

From The 1st Century To Your English Bible....

How Do You Know Your Bible Is Reliable?

Hasn't It Been Translated So Many Times That It's Unreliable?

After Centuries of Hand Copying, How Can We Be Sure Of What It Actually Says?

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Evidence Supporting The NT Greek Text Used To Translate Modern Bibles

The New Testament was originally copied onto papyrus, an early form of paper. After Christianity became legal, it became more common for the New Testament books to be copied on leather which survives better... never the less, we do have some manuscript evidence from before 300AD.

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

NT Manuscripts in Greek: Well over 5,000 Greek Manuscripts, made before printing (about 1500AD) have been discovered

Undisputed Papyrus Fragments:

P52 – John 18:31-33 - About 125AD – 35-60 years after the original

P90 and P104 – John 18:36-19:7 – 100-200AD – 10-110 years after the original

Papyrus P98 – Rev. 1:13-20 – 100-200AD - 10-110 years after the original

Additionally, there are another eight manuscripts that MAY date to before 200AD

Source: <https://biblearchaeologyreport.com/2019/02/15/the-earliest-new-testament-manuscripts/>

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Disputed Fragment:

Some believe that fragments of Mark 6:52-53 have been found at Qumran. **If true, this would definitely date Mark before 70AD** (likely well before). We can only hope that time will result in more evidence being found at Qumran.

Source:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Mark-Qumran-fragments>

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Complete New Testaments in Greek are written on leather and date from the mid-300s AD:



Codex Sinaiticus About 350AD

(Includes All Our Current NT Books)

<https://codexsinaiticus.org/en/>

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

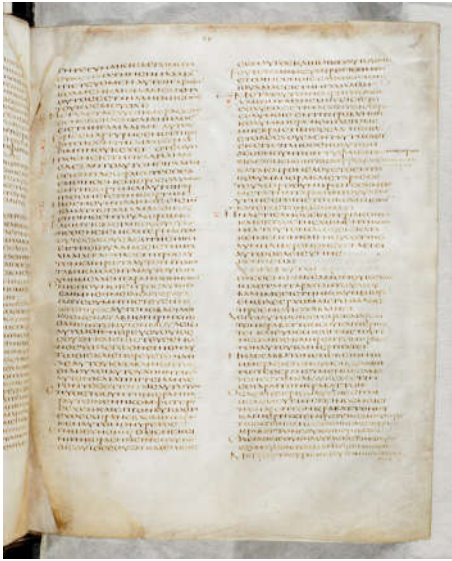


Codex Vaticanus About 350AD

Lacks some passages. Some of these include the Book of Philemon, Revelation, passages of Hebrews, among others.

(See <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-codex-vaticanus.html>)

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text



Codex Alexandrinus About 400-500AD

(See

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/codex-alexandrinus>)

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

There Are Well Over 5,600 Greek Manuscripts From Before Printing!

For Comparison, Other Ancient Works Only Have, At Most, A Few Hundred Manuscripts and Fragments – Often Only A Few Dozen....

In Addition, The Gap Between Writing And Earliest Extant Manuscript Is No Less Than 500 years – Often Much More
(See: <https://seanmcdowell.org/blog/what-is-the-most-recent-manuscript-count-for-the-new-testament>)

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Work	Date Written	Earliest Copy/Fragment	Gap
Pliny (Younger)	61-113AD	850AD	750 yrs
Plato	427-347BC	900AD	1200 yrs
Caesar	100-44BC	900AD	1000 yrs
Tacitus	100AD	1100AD	1000 yrs
Aristotle	384-322BC	1100AD	1400 yrs
Homer (Iliad)	900BC	400BC	500 yrs
New Testament	40-90AD	125AD	35-50 yrs

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Translation

Date

Old Latin version

150-200AD

Coptic versions

Likely Before 300AD

The Ethiopic version

No later than the 400s

The Georgian version

400s AD

The Gothic version

Mid 400s

The Vulgate

About 400AD

(Latin Translation Used in the Western Catholic Church to this day)

Manuscripts of these and other early translations total over 18,130!

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

The Didache – 75-150AD (Very close to NT)

Early Church manual on instruction and Baptism of Converts, as well as Christian living in Roman times.

Quotes or paraphrases extensively from NT including the Lord's Prayer from Matthew. Including passages from Matthew, Luke, John and 1 John....

<https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/blog/the-didache-and-the-bible>

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/904/the-didache-a-moral-and-liturgical-document-of-ins/>

Evidence Supporting The New Testament Greek Text

Early Church Fathers (Before 300AD)

Over 12,000 quotations by the Early Church Fathers (before Constantine legalized Christianity in the early 300s). Estimated half of NT verses.

Hyperlinks to all of these quotations can be found here:

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/e-catenal/>

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament

Before We Look At The Archaeological Evidence, We Need To Address An Unfair Tactic:

”There Is No Archaeological Evidence For “X” (A NT Passage) Therefore X Never Happened And The NT Is False.”

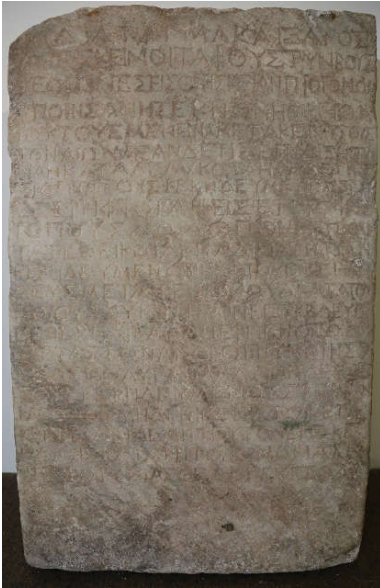
Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament

What Is The Problem With This Argument?

The Absence Of Evidence Is Not Evidence Of Absence!

Furthermore, We Must Ask, “Should We Expect Evidence To Have Survived?”

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament



Date: AD 41-54

Place Judea

Bible Passage: Matthew 28:11-15

The text specifically prohibits the moving or stealing of bodies from stone-sealed tombs with “wicked intent,” compares it to an offense against the gods, and imposes an extreme new penalty of death for the crime. Confirms "cover story" in Matthew.

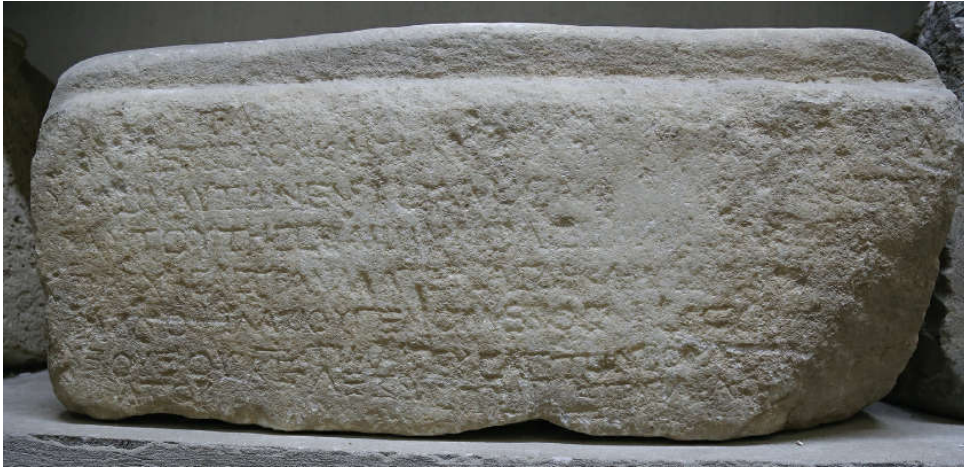
Kennedy, Titus M. *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life* (pp. 200-201). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament

They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. Acts 13:6-7 (NIV)

When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. Acts 13:12 (NIV)

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament



Kennedy, Titus M. *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life* (p. 206). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

A Roman period monumental stone in a location north of the ancient capital city of Paphos, mentions the governor Paulus who served in the position of proconsul during part of the reign of Emperor Claudius.

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament

He (Paul) sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer. Acts 19:22 (NIV)

Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. Rom 16:23b (NIV)

Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. 2 Tim 4:20 (NIV)

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament

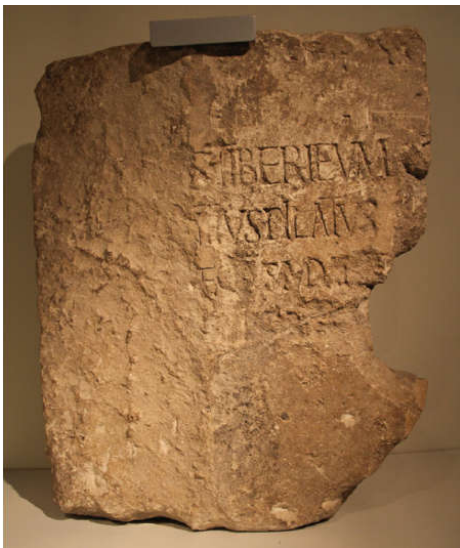


Date: AD 50
Discovered:
Corinth, Greece -1929

During excavations at Corinth in 1929, archaeologists found a rectangular pavement stone with a Latin inscription. It translates as “Erastus in return for his appointment as Director of Public Works paved it at his own expense”

Kennedy, Titus M. *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life* (p. 219). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament



Date: AD 26–36
Discovered: Caesarea, Israel - 1961

Skeptics used to say there was no archaeological evidence for the existence of Pontius Pilate, until this stone was discovered. the inscription reads:

“Tiberium, Pontius Pilatus, Prefect of Judaea... dedicated.”

Kennedy, Titus M. *Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life* (p. 191). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament



Date: 1st century AD
**Discovered: Givat Ha Mivtar,
Jerusalem 1968**

Skeptics also used to say that there was no evidence from archaeology that crucifixion victims bodies were released for burial - not anymore. That is the heel bone, nail still in it. We even know his name:
"Jehohanan the son of Hagkol"

Kennedy, Titus M. Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life (p. 195). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Archaeological Evidence Supporting The New Testament



Date: AD 90–200
Discovered: 1857
Palatine Hill, Rome

Translation:
**"Alexamenos
worships [his]
god,"**

Kennedy, Titus M. Unearthing the Bible: 101 Archaeological Discoveries That Bring the Bible to Life (p. 196). Harvest House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

Tacitus, the Greatest Roman Historian Wrote (Abt. 70AD):

"Therefore, to stop the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits and punished in the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue."

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

What Does This Confirm?

- 1 - Christians are named after their founder, Christus.**
- 2 - Christus died by the death penalty during Emperor Tiberius' reign (AD 14-37).**
- 3 - Pontius Pilatus, procurator (AD 26-36), sentenced Christus to death.**
- 4 - Christus' death ended the "pernicious superstition" for only a short time.**
- 5 - The "pernicious superstition" broke out once more in Judea, the "home of the disease."**
- 6 -The "disease" spread all the way to Rome and had a large enough following to receive blame for the great fire.**

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

Pliny The Younger (112AD):

“They were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food—but food of an ordinary and innocent kind.”

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

What Does This Confirm:

- 1 - Christians met on a “certain fixed day, before it was light”**
- 2 - They also “sang...a hymn to Christ, as to a God”**
- 3 - They were committed to moral living**
- 4 - They shared a common meal (Holy Communion)**

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

Lucian of Samosata (2nd century Greek satirist):
"The Christians ... worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account.... [It] was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws."

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

What This Confirms:

- 1 - Christians worshiped Christ as God**
- 2 - Their beliefs were "different"**
- 3 - Treated each other as brother and sisters**
- 4 - Did not worship Greek/Roman gods**
- 5 - Christ was crucified**

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

Mara Bar-Serapion (Stoic philosopher) (70-200AD):
"What benefit did the Athenians obtain by putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as judgment for their crime. Or, the people of Samos for burning Pythagoras? In one moment their country was covered with sand. Or the Jews by murdering their wise king?...After that their kingdom was abolished. God rightly avenged these men...The wise king...Lived on in the teachings he enacted."

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

What Does This Confirm:

- 1 - The Jewish Leadership Participated In Death Of Jesus**
- 2 - Jesus is regarded as "King" by some**
- 3 - His teachings endured**

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

Flavius Josephus (1st Century Jewish/Roman Historian) - Most Reliable Manuscript (Preserved By Muslims!) Reads:

“At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

<https://www.carm.org/evidence-and-answers/regarding-the-quotes-from-the-historian-josephus-about-jesus/>

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

What Does This Confirm?

- 1 - Jesus was a real person**
- 2 - Lived a virtuous life**
- 3 - Sentenced by Pilate**
- 4 - Was crucified**
- 5 - Disciples remained faithful**
- 6 - Disciples claimed He had risen**
- 7 - Claimed to be Messiah (implied)**

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

The Jewish Talmud:

Shabbath 104B: “Jesus was a magician and a fool. Mary was an adulteress.”

- 1 - Confirms Jesus supernatural signs**
- 2 - Supports the Virgin Birth**

<https://www.equip.org/articles/the-jewish-talmud-and-its-use-for-christian-apologetics/>

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

The Jewish Talmud:

Sanhedrin 107B of the Babylonian Talmud: “Jesus [“Yeshu” in the Talmud] stood up a brick to symbolize an idol and bowed down to it. Jesus performed magic and incited the people of Israel and led them astray.”

- 1 - Confirms Jesus supernatural signs**
- 2 - Taught in opposition to Jewish leaders**

<https://www.equip.org/articles/the-jewish-talmud-and-its-use-for-christian-apologetics/>

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

The Jewish Talmud:

Sanhedrin 43A: “On Passover Eve they hanged Jesus [“Yeshu” in the Talmud] of Nazareth. He practiced sorcery, incited and led Israel astray.... Was Jesus of Nazareth deserving of a search for an argument in his favor? He was an enticer and the Torah says, ‘You shall not spare, nor shall you conceal him!’”

Evidence From Jewish And Roman Sources

- 1 - Confirms Crucifixion**
- 2 - Confirms its' time**
- 3 - Confirms He was from Nazareth**
- 4 - Implies that He did not present a defense**

<https://www.equip.org/articles/the-jewish-talmud-and-its-use-for-christian-apologetics/>

New Testament Textual Variants

**There Are MANY Textual Variants
(Differences In Manuscripts)
(Tens of Thousands)**

**Given Hand Copying Over Hundreds Of Years
This Should Be Expected!**

**The More Copies You Make By Hand, The
More Mistakes Will Be Made!**

New Testament Textual Variants



**Before printing
all documents
had to be hand
copied.**

**In most cases
monks would
make single
copies from one
example.**

New Testament Textual Variants



Although the monks tried to be very careful, mistakes did happen – most involved writing a word twice, or omitting a word, or misspelling a word (80% of errors are misspellings).

New Testament Textual Variants



In other cases, a pronoun would be substituted for a name. In other cases “Lord” might be substituted for “Jesus”.

New Testament Textual Variants



Another easy mistake would be to insert text from one Gospel into another because the text was in memory and the verses are similar.

New Testament Textual Variants



In other cases, one monk would read the text to several other monks who would write out the text.

In this method, the danger is that a word that sounds similar may be substituted.

New Testament Textual Variants

As A Result, Nearly All Are Differences In Spelling, Dropped Words, Double Words, Pronoun Substitutions, Words That Sound Like Other Words Or Similar Obvious Copying Mistakes.

If A Word Is Misspelled The Same Obvious Way 2,000 Times Every One Is Counted As A Single “Variant”

New Testament Textual Variants

So, if someone asks you about thousands of “errors” in the New Testament manuscripts, you can first confidently reply that they vast majority are obvious and easily corrected.

What About The Variants That Remain?

What About Them?



New Testament Textual Variants

All These Manuscript Variations Have Been Identified And Cataloged.

No One Is Trying To Hide Them!

The Significant Ones Are All Footnoted In Your Bible!

New Testament Textual Variants

There are a very few variants that involve multiple verses.

None affect any core doctrine of the Christian Faith!

However, it is good to know about them.

New Testament Textual Variants

Example:

Matt 6:13 (NIV) "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Footnote: Some late manuscripts, *"for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

Does this effect Christian doctrine?

New Testament Textual Variants

Now For The Big Ones...

John 7:53-8:11 – The Story Of The Woman Caught In Adultery.....

The NIV brackets the passage and adds this note in the text: "The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11"

Is anyone trying to hide this?

New Testament Textual Variants

Not in ANY very early manuscript

Does not match John's style of writing

Is sometimes found appended to the end of Luke 21

May be an authentic story of Jesus that circulated in the early Church, but was not incorporated into any of the Gospels.

New Testament Textual Variants

This IS NOT a new issue – it has been known since at least the 300s

Saint Augustine, considered to be one of the greatest theologians of all time, was well aware of the issue in the late 300s, as were other Church Fathers of the same era.

He wrote: "Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if he who had said, Sin no more, had granted permission to sin."

New Testament Textual Variants

By the 900s many manuscripts include it, but mark it as questionable, just like the NIV does today

The passage was present without such notes in the very limited (less than 50) late manuscripts used to translate the KJV in 1620, thus it was included without any notation.

An excellent, heavily notated article on the passage can be found here:

<https://www.notjustanotherbook.com/disputedjohn.htm>

New Testament Textual Variants

Mark 16:9-20 is missing from SOME early manuscripts.

The NIV again brackets the passage with the same note: “The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20”

New Testament Textual Variants

Bruce Metzger, the modern era foremost expert on the NT text...

Concerning evidence from the early Church Fathers: “Clement of Alexandria (150AD-215AD) and Origen (185AD-253AD) show no knowledge of the existence of these verses; furthermore Eusebius (260AD-339AD) and Jerome (342AD-420AD) attest that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them”

New Testament Textual Variants

Metzger also states: “The last twelve verses of the commonly received text of Mark are absent from the two oldest Greek manuscripts, from the Old Latin codex Bezae Cantabrigiae, the Sinaitic Syriac manuscript, about one hundred Armenian manuscripts, and the two oldest Georgian manuscripts (written a.d. 897 and a.d. 913).”

Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 2nd edition, (Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), p123

New Testament Textual Variants

Writing style is different from the rest of Mark.

Not quoted by the early Church Fathers.

Likely not in the original.

There may very well have been a longer ending to Mark which has been lost.

No critical doctrine affected one way or the other.

New Testament Textual Variants

Finding these insertions proves that we can and will expose insertions into the New Testament text.

No doctrine is affected by this text one way or the other.

An insertion that did attempt to change doctrine would be obvious, as it would conflict with other passages.

New Testament Textual Variants

The Evidence Is Clear: The Text Of The New Testament Has Not Been Altered In Any Significant Way....

....Our Current Greek Text Is Extremely Accurate And Highly Reliable.

New Testament Textual Variants

OK, we know about the variants in the text – but how do we get back to what the original said, so we can translate it into English or other languages?

Translating The New Testament

Today's Greek New Testament

Today's standard Greek text was prepared by a committee of scholars from a variety of religious positions. These scholars produced the text by comparing thousands of manuscripts, correcting obvious mistakes and footnoting major textual variants. It is used worldwide by Protestants and Catholics, liberals and conservatives, scholars and pastors (though other Greek texts do exist and are favored by some scholars).

Translating The New Testament

**United Bible Societies Greek New Testament
Was Used In Translating:**

NIV - NASB - ESV - NCV - NLT - REB

And Many More..... In Countless Languages.

**Note: The NKJV Gives Preference To Different
Greek Texts, While Referencing the UBS**

Translating The New Testament

Why So Many Translations????

**(Or If The King James Version Was Good
Enough For The Apostle Paul, Why Isn't It
Good Enough For Us?)**

Translating The New Testament

The English Language Changes Over Time

Many words used in the KJV are seldom used today, others have totally different meanings. For instance:

<u>Word</u>	<u>KJV Meaning</u>	<u>Current Meaning</u>
Kill	Murder	To Take A Life Animal Or Human
Let	To cause or order	To Passively Allow

Translating The New Testament

We Have A Much Better Grasp Of Biblical (Koine) Greek

The New Testament is not written in “high” or Classical Greek.

Before the mid-1800s, outside of the New Testament and the translation of the Old Testament into Koine Greek (Septuagint), we had very few examples of the language.

Some even speculated that the NT was written in a special “Holy Ghost” Greek used only in the NT.

Translating The New Testament

We Have A Much Better Grasp Of Biblical (Koine) Greek

The Problem is that there are hundreds of Greek words that are used just once in the New Testament.

This makes it hard to precisely understand the meaning of these words.

Source: <https://ia600500.us.archive.org/14/items/cu31924029294588/cu31924029294588.pdf>

Translating The New Testament

We Have A Much Better Grasp Of Biblical (Koine) Greek

In the mid-1880s to early 1900s many more documents written in Koine Greek were discovered. In addition to proving that the NT was written in the common language of the day, these documents – everything from legal contracts to shopping lists – provided a much better understanding of the meaning of Koine Greek words and phrases – and enable a more precise understanding of words used only once or twice in the NT.

<https://place.asburyseminary.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2159&context=ecommonsatsdissertations>

Translating The New Testament

Why So Many Translations????

Better Greek Manuscripts

The KJV translators only had access to about 50 Greek manuscripts - even indirectly through printed Greek versions. Today, translators have access to a much more accurate Greek text.

Translating The New Testament

Why So Many Translations????

Differences In Reading Level

Version	Target
CEV	Grade School Reading Level, second language readers
NIV	7th Grade Reading Level International English Speakers
NASB	11th Grade Reading Level
NLT	6th Grade Reading Level
ESV	10th Grade Reading Level
NKJV	7th Grade Reading Level
KJV	12th Grade Reading Level Required

Translating The New Testament

What About Paraphrases?

A translation attempts to tell the reader what the original text says, a paraphrase attempts to tell the reader what the passage means. Therefore, a paraphrase is more of a commentary on the text of Scripture than it is an accurate rendering of what the text actually says. A paraphrase can be very readable.

Translating The New Testament

Translation Method

Formal equivalence: word-for-word translation (translating the meanings of words and phrases in a more literal way), keeping literal fidelity.

Dynamic equivalence: sense-for-sense translation (translating the meanings of phrases or whole sentences) with readability in mind.

Translating The New Testament

Version	Method
NIV	Dynamic Equivalence
NASB	Formal Equivalence
CEV	Dynamic Equivalence/Paraphrase
NLT	Dynamic Equivalence
ESV	Formal Equivalence
NKJV	Formal Equivalence

In Reality All Translations Use A Mix Of Both Methods - A Word For Word Translation Would Be Unreadable.

Translating The New Testament

Which Is A More Accurate Translation Of The Spanish Phrase:

"Me estás quitando el pelo"

**"You Are Taking My Hair Off"
Or "You Are Pulling My Leg"?**

The Point: Literal Does Not Always Equal More Accurate.

Inspiration Of The New Testament

We Do Not Believe That:

Any Translation Is Inspired By God

Or Translations Are Perfect – Without Error

Or That Our Manuscripts Are Without ANY Error

Inspiration Of The New Testament

We DO Believe That:

Our NT Greek Text Is Extremely Reliable, To The Point Of Being NEARLY PERFECT

Common/Popular English Translations Are EXTREMELY RELIABLE. All are done by committees of scholars, not individuals.

The New Testament “Canon”

Who Decided What Books Were Included In The New Testament?

Emperor Constantine?

A Pope?

A Church Conference?

None Of The Above?

The New Testament “Canon”

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. - John 16:13 (NIV)

The early church saw this verse as a promise that those Apostles – a qualification of which was to have seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:21-22) – as having guidance and authority to write Scripture. After they died, no more NT Scripture could be written.

The New Testament “Canon”

Thus it was the writings of the Apostles – or writings done under their supervision and approved by them – that were considered “Scripture”, and treated as such.

(This DOES NOT mean that, as we do today, they did not have other valuable writings that were not considered Scripture – such as the writings of the Church Fathers.)

The New Testament “Canon”

We actually see this standard applied by Peter, to Paul’s writings:

Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. 2 Pet 3:15-16 (NIV)

The New Testament “Canon”

**THIS IS WHY FALSE GOSPELS AND LETTERS
ALMOST ALWAYS CLAIMED TO BE WRITTEN BY
AN APOSTLE!
(Even those written hundreds of years later!)**

The New Testament “Canon”

We frequently forget that many copies of the NT Books, originally authenticated by the receiving congregation, were circulating by the end of the first century.

Therefore, although there was no official list, some books were widely accepted as authentic.

The early Church appears to have been very careful concerning what they accepted as Scripture, tending to error on the side of caution.

The New Testament “Canon”

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Col 4:16 (NIV)

Here we see an example of exactly this – Apostolic works circulating between churches – and, sadly, we do not have a copy of the letter to the Laodiceans...

The New Testament “Canon”

If an unbeliever – knowing nothing about Christianity – were simply to sit in our church how would they come to know what we consider to be authoritative?

Answer: By what the Pastor quotes as authoritative.

We can apply the same method to the early church. We can figure out what they considered to be Scripture, by looking at what they quoted as such. Remember, they quote the NT thousands of times.

The New Testament “Canon”

This Is EXACTLY What We See In The Writings Of The Early Church Fathers:

Polycarp of Smyrna (70-155AD) (Disciple of the Apostle John)

In his surviving writings, he quotes 17 of the 27 NT books as inspired.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Irenaeus of Lyons (120/140- 200/203AD) (Student of Polycarp)

In his surviving writings, he quotes every NT Book except Philemon, II Peter, III John, and Jude.

Considered I Clement and Shepherd of Hermas as having value.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

**Tertullian of Carthage (155/160-220AD?)
(First To Use The Word “Trinity” To Describe God)**

In his surviving writings, he quotes every Book of the NT, except II Peter, James, II John, and III John as inspired Scripture.

He considered Shepherd of Hermas as being valuable.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Clement of Alexandria (Wrote 180-200AD)

Quotes every NT Book except Philemon, James, II Peter, II John, and III John.

Considered some other Christian writings as “of value”, but not Scripture.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Origen (185-253AD) (Disciple of Clement of Alexandria)

Had reservations about: James, II Peter, II John, and III John – accepted all other NT books as inspired.

He is perhaps the most controversial of the Church Fathers.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

The Bibles of Constantine (322AD)

Emperor Constantine, directed Eusebius to have 50 copies of the Scriptures made by practiced scribes and written legibly on prepared parchment.

There is ZERO evidence that Constantine selected the books – in fact the issuance of the formal NT Canon 60 years later, indicates that there was no official list before that time.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

About 330AD - Eusebius of Caesarea

A highly respected church historian, he lists 22 of our NT books as “universally accepted” with the remaining 5 being accepted by the majority as authentic

Effectively affirming the 27 Book Canon we use today within 18 years of persecution ending.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Didymus the Blind (313-398AD)

Didymus the blind was a celebrated head of the theological school at Alexandria. Although he was a layman and had become blind at the age of 4, he memorized great sections of the scriptures and, by means of secretaries, dictated numerous Biblical works.

Quotes every NT Book except Philemon, II John, and III John.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria (293-373AD)

Lists NT canon of 27 books appears in the “39th Festal Letter of Athanasius”, issued 367AD.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Council of Rome (382AD)

Those present affirmed the 27 Books listed by Eusebius 50 years before. They did not create a list from scratch.

The fact that this issue was not addressed for at least 50 years is a strong indication that it was not controversial – as is the lack of documented controversy.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

The New Testament “Canon”

Jerome (345-420AD)

In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome, the leading biblical scholar of his day, to produce an acceptable Latin translation of the Bible from the several divergent translations then in use. Included the present 27 Books, as Jerome states in his writings.

The NT Canon has not changed since.

Source: <http://www.ntcanon.org/>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Simple Answer: They All Failed To Meet The Requirements!

They Were Not Written By, Or Under The Immediate Supervision Of, An Apostle.

<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2016/why-were-some-books-left-out-of-the-bible>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

About a couple of false accusations you will encounter:

No books were “taken out” at the council of Nicaea in 325AD!

No books were “taken out” by Constantine either!

As we have seen, the Church was very careful concerning books they included and by 300AD a strong consensus had developed over about 250 years.

<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2016/why-were-some-books-left-out-of-the-bible>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Some works were accepted as being orthodox, useful, but not inspired scripture.

Examples:

Didache (~70 AD)

I Clement (To the Corinthians) (95-96 AD)

Shepherd of Hermas (mid-2nd century AD)

All of the writings of the Church Fathers

<https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2016/why-were-some-books-left-out-of-the-bible>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Other works were rejected as being fraudulent – especially “Gospels”

Examples:

The Gospel Of Thomas

The Gospel Of Peter

The Gospel Of Mary

The Gospel Of Judas

See this for more: <https://www.josh.org/lost-gospels-dont-belong-bible/>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Why did the church as a whole reject such Gospels?

They recognized that the doctrine taught conflicted with known authentic Gospels.

(If someone wrote a Biography of Lincoln, supposedly written by a close associate, in which he claimed to be a space alien.... How many people would believe it?)

See this for more: <https://www.josh.org/lost-gospels-dont-belong-bible/>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Why did the church as a whole reject such Gospels?

They saw that the authors were ignorant of 1st Century Jewish customs. If you are a Gentile Gnostic writing a phony Gospel 100-150 years after Jesus, you probably wouldn't know much about the Jewish culture of 100 years before.

(Again, thinking of that Lincoln biography, what would it indicate if it said that presidents were elected by Congress and that slavery was widespread in the North?)

See this for more: <https://www.josh.org/lost-gospels-dont-belong-bible/>

Why Were Some Books Not Included In The New Testament?

Why did the church as a whole reject such Gospels?

They had no history of knowledge or use in the Church.

(If someone wrote a Biography of Lincoln, supposedly written by a close associate – in their lifetime – and they were to present it today – what would be the first question? How about: Where has it been for 160 years????!!!!)

See this for more: <https://www.josh.org/lost-gospels-dont-belong-bible/>

**The New Testament In Your Bible Is An
Extremely Accurate Translation Of Very
Reliable Texts Of The Original Texts**