

### *Part 1: Identifying the Authority*

**Note:** If you already recognize that the correct final authority of Christians is the New Testament-era church's Scriptures, in the texts and languages as originally given by God, then *Part 1* is unnecessary to you.

#### The Ancient Texts – Passages on Their Significance

2 Timothy 3:16-7a was written in the first century C.E., in Greek. The Greek words written at that time can be translated

- ◆ "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV | KJV, NKJV | ASV).

The Greek word translated "complete" is ἀρτιος and means "perfectly fit"<sup>1</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>2</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). This means that the Old Testament and the Greek New Testament Scriptures of the New Testament-era church were those Scriptures which were entirely sufficient to build proper doctrine on; they prepare "in every way" including to build proper doctrine. This means that the New Testament churches' Old Testament and Greek New Testament are by themselves a proper foundation and standard for all things doctrinal.

What does the word "Scripture" mean? The Greek word translated "Scriptures" is γραφή,<sup>3</sup> means "what has been written,"<sup>4</sup> and refers to the text of written documents.<sup>5</sup> The text on manuscripts and copies of Scripture, and not the manuscripts and copies themselves, is Scripture.

We know from the context of the passage that God meant the Old Testament, but we know He also meant the New Testament from another passage. The New Testament church held New Testament books as Scripture. At what is now 1 Timothy 5:18 God through Paul wrote "the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire" (ASV); the first quote of "the scripture" here is from Deuteronomy 25:4, and the second is from Luke 10:7.<sup>6</sup> Compare the Greek:

Luke 10:7 end

ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ

1 Timothy 5:18 second quote<sup>7n</sup>

Ἀξιός ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ<sup>8</sup>

an exact match minus γάρ = "for."<sup>9</sup> In Luke 10:7, the clause was linked by "for" to a prior statement of Jesus, but in 1 Timothy 5:18 the clause was meant to be independent, so this would be a fitting grammatical adjustment. Rules for quotation were not as strict in the ancient world as they are in American society.

It is important to note that "Scripture" refers to something written, so we see that what 1 Timothy 5:18 quoted as "the scripture" was written. That written text is in our New Testament at what is now Luke 10:7. Therefore, both the Old Testament of the New Testament church and the New Testament itself were understood as Scripture by the New Testament church and by God.

2 Timothy 3:15, immediately before the previous passage, stated that the Scriptures are

- ◆ "the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (ASV).

Hence, the Scriptures are directly related to salvation; the Scriptures can empower us with the knowledge of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>2</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>3</sup> Strong, The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, pages *Concordance* 1176, *Greek Dictionary* 20; Young, Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible, page *Analytical* 844

<sup>4</sup> Richards, New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words, page 544.

<sup>5</sup> Strong, The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, page *Greek Dictionary* 20; Vine et al, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary, page 552 NT.

<sup>6</sup> Noted in Paige Patterson's article in Criswell, Believer's Study Bible, page 1843.

<sup>7</sup> These will be quoted with the extra marks, but typically other Greek will not.

<sup>8</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, pages 246, 733.

<sup>9</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 246.

Scripture is the written Word of God. The Palestinian Jews' Old Testament was among those Scriptures described at 2 Timothy 3:15-7. At Psalm 138:2b God wrote to Himself some Hebrew that can be translated

- ◆ "You have exalted Your name, Your word, above all" (JPS 1985).

This passage shows that God's Word stands with God's name as the highest authority.

Related to the doctrine of God giving us the Scriptures is God's promise to preserve them in such passages as in Psalm 12, where Christian verses 6-7 and Jewish verses 7-8 are translated

- ◆ "The words of the LORD are pure words, As silver tried in a crucible on the earth, refined seven times. Thou wilt keep them O LORD; thou wilt preserve each from this age evermore" (JPS 1917 | JPS 1985).

This passage teaches that the Word of God will always exist in some form.<sup>1n</sup> This means that the text that He provided will always exist in some form. No passage specifies how God sees to this.

At Psalm 119:152, God informs us that His Word, the collection of His written testimonies, was forever established when given, and Psalm 89:34/35 shows God will not change His Word:

- ◆ "Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever" (NKJV).
- ◆ "no olvidaré mi pacto ni | cambiaré | mi palabra" (RVR 1995 | LBLA | VP)<sup>2n</sup> = "not will-I-forget my pact neither will-I-change my word."

In all aspects, including the process of preserving His Word, God will not change Scripture. Note that He refers to His Word in the singular; there is only one Word of God. When each book of the Old Testament was written, it was written in one of the Semitic languages Hebrew and Aramaic. Hence, when those books were written the first time, as in God giving out each text, it was in those languages. The New Testament was written in Greek. Hence, as the Word of God is unchanging, in the strictest sense those original texts are the written Word of God because they were given by Him and the Word of God does not change.

The books of Scripture were delivered individually -- not all at once. Most books of both Testaments were not titled as now. Further, no divisions were provided; division into chapters was added first, and then later those chapters were divided into verses. The 1539 Great Bible, which was an English translation before the King James Version, used chapters and lettered sections, and section breaks did not always coincide with our present verses; the break after Revelation 13 B starts 13 C in what is now verse 13:7 "And power was given hym..." -- the middle of the present verse. Book titles as a whole, chapter divisions/numberings, and verse divisions/numberings are later additions by humans to make using Scripture easier; they cannot be considered given by God and are not Scripture in the strictest sense.

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<sup>1</sup> No part of Scripture has ever ceased to exist. God has preserved His Word perfectly.

<sup>2</sup> We will be consulting foreign language translations. **Prejudices that foreign language Bible translations are 'less the Bible' than English translations will NOT be entertained here.** Just as our translations are direct from texts in Greek and Hebrew, so also are foreign language translations. In the exact way that most of us who read English read our King James Version editions, our New American Standard Bible editions, and editions of other English translations, and think 'The Bible says,' most Spanish-reading people read their editions of the Reina-Valera Revisión of 1909 or 1960, or other Revisiónes or other Spanish translations, and think 'La biblia dice' = 'The Bible says.' We will consider reading foreign translations and English translations to be reading the Bible in the same sense.

Foreign languages have different word-meaning match-up combinations and different grammatical constructions than English has. Many times, these aspects make something clear that would normally be missed in English. Hence, that is why I will often draw attention to these foreign translations. Also, foreign translations have an independence from our Bible translation traditions. English translators tend to be influenced by older English translations. Foreign translators are influenced not by these but by older translations into their languages. Foreign language translation independence can sometimes shed light on passages.

Interestingly, the 1611 KJV long preface *The Translators to the Reader* mentioned consulting "the Spanish" (10th page), likely the 1602 Valera Bible revision of the 1569 Reyna/Reina Bible. They too used foreign language translations.

### What Books Compose Scripture?

There is some discussion as to what collection of books makes up our Bible. Between Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism and related churches there is only one New Testament list of books. However, there are differences in Old Testament lists, and it is disputed which books we should recognize for the Old Testament. We should wonder what Old Testament Jesus and His apostles might have used. We have the information to recognize this: first century historian Josephus was a Palestinian Jew just like Jesus and the apostles. In *Against Apion* 1:8/1:38-41 Josephus reported that no books had been adopted as divine by Palestinian Jews since Persian rule; he describes the books "which contain the records of all the past times which are justly believed to be divine," limits them to "till the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia," and specifies "our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of like authority"<sup>1</sup> after that. Josephus's canon was within that re-adopted by Protestants.<sup>2</sup> In 90 C.E., Jewish Rabbis debated some already-accepted books that afterward remained on this list.<sup>3</sup> These events at Jamnia were about justification for the presence of certain books already in the canon.<sup>4</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples as Palestinian Jews recognized only this canon, and since the Lord Jesus is "our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (NKJV, ESV) according to 2 Peter 1:1, this was God's canon. This canon had not been added to for over 400 years before Jesus Christ's earthly ministry.

For uncertain reasons, many in the church began using books outside this canon for authoritative Old Testament Scripture as the apostles were passing off the scene. One of these is the forged "Wisdom of Solomon." This and other pre-New Testament books are added to the Old Testament in varying selections by Catholic and Orthodox groups<sup>5</sup> and are called "apocrypha"<sup>6n</sup> by people who do not believe that those books belong there. The fact that the Old Testament canon was closed in ancient times is implied by the late 100's church at Rome. They composed a list of New Testament books now called the Muratorian Canon. In this list, among the New Testament books, they listed "Wisdom of Solomon" as so:

"Of course, the epistle of Jude and two with the title `John' are accepted in the Catholic church, and Wisdom, written by friends of Solomon in his honor. We accept only the apocalypses of John and Peter...."<sup>7</sup>

This suggests that they knew they could not include it in the Old Testament, likely because it had been closed. For books of the Bible, we will limit ourselves to the Palestinian Jews' Old Testament.

The New Testament is a different matter. We will keep to the books meeting these criteria:

1. Use before 150 C.E. in multiple areas of the Christian world;
2. Another document *a*) by a human secretary-author who had a document meeting criteria 1 and was considered worth recopying and circulating, and *b*) this additional document was considered worth recopying and circulating so that it remained after the New Testament period.<sup>8n</sup>

From at least the second century until 397 C.E., there was widespread disagreement on what books to include as New Testament Scripture; the Muratorian Canon quoted above had a canon different from

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<sup>1</sup> Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*, page 776.

<sup>2</sup> Filson, *Which Books Belong in the Bible*, page 82.

<sup>3</sup> *Archaeological Study Bible*, page 1552.

<sup>4</sup> Marc Zvi Brettler in Berlin, Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, page 2073.

<sup>5</sup> In O'Day, Petersen, *The Access Bible*, pages 28-9.

<sup>6</sup> Originally, this word was from a Greek word suggesting `hidden.' It has come to mean `spurious; inauthentic; does not really belong.'

<sup>7</sup> Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, page 95.

<sup>8</sup> Paul had a letter to the Corinthians written before 1 Corinthians, per 5:9-11, that did not survive. It was apparently not worth preserving to the New Testament church. Luke 1:1 reports "many" (ASV) narratives of church history before Luke+Acts. The New Testament church evidently had some manner of distinguishing between what was normal literature and correspondence versus what was to be held as Scripture and propagated.

most Christians today. It is very often alleged by both Catholic and Orthodox apologists that the church determined what books to recognize as Scriptures in fourth century councils when they were both one body. It must be remembered that these same bodies failed to reject pre-New Testament books entirely from consideration as Scripture when those books were excluded from the Old Testament Scripture of Jesus and His personal disciples. Those church bodies therefore had no credibility in decreeing the New Testament during the fourth century; the earliest criteria possible must be considered. These criteria are the basis for what we should consider the New Testament.

### Our Procedures for Handling Scripture – Initial Basis

We will be guided by the Scriptures put on the top and bottom of each page of this paper. The top, 2 Timothy 3:16a, reminds us Who the ultimate Author of Scripture is. This means that every unit of text in Scripture comes from God. Each unit of text is what God wanted written down for us to read or have read to us. It should be held as the highest authority in any matter that it addresses, and its precepts and approved practices are backed by the wisdom, will, and authority of God Himself.

The axiom on the bottom takes its context from a number of passages. It indicates that we are not to "go beyond" what is written in Scripture. For meaning, let us first note Romans 14:1-12:

"Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but do not argue about opinions. One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, 'AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.' So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God" [NASB|ICB|PEB|NASB].

Per what this passage examples, some churches have what they call "Individual Soul Liberty." We are shown that Christians are authorized to make some decisions for themselves. James 1:25 refers to the Christian's "perfect law, the law of liberty" (ASV). Again, Christians have some liberty.

Having laid out background information, we now turn directly to 1 Corinthians 4:6. In it, we have something called in Greek "το μη υπερ α γεγραπται" literally translated

1. "el no sobre lo que está escrito" <sup>1</sup> = "the not over it that it-is written."
2. "the not beyond what has been written." <sup>2</sup>

This was a New Testament church maxim with a name. The Greek "γεγραπται" is translated "It is written" before some of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, including Luke 4:4, and so at 1 Corinthians 4:6, Scripture is what is referred to with Greek "γεγραπται."

In the larger passage in which this maxim was applied, Paul is rebuking the Corinthian congregation for boasting of following one teacher more than another. The Corinthian Christians by their boasting were teaching that it was better to follow one person as opposed to another. This was a teaching that was beyond what was written in Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> Lacueva, Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español, page 665.

<sup>2</sup> McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 603.

Word by word: το = "the," μη = "not," υπερ = "beyond," α = "what," γεγραπται = "has been written."

We now come to the conclusion of the meaning of 1 Corinthians 4:6. The maxim means we should not be mandating or `encouraging with maybe a little pressure<sup>1n</sup> any doctrine, practice, or non-practice besides what is explicitly mandated, principled, exemplified, or patterned in Scripture.

The Restoration slogan "Where Scripture speaks, we speak; where Scripture is silent, we are silent" is a fitting interpretation of the passage. Combined with "Individual Soul Liberty," we can form a basis for Christian non-disagreement. We should only require of believers what is clearly mandated, patterned, or exemplified in Scripture; we should leave them on their liberty to carefully interpret the Scriptures for how to follow those principles outside of what is explicitly written. They will be responsible to God and Him alone for how they do this. This is GOD'S jurisdiction -- not ours; God does not need or authorize `little helpers' in this regard, and actually Romans 14:1-12 suggests a `mind your own business' approach among us.

### Deciding the Text of Scripture – Part I of III: Introduction and Old Testament

Both the Old Testament and New Testaments have multiple text-types. A text-type is a form of text. Manuscripts belonging to one text form will generally agree with each other in certain ways against manuscripts outside that text class. This is *not* to say that they *always* agree, *but* that they *generally* agree. The differences in text-types, which we will often call TEXT CLASSES, are typically minor. For example, the difference between one New Testament Greek text class and another at John 5:16 is simply word order.<sup>2</sup> Many, sadly, make a division about the text classes, claiming that Christians must follow only one and reject the others. Therefore, they must be addressed.

For the Old Testament, there was a text class translated into Greek as the Septuagint translation. Another text class became the basis for what is called the Masoretic Text, standardized by Jewish authorities in the Middle Ages and the basis for most Old Testament translations. Before the New Testament was written, the Lord Jesus Christ is recorded at John 10:35 saying "a Escritura não pode falhar" (ARA) = "the Scripture no/not <=> it-can fail"; it cannot fail to be accurate, and is also translated more directly "as Escrituras Sagradas sempre dizem a verdade" (NTLH) = "the Scriptures Sacred always they-say the truth." Jesus was referring to what is now the Jewish Old Testament, which was written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The Septuagint translated a Hebrew text form attested to by 5% of the Dead Sea Scrolls from the first century C.E. and before, while proto-Masoretic-type manuscripts composed 60% of the Bible manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>3</sup> At Jesus' time, there was variation in the manuscripts of His Scriptures, yet He still held them to be authoritative. *To Jesus, variation in manuscripts did not in any way compromise the authority of Scripture.*

Paul thought similarly. In quoting the Old Testament, Paul used both the Hebrew text common to us now and the Septuagint.<sup>4</sup> The Hebrew text common to us now is Masoretic, built on the proto-Masoretic text class, and the Septuagint was based upon the Septuagint text class. Paul used both text classes. Naturally, since God is ultimately the Author of Scripture, this means God used both text classes even though one was certainly closer to the original text than the other.

The Proto-Masoretic Text is most likely closest to the original text. Why? As we saw, it is in the majority of surviving manuscripts from the New Testament era and the last few centuries prior.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes any type of activity that would reasonably deter anyone from believing or doing differently. This includes officially or unofficially harming the person's status in the church, taking away opportunities, or raising questions about the devoutness or character of the person in disagreement. `Pressure' is not limited to these either -- it includes any negative consequence or removal of anything positive in order to address nonconformance itself or nonconformists.

<sup>2</sup> Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 305.

<sup>3</sup> Schiffman, Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls, page 172.

<sup>4</sup> Open Bible, page 1211.

### Deciding the Text of Scripture – Part II of III: The New Testament Problem

The New Testament quarrel gets nasty. There are three New Testament text classes. One is the Byzantine text class. It was the only one known during the Reformation period, so translations such as the King James Version in English and the Reina-Valera translation tradition in Spanish all draw predominantly from Byzantine-type texts. In the 1800's, manuscript discoveries confirmed the existence of the so-called "Alexandrian" text class, common in ancient times. A third text class is the Western text class, which most ancient translations followed. The people who are most quarrelsome about the New Testament text class issue are typically those who exclusively trust the Byzantine text.

In *Part 1/The Ancient Texts* we discussed passages that indicate that God would preserve His Word. Many Byzantine text supporters, often appealing much to preservation, actually deny it by claiming that the similar text classes are much more different than they are, and that Christian doctrine is threatened by ancient manuscripts the Lord has allowed to survive.

Typically, the nastiness involves accusations against people that simply are not true. Reuben J. Clark throughout his book calls those who follow ancient text bases "Extreme Textualists." He writes at one place "one can but wonder if there be not behind this movement of the Extreme Textualists a deliberate purpose and intent to destroy the Christian faith."<sup>1</sup>

The English Revised Version was published in 1881, the same year of a similar Greek text by B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort.<sup>2n</sup> The 1881 RV had at Mark 3:34-5 "For whosoever shall do..." from Ος γαρ αν προπηση while the Westcott-Hort Greek text had Ος αν προπηση which would equate to "Who|soever shall do..."<sup>3</sup> because γάρ = "for."<sup>4</sup> The Revisers did not subscribe to the Westcott-Hort text as a whole.<sup>5n</sup>

Let us examine what real enemies of Bible-based Christianity write, and compare them to writings from early influential pre-Westcott-Hort "Extreme Textualists." The 1990's Jesus Seminar boasted that they rejected 82% of Jesus' words recorded in the Gospels as fake,<sup>6</sup> and wrote

"The seventh and final pillar that supports the edifice of contemporary gospel scholarship is the reversal that has taken place regarding who bears the burden of proof. It was once assumed that scholars had to prove that the details in the synoptic gospels were not historical"

finishing that thought "The current assumption is now more nearly the opposite."<sup>7</sup>

The Jesus Seminar assumes that gospel narratives are historically inaccurate unless shown otherwise. Many non-Christian liberal theologians know that if they can collapse people's belief in Scripture, other denials of Christian beliefs and of biblical morality will be easier to advance. Constantine Tischendorf in the 1800's opposed them. He was an editor of an 1800's Greek text based on the "Alexandrian" text class,<sup>8n</sup> but against opponents of the Bible he wrote

"May my writing serve this end, to make you mistrust those novel theories upon, or rather against, the Gospels, which would persuade you that the wonderful details which the Gospels give us of our gracious Saviour, are founded on ignorance or deceit."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Clark, Why the King James Version, page 126.

<sup>2</sup> Westcott, Brooke Foss and Fenton John Anthony Hort. The New Testament in the Original Greek, American Edition. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882.

<sup>3</sup> Marshall, Interlinear NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament, page 109|KJV, ASV and British RV counterpart.

<sup>4</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 246.

<sup>5</sup> Palmer, E.. The Greek New Testament with the Readings Adopted by the Revisers of the Authorised Version. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881.

"The body of the text in this volume is taken from the third edition of Stephanus, published in 1550" - page v. This base text was emended to what the RV translated.

<sup>6</sup> Funk, Hoover, et al, The Five Gospels, page 5.

<sup>7</sup> Funk, Hoover, et al, The Five Gospels, page 4.

<sup>8</sup> Tischendorf, Constantinus. Novum Testamentum Graece. Three Volumes. Lipsiae: Giesecke & Devrient, 1869.

<sup>9</sup> Tischendorf, When Were Our Gospels Written?, pages 118-9.

He elsewhere protested against "the historic attacks which have been made upon the authenticity of the evangelical sources. Here we have to protest with the utmost decisiveness, but on the ground of rigid scientific investigation."<sup>1</sup>

C. Tischendorf upheld authenticity of the Gospels, unlike the 1990's Jesus Seminar. Samuel P. Tregelles edited another pre-Westcott-Hort Greek text<sup>2n</sup> in the 1800's based upon the Alexandrian text form's testimony. He wrote "we have to maintain the Scripture as God's revealed truth"<sup>3</sup> and

"Definite grounds of testimony are equally opposed to the growing evil of rationalism under its various forms. Some seek to meet this evil by the claims of Church authority :-let them rather be met by the authority of God in his word. Whatever would cast doubt or uncertainty upon Scripture, is answered by the distinct evidence which carries us back to the age of the Apostles. We may thus hold forth the New Testament, maintaining its claims."<sup>4</sup>

This is opposed to the likes of the 1990's Jesus Seminar. The impetus for starting ancient text-based textual study was not the destruction of the basic doctrine of the Bible's authority, upon which proper Christian doctrine rests. Douglas Stauffer writes regarding F. J. A. Hort and B. F. Westcott

"the two men had to come up with a completely subjective text influenced by their heretical views. Consequently, they wrote an 'eclectic' text, meaning that they preferentially picked and chose certain portions of scripture from the Vaticanus manuscript and other portions from the Sinaiticus manuscript until they produced a rendering that satisfactorily conveyed their doctrines."<sup>5</sup>

The views of these two may be open to question, but **the biblical conservatism of Constantine Tischendorf and Samuel Tregelles before them is not in question.** C. Tischendorf saw both Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and S. Tregelles saw Vaticanus.<sup>6</sup> S. Tregelles was dissatisfied with J. Griesbach's reluctance to diverge from the Byzantine text and pioneered placing ancient manuscripts first,<sup>7</sup> but clearly not to subvert Scripture. *It is sad that some are so reckless as to characterize as enemies of biblical conservatism men who actually devoted substantial efforts of their lives for it.*

Now, let us examine the matter of the Greek New Testament text classes themselves. Allegations that the so-called "Alexandrian" text class was a product of Gnostic non-Christians are very speculative.<sup>8n</sup> We do not know who made these manuscripts. KJV advocate D. A. Waite condemns the main "Alexandrian" type manuscripts as "the false Vatican ('B') and Sinai ('Aleph') Gnostic Greek manuscripts"<sup>9</sup> and KJV advocate Gail Riplinger describes "Catholics and unwary Protestants, with their Gnostic Vatican manuscript under their arm."<sup>10</sup> Contrary to the general claim, Gnosticism was not similar enough to Christianity to be legitimately teachable from New Testament manuscripts and Gnostics had to create their own set of "scriptures,"<sup>11n</sup> but as for this specific claim, a

<sup>1</sup> Tischendorf, Origin of the Four Gospels, page 219.

<sup>2</sup> Tregelles, Samuel Prideaux. The Greek New Testament. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1857-79.

<sup>3</sup> Tregelles, An Account of the Printed Greek Text of the New Testament, page viii.

<sup>4</sup> Tregelles, A Lecture on the Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New Testament, page 94.

<sup>5</sup> Stauffer, One Book Stands Alone, page 285.

<sup>6</sup> Holland, Crowned With Glory, page 36.

<sup>7</sup> Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, page 125.

<sup>8</sup> Early church writers reported vile readings put in Scripture manuscripts by unbelievers, but which have since vanished from the manuscript tradition.\*

\* Burgon, Miller, The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text, page 139.

<sup>9</sup> Waite, The Case for the King James Bible, pages 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, page 498.

<sup>11</sup> For example, in forged *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus is purported to say at *Logion* 14 "if you pray, you will be condemned."\* 1 Thessalonians 5:17 in Alexandrian-type Codex Vaticanus says differently: *Ἀδιαλειπτως προσευχεσθε* † = "pray constantly" (HCSB).

\* Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Library in English, page 128.

† In Maius, Codex Vaticanus Novum Testamentum Graece, page 133

counterexample should suffice. At Romans 5:8 the main Alexandrian-type codex, Codex Vaticanus, has *χριστος υπερ ημων απεθανεν*<sup>1</sup> translated "Christ died on our behalf" (TCNT). Gnostics would have liked to have their Bible manuscripts deny or omit that the Christ of God underwent a physical death. This manuscript would not have been favorable to them.

The New Testament text has never been preserved as a stream that never had any changes. The most closely agreeing manuscripts vary six to ten times per modern chapter.<sup>2</sup> Appearances of Scripture frequently cited as similar to the traditional English King James Version such as the Syriac Peshitta, the Gothic translation, older Byzantine-type manuscripts, the majority of Greek manuscripts, the traditional Eastern and Greek Orthodox church's text, Reformation-era printed Greek texts, older English translations, and Reformation-era foreign translations all differ in source Greek text from the King James Version, which itself underwent change in source Greek text.

The Syriac Peshitta, third century or before,<sup>3n</sup> traditionally universally received by the Syriac church, also differs in source text from the KJV, as does the Gothic translation<sup>4n</sup> of Europe from the mid-fourth century C.E.. At Luke 2:22 the Syriac Peshitta has "their purification"<sup>5</sup> like the translation into Gothic by Ulfilas and most Greek manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> The King James Version agrees with the same text here that the Latin Vulgate followed<sup>7</sup> for "her purification" (KJV; DRV) but the Syriac Peshitta and the Gothic translation follow the same Greek text as the early 1500's New Testament translations by William Tyndale, which had "their purification" in the 1526 edition.

We now consider the oldest Byzantine manuscripts. Those with the oldest form of Byzantine text had the name *ιωακειμ* at Matthew 1:11<sup>8</sup> which appears transliterated as "Iacim" in the 1568 Bishops' Bible, and as "Iakim" in the 1611 KJV margin "Some read, Iosias begate Iakim, and Iakim begat Iechonias" = "Some read, Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jechonias." Here, the KJV text itself differs from the oldest Byzantine-type manuscripts because it has no "Iakim" = "Jakim."

The majority of manuscripts also do not always agree with the traditional English King James Version. One such place was recognized by the 1611 KJV translators at Luke 17:36, where the margin has "This 36. verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies." The modern Majority Text also lacks the verse (NKJV margin) thousands of known manuscripts later. Most manuscripts do not have what is now Acts 8:37,<sup>9</sup> not all with parts of it have the whole (AmerV margin), and it is not present in any of the ancient manuscripts from before the year 500.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ornsby, The Greek Testament, from Cardinal Mai's Edition of the Vatican Bible, page 339.

<sup>2</sup> W. Edward Glenny in Beacham, Bauder, One Bible Only?, page 82.

<sup>3</sup> The Peshitta was originally for Jews.\* As early as the close of the fourth century, church writer Theodore of Mospuestia wrote "It has been translated into the tongue of the Syrians by someone or other, for it has not been learned up to the present time who this was."\*\*\* The Peshitta was so old that even an adult from the last decades of the fourth century knew of no one who knew of who made it.

However, Hegessipus quoted from a non-Peshitta Syriac translation in the mid-100's.<sup>†</sup>

\* Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler in The Jewish Study Bible, page 2071.

\*\* Wegner, The Journey from Texts to Translations, page 245.

† Geisler, Nix, From God to Us, page 79.

<sup>4</sup> The Gothic translation followed a predominantly Byzantine text for the New Testament.\* Regarding the Old Testament, a few decades after Ulfilas's translation work in the mid-fourth century, church historian Philostorgius reported that Ulfilas left out the entire Old Testament books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings for fear it would encourage the Goths' warlike tendencies.<sup>†</sup>

\* Berrera, The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible, page 362.

† Wegner, The Journey from Texts to Translations, page 258.

<sup>5</sup> Lamsa, The Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text, page 1015.

<sup>6</sup> Moorman, Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version – A Closer Look, page 86.

<sup>7</sup> Moorman, Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version – A Closer Look, page 86.

<sup>8</sup> Von Soden, Die Schriften Des Neuen Testaments, page 2:1.

<sup>9</sup> J. White, The King James Only Controversy, page 63; Hills, The King James Version Defended, page 154.

<sup>10</sup> In Sayão, Novo Testamento Trilíngüe: Grego, Português, Inglês, page 415.



The Eastern and Greek Orthodox churches have used the Byzantine text exclusively from antiquity.<sup>1</sup> At Matthew 23:25, the Orthodox text has ἀδικία<sup>2</sup> = "unrighteousness"<sup>3</sup> where the KJV follows ἀκρασία<sup>4</sup> for "excess." The Orthodox text does not always agree with the majority of manuscripts; at Matthew 27:41 most manuscripts mention φαρισαίων<sup>5</sup> "Pharisees" (NKJVMg) among those who mock Jesus at the cross, but the Orthodox text does not.<sup>6</sup>

The first printed Greek New Testament to be published was by Desiderius Erasmus and this happened in 1516. The most influential printed Greek text to be published in the Reformation period was the 1550 edition of Robert Stephanus. At James 2:18 the texts of Desiderius Erasmus and Robert Stephanus go "by thy works" vs. KJV "without thy works."<sup>7</sup> The older texts have here ἐκ τῶν ἐργῶν σου<sup>8</sup> and the KJV followed χωρὶς τῶν ἐργῶν σου.<sup>9</sup> From this variation, we have disagreement between the KJV and older Reformation-era translations. The 1611 KJV matched the Latin Vulgate's "without" (DRV): "||without thy workes" with margin note "||Some copies reade, by thy workes." In contrast, the German Bible translation of Martin Luther had in his 1545 revision "mit deinen werken" = "with your works" and the 1535 Olivetan Bible in French had "par tes oeuvres" spelled now "par tes oeuvres" = "by thy works" and the 1526 William Tyndale New Testament in English had "by thy dedes" now spelled "by thy deeds."

In the English Bible, the KJV differs in text from all of its predecessors. At Revelation 16:5 the KJV has "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because" (KJV). There is no future tense in older English translations; rather, the Lord is called "holy":

1560 Geneva Bible: "Lord, Thou art iust, Which art, and Which wast : and holy, because" [GenB]

Tyndale Testament: "lorde whych arte, and wast, thou arte ryghteous and holy, because" [1526]

1539 Great Bible: "Lorde whych art, and wast, thou arte righteous and holy, bicause" [1539]

1568 Bishops' Bible: "Lorde, which art, and wast, thou art righteous & holy, because" [BishB].

Further, the 1535 French Olivetan Bible followed this reading for "saint" today spelled "saint" = "holy," Martin Luther's 1545 revision of his German Luther Bible has "heilig" = "holy," and the 1569 Reina/Reyna Bible in Spanish has "sancto" today spelled "santo" = "holy" and the 1602 Valera revision has the same. There is a reason why the KJV does not translate a Greek reading in agreement with its predecessors both foreign and in English here. The reading followed by the King James Version translators here was a conjecture of Theodore Beza from the late 1500's.<sup>10</sup> In this conjecture, it was implicitly believed that the original text of Scripture here was not preserved in such a way that the original text here could be found among surviving manuscripts. The manuscript discoveries numbering in the thousands since that time have still not turned up a manuscript with the conjectured Greek text which the KJV followed at Revelation 16:5.

We turn to the fact that the KJV has further disagreements with foreign Reformation-era translations besides what has already been noted. At Matthew 26:26 the 1543 Spanish New Testament of Francisco de Enzinas differed from the KJV and Latin Vulgate, translated "blessed" (DRV) and "bendijo" (Amat) = "He-blessed"; the Enzinas New Testament of 1543 had "quando vbo hecho gratias"<sup>11</sup> = "cuando hubo hecho gracias" = "when He-had done thanks," in contrast to 1611 KJV "||blessed it" with margin note "||Many Greeke copies haue gaue thanks" = "||Many Greek copies have gave thanks." At 2 Timothy 1:18 the KJV and Latin Vulgate agree with a few

<sup>1</sup> In J. Allen, et al, Orthodox Study Bible: New Testament, page x.

<sup>2</sup> In Zodhiates, Complete Word Study New Testament With, page 87.

<sup>3</sup> Farstad, Hodges, et al, NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament, page 90.

<sup>4</sup> Green, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 698.

<sup>5</sup> Hodges, Farstad, The New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 99.

<sup>6</sup> In Zodhiates, Complete Word Study New Testament With, page 110.

<sup>7</sup> J. White, The King James Only Controversy, page 68.

<sup>8</sup> G. Berry, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 588.

<sup>9</sup> Green, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 698.

<sup>10</sup> J. White, The King James Only Controversy, page 63; Hills, The King James Version Defended, page 208.

<sup>11</sup> Noted by Bill Kincaid <<http://www.west.ga.net/~ForHim/Word.html>>, October 1999.

manuscripts' text (NKJV margin) διηκονησε μοι<sup>1</sup> for "ministered vnto me" per the 1611 KJV and the Latin Vulgate translated "ministered unto me" (DRV) with μοι = me<sup>2</sup>; most manuscripts have simply διηκονησε translated in the 1569 Spanish Bible of Casiodoro de Reina/Cassiodoro de Reyna, as "nos ayudó = "us he-helped" with "nos" italicized as an indication of being supplied to clarify the Greek. The 1602 Revisión of Cypriano/Cipriano de Valera and the Revisiões of 1862, 1909, 1960, 1995 all have the same Spanish text - as does an 1865 American KJV-based alteration.<sup>3n</sup> This is at variance with Spanish translations of the Latin Vulgate which agree with the KJV here: the thirteenth century Spanish New Testament had "seruicio me fizo"<sup>4</sup> = "servicio me hizo" = "service to-me he-did," and the Amat Version has "servicios me prestó" = "services to-me he-gave" in agreement with KJV "ministered unto me" at 2 Timothy 1:18. Behold also Matthew 27:41

Traditional Reina-Valera [RVR 1909]	1602 Valera Bible	Translated Into English
"De esta manera también los príncipes de los sacerdotes, escarneciendo con los escribas y los Fariseos y los ancianos, decían"	"Dešte manera tambien los principes de los Sacerdotes ešcarneciendo, con los Ešcribas, y los Pharišeos, y los Ancianos, dezian"	Of-this manner also the principals of the Priests mocking, with the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Elders, they-were-saying

The King James Version does not mention the Pharisees here, but most Greek manuscripts do (NKJV margin). The Portuguese D'Almeida Bible's New Testament finished in 1681 had "Phariseos" in the 1693 edition and this is updated "fariseus" in the ARC and AEC. Also, the 1602 edition of the Geneva Bible has an old spelling "Pharises" here, and the Italian Bible of Giovanni Diodati finished in 1607, while the KJV was being made 1604-11, has "Farisei" = "Pharisees." In addition, at Ephesians 3:9 the KJV follows a Greek word meaning "fellowship" but other Greek manuscripts have a word meaning "stewardship" (NKJV margin) which also means "dispensation"<sup>5</sup>; in disagreement with its contemporary the KJV, the 1607 Diodati Bible has "dispensazione" updated in later editions as "dispensazion" = "dispensation."

Finally, after the KJV was finished in 1611, there were changes made, including in underlying Greek text. At John 16:25<sup>6</sup> the 1611 KJV had "prouerbs : the time" and the 1638 KJV had "proverbs : the time" where the 1769 KJV has "proverbs: but the time"; "but" is from αλλ.<sup>7</sup> The 1550 Robert Stephanus Greek text had υμιν αλλ ερχεται but the older Desiderius Erasmus Greek text of 1516 had merely υμιν ερχεται. The 1611 KJV has "These things haue I spoken vnto you in ||prouerbs : the time commeth when I shall no more speake vnto you in || prouerbs" with "||" referring to margin notes with alternative translation "||Or, parables." The current 1769 edition of the KJV text has a "but," and the 1611 KJV does not have it nor does the 1638 KJV at the focal point: "proverbs : the time" which only changes the spelling of the 1611 edition. The 1568 Bishops' Bible 1602 edition, upon which the KJV was based,<sup>8</sup> had "prouerbs : the time" but the 1602 edition of the Geneva Bible had "parables : but the time" (GenB), so by excluding "but" the 1611 KJV rejected the source reading of the 1769 KJV. The 1611 KJV evidently followed the Bishops' Bible; both matched the text that Desiderius Erasmus adopted in 1516 here, and the 1769 KJV matches the influential Robert Stephanus text of 1550 here.

All Reformation-era New Testament translations and Greek texts followed the Byzantine class, yet all differed. There is no textual tradition that comes to us without variation from the first century.

<sup>1</sup> Farstad, Hodges, et al, NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament, page 735.

<sup>2</sup> Farstad, Hodges, et al, NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament, page 735.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, this 1865 alteration, done outside the Spanish-speaking world, rejected all Greek manuscript testimony at Revelation 16:5 in favor of the conjectured reading followed in the KJV. Rather than continue from Valera 1602 "sancto" = "santo" = "holy," it has "serás" = "you-will-be." This agrees with the KJV, but not with any Greek manuscript or the translations of Reina 1569 or Valera 1602.

<sup>4</sup> Nuevo Testamento: Versión Castellana de hacia 1260, page 367.

<sup>5</sup> Young, Young's Analytical Concordance, page *Index-Lexicon...New Testament* 81.

<sup>6</sup> This variation was noticed at [www.bible-researcher.com/kjv.html](http://www.bible-researcher.com/kjv.html), July 2003.

<sup>7</sup> G. Berry, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 295.

<sup>8</sup> In Metzger, Murphy, The New Oxford Annotated Bible, page 402 NT.

Deciding the Text of Scripture – Part III of III: The New Testament Solution

Even before the third century which we examined, there was manuscript variation. There are three text classes for the Greek New Testament which were recognized as early as 1796 by J. J. Griesbach.<sup>1</sup> The "Textus Receptus" tradition did exist before the KJV; the "Textus Receptus" for pre-1881 times referred to a procession of printed Greek New Testament texts which started in 1516, none of which matched the source text for the KJV in all places. In 1881, F. H. A. Scrivener created a Greek Testament edited from the KJV, attempting to reproduce the Greek text that the KJV translators followed; he wrote "the Authorised Version was not a translation of any one Greek text then in existence, and no Greek text intended to reproduce in any way the original of the Authorised Version has ever been printed"<sup>2</sup> as of then. Before F. H. A. Scrivener's 1881 Greek text, the closest printed Greek text to the KJV was Theodore Beza's 1598 edition with between 190 and 200 differences.<sup>3</sup> After F. H. A. Scrivener edited his artificial<sup>4n</sup> 1611 KJV-based text in 1881, a medieval manuscript called Ω = Omega was found to resemble it at over 90%.<sup>5</sup> This is the Byzantine text class.

There is a parallel in the so-called "Alexandrian" text class. Codex Vaticanus is a mid-300's manuscript found in Europe, although the Vatican secluded its contents for centuries<sup>6</sup> likely due to its differences with the Latin Vulgate. An older manuscript was found in Egypt during the 1900's, and it is called Papyrus #75 = P75. P75 and Codex Vaticanus, at their common surviving parts,<sup>7n</sup> agree over 90%.<sup>8</sup> This is reminiscent of Omega and the KJV source text both of which are in the Byzantine text class; the so-called "Alexandrian" text class is a parallel from ancient times.

The so-called "Alexandrian" text is really not local to the Egypt area. An 1815 opponent of it rejected the name "Alexandrine" preferring instead "Palestine Text."<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Palestine was where the church began. Codex Sinaiticus is another mid-300's manuscript with so-called "Alexandrian" text. It was found on the Sinai Peninsula in the 1800's, but altered at Caesarea in northern Palestine the 500's-600's,<sup>10</sup> suggesting a southbound path and a possible origin even farther north than Caesarea in Syria. Europe-found Codex Ephraemi from the fifth century C. E. contains a mixed text involving both Alexandrian<sup>11</sup> and Byzantine readings.<sup>12</sup> A 300's manuscript found in Europe is considered the lead manuscript of the so-called "Alexandrian" text; this manuscript, Codex Vaticanus, was found on the opposite side of the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt. The so-called "Alexandrian" text refers to an ancient text that was *WIDESPREAD* in ancient times.

The third text class is the Western Text and less well-defined. Western text class manuscripts tend to have expansions – not all of which are shared even by each other. In the Western Text, Acts is about 10% longer with many readings never put in English translations.<sup>13</sup> However, in Luke 24, Codex Bezae of c. 400 C.E.<sup>14</sup> and the Greek manuscripts which the 100's Old Latin version translated

<sup>1</sup> Hills, The King James Version Defended, pages 65, 126.

<sup>2</sup> Scrivener, The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorised Version Together with the Variations Adopted in the Revised Version, pages vii.

<sup>3</sup> Scrivener, The New Testament in the Original Greek According to the Text Followed in the Authorised Version Together with the Variations Adopted in the Revised Version, pages vii-ix.

<sup>4</sup> The reason this is "artificial" is because it was not an attempt to represent the original Greek text; the reconstruction of this text from Greek texts current up to 1611 and information current in 1611 was made primarily for historical inquiry.

<sup>5</sup> Zane C. Hodges article in Fuller, Which Bible?, page 33.

<sup>6</sup> In Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, pages viii-ix.

<sup>7</sup> As common of artifacts, Codex Vaticanus and other ancient manuscripts are missing parts of their original contents -- Scrivener, Plain Introduction, pages 87-8, 95, 102.

<sup>8</sup> Zane C. Hodges article in Fuller, Which Bible?, page 33.

<sup>9</sup> Nolan, Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate, page 105.

<sup>10</sup> Geisler, Nix, From God to Us, page 147.

<sup>11</sup> Aland, Aland, Text of the New Testament, page 160; in Throckmorton, Gospel Parallels, page ix; Metzger, Textual Commentary, page xxix.

<sup>12</sup> Kenyon, Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, page 326.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Minnick in Williams, Shaylor, God's Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us, page 242.

<sup>14</sup> Vaganay, Amphoux, An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism, page 16.

agree in seven omissions not made in the other text classes.<sup>1</sup> In Clement of Alexandria's late second century writings, his Scripture quotes at places of textual variation have a close match with Codex Bezae, but only around half for the other two text forms.<sup>2</sup> 200's C.E. P38 substantially matches Codex Bezae,<sup>3</sup> and 400's P112 has a text of Codex Bezae's type.<sup>4</sup> These show the Western text.<sup>5n</sup>

One should make little of differences in text class.<sup>6n</sup> Polycarp<sup>7n</sup> was a pupil of the apostle John, and his *Epistle to the Philippians* quotes passages that vary among text classes; these quotes match multiple text classes,<sup>8</sup> suggesting he was not taught to be strict about text form. Western text Codex Bezae agrees "far more" with "Alexandrian" text manuscripts than it disagrees.<sup>9</sup> The modern Byzantine KJV-based "Textus Receptus," Byzantine Majority Text, and "Alexandrian" text match "fully" 85%.<sup>10</sup> It would be an unwise claim to say of English translations that the KJV and early 1500's William Tyndale New Testaments were substantially different. 80% of W. Tyndale's text was adopted in the KJV.<sup>11</sup> While these were similar, the Byzantine and so-called "Alexandrian" Greek text classes are even more similar in text.

There are ways to determine which text class is most likely to represent the original New Testament text. There is archaeological evidence of early medieval and ancient manuscripts.<sup>12n</sup> From no time do surviving manuscripts show the Western text to have been the majority of manuscripts. While most manuscripts to survive are Byzantine, they also come from after 1000 C.E.. The surviving manuscripts of the first millennium give no Byzantine manuscripts of Paul's epistles for the first eight centuries C.E.,<sup>13</sup> and the surviving manuscripts show that the so-called "Alexandrian" text was the majority text<sup>14n</sup> in every century from which we have manuscripts for the first eight centuries C.E..<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aland et al, The Greek New Testament: United Bible Societies' Fourth Corrected Edition, pages 306-11.

<sup>2</sup> Holland, Crowned with Glory, page 30.

<sup>3</sup> R. Clark, Why the King James Version, pages 217-8.

<sup>4</sup> Comfort, Essential Guide to Bible Versions, page 82.

<sup>5</sup> A common speculation among radical KJV-likers is that the "Alexandrian" text in 50 lost copies of Scripture from Eusebius. This is unlikely. His Bible quotations show that he preferred the Western text -- Lake, The Text of the New Testament, page 51.

<sup>6</sup> This excludes apocryphal narratives added into the gospels, like after Mark 16:8. For this one, the two oldest Greek manuscripts plus another lack such narration, as do some manuscripts of multiple ancient translations, and some Greek manuscripts present alternative narration -- J. White, King James Only Controversy, page 255.

<sup>7</sup> Polycarp was not a monarchical bishop. Polycarp described himself in a letter as "Polycarp and the presbyters with him"\* -- he saw himself as one of several presbyters.

\*In Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers, page 207.

<sup>8</sup> Based on Greek text and Scripture quotes noted in Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers, pages 207-221.

<sup>9</sup> Lightfoot, How We Got the Bible, page 59.

<sup>10</sup> Preface to the New King James Version as found in SOME editions of the NKJV.

<sup>11</sup> Ryken, The Word of God in English, page 48.

<sup>12</sup> Isolated variants in a manuscript that match another text class are not evidence on text class. Evidence on text class of a manuscript is from its NORMAL agreements.

<sup>13</sup> W. Edward Glenny in Beacham, Bauder, One Bible Only?, page 106.

<sup>14</sup> Byzantine text supporters often claim: the reason so-called "Alexandrian"-type manuscripts survived is that they were promptly discarded, while Byzantine-type manuscripts were worn out from use. This is unlikely; the Byzantine text gets least use among the ancient translations from the first three centuries C.E..\* Only one uses the Byzantine text: the Syriac Peshitta. The Old Latin, the two Old Syriac translations, and the two Coptic translations are based on other text classes.

"Alexandrian" text Codex Sinaiticus has markings on it from user after user.† Codex Sinaiticus has markings from users up to the twelfth century and Ephraemi has these up to the ninth century,†† and Vaticanus has such up to c.1000.‡ Clearly, these manuscripts were anything but promptly considered too corrupt for use.

\* Epp, Fee, Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism, page 187.

† in Green, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page viii.

†† Aland, et al, Novum Testamentum Graece, page 48\*.

‡ In Monser, The Cross-Reference Bible (American Standard Version) with..., page xv.

<sup>15</sup> In Ehrman, Holmes, The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research, page 311.

We also have surviving evidence from the New Testament era and the decades afterward. First, we discuss the manuscript evidence. None of the Dead Sea Scrolls can be any later than 68 C.E., when the settlement at Qumran in Palestine was fled, and among those is 7Q5, part of Mark 6:52-3.<sup>1n</sup> The surviving part of the second line has τω<sup>2</sup> followed by a damaged letter which seems to be ν.<sup>3</sup> The surviving part of the third line has the end of an η, then και, then τ, then another letter, possibly ι.<sup>4</sup> The original editors of 7Q5, M. Baillet, J. Milik, and R. de Vaux reported νησ in line 4.<sup>5</sup> The surviving part of the last line has θη.<sup>6</sup> The τ of the third line is the beginning of the word διαπεράσαντες<sup>7</sup> = "crossing over"<sup>8</sup>; some first century Greek scribes liked to spell the soft "δ" with a "τ" or a "θ," as was done in a warning stone for foreigners at the Jewish temple<sup>9</sup> destroyed in 70 C.E., and the scribal practice was continued in twenty biblical manuscripts<sup>10</sup> including P4<sup>11</sup> from between 150 and 175 C.E..<sup>12</sup>

The surviving parts of the last two lines are important. The letters νησ are part of the word Γεννησαρετ = "Gennesaret" (ASV) and the θη must be part of the word προσωρμισθησαν = "anchored there" (TNIV) at Mark 6:53 in the ancient manuscripts except for Codex Bezae of the Western text and Codex Washington<sup>13</sup> which is Western in Mark. The Old Latin, which translated Western text manuscripts older than Bezae, also lacks equivalent to that word.<sup>14</sup> 7Q5 includes the word rendered "anchored there" in the TNIV as do the manuscripts of the non-Western text classes, but that word is omitted in the Western text class. Hence, 7Q5, from the New Testament period, testifies against the Western text. By elimination, it would favor the Byzantine and so-called "Alexandrian" texts.

P52 has similarity in handwriting style to first century non-New Testament manuscripts, especially to one from c. 100, naturally suggesting a date of c. 100.<sup>15</sup> Much of the manuscript is lost, but parts of John 18:33 survive. At one point, Byzantine text class manuscripts have Greek word order εις το πραιτωριον παλιν<sup>16</sup> rendered "into the Praetorium again" (NKJV) while "Alexandrian" text class manuscripts have παλιν εις το πραιτωριον<sup>17</sup> rendered "again into the Praetorium" (ASV, NASB). In both text classes, these words appear immediately before ο Πιλατος, the mention of Pilate. The second line of the surviving manuscript starts with "ριον" and then

<sup>1</sup> Not all accept 7Q5 as a fragment of Mark; being inclined to date New Testament writings as late as possible, some speculate that 7Q5 belongs to an unknown work. The surviving text matches Mark closely, and no other known ancient writing matches the surviving text. It seems more prudent to remain within known ancient works.

Second, it is suggested that if 7Q5 is of Mark 6:52-3, then three short Greek words were omitted outside of the surviving part of the fragment. Again, this is speculation; we know nothing about the parts of the manuscript which do not survive. Perhaps the words were never there, OR perhaps the margins were generous and they were but due to an oversight the scribe wrote a longer line than usual to the right, or started farther back left on the left side than usual for the next line, or wrote smaller, or a combination of these mentioned possibilities. We cannot know; there is no reason to make statements on the fragment's text where the paper has not survived.

We will refrain from speculation about lost works and about parts of the manuscript that have been lost, and accept that 7Q5 is a scrap of Mark 6:52-3.

<sup>2</sup> Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, plate 7.

<sup>3</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, page 42.

<sup>4</sup> Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, page 27.

<sup>5</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, pages 32-3, 174.

<sup>6</sup> Stanton, *Gospel Truth?*, page 27.

<sup>7</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, page 38.

<sup>8</sup> Marshall, *Interlinear NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament*, page 121.

<sup>9</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, page 38.

<sup>10</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, page 39.

<sup>11</sup> Thiede, D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus*, page 39.

<sup>12</sup> Comfort, Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest Greek New Testament Manuscripts*, page 53.

<sup>13</sup> Nestle, Aland, et al, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, page 110.

<sup>14</sup> Nestle, Aland, et al, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, page 110.

<sup>15</sup> Comfort, Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest Greek New Testament Manuscripts*, page 367.

<sup>16</sup> G. Berry, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, page 300.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall, *Interlinear NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament*, page 326.

continues with "ο π" followed by a lost edge.<sup>1</sup> The ριον is the end of πραιτωριον and precedes "ο π" the beginning of ο Πιλατος. Hence, P52 demonstrates "Alexandrian" text here.

We come to P46 of Egypt from the late first to early second century,<sup>2</sup> or c. 100, the same period as P52. P46 has most of Paul's epistles and Hebrews. It is of the so-called "Alexandrian" text family.<sup>3</sup> G. Zuntz reported only nine distinctively Western readings from Hebrews and 1 Corinthians in P46.<sup>4</sup> Among the variants between the Alexandrian text and Byzantine Majority Text in Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad's *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*,<sup>5n</sup> there were 32 instances between Romans and 1 Thessalonians inclusive plus Hebrews where P46 lined up alone among ancient manuscripts with the Majority Text in supporting distinctively Byzantine readings; in contrast, there were over 200 instances where P46 lined up with Codex Vaticanus against the Majority Text in just Romans and 1 Corinthians alone, not including the rest of P46. Hence, P46 supports a contention that at least the majority of manuscripts c. 100 were of so-called "Alexandrian" text.

This is confirmed in Europe by a letter "the church of God which sojourns in Rome to the church of God which sojourns in Corinth"<sup>6</sup> later named *1 Clement* and written in the late first century.<sup>7n</sup> I compared the allusions to New Testament Scripture noted in Michael W. Holmes's *The*

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest Greek New Testament Manuscripts*, page 368.

<sup>2</sup> In Comfort, *The Origin of the Bible*, page 186.

<sup>3</sup> Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations*, page 233.

<sup>4</sup> Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, pages 142-50.

<sup>5</sup> Hodges, Zane C. and Arthur L. Farstad. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> Holmes et al, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, page 29.

<sup>7</sup> Some Christians and church-related people disdain Rome 'on principle' because of Roman Catholicism. They may need to be made aware of this: when *1 Clement* was written, **the seed and core of Roman Catholicism, the monarchical bishop, did not even exist at Rome yet.**

Titus 1:5 has καταστησης κατα πολιν πρεσβυτερους literally "appoint in each city |Officers"\* the latter translating πρεσβυτερους. 1 Timothy 5:17 shows that these governed congregations in New Testament times\*\*; the same Greek word appears there also when the passage is translated "Os presbiteros que governam bem sejam estimados" (ARC) = "The presbyters that govern well let-them-be esteemed." Hence, in Titus 1:5 we see that each congregation was to have multiple leaders. Acts 20:17 has πρεσβυτερους της εκκλησιας = "presbiteros da| congregacion"^^ = "presbyters-of-the congregation." Again, this is one congregation, multiple presbyters/leaders. This is how we see congregations governed during the New Testament decades.

The congregation at Alexandria in Egypt likely had no bishop before the second century.^† There was a thriving Christian community there in the first century.†\*

A possibility that the one-bishop system of church government began as an unestablished system in Syria, Asia Minor and Greece has been suggested by scholars.† The letters of Ignatius from c. 110 written to congregations Greece and eastward repeatedly urge submission to local singular bishops.†† However, the only letter written to a western church, that at Rome, mentions no singular bishop.‡ *1 Clement* does not show a singular leader giving direction to the church at Corinth; it was a congregation to congregation letter. The preferred church leadership is described at *1 Clement* 47:6 when it disdains "that the well-established and ancient church of the Corinthians, because of one or two persons, is rebelling against its presbyters."†† Notice the plural "presbyters." From all these indications, is evident that at the time *1 Clement* was written, there was no monarchical bishop at Corinth or at Rome.

\* Marshall, *The Interlinear NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament*, page 620 | TCNT.

\*\* *New Pilgrim Study Bible*, pages 1700-1.

^\* ARA| English W. Tyndale New Testament 1526.

^† In Goehring, Timbie, *The World of Early Egyptian Christianity*, page 4.

†\* *Life Application Study Bible*, page 2186.

† Jefford et al, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, page 62.

†† Jefford et al, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, page 62-3.

‡ Jefford et al, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers*, page 63.

†† Holmes et al, *The Apostolic Fathers*, page 83.

*Apostolic Fathers*<sup>1n</sup> with *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*.<sup>2n</sup> When I did this, I found 1 Clement to be involved in only one textual variant involving the main "Alexandrian" text class manuscript and the second most important: Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. That variant is Romans 4:8 as quoted at 1 Clement 50:6. Just a few decades prior, Paul had written the book of Romans and sent it to the congregation at Rome. At Romans 4:8, the Byzantine text class has Μακαριος ανηρ ω ου μη λογισηται κυριος αμαρτιαν and the two preeminent "Alexandrian" text class manuscripts have Μακαριος ανηρ ου ου μη λογισηται κυριος αμαρτιαν.<sup>3</sup> 1 Clement 50:6 agrees with the latter verbatim: μακαριος ανηρ ου ου μη λογισηται κυριος αμαρτιαν.<sup>4</sup> The text is translated at Romans 4:8 "Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not reckon his sin" (RSV 1952).<sup>5n</sup> When the congregation at Rome wrote what is now called 1 Clement and quoted Romans 4:7-8, they were quoting an important personal letter from just a few decades past.

The manuscript evidence and early historical evidence favors the so-called "Alexandrian" text as the text of at least the majority of manuscripts c. 100, which is the decades after the close of the New Testament period. *However, the most important evidence is still left:* the Word of God itself gives us hints as to which text class is most likely closest to original. Luke and Acts were originally a two-volume work. Acts 1:1-2 says "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up" (RSV 1952, ESV). The "first book" is the Gospel of Luke, so Acts 1:1-2 shows that Luke originally had the ascension of Jesus.<sup>6</sup> The Western text class includes Codex Bezae and Old Latin manuscripts, and the Western text is unique in lacking "and was carried up to heaven" at Luke 24:51.<sup>7</sup> Even Codex Bezae has ανεληφθη<sup>8</sup> meaning "He was taken up"<sup>9</sup> like the manuscripts of the other two text classes at Acts 1:2. Hence, when Acts 1:2 notes that Luke had the Ascension, and the Western text of Luke does not have it but the other two text classes do at Luke 24:51, it means that Scripture shows that the Western text is wrong at Luke 24:51.

At what is now 1 Timothy 5:18 we have "For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire" (ASV). The first quote of "the scripture" here is from Deuteronomy 25:4, and the second is from Luke 10:7.<sup>10</sup> Compare the Greek:

Luke 10:7 end: ἄξιος γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ  
1 Timothy 5:18 second quote: Ἀξιὸς ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ<sup>11</sup>

an exact match minus γάρ = "for."<sup>12</sup> In the former, the clause was linked by "for" to a previous statement of Jesus, but in the latter was meant to be independent, so this would be a fitting grammatical adjustment. Rules for citations were not as strict in the ancient world as they are in American society. Consider how 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes Luke 10:7, and recall that the relevant passage of 1 Timothy 5:18 is shared by the majority of manuscripts<sup>13</sup> and KJV's source text,<sup>14</sup> both of which are Byzantine. This text is the same in modern editions of the Greek New Testament which give most

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, Michael W. (ed.). The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations. Edited and translated by J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, updated and revised by Michael W. Holmes. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Hodges, Zane C. and Arthur L. Farstad. The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985.

<sup>3</sup> Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 483.

<sup>4</sup> In Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, page 85.

<sup>5</sup> The variance in Greek texts here does not effect English translation. Also, I added the markings over Greek words that would otherwise have appeared to be duplicates.

<sup>6</sup> Noted by Gipp, The Answer Book, pages 49-50.

<sup>7</sup> Comfort, Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament, page 103.

<sup>8</sup> Nestle, Aland, et al, Novum Testamentum Graece, page 320.

<sup>9</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 409.

<sup>10</sup> Noted in Paige Patterson's article in Criswell, Believer's Study Bible, page 1843.

<sup>11</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, pages 246, 733.

<sup>12</sup> In Douglas, New Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 246.

<sup>13</sup> Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 631.

<sup>14</sup> Green, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 645.

weight to the so-called “Alexandrian” text class. Now, compare the Byzantine and “Alexandrian” text classes at the quoted part of Luke 10:7

Byzantine: ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ<sup>1</sup>  
 “Alexandrian” and Western: ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ<sup>2</sup>

Immediately compare to 1 Timothy 5:18 above. These readings at Luke 10:7 are literally translated

Byzantine: “for worthy the workman of his hire is”<sup>3</sup>  
 “Alexandrian” and Western: “for worthy the workman of his hire”<sup>4</sup>

The Byzantine text adds to Luke 10:7 a clarifying word ἐστὶ = “is”<sup>5</sup> but that does not appear in the quotation at 1 Timothy 5:18. When we consider how Luke 24:51 + Acts 1:1-2 testified against the Western text, we focus on how the “Alexandrian” text of the quoted part of Luke 10:7 matches the quotation at 1 Timothy 5:18.

The only text class to be universally supported by Scripture is the so-called “Alexandrian” text. The designation is a misnomer, because this text was an ancient text that was *WIDESPREAD* in ancient times, and the basis of it was the New Testament secretary-authors’ pens as they wrote outside of Egypt. This ancient text is universally supported in Scripture and also by the archaeology of surviving ancient New Testament Greek manuscripts. Hence, although the so-called “Alexandrian” text does not always represent the original New Testament text, it should be most closely trusted to do so as decisions are made at places of manuscript variance.

### Eliminating Proposed Competition to Scripture – Part 1 of 3: Other Texts

Now, with the Scriptures being defined, there have been efforts to advance competing authorities for Scripture. Proposals have included additional literature, Bible translations instead of the original texts, conjecture, human philosophy and/or human beliefs about history and the universe, and sadly, the church itself, which ought to know better.

Recall 2 Timothy 3:16-7a “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for | doctrine |, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete” (ESV | KJV, NKJV | ASV). The Greek word translated “complete” is ἀρτιος and means “perfectly fit,”<sup>6</sup> “entirely suited; complete”<sup>7</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture “It is God’s way of preparing us in every way” (NLT 1996). This was written to the New Testament church and describes their Old Testament and Greek New Testament.

The most famous competing literature to the Scriptures is the Book of Mormon. Unknown to many, the Mormons, also called “Latter-Day Saints,”<sup>8n</sup> also adopt their *The Pearl of Great Price* and *The Doctrine and the Covenants* among their Scriptures.<sup>9</sup> The Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 23:39-24 is included in the *Pearl of Great Price*. At *Joseph Smith – Matthew* 1:26 the text reads “For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.” There are two parts of this not present in the KJV of Matthew 24:27 “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” – those parts are “of the morning” and “and covereth the whole earth.” The “of the morning” is meant to be a clarification of what is translated from

<sup>1</sup> Farstad, Hodges, et al, NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament, page 250.

<sup>2</sup> In Maius, Codex Vaticanus Novum Testamentum Graece Ex Antiquissimo Codice Vaticano, page 133; Scrivener, Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis, Being an Exact Copy, in Ordinary Type, page 204.

<sup>3</sup> G. Berry, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 186.

<sup>4</sup> G. Berry, Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, page 186.

<sup>5</sup> Farstad, Hodges, et al, NKJV Greek English Interlinear New Testament, page 250.

<sup>6</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>7</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>8</sup> We will use this designation because the ones I have spoken with seem to prefer it.

<sup>9</sup> Ballard, Our Search for Happiness, page 47.



αστραπη rendered in the KJV "lightning." The addition of "of the morning" to clarify indicates that what was there in the Greek New Testament is not held as sufficient. Similar happens at *Joseph Smith – Matthew* 1:37b "they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The Greek text as rendered in the KJV at Matthew 24:31 has "they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." The addition of "the remainder of" is a clarification on what is in the Greek text. In both cases, adoption of this portion of the "Joseph Smith Translation" within the *Pearl of Great Price* as Scripture would require that the Greek New Testament itself did not correctly record all revelation needed for proper Christianity. This is contrary to 2 Timothy 3:17a which says that the New Testament church's Scriptures made Christians ἀρτιος "perfectly fit"<sup>1</sup> "entirely suited; complete."<sup>2</sup> Because of this, we must reject these additional writings.

Other attempts to misplace the authority of the New Testament church's Scriptures include passing that authority to translations of them. Up to the 1800's, some believed that the German Luther Bible was a "second inspiration."<sup>3</sup> More seriously, the Latin Vulgate was for centuries given similar authority by a large segment of the church, and also the ancient Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament has been given authority above the Semitic Old Testament in another portion of the church. Still further, in English some have given the 1769 edition of the King James Version such authority and this continues to the decades around 2000. We will examine each of the latter in turn.

For the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament into Greek, it is common tradition in the Orthodox churches to place that as more authoritative than the Old Testament in the Semitic languages.<sup>4</sup> The Septuagint is considered to be the official Old Testament among the Orthodox.<sup>5</sup> To some Greek-speaking Jewish circles, the Septuagint also took precedence over the Semitic Old Testament.<sup>6</sup> What is notable is that even among Greek-speaking Jews, only some of them gave precedence to the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament; others did not. That the church was not intended to separate from Judaism is evident from Paul's warnings against Christians engaging in anti-Judaic bigotry in Romans 11:17-27 on the basis that Gentile salvation branches from the Jewish roots. Paul also stated at Romans 10:12a "There is then no distinction between Jew and Greek, for they all belong to the same Lord" (NBV). Paul continued to identify himself as a Pharisee per Acts 23:6 and Philippians 3:5. Further, at James 2:2, the meeting place of the Christians of James 2:2 is called a "synagogue" in the Greek<sup>7</sup> -- συναγωγην. Hence, if some of even the Greek-reading/hearing Jews did not put the Septuagint above the Semitic Old Testament, it follows that this certainly was not to be the practice of the church as a whole.

Paul was an apostle. Paul was also a secretary-author of a major portion of the New Testament. Paul used both the Hebrew Old Testament text and the Greek Septuagint translation as a source for his quotes of the Old Testament.<sup>8</sup> Paul himself did not place the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament as his sole authority for Old Testament Scripture; often, he took the trouble to translate Hebrew into Greek for the benefit of his Greek-speaking audiences rather than quote what they were familiar with. It is important also to remember that Paul's epistles are Scripture according to 2 Peter 3:15-6, and therefore God is their ultimate Author. Hence, if God Himself did not see fit to attribute sole authority to the Septuagint for the Old Testament, no one should.

<sup>1</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>2</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas K. Kutilek in Beacham, Bauder, One Bible Only?, page 41-2.

<sup>4</sup> Ware, The Orthodox Church, page 200.

<sup>5</sup> Stamatias, Catechetical Handbook of the Eastern Orthodox Church, page 105.

<sup>6</sup> Müller, The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint, page 115.

<sup>7</sup> Open Bible, page 1226.

<sup>8</sup> Open Bible, page 1211.

Catholicism for centuries held the Latin Vulgate translation as the highest authority for Scripture. At the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent on April 8, 1546, Catholic authorities decreed of the Vulgate "no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever."<sup>1</sup> This is why the Douay-Rheims Version sometimes differs substantially from Bible translations direct from the original languages; it was a Catholic translation of the Latin Vulgate finished in 1610, and made changes to until 1752. This rule changed; in 1943 the bishop of Rome, who dictates official Catholic precepts, decreed in the encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu* that the original languages of Scripture take precedence.<sup>2</sup> This is why Catholic scholars now base their work on texts in the original languages.

A similar teaching extant as of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is that the English King James Version must have authority equal to or greater than the New Testament church's Scriptures.<sup>3n</sup> This is similar to a common view in the 1800's which held the German Luther Bible as a "second inspiration"<sup>4</sup> in German.<sup>5n</sup> In 1830 the Barren River Association distinguished Scripture "as translated by the authority of King James" to be "the only true rule of faith and practice."<sup>6</sup> Samuel Gipp conjectured about God "Just as He has shown in His choosing only **one** language for the Old Testament and only **one** language for the New Testament, He continued that practice by combining those two testaments in only **one** language."<sup>7</sup> Jeff McArdle writes "there never will be a King James Bible in the Spanish language. The King James Bible is superior to any book or Bible ever written and it will remain that way until Christ returns."<sup>8</sup> Peter Ruckman recognized discrepancies between the KJV and Greek New Testament, and wrote that the "AV 1611 text is to be preferred over any Greek text,"<sup>9</sup> "Where the Greek says one thing and the AV says another, throw out the Greek,"<sup>10</sup> that divergence is "advanced revelation" by the KJV,<sup>11</sup> and "a little English will clear up the obscurities in any Greek text."<sup>12</sup>

Recall that 2 Timothy 3:16-7a was written to the New Testament churches and says "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). The Greek word translated "complete" is *αρτιος* and means "perfectly fit"<sup>13</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>14</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). The New Testament church's Scriptures, which included the Palestinian Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, were entirely sufficient for the Christian and made the Christian "perfectly fit" and "entirely suited; complete." Any notion that the

<sup>1</sup> In Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, page 2:82.

<sup>2</sup> *Preface to the New American Bible, Old Testament*. New American Bible, copyright 1969, 1970, 1986, 1991 by Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. All rights reserved.

<sup>3</sup> The KJV is a good translation overall. Throughout this study, it is used as a translation of the Scriptures alongside numerous other translations in English and in other languages. Nonetheless, some people esteem it as much more, and the results are often harmful. Therefore, I will be discussing why these lavish esteems of the KJV are well beyond its due merits.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas K. Kutilek in Beacham, Bauder, *One Bible Only?*, page 41-2.

<sup>5</sup> The Luther Bible has disagreements with the King James Version. The 1545 Luther Bible has "mit deinen werken" = "with your works" at James 2:18 where the 1611 KJV has "without thy workes." It would be impossible, without extra-biblical speculation, to decide which translation would be inerrant, if either. The New Testament-era Bible text would be the verifiable authority between the two. This is fitting, as the New Testament-era church's Scriptures are final authority on any subject they address.

<sup>6</sup> Stauffer, *One Book Stands Alone*, page 275; emphases his.

<sup>7</sup> Gipp, *The Answer Book*, page 33.

<sup>8</sup> McArdle, *The Bible Believer's Guide to Elephant Hunting*, page 23; emphasis his.

<sup>9</sup> Ruckman, *The Christian's Guide to Manuscript Evidence*, page 137.

<sup>10</sup> Ruckman, *The Christian's Guide to Manuscript Evidence*, page 151.

<sup>11</sup> Ruckman, *The Christian's Guide to Manuscript Evidence*, page 139.

<sup>12</sup> Ruckman, *The Christian's Guide to Manuscript Evidence*, page 161.

<sup>13</sup> Friberg et al, *Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 76.

<sup>14</sup> In Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 54.

Latin Vulgate or English King James Version should take precedence over those Scriptures<sup>1n</sup> would require that those Scriptures were not enough for the Christian, which is biblically impossible.

Statements that are at best of questionable judgment are often advanced in this cause. D. A. Waite claims that at 1 John 4:3 "Leaving out 'Christ is come in the flesh' is a denial of His incarnation."<sup>2</sup> Gail Riplinger writes regarding 1 John 4:3 "By omitting 'Christ' and 'is come in the flesh,' new versions are not confessing that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh'; as John says, 'this is that spirit of antichrist.'"<sup>3</sup> Neither considers back just one verse to 1 John 4:2 which states very clearly "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (ASV). It is important to remember that the Bible came to us unversified; competent Bible study requires us to be able to examine whole passages of Scripture, and in the KJV, what is now 1 John 4:2-3 is only one sentence.

Similar inaccuracy is in dealing with foreign translations. Jeff McArdle claims regarding the Spanish Reina-Valera Revisión of 1960 at 2 Thessalonians 2:2 "the RVR 1960 removes the word 'Christ' and replaces it with 'Lord.'"<sup>4</sup> The KJV has "day of Christ" where the RVR 1909 and 1960 have "día del Señor" = "day of-the Lord." This is due to variance in Greek manuscripts; let us examine which reading the 1602 Valera followed: "dia del Señor" which is spelled presently "día del Señor"<sup>5n</sup> = "day of-the Lord." The RVR 1960 changes nothing in this regard; the RVR 1960 has the exact same text as the RVR 1909 which followed the RVR 1862 which followed the 1602 Valera Bible.

Similar statements include "the new versions are *more* difficult to read than the KJV" by Gail Riplinger based on a computer software tool.<sup>6</sup> Computers are not human readers. Let us compare John 3:16 in the KJV to a modern translation that existed in 1993, the year of her first book:

KJV "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

ICB-NCV<sup>7n</sup> "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life."

Honestly, if the child is dear to you personally, which translation would you want quoted to this child on this important verse when s/he is seriously listening to how to get to Heaven? To a nine year old child, there is a difference between "whosoever" and "whoever"; "everlasting" and "eternal"; "so loved the world" and "loved the world so much"; "perish" and "be lost." The KJV does not compare in readability to any translation into English as spoken in the 1900's and later.<sup>8n</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some twist 'weaker faith' passages to manipulate people to put the King James Version as the highest Bible authority. First, they seek to weaken the faith of believers; they seek to make the case that unless someone can see and hold a tangible perfect edition of the Scriptures, s/he can have no confidence in Scripture. That is the level of faith that prompted the idolatry of Exodus 32: they needed something tangible. Scripture repeatedly encourages strong faith, such as at Luke 7:9. Any effort to stunt or damage a valued quality of Christ's servants is wrong.

<sup>2</sup> Waite, Defending the King James Bible, page 160.

<sup>3</sup> Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, page 351.

<sup>4</sup> McArdle, The Bible Believer's Guide to Elephant Hunting, page 104.

<sup>5</sup> English changes too; 1 John 1:8 John Wycliffe-John Purvey Bible, Middle English 1395: "If we seien, that we han no synne, we disseyuen vs silf, and truethe is not in vs."\* = "If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive us self, and truth is not in us." Middle English had -n verb endings for plural subjects.

\*Reprint © 2006 The Bible Reader's Museum.

<sup>6</sup> Riplinger, New Age Bible Versions, page 3.

<sup>7</sup> Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible, New Century Version, © 1986 by Sweet Publishing, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. Used by permission. "ICB" in this study refers to the ICB of 1999 -- see bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding children's Christian education, this should be heeded about use of the King James Version, and use of high school reading level translations -- regardless of what is put on the book cover: if we do not make Scripture's teachings understandable to children, the carnal world stands very ready to make understandable to them its opposing teachings.

Blind fanaticism is common to this persuasion. We note William Grady, who wrote in a tirade about "papal armies" this about the 1620 Pilgrims: "Upon the Mayflower's landing in Cape Cod, an aquatic barrier of over 3,000 miles gave the church unprecedented protection and liberty."<sup>1</sup> The Pilgrims did not set sail to flee the Vatican; they left religious persecution<sup>2n</sup> by King James's England.

Conspiracy accusations are common among this persuasion. We note the conspiracy-laden words of KJV advocate Samuel Gipp who claims that the rule of manuscript evidence when the oldest manuscripts and majority of manuscripts differ is "Do what you want as long as you **do not** agree with the Authorized Version."<sup>3</sup> If this was true, all of the modern translations into English would have a mention of the "Pharisees" at Matthew 27:41, but this is not the case. More seriously, he charges of the translators of the New American Standard Bible at James 5:16

"The Greek word translated 'faults' in the King James Bible (paraptomata) is found in manuscripts E, F, G, H, S, V, Y, and Omega plus the rest of the Receptus family and the greater number of all remaining witnesses. Nestle's text inserts 'sins' (tax amartias) with **no** manuscript authority. The misguided men of the Lockman Foundation accept it with no evidence, no resistance and no questions. Perhaps there are more Jesuits lurking in the shadows than we think! Anyone accepting an alternate reading with no evidence **cannot** be credited with acting ethically or scholarly."<sup>4</sup>

The clauses "**no** manuscript authority" and "no evidence" are completely untrue. *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* did report the manuscript evidence: the Greek word transliterated *amartias* is found at James 5:16 in manuscripts Aleph, B, and A.<sup>5</sup> Here, the common Jesuit conspiracy theory is referred to,<sup>6n</sup> and the ethics and competence of translators who consider multiple sources of information<sup>7n</sup> are both reviled untruthfully.

Gail Riplinger is more aggressive in such tactics. One method she uses is misquotation. Of John Burgon, she 'quotes' "'I have convinced myself by laborious collation that they are the most corrupt of all. They are the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated and intentional perversions of truth which are discoverable in any copies of the word of God. They exhibit a fabricated text...[and are] shamefully mutilated.'"<sup>8</sup> The substantiating endnote: "The Revision Revised, pp. 16, 520, 318."<sup>9</sup> The problem is that the ellipses imply that these words are quoted in the order of original writing, but "shamefully mutilated" comes *BEFORE* the rest of the quoted words in J. Burgon's *Revision Revised* -- not after. This is not a valid quote because there are chapters upon chapters between the first two extracts and they are not part of the same immediate train of thought, and further the quoted words are out of order. In another place, she has "Carson, a KJV detractor who felt 10% of its readings were late"<sup>10</sup> with substantiating endnote "*The King James Version Debate*, p. 111."<sup>11</sup> This is inaccurate; D. A. Carson was referring to E. F. Hills contends that only about 10% of the Byzantine readings are really late" on page 111 of his book *The King James Version Debate*.<sup>12</sup> Many in the 'supremacy of the King James Version' movement consider G. A.

<sup>1</sup> Grady, *Final Authority*, page 320.

<sup>2</sup> I learned about persecution for not joining the Church of England in 2nd grade fall 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Gipp, *Gipp's Understandable History of the Bible*, page 338; emphases his.

<sup>4</sup> Gipp, *Gipp's Understandable History of the Bible*, page 344; emphases his.

<sup>5</sup> Hodges, Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, page 686.

<sup>6</sup> This is the fear that the Jesuit order of Catholic priests is trying to influence non-Catholics to corrupt Bible translations to be favorable to Roman Catholicism.

<sup>7</sup> *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* was first printed in 1982, so early editions of the NASB would not have used it, but there were sources besides the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* for manuscript information.

<sup>8</sup> Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, page 546 – ellipsis and brackets hers.

<sup>9</sup> Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, page 686.

<sup>10</sup> Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, page 484.

<sup>11</sup> Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, page 682.

<sup>12</sup> D. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, page 111.

Riplinger's tabloid-style journalism an embarrassment, but many others consider her a hero to be praised lavishly<sup>1n</sup> and to be invited to write articles to contribute to books edited by other authors.

David Cloud and Gail Riplinger submitted articles in Mickey Carter's *The Elephant in the Living Room*. In this book, Gail Riplinger claims that the Spanish upper case name "Lucero" at Isaiah 14:12 is the same as lower case "lucero" at 2 Peter 1:19.<sup>2</sup> Cases matter as much in Spanish as they do in English.<sup>3n</sup> My childhood cat was named Princess, but when I talk about a specific human princess, I am not calling her my childhood cat. Capitalization makes as much difference in Spanish as in modern English. David Cloud writes "**I am convinced that the KJV and the distinctive edition of the TR underlying it is the unreserved Word of God, and one way or the other every foreign language translation needs to be brought to this Touchstone.**"<sup>4</sup> As we have observed in *Part 1/Deciding the Text of Scripture - Part III of III*, the modern "Textus Receptus" = "TR" underlying the KJV did not exist before 1881, when it was edited according to the 1611 KJV as a matter of historical inquiry. D. Cloud's position holds that the authority for determining the original Greek text must be the KJV, and that that would place the KJV as ultimate biblical authority.

The Mormon/"Latter Day Saint" *Articles of Faith* in *The Pearl of Great Price* has "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly"; this centralizes the translation as the Bible.<sup>5n</sup> Timothy Morton wrote regarding the family of Greek texts underneath the King James Version "A Bible believer does not believe the *Received Text* (which was written in what is now a dead language) to be his final authority. He believes the Bible God has given him in his OWN language."<sup>6</sup> In essence, the "Bible believer" is to place the English translation above the Greek text. We recall Jeff McArdle's statement "there never will be a King James Bible in the Spanish language. The King James Bible is superior to any book or Bible ever written and it will remain that way until Christ returns."<sup>7</sup> We take this also to mean that the King James Version is held to be superior to even the Greek New Testament, and this is suggested when he says in the same paragraph and on the same page "Spain was rejected *by God* from producing the one Book that He wanted to use in the last days as final authority."<sup>8</sup> We recall David Cloud who believes that a foreign translation

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<sup>1</sup> In 1996 Gail Riplinger was given an Honorary Doctorate at Hyles-Anderson Bible College,\* an unaccredited college in Indiana. For the 2006-7 year, mathematics course "MA 101" was officially designated "A course designed for education majors with a weakness in mathematics. It includes simple arithmetic, fractions, decimals, percent, proportions, word problems, properties of real numbers, exponents, and introduction to algebra. Applications are stressed."<sup>†</sup> The next "Algebra" course is MA 210.<sup>†</sup> Among accredited colleges in Indiana, courses that are predominantly reviews of sub-algebra arithmetic are 0-hundred level, and above-basic algebra is 100-level. The rationale is that math is a standard requirement in schools, Algebra 1 is the standard math course in high school, and so college credit earners should be able to at least exceed such a standard either immediately or after preparatory courses. Such low academic standards of the institution are unbecoming accreditation as a college.

\*In Carter, *The Elephant in the Living Room*, page 109.

<sup>†</sup> Hyles-Anderson College 2006-7, page 102;

<<http://www.hylesanderson.com/pdfs/haccatalog2006-2007.pdf>> November 13, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> In Carter, *The Elephant in the Living Room*, pages 67-8.

<sup>3</sup> As for G. Riplinger's knowledge of Spanish shown in that book, it is at best highly unlikely that she wrote the corresponding article in the Spanish edition *El Elefante en la Sala*. No translator of this book is specified, and no Spanish-reading person would be aware from the book itself that it is an effort of English-speaking people.

<sup>4</sup> In Carter, *The Elephant in the Living Room*, page 91; emphasis his.

<sup>5</sup> Latter-Day Saint = LDS author Stephen E. Robinson says "the King James Bible is the LDS Bible."\* This affects English *ONLY*; some foreign Bibles are approved.<sup>†</sup>

\* Blomberg, Robinson, *How Wide the Divide?*, page 59.

<sup>†</sup> Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, page 149.

<sup>6</sup> Morton, *Which Bible Should You Trust?*, page 45.

<sup>7</sup> McArdle, *The Bible Believer's Guide to Elephant Hunting*, page 23.

<sup>8</sup> McArdle, *The Bible Believer's Guide to Elephant Hunting*, page 23; emphasis his.

must be altered according to the Greek text edited according to the King James Version. We recall that Peter Ruckman wrote "a little English will clear up the obscurities in any Greek text."<sup>1</sup>

At 1 Corinthians 14:33a the 1611 edition of the KJV has "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" with margin note "†Gr. tumult, or vnquietness." The KJV translators themselves indicate divergence between the Greek they were translating versus wording they chose.

Are English-reading Christians the first to have Scripture? What was Jesus referring to when He spoke John 10:35b "a Escritura não pode falhar" (ARA) = "the Scripture no/not <=> it-can fail" translated more directly "as Escrituras Sagradas sempre dizem a verdade" (NTLH) = "the Scriptures Sacred always they-say the truth"? What was Paul referring to when he wrote 2 Timothy 3:16a? Clearly, Scripture existed before English began to exist centuries later in the late first millennium.

Paul at 2 Timothy 3:16-7a wrote in Greek "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV); ἀρτιος "complete" means "perfectly fit"<sup>2</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>3</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17 can be translated regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). No further revelation was needed. We needed no "Joseph Smith Translation" to be adopted into a new Scripture called *The Pearl of Great Price*, and nor the KJV to help us decide what Greek New Testament text to translate, nor the KJV to "clear up the obscurities in" the Greek text given to the New Testament church. The New Testament church's Scriptures were all-sufficient then and always. To assert otherwise is to go against the Scriptures of the New Testament church led by the Lord Jesus Christ's Personally-commissioned apostles.

About the KJV in relation to foreign language translations, some boast the KJV must *a priori* be more reliable than any foreign language translation. As seen in essays on the Greek New Testament text, the KJV differs in underlying Greek text from older foreign language translations. How do we know, without extrabiblical speculation, that God would give any one language-culture a Bible translation to be above all other language-cultures' Bible translations, and if He would, which language? 1 Corinthians 4:6 records a New Testament church precept το μη υπερα γεγραπται literally

1. "el no sobre lo que está escrito"<sup>4</sup> = "the not over it that it-is written."
2. "the not beyond what has been written."<sup>5</sup>

This was a New Testament church maxim with a name. 2 Timothy 3:16-7a written to the New Testament church in Greek is translated "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). The Greek word translated "complete" is ἀρτιος and means "perfectly fit"<sup>6</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>7</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). That New Testament church maxim of 1 Corinthians 4:6 fits in the context of 2 Timothy 3:16-7a and is sufficient for all time. We are not to speculate beyond the Scriptures in areas of asserted doctrine or mandated practice/non-practice. The assertion that one post-New Testament language-culture's Bible translation is divinely appointed to have all other language-culture's Bible translations subject to it is an asserted doctrine outside of Scripture, and further to assert that people should actually place one language-culture's Bible translations in subjection to another *a priori* is a mandated practice in violation of that New Testament church maxim. If a doctrine or practice/non-practice cannot be shown from the New Testament church's Scriptures alone, it cannot be asserted.

<sup>1</sup> Ruckman, *The Christian's Guide to Manuscript Evidence*, page 161.

<sup>2</sup> Friberg et al, *Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 76.

<sup>3</sup> In Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 54.

<sup>4</sup> Lacueva, *Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español*, page 665.

<sup>5</sup> McReynolds, *Word Study Greek-English New Testament*, page 603.

Word by word: το = "the," μη = "not," υπερα = "beyond," α = "what," γεγραπται = "has been written."

<sup>6</sup> Friberg et al, *Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament*, page 76.

<sup>7</sup> In Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, page 54.

The New Testament church's Scriptures were the Scriptures of church under the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ's apostles whom He commissioned Personally. This should keep anyone from placing any later translation of those Scriptures on a plane equal to or higher than those Scriptures.

Eliminating Proposed Competition to Scripture – Part 2 of 3: Other Sources

It is a common fad in decades around 2000 to discuss "oral traditions" to seek 'more accurate' renditions of Jesus' sayings by conjecturing back through "oral traditions."<sup>1n</sup> It is true that Jesus' sayings were passed on orally, but that certainly does not mean Scripture is not 'accurate enough.'

After Jesus Christ instituted His church, His sayings were passed on, but also written down, and accounts about Him and the origins of His church were written. To open up Luke-Acts, Luke 1:1 reports "many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us" (RSV 1952) to open up the gospel of Luke and the church history of Acts.

Early church records teem of traces of such things. The New Testament gospels include Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The origins of Matthew are mysterious; Papias from the 130's/140's C.E. reported that "So Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language and each person translated them as best he could"<sup>2</sup> – a sayings document.<sup>3n</sup> The gospel of Matthew we have in the New Testament is in Greek, and does not seem to be a translation of an Aramaic document either.<sup>4</sup>

The undivided testimony of the early church is that Matthew wrote first.<sup>5</sup> The Greek texts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often too similar to be likely coincidental; this is called the Synoptic Problem. One theory has Mark as a source for the other two. There are reasons for this. For instance, in most variances of wording, Matthew and Mark go together or Luke and Mark go together.<sup>6</sup> Also, for events Mark records, Matthew and Luke often have the same order, never leave Mark's sequence together,<sup>7</sup> and for non-Mark material their orders vary.<sup>8</sup> The gospels never claim to be chronological; in ancient times, rearranging Jesus' sayings into sermons was acceptable biography.<sup>9</sup> The evidence is not total: sometimes Matthew and Luke share closer wording to each other than to Mark.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The depths some Bible deniers will go into speculation can rarely be underestimated. For instance, manuscript P52 of John has long been dated early 100's. To push the date of John up to 120 C.E., it is conjectured that there were multiple layered forms of it\* -- even though only one form is extant or reported from antiquity.

There are two forgeries called "Gospel of Thomas." One claims to narrate Christ's childhood. The other is a forgery made by Gnostics. It is widely-accepted that the Gnostic forgery dates from c.100 or later. However, some seek to give this document equal credibility to Scripture's four gospels, so they propose that there was a "first edition" of this written between 50 and 70 C.E.<sup>†</sup> that underlies the forgery known now. Among discovered archaeological manuscripts, and in historical records, the only Gnostic "Gospel of Thomas" forgery is the "edition" known now.

There is a theory with THREE(!) "Proto-Mark" before the only Mark<sup>‡</sup> extant or historically recorded. Unlike real scholarship, Bible-skeptical "scholarship" takes great liberty in making fanciful conjectures without real evidence, and they are accepted in the same spirit and built upon. Real scholarship requires evidence.

\* L. White, From Jesus to Christianity, page 307.

† Harris, Understanding the Bible, page 397.

‡ Burkett, Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity, page 147.

<sup>2</sup> In Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, page 569.

<sup>3</sup> This was not an Aramaic gospel among Nazorean Jewish-Christians. That had narratives over Jesus' whole earthly life with additions in comparison to the gospel of Matthew.\*

\*Klijn, Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition, page 37.

<sup>4</sup> Open Bible, page 937.

<sup>5</sup> In Criswell, Believer's Study Bible, page 1326.

<sup>6</sup> Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, page 162.

<sup>7</sup> Gundry, A Survey of the New Testament, page 97.

<sup>8</sup> Feine, Behm, Introduction to the New Testament, page 52.

<sup>9</sup> Schenck, Jesus Is Lord: An Introduction to the New Testament, page 221.

<sup>10</sup> Streeter, The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins, page 168; Koester, Ancient Christian Gospels, page 279.

Most New Testament scholars believe that the gospels of Matthew and Luke were composed using the gospel of Mark and a source they call "Q" from German "quelle"; this Q-source is not manuscript Q Codex Guelferbytanus, which is a real manuscript of the New Testament from c. 400 C.E.. This Q-source is thought to be a first-century document composed of material common to Matthew and Luke but not in Mark; it is considered lost, and attempted reconstructions are many and conjectural. This conjectured lost source is unneeded.

Luke 1:1 reports "many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us" (RSV 1952) to open the gospel of Luke and the church history of Acts. Per Luke 1:1, records of Christian beginnings were plentiful in the New Testament era. The conjectured Q-source is mostly sayings but has a little narrative.<sup>1</sup> Papias's 130's/140's C.E. statement about an Aramaic document that Matthew wrote described the document as "oracles," meaning 'utterances' or 'sayings.' We can replace the conjectured Q-source with the historically-attested document.

It has been suggested that Luke and the gospel of Matthew had as sources an earlier edition of Matthew and a list of sayings, both of which were written in Aramaic and translated into Greek.<sup>2</sup> A reason for this is that Luke and the author of the present gospel of Matthew each handled the list of sayings differently.<sup>3</sup> It has also been suggested that Mark used an older form of Matthew.<sup>4</sup> Matthew and Mark are most similar in order and wording overall.<sup>5</sup> The bulk of material unique to Matthew is sayings but there is some narrative,<sup>6</sup> as is the case for the conjectured Q-source. The mostly-narrative biographical portions of proposed "Q material" are in the same orders in both Matthew and Luke.<sup>7</sup> A substantial amount of "Q material" in Luke shows translation Greek.<sup>8</sup> The conjectured Q-source has been shown from linguistic analysis to have been originally in Aramaic.<sup>9</sup> The bulk of material in the conjectured Q-source and the bulk of material unique to the gospel of Matthew are mostly sayings with some narrative. It is best not to propose much of a plurality of ancient writings, as Jewish culture had an aversion to literary composition.<sup>10</sup> I suggest that the conjectured Q-source and the material unique to Matthew were all encompassed in one document written in Aramaic.

Interestingly, in Luke 10-19, speeches of Jesus were in a different order between Matthew and Luke, but the sayings within the speeches were mostly in the same order.<sup>11</sup> There is language and linguistic style that is found repeatedly in Matthew but only found in Luke when Luke is paralleling Matthew.<sup>12</sup> This suggests that Luke was following Matthew or a document similar to it.<sup>13</sup>

There are numerous aspects of the Marcan-priority + Q hypothesis as commonly accepted among New Testament scholars that are problematic. Mark wrote in a very simplified form of Greek so that anyone with minimal Greek functionality could have understood it.<sup>14</sup> Certainly Mark was written very early, as the Greek style in it is cruder than in Matthew or Luke.<sup>15</sup> There are hints that he was modifying material from Matthew or an earlier version of it. For instance, everyone would agree that Jesus Christ was Jewish and that His earthly ministry was mainly directed towards Jews living in

<sup>1</sup> First seen by the study's author in Mack, The Lost Gospel: Q and Christian Origins; other interesting reconstructions studied by the study's author: R. Miller, Complete Gospels and Kloppenborg, Q Parallels.

<sup>2</sup> In Wansbrough, The New Jerusalem Bible, pages 1601-2.

<sup>3</sup> In Wansbrough, The New Jerusalem Bible, page 1601.

<sup>4</sup> Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, page 138.

<sup>5</sup> Schenck, Jesus Is Lord: An Introduction to the New Testament, page 222.

<sup>6</sup> Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, pages 160, 164-6.

<sup>7</sup> Based on reconstructions in R. Miller, Complete Gospels and Kloppenborg, Q Parallels.

<sup>8</sup> Martin, Studies in the Life and Ministry of the Historical Jesus, page 81.

<sup>9</sup> Duling, Perrin, The New Testament, page 14.

<sup>10</sup> Goodspeed, An Introduction to the New Testament, page 153.

<sup>11</sup> In McNicol et al, Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's Use of Matthew, page 21.

<sup>12</sup> In McNicol et al, Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's Use of Matthew, pages 22-4.

<sup>13</sup> In McNicol et al, Beyond the Q Impasse: Luke's Use of Matthew, pages 22-4.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Ann Tolbert's essay in New Interpreter's Study Bible, page 1802.

<sup>15</sup> C. Clifton Black's essay in Meeks, The HarperCollins Study Bible, page 1916.



Jewish territory. As Mark relates material found in Matthew, he consistently omits material relevant to Jews that is present in the gospel of Matthew.<sup>1</sup> It is more likely that the Jewish material was there and omitted, rather than posit that the Jewish material was added. The linguistic substratum of Matthew is deeply Semitic, but this substratum is reduced in Mark.<sup>2</sup> Further, there are cases where a passage in Mark relates material that is out of place, but that same material was in Matthew fitting integrally within a context.<sup>3</sup> While it is apparent that the gospel of Matthew used Mark when it was composed, it is apparent that Mark was drawing from a Matthew-like document.

I suggest Matthew wrote a primitive writing in Aramaic that was a narrative of Jesus Christ's life and teaching ministry with an addendum of mostly sayings. Recall that this would have been one of the first efforts to put the life and ministry of Jesus Christ into writing. There is good reason to expect such a document to be primitive compared to the New Testament gospels. I suggest Matthew wrote a narrative account of Jesus Christ's life and ministry in Aramaic, then appended some additional sayings of Jesus Christ. When this document was finished, it was translated into Greek.

One translation<sup>4n</sup> was used by Mark as the primary source for his gospel of Mark. Luke then used the gospel of Mark as the narrative frame for Luke-Acts, and he inserted extracts from the same translation to make a more thorough account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. To be sure, Luke 1:1 reports "many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us" (RSV 1952) and we can expect that Luke used the good fruits of such labors. Still, Luke made most use of Mark and a Greek translation of Matthew's Aramaic document.

Finally, someone else took the same translation and inserted extracts into, and sometimes over, Mark's gospel and edited the compilation to make an 'improved' gospel of Matthew that would compare with the other New Testament gospels.<sup>5n</sup> Notice that for the most part, extracts of the translation were inserted into Mark's narrative, but sometimes extracts of the translation were inserted over Mark's gospel. The narrative framework and main body of wording would have been the gospel of Mark, but the translation of Matthew's Aramaic document would have been richly deposited therein. The early church continued to attribute it to Matthew. It is possible they did this because they felt that the work was based so much on Matthew's work that he should rightfully be attributed authorship. They might have done this to enhance its authenticity, or for both reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> Pierson Parker's essay in Farmer, New Synoptic Studies, page 80.

<sup>2</sup> B. C. Butler's essay in Bellinzoni, The Two-Source Hypothesis: A Critical Appraisal, page 115.

<sup>3</sup> Pierson Parker's essay in Farmer, New Synoptic Studies, page 98.

<sup>4</sup> Existence of more than one translation of Matthew's Aramaic document is possible. An anonymous early homily presently called *2 Clement* from Egypt quotes Luke closely in Greek, but when it cites Matthew material, the Greek differs much more.\* It could be that *2 Clement* quotes another translation of Matthew's Aramaic writing used among the southern church. On the other hand, the anonymous traditionally-called *Epistle of Barnabas* also from Egypt seems to have quoted the gospel of Matthew as we have it.

\*Noted from parallels from: Koester, Ancient Christian Gospels, pages 351-8.

<sup>5</sup> There was an Aramaic gospel used among Hebrew Christians called the *Gospel of the Nazoreans*. This *Gospel of the Nazoreans* does not survive in manuscript form; it is known to us only from quotations and reports from early church writers. According to early church writers, it was similar to Matthew but had some differences. The association between the apostle Matthew, the existence of an Aramaic document that he wrote, the gospel of Matthew, and this *Gospel of the Nazoreans* certainly raises questions about their relationship.

The *Gospel of the Nazoreans* may have then been made using the original Aramaic document of Matthew as well as the gospel of Matthew. The *Gospel of the Nazoreans* certainly had expansions on the gospel of Matthew which likely did not originate with Matthew. Still, due to how similar early church writers reported it to be to the gospel of Matthew, it may have been made mainly by translating the gospel of Matthew into Aramaic. It is possible that in some places, rather than translating the gospel of Matthew into Aramaic as normal, the compiler used Matthew's original Aramaic writing instead.

The gospel of Matthew never claims Matthew as author. All four Scripture gospels were written anonymously. This was possibly to avoid focus on them as secretary-author, and keep the readers'/hearers' focus instead on the subject: Jesus Christ. Authenticity does not depend upon Matthew being author of the gospel of Matthew.

The model described above explains how the gospel of Matthew became associated so much with an Aramaic writing Matthew composed. It explains why the material of Mark appears in substantially the same order in both Matthew and Luke, while most material common to just Matthew and Luke varies widely in order. It explains why the small portions of primarily-narrative biographical material common to just Matthew and Luke have the same order. It explains why in wording Matthew and Luke both match Mark, or normally either Matthew or Luke matches Mark – and why there are instances that Matthew and Luke have matching wording against Mark, and why Mark and Luke sometimes show hints of drawing from Matthew. It explains signs of Aramaic origins of Matthew, and it stays within the parameters of documents for which there is real evidence.

We determined that while the gospel of Matthew is intimately connected to something Matthew wrote, the gospel of Matthew was not written by Matthew. Is the gospel of Matthew Scripture? Yes it is. Polycarp was a student of the apostle John. Polycarp quotes both parts of Ephesians 4:26 as "Scripture" at *Polycarp to Philipppians* 12:1. At 2:3, Polycarp has "Judge not, that you be not judged"<sup>1</sup> which is an exact match of Matthew 7:1 (RSV 1952). The Greek is exactly the same also: Μη κρινετε ινα μη κριθητε which is different from the parallel in Luke. The apostle John's student Polycarp recognized the gospel of Matthew as we have it as Scripture, continuing what was handed down to him from proper authority in the New Testament church.

The existence of slightly varying accounts of Jesus Christ's earthly ministry has caused some people to believe that they need to get 'behind' the New Testament gospels to get to the 'real Jesus' to learn His 'real' teachings.<sup>2n</sup> This is not biblically warranted. 2 Timothy 3:16a says "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV). The Greek word translated "Scriptures" is γραφη,<sup>3</sup> means "what has been written,"<sup>4</sup> and refers to the text of written documents.<sup>5</sup> Whatever was said during Christ's earthly ministry, whatever God's written Word has is a 100% reliable and authoritative representation of what was intended to be communicated. There may be some merit to 'seeking behind the texts' for academic historical curiosity, but "what has been written" is most authoritative for Christian teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers*, page 132.

<sup>2</sup> It needs to be pointed out that a lot of these people are enemies of Christianity. They might claim church affiliation -- but the aims of their materials are to get people to think less highly of Him than Scripture teaches.

There are many authors who fully honor Jesus Christ but write things that would make people doubt Scripture. I do not agree that there is any good basis to deny the accuracy of any part of Scripture, and consider doing so to be very unsafe. Still, a person can be a skeptic of Scripture without denigrating Jesus Christ.

Other authors go beyond trying to get people to deny Scripture: they try to convince people to think less highly of Jesus Christ than what is right. To gain undeserved credibility for their materials, some of these allege church affiliation. For instance, John Shelby Spong, while presuming a role as an Anglican clergyman, described "the Christ story" as "the mythological tale that begins with a virgin birth and ends with a cosmic victory over death."\* He also wrote "a supernatural redeemer who enters our fallen world to restore creation is a theistic myth."\*\*

Here is a good rule to always remember: whatever the author claims, if what you are reading tries to convince you to think less highly of Jesus Christ than Scripture teaches, the author is not providing a 'Christian service.'

\* Spong, *Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism*, page 236.

\*\* Spong, *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, page 99.

<sup>3</sup> Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, pages *Concordance* 1176, *Greek Dictionary* 20; Young, *Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, page *Analytical* 844

<sup>4</sup> Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words*, page 544.

<sup>5</sup> Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, page *Greek Dictionary* 20; Vine et al, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary*, page 552 NT.

### Eliminating Proposed Competition to Scripture – Part 3 of 3: People

No mortal concept can match God's thoughts in God's written Word. At Psalm 138:2b God wrote to Himself "You have exalted Your name, Your word, above all" (JPS 1985) including human:

- writings,
- religious teachings,
- traditions,
- philosophies or theories
- interpretations of the physical universe, of the past or archaeological and historical sources, or of experience
- or any other mortal concepts, whether from individuals or group consensus.

A Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah 55:9 retains text lost in the Masoretic Text which reports God saying "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."<sup>1</sup> Those who hallow Scripture above all else besides God share God's appraisal of Scripture; those who do not do so reject God's counsel. If any belief system disregards Scripture or does not put it first, and comes to conclusions that oppose Scripture, then it is wrong in such cases.

Notions that the Bible may not always be authoritative are only a recent idea in the church.<sup>2n</sup> Non-fundamentalist historian David Katz candidly admitted in the opening years of the 21st century regarding modern biblical fundamentalism and the 1500's Protestant Reformation "Fundamentalists are actually those whose theological position is closest to the message of the Protestant revolution, while we are the ones who have gone...."<sup>3</sup> As far back as the late first century, *1 Clement* 45:2 has "You have searched the Scriptures, which are true, which were given by the Holy Spirit."<sup>4</sup>

The Scriptures should not be placed among the mythological writings of ancient religions existing simultaneously to Judaism and Christianity. God's disdain for myths is seen in 2 Timothy 4:4 "They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to | myths" (HCSB | TNIV), Titus 1:14 "not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth" (NASB).<sup>5n</sup> 2 Peter 1:16 has "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths" (ESV) and 1:20 has "no prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation" (ConfV) per the Latin Vulgate, and direct from the Greek "no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation" (ESV). God's disdain for myths is shown in Scripture, making it evident He would exclude them in His Word.

The Lord did not intend for His Word to ever be doubted by His people. At Psalm 119:160a God wrote to Himself "The entirety of | your words | is truth."<sup>6</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ is translated

<sup>1</sup> Abegg, et al, The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, page 362.

<sup>2</sup> Biased opposition to Scripture does exist. For instance, in the 1800's "German scholars gathered arguments in favor of pseudonymous origin" of Ephesians.\* They made a specific effort to make a case against Ephesians being written by Paul, despite what it says. Such efforts are common in some circles of "Bible scholars."

Sadly, this has affected Bible publication. Some Bible translations reflect a perspective that Scripture's message is not of utmost truth. Examples include the *New American Bible* -- NOT the NASB -- and the *New Revised Standard Version* which both render Genesis 1:6 to portray the sky as a mythological "dome" covering a flat earth, rather than translate the Hebrew for our sky as "expanse" (JPS 1985, NASB, others) or similar as most naturally fitting what our sky is and what is conveyed by Hebrew.

Some "study Bibles" have notes/articles denying Scripture's truth value. For instance, one says of 200's C.E. enemy of Christianity Porphyry and his redating of Daniel to the 160's B.C.E. this: he "appears to have been a more serious scholar of the Bible" and "his general view is the one accepted by modern scholars" -- praising an enemy of Christianity and claiming a modern consensus on this that is nonexistent.

Wanton disrespect of God Himself has reached Bible publishing: "let us protest against God and demand that God consider alternatives" appears in a "Study Bible."

\* In Metzger, Coogan, The Oxford Companion to the Bible, page 186.

\*\* Elizabeth A. Clark article in Suggs, et al, The Oxford Study Bible, page \*133.

^\* Nancy R. Bowen in The Discipleship Study Bible, page 111.

<sup>3</sup> Katz, God's Last Words: Reading the English Bible from the Reformation to Fundamentalism, page 315.

<sup>4</sup> In Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, page 79.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of "myths": fanciful tales found in ancient extrabiblical Jewish writings.

<sup>6</sup> NKJV|Abegg, et al, The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, page 567|NKJV; passage noted by Prince, Spirit-Filled Believer's Handbook, page 44.

translated into Portuguese at John 10:35b as saying "a Escritura não pode falhar" (ARA) = "the Scripture no/not <=> it-can fail"; it cannot fail to be accurate, and is also translated more directly "as Escrituras Sagradas sempre dizem a verdade" (NTLH) = "the Scriptures Sacred always they-say the truth." If one truly considers Jesus Christ to be Lord, then s/he must live by His decrees.

It has been alleged that those who believe the Bible in all details are idolaters to the Bible. In the early 1900's Bible-believer theologian Howard Crosby observed "we worship no book. We do worship God who sent the Book, and it is no true worship of God that slights the Book which He gives."<sup>1</sup> In reality, those rejecting Scripture reject God as He has revealed Himself; they turn instead either to no God, or to false images of the Divine crafted by human minds -- which is true idolatry, however unwitting and unintentional it may be, including among Christians.

We turn now to the most disappointing aspect of proposed competition to Scripture accepted by Christians: church people claiming authority equal to or above Scripture. Examples:

- Catholic Philip St. Romain "Catholics also recognize sacred Tradition to be an authentic source of Christian understanding" and "Examples of basic forms of Tradition are the Bible..."<sup>2,3n</sup>
- Catholic Alan Schreck "...writings that we now call the New Testament were initially part of the `apostolic tradition,..."<sup>4</sup>
- Catholic David Armstrong "The Bible is part of a Tradition larger than itself."<sup>5</sup>
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* 83 "...the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition"<sup>6</sup>  
"...el Nuevo Testamento mismo atestigua el proceso de la Tradición viva"<sup>7</sup> = "the New Testament itself it-attests the process of the Tradition ↔ living."
- Catholic Robert Witherup "Read the Scripture within 'the living Tradition of the whole Church.'"<sup>8</sup>
- Catholic Anthony Gilles "...we can't read the New Testament outside of the context of this same communal life of God's people – his Church."<sup>9</sup>
- Orthodox Marc Dunaway "The Bible should not be seen as something outside of the church's tradition, but *as part of it.*"<sup>10</sup>
- Orthodox Peter Gillquist The church should "shed the light of holy tradition on those chapters and verses."<sup>11</sup>
- Orthodox Nikolai Velimirovic "...the Scriptures can only be interpreted within the Tradition."<sup>12</sup>
- *Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church* 24 Church tradition is "a guide to the right understanding of holy Scripture."<sup>13</sup>

Similar is expressed in Catholic Robert Fox 's claim that Scripture came "through the authority of the Church and Tradition."<sup>14</sup> U. S. Catholic bishops write "Scripture alone is insufficient. Authoritative

<sup>1</sup> In Torrey, The Fundamentals, page 2:171.

<sup>2</sup> St. Romain, Catholic Answers to Fundamentalists' Questions, page 9.

<sup>3</sup> Same book: "The author of Genesis 1, for example, borrowed heavily from Mesopotamian mythology for his creation account" (pg. 14), which associates Genesis 1 with unactual myths. Such treatment of Scripture is common in approved Catholic writings. Inconsistently, it is not that way regarding the Vatican's extrabiblical "Tradition."

<sup>4</sup> Schreck, Catholic & Christian, page 52.

<sup>5</sup> Armstrong, A Biblical Defense of Catholicism, page 5.

<sup>6</sup> English translation from Latin: Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 26.

<sup>7</sup> Spanish translation from Latin: Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica, page 24.

<sup>8</sup> Witherup, Biblical Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Should Know, page 44.

<sup>9</sup> Gilles, Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Needs to Know, page 40.

<sup>10</sup> Dunaway, Orthodox Answers to Frequently Asked Questions, page 27; emphasis his.

<sup>11</sup> Gillquist, Becoming Orthodox, page 71.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Gregory, The Church, Tradition, Scripture, Truth, and Christian Life, page 12.

<sup>13</sup> In Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, page 2:449.

<sup>14</sup> Fox, Protestant Fundamentalism and the Born-Again Catholic, page 47.

teaching is also needed."<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Vatican decreed "an authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the church alone"<sup>2</sup> at *Dei Verbum* 10. Orthodox Frank Schaeffer wrote that the church alone provides context to even begin proper interpretation of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Catholic Karl Keating suggested that the basis for believing the authority of Scripture is the church telling us to.<sup>4</sup> The Catholic Vatican decreed "sacred tradition, sacred scripture and the magisterium of the church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others"<sup>5</sup> at *Dei Verbum* 10.

Both Catholicism and Orthodoxy hold Scripture as insufficient; the church is held to be needed.<sup>6n</sup> Paul at 2 Timothy 3:16-7a wrote in Greek "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for | doctrine |, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). Greek αρτιος translated "complete" means "perfectly fit"<sup>7</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>8</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). The New Testament church's Scriptures are all an individual Christian needs to be able to serve fully and at optimum capacity.

The church's relationship to the truth is defined at 1 Timothy 3:15 where the church is called "the pillar and support of the truth" (NASB).<sup>9</sup> The church is in a position to uphold the truth provided it, but never to decide it. To state otherwise is to go against the New Testament church maxim at 1 Corinthians 4:6 in Greek called "το μη υπερ α γεγραπται" literally translated

1. "el no sobre lo que está escrito" <sup>10</sup> = "the not over it that it-is written."
2. "the not beyond what has been written." <sup>11</sup>

If the church is specified to uphold the truth, and no mention is made in the New Testament church's Scriptures of the church determining truth, then it follows that holding the church as determiner of truth is against the New Testament church's Scriptures.

The most common effort to convince people to accept the church over Scripture is that the 397 C.E. Council of Carthage shared by what is now the Orthodox and Catholic bodies determined the New Testament list of books that most Christians accept at present. The Syriac church has a shorter list and the Ethiopic church has a longer list,<sup>12</sup> but most of the Christian world adheres to the fourth century

Does John 16:13a Promise Inerrant Church Leaders?

Jesus said to His apostles "When the Spirit of Truth comes, however, He will guide you into all truth" (NBV). Many Orthodox and Catholics think this means the Spirit would guide their respective leaders to legislate church teaching inerrantly.

This was likely reported to show credibility of the apostles in response to the rebellion alluded to in 3 John. Titus 3:8a-9b says that Christians ought to "be careful to devote themselves to good |deeds|. These things are good and profitable unto |people|: but shun foolish questionings" (ESV|NLT 1996, RSV 1952|ASV|ESV|ASV). Even if John 16:13a was to apply beyond the apostles, not all "questionings" are approved – any unrelated to "good deeds" are not. This means "guide" plus "into all truth" would not necessarily extend to every single curiosity that any church influencer ever had; "into all truth" is on God's prerogative.

<sup>1</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, page 30.

<sup>2</sup> In Flannery, Vatican Council II, page 103-4.

<sup>3</sup> Schaeffer, Dancing Alone: The Quest for Orthodox Faith in the Age of False Religion, page 95.

<sup>4</sup> Keating, Catholicism and Fundamentalism, page 125.

<sup>5</sup> In Flannery, Vatican Council II, page 103.

<sup>6</sup> No place will be given to genuinely anti-Catholic expressions many people engage in, where every conceivable objection to Catholicism -- whether legitimate or not -- is expressed in the nastiest terms possible about Catholics as persons. Disagreement with Catholicism is not anti-Catholic bigotry despite what some pretend. Relevant problems within Catholicism's religious tenets will be discussed as appropriate.

<sup>7</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>8</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>9</sup> Reference in Sungensis, Not By Scripture Alone, page 45.

<sup>10</sup> Lacueva, Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español, page 665.

<sup>11</sup> McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 603.

Word by word: το = "the," μη = "not," υπερ = "beyond," α = "what," γεγραπται = "has been written."

<sup>12</sup> Ehrman, Lost Christianities, page 231.

church's list. In fact, this has sometimes led to the claim among Catholics "it is the Church which gave us the Bible"<sup>1</sup> and among the Orthodox "people take the Gospel book, forgetting that the Church gave it to them"<sup>2</sup>; they make these claims because their different denominations each claim credit for determining what books were New Testament Scripture and which were not. It is important that Scripture says at 2 Timothy 3:16a "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV) and this was the teaching of the church secretary-author who wrote this on behalf of God. Scripture comes from God; God is Who is entitled to credit for Scripture. Further, the canon ultimately comes down to God: some books were composed with every part of the texts being "breathed out by God" according to 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) by the close of the first century, and no group of people in the fourth century could decree between the two nor change one to the other; the church did not and does not determine the Bible.<sup>3n</sup> *Scripture is the written Word of God.*

We must also consider the Muratorian Canon of the church at Rome in the late second century. In this list, they accept only two epistles of John, and accept an Apocalypse of Peter:

"Of course, the epistle of Jude and two with the title 'John' are accepted in the Catholic church, and Wisdom, written by friends of Solomon in his honor. We accept only the apocalypses of John and Peter...."<sup>4</sup>

This canon differs from that decreed at the Council of Carthage and accepted by most of the Christian world including that portion under the leadership of the bishop of Rome. It is commonly alleged by Orthodox apologists and Catholic apologists that the New Testament list of books was a fruit of church tradition. The Orthodox typically hold that their tradition has come from the New Testament period unchanged: "The Apostles in turn delivered this Tradition to the entire Church"<sup>5</sup> and "the Orthodox do not believe Tradition changes or 'develops.'"<sup>6</sup> Regarding the New Testament canon: "And how did these early Christians know which books were authentic and which were not...?"<sup>7</sup> replied with "It was the Apostolic Tradition that aided the Church in making this determination."<sup>8</sup> The Vatican leadership of Catholicism made this official: "By means of this same Tradition, the full canon of the sacred books is known to the church..." at *Dei Verbum* 8.<sup>9</sup> The Muratorian Canon is lethal to this. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 81 says "Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."<sup>10</sup> Catholicism and Orthodoxy finalized the split in 1054; would the Orthodox acknowledge pre-1054 Rome's input on "Tradition" for the list of authoritative New Testament books? Absolutely; I quote Orthodox priest Theodore Pulcini first:

"I was struck by the Orthodox Church's willingness even today to recognize Rome as the first among equals if only Rome would reject its pretensions. In other words, if Rome again affirmed the early Church's understanding of authority, the Orthodox Church would again recognize Rome's primacy."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gilles, *Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Needs to Know*, page 40.

<sup>2</sup> Ilarion quoted by Gregory, *The Church, Tradition, Scripture, Truth, and Christian Life*, page 17.

<sup>3</sup> When these denominations' polemicists claim credit for Scripture to address shown disparity between their teachings and Scripture, it is a tacit admission of such disparity and often a brazen assertion of authority over and above what God wrote.

It is common for such groups to assert 'Why trust the Bible if you do not think we are right?' It suggests that belief in God's written Word is seen as expendable.

<sup>4</sup> Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, page 95.

<sup>5</sup> Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology*, page 18.

<sup>6</sup> Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology*, page 18.

<sup>7</sup> Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology*, page 18.

<sup>8</sup> Whiteford, *Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology*, page 18.

<sup>9</sup> In Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, page 102.

<sup>10</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, page 26.

<sup>11</sup> Pulcini, *Orthodoxy and Catholicism: What Are the Differences?*, page 8.

Now, I quote Orthodox priest Eusebius Stephanou

"It cannot be denied that the Bishop of Rome had always enjoyed a distinguished position in the Early Undivided Church. But, the important thing to remember is that it consisted of an authority of honor and dignity, and for no other reason, but that he was Bishop of the capital city of the Roman Empire. In other words, he was first among equals [*Primus inter pares*]. And when the capital was moved about A.D. 330 to Constantinople [otherwise called New Rome], the Bishop at this city also acquired the distinction of honor, and he, too was elevated to the rank of *Primus inter pares* alongside of the Bishop of Old Rome."<sup>1</sup>

Instead of Rome, the Bishop of Constantinople/Istanbul has that role.<sup>2</sup> He concludes this essay

"The Holy Orthodox Catholic Church still awaits the blessed day of unity when the Bishop of Rome will repudiate his groundless claims to primacy of authority and infallibility, return to his most honored and historical dignity of *Primus inter pares*, and stand together with the Bishop of New Rome in the company of the Patriarchs of the Ancient Sees of Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch."<sup>3</sup>

Now, in light of this, we reexamine the Muratorian Canon of the church at Rome in the late second century. In this list, they accept only two epistles of John, and accept an Apocalypse of Peter:

"Of course, the epistle of Jude and two with the title `John' are accepted in the Catholic church, and Wisdom, written by friends of Solomon in his honor. We accept only the apocalypses of John and Peter...."<sup>4</sup>

This canon differs from the canon decreed at the Council of Carthage and accepted by most of the Christian world including that portion under the leadership of the bishop of Rome. Evidently, the church at Rome did not know in the late second century what New Testament books to accept as Scripture – or, if they did, Rome was off course with "Tradition" in 397 C.E.. If Rome's input on "Apostolic Tradition" was fitting before the Orthodox-Catholic split, then it means that "Apostolic Tradition" did not provide the church at Rome 'handed-down' knowledge of what was to be considered Scripture between New Testament times, through the late second century, to the fourth century. It seems unlikely that any such "Apostolic Tradition" ever existed.

Scripture does refer to approved "tradition." 2 John verse 12 shows that the apostle John preferred to address people in person rather than in writing,<sup>5</sup> but this should not be used to deny the importance of the writings recognized as Scripture in the New Testament church, because 2 Timothy 3:16 indicates they are God's direct production. At 2 Thessalonians 2:15 Paul as an apostle instructed the Thessalonians to abide by what he and his coworkers taught them, whether by mouth or letter,<sup>6</sup> specifically the "traditions you were taught" (HCSB); these "traditions" were solely of the past and given to and known by ALL members of the Thessalonian church<sup>7</sup> at that time, and not just leaders. In the same epistle, 2 Thessalonians 3:6 instructs Christians to separate themselves from people who do not behave "according to the tradition which ye received from us"<sup>8</sup>; again, this is "received" in past tense and was known by ALL members – not just leaders – of the Thessalonian church at that time.<sup>9n</sup> This cannot possibly refer to teachings only disclosed in later centuries. 1 Corinthians 11:2 also mentions "the traditions" (HCSB) and here Paul commends the Corinthian congregation for

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<sup>1</sup> Stephanou, How the Orthodox Church Differs from Roman Catholicism, page 14.

<sup>2</sup> In Matlins, Magida, How to Be a Perfect Stranger Vol. 2, page 249.

<sup>3</sup> Stephanou, How the Orthodox Church Differs from Roman Catholicism, pages 14-5.

<sup>4</sup> Gamble, The New Testament Canon, page 95.

<sup>5</sup> in Hahn, Seprenant, Catholic for a Reason, page 54.

<sup>6</sup> Shea, By What Authority?, page 79.

<sup>7</sup> J. White, Roman Catholic Controversy, page 96.

<sup>8</sup> In J. Allen, et al, The Orthodox Study Bible – New Testament, page xvi.

<sup>9</sup> The "tradition" at this verse is against "leads an unruly life" (NASB), which means that it refers to conduct in overall life. This is not extrabiblical religious tenets and extrabiblical worship practices commonly called "tradition"/"Tradition."

keeping them,<sup>1</sup> but again these traditions were "the traditions just as I delivered them to you" (HCSB), which again is past tense and were known by ALL members of the Corinthian congregation at that time. Again, this cannot possibly refer to teachings only disclosed in later centuries.

Polycarp<sup>2n</sup> was a student of the apostle John. He expected no further revelations. In his epistle, he wrote at what is now 7:1-2 Greek translated

"whoever twists the sayings of the Lord to suit his own sinful desires and claims that there is neither resurrection nor judgment - well, that person is the firstborn of Satan. Therefore let us leave behind the speculation of the crowd and their false teachings, and let us return to the word delivered to us from the beginning"<sup>3</sup>

then continued that sentence with verbatim Greek quotations from Matthew 6:13 and 26:41. Hence, "the word delivered" was Scripture. This personal pupil of John expected no further Word of God, whether it be called "Scripture" or called by another name.

The intended shift of authority from apostles to Scripture is made evident in Paul's interaction with Timothy. 2 Timothy 1:6 has "For which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands" (ASV), and 1 Timothy 4:14 indicates that Timothy had been appointed to church leadership. Some hints of being something of a successor were there, but instead Paul wrote to him 2 Timothy 3:16-7a "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). The Greek word translated "complete" is *απτιος* and means "perfectly fit"<sup>4</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>5</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). Paul never instructed his protégé Timothy to assert any kind of authority for himself and for his teachings as a disciple of an apostle or as a person who was "laid hands" over by an apostle and appointed to church leadership; Paul told Timothy to use the Scriptures as entirely sufficient. He continued the thought at 4:1-2 "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (ASV). This was expected to be final advice; Paul announced his impending death later in chapter 4, and also indicated uncertainty of ever seeing Timothy again before martyrdom.

### A Comparison of Proposed Authorities

We have been discussing Scripture and the church as proposed authorities for Christians to submit to. It is often claimed that to be subservient to both as equals, or to the church first, would not discord with Scripture.

2 Peter 1:1 indicates of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is "our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (NKJV, ESV). Hence, Jesus Christ is God.

Regarding Jesus Christ, Colossians 1:18 states "he is the head of the body, the church" (ASV). Hence, Christ is the head of His body, which is the church. In a healthy body, the head makes all the decisions, and the body does no deciding. Hence, in the church, all the authoritative decisions are made by Christ, and none by the church.

2 Timothy 3:16a says "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV). 2 Peter 1:1 quoted from earlier indicates that Jesus Christ is God; per 2 Timothy 3:16, this means that He holds Authorship to Scripture.

Because all the decisions of a healthy body are made by the head, the authoritative decisions of the church are made by the Head Jesus Christ. Because He authored Scripture, what it says are decisions of the Head. The church is to be subject to Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> Whiteford, Sola Scriptura: An Orthodox Analysis of the Cornerstone of Reformation Theology, page 23.

<sup>2</sup> It has been claimed that Polycarp was a monarchical bishop. However, Polycarp described himself in a letter as "Polycarp and the presbyters with him"\* -- describing himself as one of several presbyters.

\*In Holmes, et al, The Apostolic Fathers, page 207.

<sup>3</sup> Holmes et al, The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations, pages 213, 215.

<sup>4</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>5</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.



Hence, at 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2, Paul indicated that although Timothy had all the makings of what could have been a successor, Timothy was to use Scripture, treat it as sufficient and complete for Christian service, and preach rightly. In post-apostolic times, Scripture is the source of authority.

Paul told Timothy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" at 2 Timothy 4:13 demonstrating the centrality of Scripture in congregation life.<sup>1</sup> It should be like that always.

### Scripture and the Age of "Traditions"

Going further, what is called "Tradition" among Orthodox, Catholics, and similar groups is not what Scripture refers to as approved "tradition" (NASB). 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 gives a specific:

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you" (NASB).

The "tradition" here is not to live undisciplined lives. This is nothing foreign to what is in Scripture now. There is no evidence that this "tradition" was a mass of distinctly-religious tenets distinct from Scripture,<sup>2n</sup> which is the nature of Orthodox, Catholic, and similar "Tradition." 2 Thessalonians 2:15 told its audience to adhere to the "traditions you were taught" (HCSB), but what is approved as "tradition" in Scripture is about regular living, and was not distinct from the contents of Scripture.

This would not be a surprise. The word "traditions" in Judaism referred to passing onward of instruction from earlier teachers, so this would refer to Jesus' teachings.<sup>3</sup> As Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, the only earlier Teacher to pass on "traditions" from would have been Jesus Christ.

Before His ascension, Christ said to His apostles Matthew 28:19-20 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, | and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (NASB|NCV|NASB). Note the "I **have taught** you" in a past tense – they were to teach future converts what Jesus Christ had taught *up to that time* found in the four gospels and Acts 20:35.

Per Acts 2:42, after the inaugural sermon of the church, those in the church "devoted themselves to the apostles' | doctrine | and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (ESV| KJV, NKJV| ESV). They would have been obeying what Jesus Christ had told them at Matthew 28:20a "Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you" (NCV). The "apostles' doctrine" would have been Christ's teachings found in the four gospels and Acts 20:35. Therefore, what the New Testament refers to as "tradition" being passed on to Christians by Christ's apostles would have been simply the same. We see that approved "tradition" at that time was simply what Christ taught during His earthly ministry, and is by no means distinct from what is found in Scripture.

This is likely why at 2 Timothy 3:16-7,<sup>4n</sup> Paul wrote as he awaited martyrdom:

"**All Scripture is breathed out by God** and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness: so **that the | person who serves God|** may be complete, | **entirely instructed for all good work.**"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pointed out by R. Kent Hughes article in Dennis, Grudem, ESV Study Bible, page 2574.

<sup>2</sup> Titus 3:8-9 urges "that they who have believed God| may be careful to devote themselves to good |deeds|. These things are good and profitable unto men: but shun foolish questionings" (ASV|ESV|RSV 1952, NLT 1996|ASV). The "foolish questionings" were such because they had no relevance to "good deeds." What is called "Tradition" among Orthodox, Catholics, and similar are collections of distinctly-religious tenets with no relevance to "good deeds" and which result from such "foolish questionings." Masses of them called "Tradition" are unlikely to have any positive relationship with God.

<sup>3</sup> In Blackaby, et al, The Blackaby Study Bible, page 1435.

<sup>4</sup> Notice it says individual "**person** who serves God" -- NOT `teaching class of clergy.'

<sup>5</sup> ESV|KJV, NKJV|NBV|ICB|ASV|RVR 1909 "enteramente instruído para toda buena obra" translated.

Greek translated "complete" is *απτιος* meaning "perfectly fit,"<sup>1</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>2</sup>; 3:17a can be translated regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). We have seen that New Testament-era approved "tradition" involved teachings about regular living. Per 2 Timothy 3:16-7, by the end of the New Testament era, Scripture was a sufficient embodiment of New Testament-era approved "tradition" for Christians to be "entirely instructed for all good work." This means that from Scripture, we can learn everything we need to do "ALL" that pleases God.

At 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2, Paul told Timothy to use Scripture, treat it as sufficient and complete for Christian service,<sup>3n</sup> and teach rightly. Paul held the Scriptures to be sufficient to pass on the apostles' teachings, and were to be the source of authority in post-apostolic times. Because Paul's epistles are Scripture per 2 Peter 3:15-6, God ultimately wrote this passage. Therefore, let us do as God intended: let us make the New Testament church's Scriptures the sole highest authority.

### Authority for Congregation Governance Now

The only people shown in Scripture to have had general authority over congregations they did not regularly attend were the apostles. When they died, they are not shown having successors; in what we just studied, the authority they held was to be given to Scripture instead.

Church congregations are subject to that authority ultimately. Voluntary submission in a voluntary cooperative group of congregations is one matter, but no person is to claim authority over congregations other than that person's own congregation with which s/he meets. Church congregations may admonish each other to correct their paths according to Scripture,<sup>4n</sup> but they are not in a position to assert 'Do such-and-such or we will do this-or-that against you' toward each other - even when the objection is right. Scripture is the authority above congregational leaderships.

<sup>1</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>2</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>3</sup> A new proposed alternative authority to Scripture is 'The Holy Spirit tells me...' The people think 'The Holy Spirit tells me stuff' -- or boast such to add credence to their own opinions. Besides being reminiscent of persons "always talking about|visions, puffed up without reason" (ICB|ESV) at Colossians 2:18, these are subjective feelings with no way to verify their legitimacy. Quite expectably, those asserting their views with claims of atypical 'Spirit-led' status often have unshared 'leadings.'

First of all, God's Spirit should not be expected to contradict God's written Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-7 says:

**"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for |doctrine|, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness: so that the| person who serves God| may be complete, |entirely instructed| unto every good work."**

--ESV|KJV, NKJV|NBV|ICB|ASV|RVR 1909 "enteramente instruído" translated|ASV. The Lord does not tell us one thing and also tell us something contrary. Any person who serves God can trust Scripture. If s/he hears/reads something contrary to it, s/he can be sure which one to trust: Scripture.

Second, the passage shows that Scripture is provided to enable to "the person who serves God" to be "entirely instructed unto every good work." Titus 3:8-9 urges "that they who have believed God| may be careful to devote themselves to good |deeds|. These things are good and profitable unto men: but shun foolish questionings" (ASV|ESV|RSV 1952, NLT 1996|ASV). The "foolish questionings" were "foolish" because they had no relevance to "good deeds."

The Christian is to take utmost care to "good deeds." Scripture is given to instruct completely in that matter, and that is its 'Book subject.' The Christian is expected to "shun" intellectual pursuits irrelevant to that. Christians should not expect God's Spirit to personally 'reward' undue religious curiosities unrelated to God's priorities for us -- even if they involve attempts at Scripture inference. What is in Scripture can make a "person who serves God" be "entirely instructed unto every good work" -- what s/he needs to do. When a disputable teaching is asserted with an 'The Holy Spirit revealed to me'-type claim, the claim should be rejected.

<sup>4</sup> The late first century letter from Rome to Corinth now named *1 Clement* did just that; they cited Scripture in their urgings to the Corinthian congregation to fix its wrongs.

### Our Procedures for Handling Scripture – Added Basis

We will be guided by passages put on the top and bottom of each page of this paper. The top, 2 Timothy 3:16a, reminds us Who the ultimate Author of Scripture is. This means every unit of text in Scripture comes from God. Every unit of text is what God wanted written down for us to read or to have read to us. It should be held as the highest authority in any matter that it addresses, and its precepts and sanctioned practices are backed by the wisdom, will, and authority of God Himself.

The axiom on the bottom is from 1 Corinthians 4:6. In it, we have something called in Greek "το μη υπερ α γεγραπται" literally translated

1. "el no sobre lo que está escrito" <sup>1</sup> = "the not over it that it-is written."
2. "the not beyond what has been written." <sup>2</sup>

This was a New Testament church maxim with a name. This was a New Testament church maxim with a name. The Greek "γεγραπται" is translated "It is written" before some of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, including Luke 4:4, and so at 1 Corinthians 4:6, Scripture is what is referred to with Greek "γεγραπται."

In the larger passage in which this maxim was applied, Paul is rebuking the Corinthian congregation for boasting of following one teacher more than another. The Corinthian Christians by their boasting were teaching that it was better to follow one person as opposed to another. This was a teaching that was beyond what was written in Scripture, and the disobedience thereof was causing unwanted consequences in the Corinthian congregation.

We have studied three categories of oppositions to full and/or sole authority of Scripture as highest authority for the Christian. The first category was other texts, the second was other sources, and the third was people. In order to more closely follow the New Testament church's Scriptures, which are "breathed out by God" (ESV) per 2 Timothy 3:16, we must follow the New Testament church maxim of 1 Corinthians 4:6. According to the New Testament church maxim at 1 Corinthians 4:6, we must not be mandating or 'encouraging with maybe a little pressure<sup>3n'</sup> any doctrine or practice/non-practice besides what is explicitly mandated, exemplified, or patterned in the New Testament church's Scripture. No doctrine that cannot be backed by the New Testament church's Scriptures *ALONE* can be advanced with such means in the church. Likewise, no practice/non-practice that cannot be shown from the New Testament church's Scriptures *ALONE* can be advanced with such means in the church.

If a doctrine or practice/non-practice is propagated by either mandate or 'maybe a little pressure,<sup>4n'</sup> but is dependent upon

- an additional writing considered a 'revelation,' or
- a Bible translation or a Bible re-wording or Bible explanation, or
- a church leadership directive,

and cannot be derived from the New Testament church's Scriptures *ALONE*, then it is in violation of the New Testament church's Scriptures, which were described as "breathed out by God" (ESV) per 2 Timothy 3:16. There have been cases of such situations from insubordinate disobedience, but in most cases these types of situations are merely due to simple mistake. ■

<sup>1</sup> Lacueva, Nuevo Testamento Interlineal Griego-Español, page 665.

<sup>2</sup> McReynolds, Word Study Greek-English New Testament, page 603.

Word by word: το = "the," μη = "not," υπερ = "beyond," α = "what," γεγραπται = "has been written."

<sup>3</sup> This includes any type of activity that would reasonably deter anyone from believing or doing differently. This includes officially or unofficially harming the person's status in the church, taking away opportunities, or raising questions about the devoutness or character of the person in disagreement. 'Pressure' is not limited to these either -- it includes any negative consequence or removal of anything positive in order to address nonconformance itself or nonconformists.

<sup>4</sup> This is explained in the previous note.