

but this was later changed to
“

Christ, God
”

in the Coptic manuscripts. In Mark 3:11 the demon referred to Jesus as
“

Son of God,
”

but this was later changed to
“

God, the Son of God

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”

[MS 69].

In Luke 7 we are told how a Roman centurion went to Jesus in order to ask him to heal his sick servant. In verse 9 we read: “when Jesus heard.” This was changed to “When God heard” [miniscule MS 124]. In Luke 8:28 the demon referred to Jesus as

“

Jesus, Son of God Most High.

”

This was changed to

“

Jesus, the Highest God

”

[MS 2766].

In Luke 20:42 Jesus quotes the words of David: “The LORD said to my Lord.” This was changed to
said to my God

“God

”

[Persian Diatesseron]. In Jude verse 5 we are told that

“

the Lord

“

saved the people from Egypt. This was changed to

“

Jesus

”

in MSS A B 3381 1241 1739 and 1881. In the following MSS C

2

623 and VG

ms

the reading is

“

God.

”

In one manuscript P

72

the reading is

“

the God Christ.

”

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In Galatians 2:20 the earliest reading is:

"...I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"[King James Bible].

This was changed in MSS P⁴⁶ B D F and G to read:

"by the faith of God even Christ."

Miniscule MSS 330 reads:

"by the faith of God."

MS 1985 reads:

"by the faith of God the Son."

In Titus the original reading "through Jesus Christ our Savior" was changed to "through Jesus Christ our God." In Hebrews 13:20 "our Lord Jesus" was changed to "our God Jesus" [MS d]. In Ephesians 3:9 the words "by Jesus Christ" are added later in some manuscripts. Majority of English bibles omit these words as do also Greek manuscripts coded A B C D F G, Syriac, Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, and Itala. These words were added so that the reader would think that Jesus was present with God when the creation took place and that everything was made by Jesus.

The most significant and evil text added to the New Testament is found in 1 John 5:7 – a text

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bolstering the Trinity dogma. This verse was not in any of the Greek manuscripts prior to the fifteenth century. The *Emphatic Diaglott*, p. 803, omitted this text and explains why:

“The received text reads, For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth. This text concerning the heavenly witnesses is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the 15th century. It is not cited by any of the Greek ecclesiastical writers; nor by any of the early Latin fathers, even when the subjects upon which they treat would naturally have led them to appeal to its authority. It is therefore evidently spurious.”

Adam Clarke, himself a trinitarian states in his Clarke’s Commentary, Vol. 6, p. 923, in regards to 1 John 5:7 the following:

“...this verse is not genuine. It is wanting in every MS [manuscript], in this epistle written before the invention of printing [15th century]...It is wanting in both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Ethiopic, the Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonian, etc. In a word, in all the ancient versions but the Vulgate [official version of the Romish Church]; and even of this version many of the most ancient and correct MSS have it not.”

Do you realize what this means? People who lived prior to the fifteenth century simply knew nothing about 1 John 5:7. They never referred to it because they could not refer to something that was not in existence. St. Gregory urged the Roman hierarchy to delete this text since "God does not need our lies" – he said. However, his church most certainly does and consequently on January 13, 1897 Pope Leo XIII forbade anyone to question the authenticity of this text.

Despite the fact that this text is a wicked forgery, many Christians still use it in order to prove their erroneous teaching on Trinity. Moreover, they sternly condemn those who reject this text as scribal interpolation. Even some Bible scholars retain this verse in their translations even though they frankly admit it to be a forgery. J.P. Green retains this verse in his Interlinear Bible, yet in the preface he plainly states that he does not regard this text as true Scripture.