

**Chapter 1 : Manuscript Evidence for the Bible (by Ron Rhodes)**

*The New Testament is constantly under attack, and its reliability and accuracy are often contested by critics. If the critics want to disregard the New Testament, then they must also disregard other ancient writings by Plato, Aristotle, and Homer. This is because the New Testament documents are.*

Perhaps the earliest section of Scripture to survive is a fragment of a papyrus codex containing John Found in Egypt some distance from the probable place of composition in Asia Minor , this little piece of papyrus has forced the critics to place the fourth gospel in the first century, abandoning previous assertions that it could not have been written by the apostle John. This collection of three codices contains most of the New Testament. P45 consists of pieces of 30 leaves of a papyrus codex: It dates from the third century and also contains several apocryphal books. This is the earliest known copy of Luke. Actually, in this collection are some 88 papyri manuscripts of portions of the New Testament, of which the foregoing are merely the most important representatives. The papyri witness to the text is invaluable, dating as far back as the threshold of the second century – within a generation of the autographs original copies penned by the author and including most of the New Testament. All are extant that is, available as manuscript from within the first years after the New Testament itself was written. The Codex Vaticanus is perhaps the oldest codex on parchment or vellum ca. It is one of the most important witnesses to the text of the New Testament. This manuscript of the whole Bible was likely written by the middle of the fourth century; however, it was not known to textual scholars until after , when catalogued in the Vatican Library. Missing are Timothy through Philemon, Hebrews 9: This fourth century Greek manuscript is generally considered the most important witness to the text because of its antiquity, accuracy, and lack of omissions. Integrity of the Manuscript Texts The texts of New Testament manuscripts were not copied and maintained as meticulously as those of the Old Testament. As strange as it may appear, the texts for the Old Testament – especially the oldest books in the Torah – are the very texts likely to be the most accurate when compared to the original. This is because they were recognized as the sacred Word right from the beginning; as a result they were carefully protected and copied by scribes. The New Testament manuscripts, however, were copied by the early Christians. Not all text was immediately acknowledged as Scripture, but also the early Christians were not well-trained scribes. They did not do the extensive error checking like the Masoretes and other Jewish scribes and were under much more time pressure to get the texts reproduced and distributed among the fast growing number of eager disciples of Christ. Errors in copying, mistranslations and some scribal editing and additions to many manuscripts has resulted in numerous variant readings. Some estimated as many as , variant readings. This would leave the text By comparison, he estimated the New Testament is about It is safe to summarize that less than one percent of the New Testament text as we know it today is under competent dispute. No doctrine taught in the Bible depends on the turn of any of these disputes. In the words of Dockery, Mathews and Sloan: Elimination of scribal errors and intentional changes leaves only a small percentage of text about which any questions occur. Although there are certain differences in many of the New Testament manuscripts, not one fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading.

### Chapter 2 : The Qur'an's Manuscript Evidence | Pfander UK

*Manuscript Evidence for the Bible: An Outline Reliability of the New Testament as Historical Documents "Astounding" number of ancient manuscripts extant: 5, Greek manuscripts, 10, Latin and 9, other--totaling over 24, manuscript copies or portions of the New Testament.*

Bultitude Thank you for your clarification. That is exactly how I read the question. Does it prove the Bible is the Word of God? To be completely honest with you, I do not think it proves the point it seeks to prove. First of all, the fact that there are more New Testament manuscripts than any other book from antiquity only proves that very many people were interested in reading it. Further, what the above table does not state is that the manuscripts listed very frequently do not agree with each other. The variations are not simple typographical errors. They are variations wherein entire words or phrases are different. They also are not variations where an older manuscript has different text than a newer manuscript. Manuscripts produced at roughly the same time seem to be no less prone to disagreeing with each other. The Nestle-Aland Greek-English New Testament provides on each page a list of alternate versions of each verse, when applicable. As a representative example, we could consider John 1: According to the apparatus, within this section there is one verse that has 5 different Greek variants, one that has 4 variants, three that have 3 variants, three that have 2 variants, and one that has a single variants: If this sample is representative, it is possible that the number of different New Testament texts which could be constructed from all the various manuscripts is on the order of 1 followed by 8, zeroes. The Old Testament is really not any less subject to textual aberrations. In the Book of Psalms, the editors claim that there are well over such verses. Finally, even if the manuscripts were perfectly consistent, their meanings - even in the original language - can be distorted. Consider, for example, the passage: Since the text in the available manuscripts is unpunctuated, the Nestle-Aland editors need to decide on a punctuation scheme. In this particular case, they chose one that yield the translation: And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice The scheme they chose, however, yields a heretical reading that was recognized and refuted by the Church Fathers. The King James editors made the same error in interpreting the Byzantine text. The correct reading is: And he has given him authority to execute judgment also. That he is the Son of Man, Do not marvel at this: Christians, I believe, have to accept the the Bible is the inspired Word of God by faith and not statistics. But I also believe that much discernment is needed in understanding that Word.

### Chapter 3 : Textual criticism - Wikipedia

*"Manuscript Evidence" does not prove that the Bible is God's word - that is a matter of faith. Apologists use manuscript evidence to prove that the Bible has not changed over time; sceptics also use manuscript evidence to prove that the Bible has changed over time.*

Jump to Questions The Bible is an old book that was compiled over many years. This has led some people to argue that the Bible we have today is inaccurate. Skeptics argue that parts of the Bible have been changed or altered by zealous monks or power hungry priests. Are these criticisms valid? Fortunately, we have three major pieces of evidence at our disposal to help us understand the manuscript issue. It was hand written and from very early on copies were made of the originals. We currently have close to 6, copies in existence that contain all or part of the New Testament. The number of NT manuscripts we have compared to the number of manuscripts for other ancient writings is quite remarkable. For many ancient works, we have under copies. Additionally, the gap in time between the original composition of the NT and the next surviving manuscript is far less for the NT than any other work in Greek literature. The gap for most Greek works from the date it was written to the date of a surviving manuscript is years. And we have a complete copy of the NT that dates from within years of the time of the writing of the NT. These translations give us another 25, copies of the NT, which point us to the original text of the NT. Finally, even without all these manuscripts we could still reconstruct the NT through the writings of the church fathers of the first years of the church. Through commentaries, letters, and sermons, we have over 86, citations of the NT from the early church. If we piece these citations together, we find the same text of the NT that we have today. Even so, we have hundreds of OT manuscripts. The accuracy of our OT manuscripts can be checked by comparing them to the OT manuscripts that were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls in the ss. In addition, Jewish scribes went through painstaking detail to make sure that the manuscripts they copied were accurate. They had complex systems to check the their work, including counting the number of letters and words to make sure no errors had crept in. They would count the number of times a letter appeared in a book. If a manuscript had an error, it was destroyed. It has been preserved for us by God so that we could have his Word in our day. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic. What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you? Have you ever had any one tell you that the Bible is corrupted, or that the translations that we have today are wrong? What evidence did they give you? In your opinion, what is the most powerful piece of evidence for the reliability of the Old Testament? In your opinion, what is the most powerful piece of evidence for the reliability of the New Testament? Write a personal action step based on this conversation.

## Chapter 4 : Mission & Activities

*Manuscript Support for the Bible's Reliability by Ron Rhodes Manuscript Evidence for the New Testament. There are more than 24, partial and complete manuscript copies of the New Testament.*

Can we know for certain that the New Testament has been handed down accurately? King was quick to endorse her "facts. The "telephone" game is often used to demonstrate how reasonable this objection is. Whisper a message to one person and transfer it from person to person, ear to ear, in a circle. The radical transformation of the original phrase in so short a period of time is always good for a few laughs. This comparison is enough to convince the casual skeptic that the New Testament documents are equally unreliable. The argument against the reliability of the New Testament texts can be stated very simply. How can we know that the documents we have in our possession accurately reflect originals destroyed almost two millennia ago? Communication is never perfect; people make mistakes. Errors are compounded with each successive generation, just like the message in the telephone game. Yet offering evidence on its behalf is a bit more difficult. Usually the complaint is raised by people who have little understanding of the real issues. In cases like this, an appeal to common knowledge is more often than not an appeal to common ignorance. When we try to conceptualize how to reconstruct an original after years of copying, translating, and copying some more, the task appears impossible. The skepticism, though, is based on two misconceptions about the transmission of ancient documents like the New Testament. The first assumption is that the transmission is more or less linear, as in the telephone example—“one person communicating to a second, who communicates with a third, etc. In a linear paradigm, people are left with one message and many generations between it and the original. Second, the telephone game example depends on oral transmission, which is more easily distorted and misconstrued than something written. Neither assumption applies to the written text of the New Testament. First, the transmission was not linear but geometric—“e. Secondly, the transmission in question was done in writing, and written manuscripts can be tested in a way that oral communications cannot be. It will help you to see how scholars can confidently reconstruct the text from existing manuscript copies even though the copies themselves have differences and are much younger than the autograph. Pretend your Aunt Sally has a dream in which she learns the recipe for an elixir that would continuously maintain her youth. When she wakes up, she scribbles the directions on a scrap of paper, then runs into the kitchen to make up her first glass. In a few days her appearance is transformed. They, in turn, make copies which each sends to ten of her own friends. Sally is beside herself. In a panic she contacts her three friends who have mysteriously suffered similar mishaps. Their copies are gone, too, so the alarm goes out to their friends in attempt to recover the original wording. They finally round up all the surviving hand-written copies, twenty-six in all. When they spread them out on the kitchen table, they immediately notice some differences. Twenty-three of the copies are exactly the same. One has a misspelled word, though, one has two phrases inverted "mix then chop" instead of "chop then mix" and one includes an ingredient that none of the others has on its list. Here is the critical question: Do you think Aunt Sally can accurately reconstruct her original recipe? Of course she could. The misspelled words can easily be corrected, the single inverted phrase can be repaired, and the extra ingredient can be ignored. Even with more numerous or more diverse variations, the original can still be reconstructed with a high level of confidence given the right textual evidence. This, in simplified form, is how the science of textual criticism works. Textual critics are academics who reconstruct a missing original from existing manuscripts that are generations removed from the autograph. According to New Testament scholar F. Bruce, "Its object [is] to determine as exactly as possible from the available evidence the original words of the documents in question. Textual criticism allows an alert critic to determine the extent of possible corruption of any work. How Many and How Old? The ability of any scholar to do effective textual criticism depends on two factors. First, how many existing copies are there to examine and compare? Are there two copies, ten, a hundred? The more copies there are, the easier it is to make meaningful comparisons. Second, how close in time are the oldest existing documents to the original? If the numbers are few and the time gap is wide, the original is harder to reconstruct with confidence. To get an idea of the significance of the New

Testament manuscript evidence, note for a moment the record for non-biblical texts. These are secular texts from antiquity that have been reconstructed with a high degree of certainty based on the available textual evidence. The important First Century document *The Jewish War*, by Jewish aristocrat and historian Josephus, survives in only nine complete manuscripts dating from the 5th Century—four centuries after they were written. Yet scholars are confident of reconstructing the originals with some significant degree of accuracy. In fact, virtually all of our knowledge of ancient history depends on documents like these. The Biblical Manuscript Evidence

By comparison with secular texts, the manuscript evidence for the New Testament is stunning. The most recent count shows 5, separate Greek manuscripts represented by early fragments, uncial codices manuscripts in capital Greek letters bound together in book form, and minuscules small Greek letters in cursive style! The most fascinating evidence comes from the fragments as opposed to the codices. It dates from A.D. Barely three inches square, it represents the earliest known copy of any part of the New Testament. The papyrus is dated on paleographical grounds at around A.D. Keep in mind that most of the papyri are fragmentary. Only about 50 manuscripts contain the entire New Testament, though most of the other manuscripts contain the four Gospels. Even so, the manuscript textual evidence is exceedingly rich, especially when compared to other works of antiquity. Ancient Versions and Patristic Quotations

Two other cross checks on the accuracy of the manuscripts remain: These texts helped missionaries reach new cultures in their own language as the Gospel spread and the Church grew. In addition, there are ancient extra-biblical sources—characteristically catechisms, lectionaries, and quotes from the church fathers—that record the Scriptures. Paul Barnett says that the "Scriptures New Testament specialist Daniel Wallace notes that although there are about 10,000 individual variations of the text of the New Testament, this number is very misleading. Most of the differences are completely inconsequential—spelling errors, inverted phrases and the like. This means that our New Testament is 99.9% accurate. In the entire text of 200,000 lines, only 40 lines are in doubt about words, and none affects any significant doctrine. Carson sums up this way: Has the New Testament been altered? Critical, academic analysis says it has not. Eerdmans, Baker, Vine Books, Moody Press, Bruce records two existing copies of this document p. Oxford University Press, This number consists of papyri, 2 uncials and minuscule manuscripts.

*Presents arguments for the King James text that have never been refuted, including evidence that the phony "Septuagint" never existed before A.D.*

Name Email Manuscript Evidence for the Bible: These are dated from to years after the originals. There are no original manuscripts ["autographs"] extant, but the number and similarity of copies allows scholars to reconstruct the originals. John Ryland manuscript A. Comparison with other ancient documents available copies versus the originals: Caesarâ€™10 copiesâ€™ year gap Tacitusâ€™20 copiesâ€™ year gap Platoâ€™7 copiesâ€™ year gap F. Ignatius who knew the apostles well referred to six Pauline Epistles in about Irenaeus who apparently heard the apostles quoted from Matthew, John, Acts, and 1 Corinthians in A. Of the four Gospels alone, there are 19, citations by the church fathers from the late first century on. Even if we had no manuscripts, virtually the entire New Testament could be reconstructed from these quotations. This argues powerfully that the Gospels were in existence before the end of the first century, while some eyewitnesses including John were still alive. See Can We Construct? Both liberal and conservative scholars in recent years have moved to the view that ALL of the New Testament was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Liberal scholar John A. Though the Gospels include prophecies of such a destruction, they are prophetic stock-in-trade. These prophecies lack any details that certainly would have been added if written after this important historical event. Substantial other evidences of the New Testament being written between 40 and 60 A. See Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics. Reliability of the Old Testament Jewish scholars performed "unbelievable" care in copying and preserving Scripture. The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in are dated from the third century B. These manuscripts predate by years the previous oldest manuscripts. They represent every Old Testament book except Esther as well as non-biblical writings.

**Chapter 6 : Biblical manuscript - Wikipedia**

*The Bible's Manuscript Evidence Print PDF Unlike the Qur'an, when we consider the New Testament manuscripts (MSS) we are astounded by the sheer numbers of extent copies which are in existence.*

Manuscript Evidence for the New Testament There are more than 24,000 partial and complete manuscript copies of the New Testament. These manuscript copies are very ancient and they are available for inspection now. There are also some 86,000 quotations from the early church fathers and several thousand Lectionaries church-service books containing Scripture quotations used in the early centuries of Christianity. The Variants in the New Testament Manuscripts Are Minimal In the many thousands of manuscript copies we possess of the New Testament, scholars have discovered that there are some 4,000 variants. But to those who study the issue, the numbers are not so damning as it may initially appear. Indeed, a look at the hard evidence shows that the New Testament manuscripts are amazingly accurate and trustworthy. To begin, we must emphasize that out of these 4,000 variants, 99 percent hold virtually no significance whatsoever. Many of these variants simply involve a missing letter in a word; some involve reversing the order of two words such as "Christ Jesus" instead of "Jesus Christ" ; some may involve the absence of one or more insignificant words. Really, when all the facts are put on the table, only about 50 of the variants have any real significance - and even then, no doctrine of the Christian faith or any moral commandment is effected by them. For more than ninety-nine percent of the cases the original text can be reconstructed to a practical certainty. Even in the few cases where some perplexity remains, this does not impinge on the meaning of Scripture to the point of clouding a tenet of the faith or a mandate of life. Thus, in the Bible as we have it and as it is conveyed to us through faithful translations we do have for practical purposes the very Word of God, inasmuch as the manuscripts do convey to us the complete vital truth of the originals. By practicing the science of textual criticism - comparing all the available manuscripts with each other - we can come to an assurance regarding what the original document must have said. Let us suppose we have five manuscript copies of an original document that no longer exists. Each of the manuscript copies are different. Our goal is to compare the manuscript copies and ascertain what the original must have said. Here are the five copies: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole worl. Christ Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. Jesus Christ s the Savior of the whole world. Jesus Christ is th Savior of the whle world. Jesus Christ is the Savor of the whole wrld. Could you, by comparing the manuscript copies, ascertain what the original document said with a high degree of certainty that you are correct? Of course you could. This illustration may be extremely simplistic, but a great majority of the 4,000 variants are solved by the above methodology. By comparing the various manuscripts, all of which contain very minor differences like the above, it becomes fairly clear what the original must have said. Most of the manuscript variations concern matters of spelling, word order, tenses, and the like; no single doctrine is affected by them in any way. We must also emphasize that the sheer volume of manuscripts we possess greatly narrows the margin of doubt regarding what the original biblical document said. If the number of [manuscripts] increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. The New Testament Versus Other Ancient Books By comparing the manuscript support for the Bible with manuscript support for other ancient documents and books, it becomes overwhelmingly clear that no other ancient piece of literature can stand up to the Bible. Manuscript support for the Bible is unparalleled! There are more [New Testament] manuscripts copied with greater accuracy and earlier dating than for any secular classic from antiquity. Rene Pache adds, "The historical books of antiquity have a documentation infinitely less solid. Benjamin Warfield concludes, "If we compare the present state of the text of the New Testament with that of no matter what other ancient work, we must No other book is even a close second to the Bible on either the number or early dating of the copies. The average secular work from antiquity survives on only a handful of manuscripts; the New Testament boasts thousands. The average gap between the original composition and the earliest copy is over 1,000 years for other books. The New Testament, however, has a fragment within one generation from its original composition, whole books within about years

from the time of the autograph [original manuscript], most of the New Testament in less than years, and the entire New Testament within years from the date of its completion. The degree of accuracy of the copies is greater for the New Testament than for other books that can be compared. Most books do not survive with enough manuscripts that make comparison possible. From this documentary evidence, then, it is clear that the New Testament writings are superior to comparable ancient writings. There are also New Testament quotations in thousands of early church Lectionaries worship books. There are enough quotations from the early church fathers that even if we did not have a single copy of the Bible, scholars could still reconstruct all but 11 verses of the entire New Testament from material written within to years from the time of Christ. In fact, in these scrolls discovered at Qumran in , we have Old Testament manuscripts that date about a thousand years earlier B. The significant thing is that when one compares the two sets of manuscripts, it is clear that they are essentially the same, with very few changes. A full copy of the Book of Isaiah was discovered at Qumran. Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known A. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. Combine this with the massive amount of manuscript evidence we have for the New Testament, and it is clear that the Christian Bible is a trustworthy and reliable book. The Dead Sea Scrolls prove that the copyists of biblical manuscripts took great care in going about their work. The scribes carefully counted every line, word, syllable, and letter to ensure accuracy. The fact is, the God who had the power and sovereign control to inspire the Scriptures in the first place is surely going to continue to exercise His power and sovereign control in the preservation of Scripture. By examining how Christ viewed the Old Testament, we see that He had full confidence that the Scriptures He used had been faithfully preserved through the centuries. Because Christ raised no doubts about the adequacy of the Scripture as His contemporaries knew them, we can safely assume that the first-century text of the Old Testament was a wholly adequate representation of the divine word originally given. Jesus regarded the extant copies of His day as so approximate to the originals in their message that He appealed to those copies as authoritative. Hence, the Bible itself indicates that copies can faithfully reflect the original text and therefore function authoritatively. The above article is an example of the quality materials produced by Reasoning from the Scriptures Ministries. Write us for a full listing of other available free resources: Reasoning from the Scriptures Ministries P.

**Chapter 7 : Manuscript Evidence**

*The manuscript evidence tells us that the Bible we have in our hands is the one that was originally written. It hasn't been corrupted. It doesn't have missing books.*

Sigerist Stemmatics or stemmatology is a rigorous approach to textual criticism. Karl Lachmann "greatly contributed to making this method famous, even though he did not invent it. This specific meaning shows the relationships of the surviving witnesses the first known example of such a stemma, albeit with the name, dates from Relations between the lost intermediates are determined by the same process, placing all extant manuscripts in a family tree or stemma codicum descended from a single archetype. The process of constructing the stemma is called recension, or the Latin recensio. If one reading occurs more often than another at the same level of the tree, then the dominant reading is selected. If two competing readings occur equally often, then the editor uses judgment to select the correct reading. The step of examination, or examinatio is applied to find corruptions. Where the editor concludes that the text is corrupt, it is corrected by a process called "emendation", or emendatio also sometimes called divinatio. Emendations not supported by any known source are sometimes called conjectural emendations. The steps of examinatio and emendatio resemble copy-text editing. In fact, the other techniques can be seen as special cases of stemmatics in which a rigorous family history of the text cannot be determined but only approximated. If it seems that one manuscript is by far the best text, then copy text editing is appropriate, and if it seems that a group of manuscripts are good, then eclecticism on that group would be proper. In biology, the technique is used to determine the evolutionary relationships between different species. The manuscripts are then grouped according to their shared characteristics. The difference between phylogenetics and more traditional forms of statistical analysis is that, rather than simply arranging the manuscripts into rough groupings according to their overall similarity, phylogenetics assumes that they are part of a branching family tree and uses that assumption to derive relationships between them. This makes it more like an automated approach to stemmatics. However, where there is a difference, the computer does not attempt to decide which reading is closer to the original text, and so does not indicate which branch of the tree is the "root" which manuscript tradition is closest to the original. Other types of evidence must be used for that purpose. Phylogenetics faces the same difficulty as textual criticism: The same phenomenon is widely present among living organisms, as instances of horizontal gene transfer or lateral gene transfer and genetic recombination , particularly among bacteria. Further exploration of the applicability of the different methods for coping with these problems across both living organisms and textual traditions is a promising area of study. If a scribe refers to more than one source when creating his copy, then the new copy will not clearly fall into a single branch of the family tree. In the stemmatic method, a manuscript that is derived from more than one source is said to be contaminated. The method also assumes that scribes only make new errors they do not attempt to correct the errors of their predecessors. The stemmatic method requires the textual critic to group manuscripts by commonality of error. It is required, therefore, that the critic can distinguish erroneous readings from correct ones. This assumption has often come under attack. Greg noted, "That if a scribe makes a mistake he will inevitably produce nonsense is the tacit and wholly unwarranted assumption. He defended an authenticity of the Pericopa Adulterae John 7: According to him Erasmus in his Novum Instrumentum omne did not incorporate the Comma from Codex Montfortianus , because of grammar differences, but used Complutensian Polyglotta. According to him the Comma was known for Tertullian. But in fact, the critic employs conjecture at every step of the process. For example, where there are more than two witnesses at the same level of the tree, normally the critic will select the dominant reading. However, it may be no more than fortuitous that more witnesses have survived that present a particular reading. A plausible reading that occurs less often may, nevertheless, be the correct one. It does not account for the possibility that the original author may have revised his work, and that the text could have existed at different times in more than one authoritative version. He surveyed editions of medieval French texts that were produced with the stemmatic method, and found that textual critics tended overwhelmingly to produce bifid trees, divided into just two branches. He concluded that

this outcome was unlikely to have occurred by chance, and that therefore, the method was tending to produce bipartite stemmas regardless of the actual history of the witnesses. He suspected that editors tended to favor trees with two branches, as this would maximize the opportunities for editorial judgment as there would be no third branch to "break the tie" whenever the witnesses disagreed. He also noted that, for many works, more than one reasonable stemma could be postulated, suggesting that the method was not as rigorous or as scientific as its proponents had claimed. This makes a Best-text edition essentially a documentary edition. Often, the base text is selected from the oldest manuscript of the text, but in the early days of printing, the copy text was often a manuscript that was at hand. Using the copy-text method, the critic examines the base text and makes corrections called emendations in places where the base text appears wrong to the critic. This can be done by looking for places in the base text that do not make sense or by looking at the text of other witnesses for a superior reading. Close-call decisions are usually resolved in favor of the copy-text. The first published, printed edition of the Greek New Testament was produced by this method. Erasmus, the editor, selected a manuscript from the local Dominican monastery in Basle and corrected its obvious errors by consulting other local manuscripts. The Westcott and Hort text, which was the basis for the Revised Version of the English bible, also used the copy-text method, using the Codex Vaticanus as the base manuscript. McKerrow introduced the term copy-text in his edition of the works of Thomas Nashe, defining it as "the text used in each particular case as the basis of mine. In some cases, McKerrow would choose a later witness, noting that "if an editor has reason to suppose that a certain text embodies later corrections than any other, and at the same time has no ground for disbelieving that these corrections, or some of them at least, are the work of the author, he has no choice but to make that text the basis of his reprint. Greg, "The Rationale of Copy-Text". The true theory is, I contend, that the copy-text should govern generally in the matter of accidentals, but that the choice between substantive readings belongs to the general theory of textual criticism and lies altogether beyond the narrow principle of the copy-text. Thus it may happen that in a critical edition the text rightly chosen as copy may not by any means be the one that supplies most substantive readings in cases of variation. The failure to make this distinction and to apply this principle has naturally led to too close and too general a reliance upon the text chosen as basis for an edition, and there has arisen what may be called the tyranny of the copy-text, a tyranny that has, in my opinion, vitiated much of the best editorial work of the past generation. In such a case, while there can be no logical reason for giving preference to the copy-text, in practice, if there is no reason for altering its reading, the obvious thing seems to be to let it stand. The resulting text, except for the accidentals, is constructed without relying predominantly on any one witness. Greg's Bowers's Tanselle[edit] W. Greg did not live long enough to apply his rationale of copy-text to any actual editions of works. His rationale was adopted and significantly expanded by Fredson Bowers. Starting in the s, G. The principle is sound without regard for the literary period. Citing the example of Nathaniel Hawthorne, he noted: Yet the fallacy is still maintained that since the first edition was proofread by the author, it must represent his final intentions and hence should be chosen as copy-text. Practical experience shows the contrary. When one collates the manuscript of *The House of the Seven Gables* against the first printed edition, one finds an average of ten to fifteen differences per page between the manuscript and the print, many of them consistent alterations from the manuscript system of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and word-division. It would be ridiculous to argue that Hawthorne made approximately three to four thousand small changes in proof, and then wrote the manuscript of *The Blithedale Romance* according to the same system as the manuscript of the *Seven Gables*, a system that he had rejected in proof. Although Melville pronounced the changes an improvement, Tanselle rejected them in his edition, concluding that "there is no evidence, internal or external, to suggest that they are the kinds of changes Melville would have made without pressure from someone else. Crane originally printed the novel privately in To secure commercial publication in , Crane agreed to remove profanity, but he also made stylistic revisions. Firstly, in anticipation of the character of the expected censorship, Crane could be led to undertake alterations which also had literary value in the context of the new version. Secondly, because of the systematic character of the work, purely censorial alterations sparked off further alterations, determined at this stage by literary considerations. Again in consequence of the systemic character of the work, the contamination of the two historical versions in the edited text gives rise to a third

version. Though the editor may indeed give a rational account of his decision at each point on the basis of the documents, nevertheless to aim to produce the ideal text which Crane would have produced in if the publisher had left him complete freedom is to my mind just as unhistorical as the question of how the first World War or the history of the United States would have developed if Germany had not caused the USA to enter the war in by unlimited submarine combat. The nonspecific form of censorship described above is one of the historical conditions under which Crane wrote the second version of *Maggie* and made it function. Indeed I regard the "uninfluenced artistic intentions" of the author as something which exists only in terms of aesthetic abstraction. Between influences on the author and influences on the text are all manner of transitions. If one may think of a work in terms of a spatial metaphor, the first might be labeled "vertical revision," because it moves the work to a different plane, and the second "horizontal revision," because it involves alterations within the same plane. Both produce local changes in active intention; but revisions of the first type appear to be in fulfillment of an altered programmatic intention or to reflect an altered active intention in the work as a whole, whereas those of the second do not. But where a revision is "vertical" i. Format for apparatus[ edit ] Bowers was also influential in defining the form of critical apparatus that should accompany a scholarly edition. In addition to the content of the apparatus, Bowers led a movement to relegate editorial matter to appendices, leaving the critically established text "in the clear", that is, free of any signs of editorial intervention. Tanselle explained the rationale for this approach: Relegating all editorial matter to an appendix and allowing the text to stand by itself serves to emphasize the primacy of the text and permits the reader to confront the literary work without the distraction of editorial comment and to read the work with ease. A second advantage of a clear text is that it is easier to quote from or to reprint. Although no device can insure accuracy of quotation, the insertion of symbols or even footnote numbers into a text places additional difficulties in the way of the quoter. Furthermore, most quotations appear in contexts where symbols are inappropriate; thus when it is necessary to quote from a text which has not been kept clear of apparatus, the burden of producing a clear text of the passage is placed on the quoter. Even footnotes at the bottom of the text pages are open to the same objection, when the question of a photographic reprint arises. As Shillingsburg notes, "English scholarly editions have tended to use notes at the foot of the text page, indicating, tacitly, a greater modesty about the "established" text and drawing attention more forcibly to at least some of the alternative forms of the text". The change of name indicated the shift to a broader agenda than just American authors. The Center also ceased its role in the allocation of funds. Believers in sacred texts and scriptures sometimes are reluctant to accept any form of challenge to what they believe to be divine revelation. Some opponents and polemicists may look for any way to find fault with a particular religious text. Legitimate textual criticism may be resisted by both believers and skeptics. LDS members typically believe the book to be a literal historical record. Although some earlier unpublished studies had been prepared, not until the early s was true textual criticism applied to the Book of Mormon. One aspect of that effort entailed digitizing the text and preparing appropriate footnotes, another aspect required establishing the most dependable text. To that latter end, Stanley R. Larson a Rasmussen graduate student set about applying modern text critical standards to the manuscripts and early editions of the Book of Mormon as his thesis projectâ€”which he completed in

Chapter 8 : Manuscript Evidence: Has the Bible Changed Over the Centuries? | [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)

*The Research Group on Manuscript Evidence, in keeping with the M-MLA's theme of "Consuming Cultures" for its Convention, sponsors a panel on the "Consumption of Manuscripts". After the completion of the Call for Papers, we now announce the Program for the Panel, which will take place on 15 November.*

This not only shows the importance the early Christians gave to preserving their scriptures, but the enormous wealth we have today for early Biblical documentation. What is even more significant however, are the differences in time spans between the original manuscripts and the copies of both the biblical and secular manuscripts. It is well known in historical circles that the closer a document can be found to the event it describes the more credible it is. The time span for the biblical manuscript copies listed above are all within years of the originals, some as early as years and one even purporting to coexist with the original i. This indeed gives enormous authority to the biblical manuscript copies, as no other ancient piece of literature can make such close time comparisons. Because of its importance to our discussion here a special note needs to be given to the Magdalene Manuscript mentioned above. Until two years ago, the oldest assumed manuscript which we possessed was the St. Thus, it was thought that the earliest New Testament manuscript could not be corroborated by eyewitnesses to the events. That assumption has now changed, for three even older manuscripts, one each from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have now been dated earlier than the Johannine account. It is two of these three findings which I believe will completely change the entire focus of the critical debate on the authenticity of the Bible. The Lukan papyrus, situated in a library in Paris has been dated to the late 1st century or early 2nd century, so it predates the John papyrus by years 7. But of more importance are the manuscript findings of Mark and Matthew! New research which has now been uncovered by Dr. Carsten Thiede, and is published in his newly released book on the subject, the Jesus Papyrus mentions a fragment from the book of Mark found among the Qumran scrolls fragment 7Q5 showing that it was written sometime before 68 AD It is important to remember that Christ died in 33 AD, so this manuscript could have been written, at the latest, within 35 years of His death; possibly earlier, and thus during the time that the eyewitnesses to that event were still alive! The most significant find, however, is a manuscript fragment from the book of Matthew chapt. Carsten Thiede, and also written up in his book The Jesus Papyrus. Using a sophisticated analysis of the handwriting of the fragment by employing a special state-of-the-art microscope, he differentiated between 20 separate micrometer layers of the papyrus, measuring the height and depth of the ink as well as the angle of the stylus used by the scribe. That suggests that we either have a portion of the original gospel of Matthew, or an immediate copy which was written while Matthew and the other disciples and eyewitnesses to the events were still alive. This would be the oldest manuscript portion of our Bible in existence today, one which co-exists with the original writers! What is of even more importance is what it says. This is highly significant for our discussion today, because it suggests that the godhead of Jesus was recognised centuries before it was accepted as official church doctrine at the council of Nicea in AD There is still ongoing discussion concerning the exact dating of this manuscript. We have other manuscript evidence for the New Testament as well: Besides the 24, manuscripts we have more than 15, existing copies of the various versions written in the Latin and Syriac Christian Aramaic , some of which were written as early as A. Because Christianity was a missionary faith from its very inception Matthew For that reason other written translations appeared soon after, such as Coptic translations early 3rd and 4th centuries , Armenian A. The fact that we have so many translations of the New Testament points to its authenticity, as it would have been almost impossible, had the disciples or later followers wanted to corrupt or forge its contents, for them to have amassed all of the translations from the outlying areas and changed each one so that there would have been the uniformity which we find witnessed in these translations today. The practice of reading passages from the New Testament books at worship services began from the 6th century, so that today we have 2, lectionaries which have been catalogued from this period If there had been a forgery, they too would have all had to have been changed. But possibly the greatest attestation for the authority of our New Testament are the masses of quotations taken from its pages by the early church fathers. Dean Burgon in his research found in all 86,

quotes from the early church fathers. In fact, there are 32, quotations from the New Testament found in writings from before the council of Nicea in A. Harold Greenlee points out that the quotations of the scripture in the works of the early church writers are so extensive that the New Testament could virtually be reconstructed from them without the use of New Testament manuscripts. Sir David Dalrymple sought to do this, and from the second and third century writings of the church fathers he found the entire New Testament quoted except for eleven verses 14! Thus, we could throw the New Testament manuscripts away and still reconstruct it with the simple help of these letters. Some examples of these are Clement 95 A. Thus the manuscript evidence at our disposal today gives us over 24, manuscripts with which to corroborate our current New Testament. The earliest of these manuscripts have now been dated earlier than A. On top of that we have 15, early translations of the New Testament, and over 2, lectionaries. And finally we have scriptural quotations in the letters of the early Church fathers with which we could almost reproduce the New Testament if we so wished. This indeed is substantial manuscript evidence for the New Testament. We know from the historical record that by the end of the seventh century the Arabs had expanded right across North Africa and up into Spain, and east as far as India. Yet, there is nothing from that period at all. The only manuscripts which Islam provides turn out to have been compiled in the ninth century, while the earliest corroborated manuscript is dated A. While Christianity can claim more than 5, known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, 10, Latin Vulgates and at least 9, other early versions, adding up to over 24, corroborated New Testament manuscripts still in existence 16, most of which were written between years after the death of Christ or between the 1st and 5th centuries 17, Islam cannot provide a single manuscript until well into the eighth century. We know in some cases who wrote them, when exactly they were written and at times even why they were written; and that none of them were from a divine source, as they were written by the most human of Rabbis and storytellers over the intervening centuries after the Bible had been canonized.

**Chapter 9 : Is the New Testament Text Reliable? | Stand to Reason**

*There is an enormous amount of evidence for authenticity of the biblical manuscripts. The New Testament was written in first century A.D. There are some 25, early manuscripts in existence, almost 6, of which (many being only recognizable fragments) are Greek texts and the others being early translations of the Greek New Testament.*

The case in point here is 1 John 5: Here is the text that we are talking about. The words in capital letters are not found in most modern translations. As far as the 1 John 5: He replied that he would include it in his next edition if anyone could produce even one Greek manuscript that included that reading. The KJ translators followed the text of Erasmus. I do not know much about Priscillian except that he was the very first to receive the death penalty for heresy from a "Christian" Emperor. There is empirical evidence as to the existence of the Johannine Comma prior to that date. Some have stated that Erasmus added the Comma reluctantly. Erasmus had been criticized for his earlier editions which did not contain the passage. At length such a copy was found--or was made to order! This statement, however, is in question. Others have shown that Erasmus did not add the verse aversely, but was in fact searching for a Greek text which supported what was already in the Old Latin texts. Brake indicates this in his thesis presented to Dallas Theological Seminary and reprinted in the book *Counterfeit Or Genuine*, edited by Dr. This is further verified by both Dr. Fuller and by Dr. Thomas Holland "While it is argued that the Comma is not in the oldest Greek manuscripts, it should also be remembered that none of the papyri manuscripts contain 1 John chapter 5 except for P74 of the seventh century, which only contains verses , , and Of the eleven uncial manuscripts which contain 1 John and omit the Comma , seven come from the ninth and tenth centuries. The remaining four come from the fourth and fifth centuries. This information tells us that the majority of Greek manuscripts, which do not contain the Comma, likewise are of later dates. Further, we note that there is evidence for the Comma in Latin long before the fourth century. The external evidence, therefore, is not as weak as some would have us believe. There are at least four evidences that convince us of the validity of 1 John 5: Here is 1 John 5: Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus sanctus: Et tres sunt, qui testimonium dant in terra: Spiritus, et aqua, et sanguis: Waite lists 10 other Greek MSS that are unconfirmed as yet. These had the earliest of connections with the church in Asia Minor and Syria, and could easily verify their translation with the Received Text of those churches. After an honest study of the history of the Waldenses it cannot be denied that they were the people of God. Their Apostolic connection, their doctrinal beliefs, their evangelization of Europe, and their stand for the Truth in the face of the greatest of persecution are all traits and proof that they were the true church of God in those dark days. They earnestly contended for the Faith, including 1 John 1: Armitage 2 Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria d. The Greek or Eastern Church was completely given over to that heresy from the reign of Constantine to that of Theodosius the Elder, a span of at least forty years c. Conversely, the Western Church remained uncorrupted by the Arian heresy during this period. Thus the disputed verse was originally suppressed, not gradually introduced into the Latin translation. After the Vandals over-ran the African provinces, their King Hunnerich summoned the bishops of the African Church and the adjacent isles to deliberate on the doctrine bound within the disputed passage. Between three to four hundred prelates attended the Council at Carthage while Eugenius, as bishop of that See, drew up the Confession of the orthodox in which the contested 7th verse is expressly quoted. That the entire African Church assembled in council should have concurred in quoting a verse which was not contained in the original text is altogether inconceivable. Such loudly proclaims that the 7th verse was part of its text from the beginning. The nouns spirit, water and blood in v. Traditional Text Society Dr. Frederick Nolan is quick to point out that the verse as preserved in the Latin manuscripts is consistent and full whereas the Greek is internally defective grammatically Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. Textus Receptus reading of 1 John 5: The omitted words are capitalized: The words spirit, water, and blood are neuter in gender, but in 1 John 5: If the Johannine comma is rejected, it is hard to explain this irregularity. It is usually said that in 1 John 5: But it is hard to see how such personalization would involve the change from the neuter to the masculine. Surely in this verse the word Spirit is "personalized," and yet the neuter gender is used. Therefore since personalization did not bring about a change of gender in verse 6, it

cannot fairly be pleaded as the reason for such a change in verse 8. If, however, the Johannine comma is retained, a reason for placing the neuter nouns spirit, water, and blood in the masculine gender becomes readily apparent. It was due to the influence of the nouns Father and Word, which are masculine. Thus the hypothesis that the Johannine comma is an interpolation is full of difficulties. The Greek language has "gender" in its noun endings as do many other languages. Neuter nouns normally require neuter articles the word "the" as in "the blood" is the article. Thus the new translations read "the Spirit neuter , the water neuter , and the blood neuter: If the "Comma" is rejected it is impossible to adequately explain this irregularity. In addition, without the "Comma" verse 7 has a masculine antecedent; three neuter subjects nouns in vs. Viewing the complete passage it becomes apparent how this rule of grammar is violated when the words are omitted. The phrase in verse 8, *to pneuma, kai to udor, kai to aima* the Spirit, and the water, and the blood , are all neuter nouns. They are, however, contiguous with the phrase, *oi marturountes* who bare witness which stands in the masculine as does the Greek word for three, *treis*. The proper grammatical explanation for this, mixing the neuter and the masculine, is that the parallel is introduced in verse 7. There we find the phrase, *o Pater, o Logos, kai to Agion Pneuma* the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost which are masculine nouns with the exception of the Holy Ghost, which stands in the neuter. This would allow for the masculine *oi marturountes* since the clause contains two masculine nouns. If, on the other hand, the masculine nouns of verse 7 are removed we are at a loss as to why the masculine is used in verse 8. Therefore, the inclusion of the Comma is not only proper theology, it is proper Greek. The usual formula, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost " would have been assuredly used by a forger. Why does it exhibit the singular combination not seen anywhere else in scripture by the use of "Word" instead of "Son"? It is quite unlikely that he would abandon the time-honored formula and invent an entirely new one. Prov 30, Amos 1: It is in accord with Biblical usage, therefore, to expect that in 1 John 5, the formula "there are three that bear witness" will be repeated at least twice cf. It shows His Deity and Unity in the Godhead. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Our confidence in Word of God must ultimately rest upon the truth of the Providential Preservation of Holy Scripture, a truth taught in the Bible itself. This authentic text may not at every point be found in a majority of surviving manuscripts. They cut I John 5: But what man cuts out God can put back in. They pulled a King Jehoiakim Read Jeremiah The same thing has happened with I John 5: The Comma passes this test. There is consent Latin witness throughout history, as well as several Greek witnesses. There are various witnesses i. MSS, versions, Fathers, lectionaries, etc. Africa, Italy, Asia which qualifies the Comma. Tertullian, the Waldenses, Cyprian, and the orthodox African writers are all credible. The reading appears consistently throughout history from AD to The manuscripts, circumstances and many of the people of the opposing side are suspicious or not credible altogether. The elementary Greek grammar is deficient without 1 John 5: The so called Comma passes again! The fact that Stephens, Beza, and the Elzevirs retained the Pericope, despite the reluctance of Erasmus to include it, is not without significance. The learned Lutheran text critic J. Bengel "Gnomon", published in also convincingly defended its inclusion as did Hills in this century. The hard fact is that, by the providence of God, the Johannine comma obtained and retained a place in the Textus Receptus. We emphatically declare that the most extreme caution should be exercised in questioning its right to that place.