

HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT AND THE KING JAMES VERSION

NSD 6/22/20

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:4

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Matthew 24:35

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Mark 13:31

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Luke 21:33

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 5:18

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Luke 16:16

89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

Psalms 119:89

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

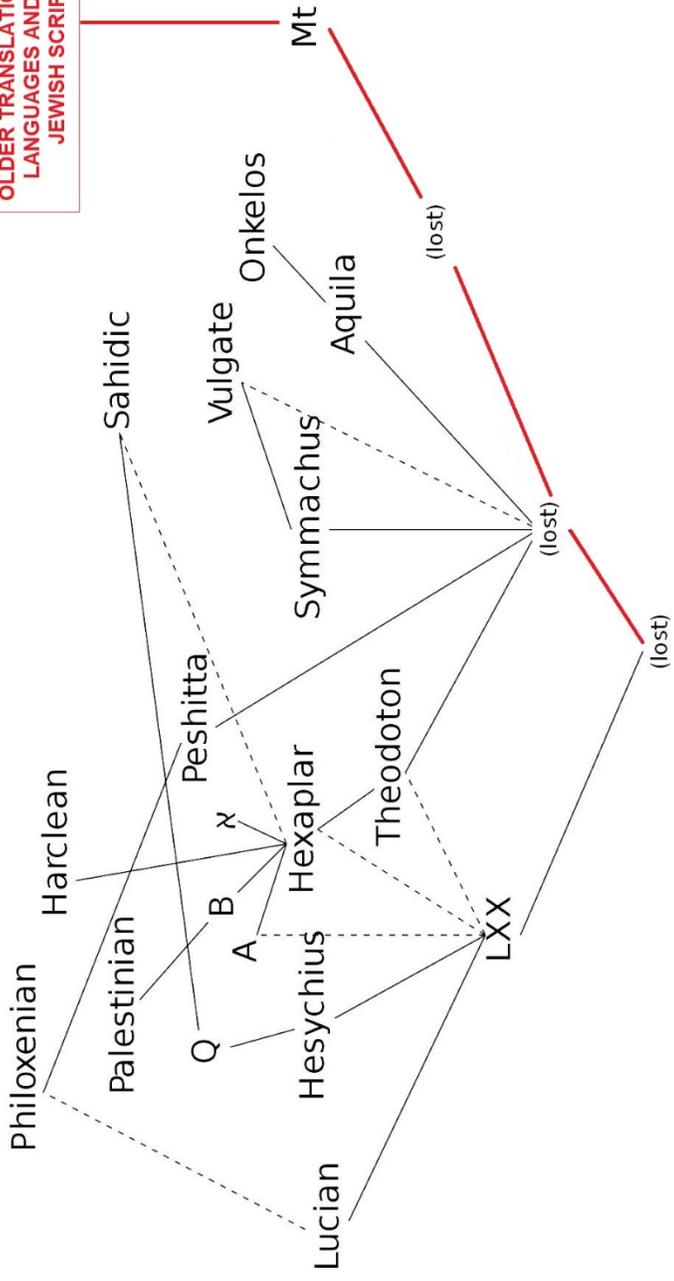
7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Psalms 12:6, 7

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:15

UNDERLYING TEXT FOR MOST
 OLDER TRANSLATIONS OF MANY
 LANGUAGES AND ORTHODOX
 JEWISH SCRIPTURES



The Hebrew Text

The Hebrew text underlying the KJV is reliable and does not have any demonstrable error. By God’s grace and providence there are not as many variant readings among the Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts as there are among the Greek New Testament manuscripts. Most of the variants concern pronunciations which do not affect translation. Many believe that the KJV is based on the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Second Rabbinic Bible, edited by Jacob Ben Chayyim and printed by Daniel Bomberg in 1525. However, the KJV appeared to follow the First Rabbinic Bible, edited by Felix Pratensis in 1517-1518, as this first edition includes Joshua 21:36-37 and Nehemiah 7:68 whereas the second edition omits these verses. Except for these two passages, the KJV appeared to follow the Ben Chayyim text. Many recent versions of the Bible are based on the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, the third edition of the Masoretic text edited by Rudolph Kittel. There are eight places where differences between the two texts (the Ben Chayyim and the Rudolph Kittel) affect translation – they are: 1 Kings 20:38, Proverbs 8:16, Isaiah 10:16, Isaiah 27:2, Isaiah 38:14, Ezekiel 30:18, Zephaniah 3:15, and Malachi 1:12.

Verse	Ben Chayyim	Rudolph Kittel
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1 Kings 20:38	“ashes upon his face”	“bandage over his eyes”
Proverbs 8:16	“all the judges of the earth”	“all who judge rightly”
Isaiah 10:16	“Lord”	“LORD”
Isaiah 27:2	“vineyard of red wine”	“pleasant vineyard”
Isaiah 38:14	“LORD”	“Lord”
Ezekiel 30:18	“Be darkened”	“Be held back”
Zephaniah 3:15	“see evil”	“fear evil”
Malachi 1:12	“table of the LORD”	“table of the Lord”

With only eight significant variants between the Jacob Ben Chayyim and the Rudolph Kittel editions, the Hebrew texts underlying the KJV and modern translations are fairly similar. However, modern textual critics believe that some verses in the Bible are erroneous in all editions of the Masoretic text. These critics believe that a Bible translation must consult the Masoretic text as well as other ancient witnesses such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Aramaic Targum, Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate. The prefaces of some of the leading translations have the following to say about the translators’ view of a deficient Masoretic text:

NIV:

“The translators also consulted the more important early versions – the Septuagint; Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion; the Vulgate; the Syriac Peshitta; the Targums; and for the Psalms the Juxta Hebraica of Jerome. Readings from these versions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading.”

ESV:

“In exceptional, difficult cases, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and other sources were consulted to shed possible light on the text, or if necessary, to support a divergence from the Masoretic text.”

NASB:

“In the present translation the latest edition of Rudolf Kittel’s Biblia Hebraica has been employed together with the most recent light from lexicography, cognate languages, and the Dead Sea Scrolls” (The NASB then lists these witnesses of cognate languages under its Abbreviations page: Aramaic, Septuagint, Latin, Syriac)”

These scholars consult these other sources because they believe that some passages are corrupt in all editions of the Hebrew text. For more on this, please read: Question: Aren’t some Textus Receptus readings based on little or no Greek manuscript evidence? A careful study, however, will reveal that the Masoretic readings underlying the KJV are demonstrably inerrant.

Textusreceptusbibles.com

Masoretic Text 1524

The Hebrew text of the Old Testament is called the Masoretic Text because in its present form it is based upon the Masora—the Hebrew, textual tradition of the Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes (or Masorites). The Masoretes were rabbis who made it their special work to correct the faults that had crept into the text of the Old Testament during the Babylonian captivity, and to prevent, for the future, its being corrupted by any alteration. They first separated the apocryphal from the canonical books, and divided the latter into twenty-two books, being the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Then they divided each book into sections and verses.

There is a great difference of opinion as to when the Masoretic Text was written, but it was probably accomplished in the 10th -11th century. Several editions existed, varying considerably, but the received and authoritative text is that of Jacob ben-chayim ibn Adonijah, who carefully sifted and arranged the previous works on the subject. It was published in 1524.

The Old Testament Texts.

In 1516, Daniel Bomberg published a text of the Old Testament under the name “First Rabbinic Bible.” This text was followed in 1524 by a second edition that had been compiled from ancient manuscripts by a Hebrew scholar and converted Jewish Rabbi named Abraham Ben Chayyim. Today this work is called the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text, and is the text that underlies the Old Testament of the King James Bible. The word “masoretic” comes from the Hebrew word “mesor” meaning traditional. The Masoretes were the scribes that were given the responsibility of guarding and keeping the text of the Old Testament, and keep it well they surely did, as we shall soon see.

The Ben Chayyim Masoretic text was the uncontested text of the Old Testament for over four hundred years. The Ben Chayyim text was used in the first two editions of “Biblia Hebraica” by Rudolph Kittel, usually referred to as BHK, published in 1906 and 1912. However, in 1937, Kittel changed his Hebrew text from the Ben Chayyim to the Ben Asher text.

The Ben Asher text was based on a text call the Leningrad Manuscript (B19a; also called simply L), which was dated around 1008 A. D. Using the peculiar logic of that day, which believed that older must always be better, Kittel published his 1937 edition based on this “older” text. His 1937 edition had about 20,000 changes (most of them minor, but changes nevertheless) from the Ben Chayyim text. Both texts are still referred to as “Masoretic,” so care must be taken as to which text is being referred to. It had apparently not dawned on Kittel that the Ben Asher version was based on very few minor manuscripts similar to B19a, while the Ben Chayyim text followed the vast majority of the manuscripts available. Why would Kittel throw out the evidence provided by the vast majority of manuscripts to follow only a small minority of texts? May I suggest, very carefully, that profit may have been the motive? Kittle had not published a major work for many, many years, he was growing older, funds for his retirement were low, and he was living in the rapidly fading glow of past glory. One final work would not only propel him back into the limelight of scholarly recognition, but would provide the funds for his impending retirement. He found a large and receptive market in the rapidly growing modernist camp that had grown to hate the traditional texts of both the Old and New Testaments.

In 1966 there was a further revision of Kittel’s “Biblia Hebraica” called “Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,” which was also based on the “older” Ben Asher text. This new edition of Kittel is generally referred to as BHS. The revision was the work of unbelieving German rationalists, and represents theologically liberal modernism in its worst form. The 1937 BHK and the newer BHS are not only based on a few minor Hebrew manuscripts which contain many erroneous footnotes, but “corrections” were often made to these already inadequate and corrupt texts by referring to such things as the “Septuagint” or “LXX”, which is nothing more than the Hebrew Scriptures translated into the Greek language. The “Septuagint” is a poor translation at best of the Hebrew due mainly to the fact that it does not follow the verbal and formal rules of translation, but is largely a paraphrase, changing the wording wherever the translators desired, seeking to “clarify” the meaning of the original.

The Syriac Version. This was a version of both the Old and New Testaments translated into the Syriac language. The source language is in doubt, some insisting it was translated by Jews from the Hebrew, and others insisting it was translated by early Christians from the Greek.

The Latin Version was the complete Bible translated into Latin, portions of which may date to the second century A. D. Jerome is generally credited with the first complete Latin version, called the Latin Vulgate, or Jerome's Vulgate, which dates to the fourth century.

God's appointed guardians of the Old Testament Text were the Jews according to Romans 3:1-2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision? Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." The methods used by the Jews in fulfilling their responsibilities as the guardians of these sacred texts is an interesting study. There were eight rules that the Jewish copyists used in the copying of the texts:

1. The parchment must be made from the skin of a clean animal (clean meaning ceremonially clean according to the Old Testament sanitary laws); must be prepared by a Jew only, and the skins must be fastened together by strings taken from clean animals.
2. Each column must have no less than forty-eight, nor more than sixty lines. The entire copy must be first lined.
3. The ink must be of no other color than black, and it must be prepared according to a special recipe.
4. No word nor letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
5. He must reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the word for "God" (Elohim), and he must wash his whole body before writing the name "Jehovah" (LORD in our King James Bibles), lest the Holy Name be contaminated.
6. Strict rules were given concerning forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
7. The revision (to correct any errors) of a roll must be made within thirty days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. One mistake on a sheet condemned the entire sheet. If three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.
8. Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter was omitted, or if an extra letter was inserted, or if two letters touched one another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.

NOTE: H. S. Miller, writing in his book "General Biblical Introduction", says: "Some of these rules may appear extreme and absurd, yet they show how sacred the Holy Word of the Old Testament was to its custodians, the Jews, and they give us strong encouragement to believe that we have the real Old Testament, the same one that our Lord had and which was given by inspiration of God."

So then, our only choice is between the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text that has been the standard text of the Old Testament for well over two thousand years, and is represented by the vast majority of the existing Old Testament manuscripts, or the new, modern text that has only a little minor manuscript support, and leaves out or changes between 20,000 and 30,000 words in the Old Testament. The choice is obvious, only the Traditional (Ben Chayyim) Text can lay claim to uninterrupted use for all the generations from the time of David (Psalm 12) until now.

The New Testament Manuscripts.

The Traditional Text. The Traditional text of the New Testament has existed from the time of Christ right down to the present. It has had many different names down through the years, such as Byzantine Text, Eastern Text, Received Text, Textus Receptus, Majority Text, and others. Although no complete Bible manuscripts have survived which would allow us to date the Traditional text to the first century, there is a strong witness to the early existence and use of the Traditional text by the early church in its lectionaries. These lectionaries were portions of the Scripture that were read in the churches on certain days. Because modern printing technology had not yet been invented, many of the early Christians did not have personal copies of the Bible. It was a custom of the early church to read a portion of the Gospels, then a portion from the Epistles each day. This practice is similar to our reading a verse of Scripture from our daily devotional booklet, then starting the day in prayer, the only difference being, it was done in the church house rather than in your own house. Nearly every lectionary in existence contains Traditional readings, attesting to the very early existence and use of the Traditional text. The early Baptist church, called “Waldensians” by their enemies, which can be dated to 120 A. D., was known to have quoted from the Traditional text in many of its writings. Also the vast majority of all existing manuscripts, somewhere around ninety percent, follow the Traditional text. The Greek Orthodox Church used, and still uses, the Traditional text, and they are experts in the Greek language, as it is their native tongue! (Allow me to say here that the attempt by some “scholars” to identify the Traditional Text as being merely the “liturgical text of the Greek Orthodox Church” is hypocritical at best, and deliberately deceptive at worst. Such a pathetically weak attempt to attach the word “liturgical” to the Traditional Text is sophomoric and moronic. It would be like saying the King James Bible is merely the liturgical text of the Anglican Church simply because it was used exclusively by them for over three hundred years. If such condemnation by association is valid, then the Revised Version (which they love so much) is the liturgical text of the Presbyterian Church, the New American Standard Version (which they also seem to love), and the New International Version are the liturgical texts of the New Evangelical Church, and the Living Bible is the liturgical text of the Charismatic Church. Such deliberately deceptive statements have no place in an honest inquiry into the true identity of the preserved text of the Holy Scriptures!)

The earliest translations of the Greek text into a foreign language produced versions that follow the traditional text. The Syriac Peshitta, which I mentioned earlier, bears such strong witness to the antiquity of the Traditional text of the New Testament, the early proponents of the Critical Text had to get it out of the second and third centuries (100-300 A. D.), where it has been historically agreed to have been produced, and make it appear as if it were of later origin. J. A. Hort theorized a late revision to account for it, and F. C. Burkitt went even farther than Hort and specified Rabbula, Bishop of Edessa (411-435 A. D.) as the author of the revision! The complete absence of even one shred of evidence to support any part of this theory has very conveniently been ignored by the proponents of the Critical text. The true evidence of course points in exactly the opposite direction, namely that Rabbula himself used the Old Syriac text in his earliest writings! Additional strong evidence against this poorly constructed fraud of a theory is found in the fact that one of the early sects, called the Nestorians, used the Peshitta extensively and thought of it as the authoritative Word of God. This would be unthinkable if the Peshitta were the work of Rabbula, who was a great adversary of the Nestorians and openly denounced them as heretics! I seriously doubt they would consider any of their greatest enemy’s work as being authoritative!

The Italic church in northern Italy in 157 A. D. was known to use a version based on the Traditional text, and the Gallic Church in what is now southern France was known to have used a Gallic version in 177 that followed the Traditional text. The Gothic Version of the fourth century (300-400 A. D.) was also based upon the Traditional text. The Old Latin texts were texts that were translated into the Latin language, not only in North Africa, but also in the East, possibly even in Antioch. These Old Latin translations, going

back in their earliest form to about the middle of the second century (150 A. D.), are very early witnesses to the Greek text from which they were translated. They are very literal translations, and the fact that they are often quoted by the church fathers of these areas, enables us to see which Greek text was generally in use in that area at that time. The vast majority of these Old Latin versions follow, in almost word-for-word format, the Traditional text.

Churches all down through the ages have used the Traditional text. The churches of the reformation period all used versions based on the Traditional text. Martin Luther's German Bible was based on the Traditional text. The French version of Oliveton was based on the Traditional text. The Czech Version and the Italian version of Diodati were based on the Traditional text. All of the early English versions including William Tyndale's Bible, The Coverdale Bible, The Matthews Bible, the Taverners Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible were all based on the Traditional text. When the Roman Catholic cleric Jerome was commissioned by the Bishop of Rome to produce a new Latin version, he wrote a letter in 383 A. D. to the person commissioning the translation stating: "Thou compellest me to make a new work out of an old so that after so many copies of the Scriptures have been dispersed throughout the whole world I am as it were to occupy the post of arbiter, and seeing they differ from one another am to determine which of them are in agreement with the original Greek. If they maintain that confidence is to be reposed in the Latin exemplars, let them answer which, for there are almost as many copies of the translations as manuscripts. But if the truth is to be sought from the majority, why not rather go back to the Greek original, and correct the blunders which have been made by incompetent translators, made worse rather than better by the presumption of unskillful correctors, and added to or altered by careless scribes." It was Jerome's contention that in his day a number of manuscripts existed that had been "altered, " "corrected," and otherwise corrupted by "careless scribes" and "incompetent translators," and the only way to insure the new Latin translation was to be accurate was to allow him to go to the majority of the Greek manuscripts that were in common usage in his time. Unfortunately, has Roman masters did not allow him to do so, and his Vulgate was simply a revision of the already existing corrupt Latin versions.

The Greek manuscripts. There are at present about 5,255 manuscripts of the New Testament in existence, and approximately 90% of those manuscripts follow the Traditional text. Let's take a closer look at these manuscripts to see what they are.

1. The Papyrus fragments are small pieces of papyrus, which is a type of paper made from the papyrus plant which grows in Egypt. This paper is very brittle, and crumbles easily when handled. Most of these fragments are broken pieces with a few verses on them. The oldest existing manuscripts are these papyrus fragments, or papyri. These manuscripts date from the second century (100-200) A. D., to the seventh century (600-700). Frequently the earliest papyri support the distinctive Traditional readings. These Traditional readings caused a problem for those who hold to the Critical text, providing a strong witness for the early existence of the Traditional text. One of the oldest, the fragment called P66, which dates to the second century (100-200) A. D., gives strong support for the Traditional text in over 25% of its readings, thus destroying the theory of the proponents of the Critical text that states the Traditional text did not originate until the mid-fourth century (350 A. D.). However, care should be taken not to overstate the evidence of the papyri as they will often side with the Critical text against the Traditional text.

2. The Uncials are Greek manuscripts that are written in all capital letters. These uncials or majuscules as they are sometimes called have no punctuation or spaces between the letters. As of this writing there are 274 uncials dating from between the third century (200-300 A. D.) to the tenth century (900-1000 A. D.). Over 85% of the readings from these uncials follow the Traditional text.

3. The Cursives, sometimes called minuscules, are Greek manuscripts written in what we would call “longhand”, or cursive writing. During the ninth century (800-900 A. D.) the scribes who were responsible for the copying of the New Testament abandoned the uncial (all capital letters) script in favor of the small-lettered cursive (minuscule) script. There are about 2800 of these cursive manuscripts, and the overwhelming majority of these (90%) side with the Traditional text. The textual implication of this change of writing style has often been overlooked in the textual debate. Jakob van Braggen says: “It is assumed that after this transliteration process the majuscule was taken out of circulation.... The import of this datum has not been taken into account enough in the present New Testament textual criticism, for it implies, that just the oldest, best, and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new uniform (cursive style).” (From “The Ancient Text of the New Testament”, pages 26, 27; as cited in “The Identity of the New Testament Text,” Wilbur Pickering, Nelson Publishing Company, 1980, page 131.)

It seems only logical and reasonable to understand that the scribes of the ninth century would be in a better position to decide on what constitutes the “oldest and best” manuscripts than the textual critics of the twentieth century! Why, during this period of change-over from the uncial to cursive style, did the scribes decisively reject the Critical text in favor of the Traditional text, if they did not realize the Traditional text represented the best readings available. It becomes obvious to any honest researcher that the scribes of the ninth century knew the Traditional text was the inspired, inerrant, preserved text of the New Testament Scriptures!

4. The Lectionaries. The word lection means “to read,” and the Lectionaries were portions of Scripture that were read in the churches on certain days. Of the 2,143 Lectionaries, every one attests to the Traditional text. 100% of the evidence from the Lectionaries supports the Traditional text as being the text used by the early churches.

What about the other texts of the New Testament? It is generally agreed among textual critics that accept the “critical” viewpoint that there are four basic types of texts represented in the manuscript evidence. However, upon closer careful examination, we find that the evidence for the existence of these so-called “text types” is very thin, if not non-existent! Although J. A. Hort claimed the results of his genealogical evidence proved to an absolute certainty that the manuscripts could be grouped into four basic “families” or “types,” it is now clear to the careful researcher that Mr. Hort’s “results” were either wishful thinking at best, or pure fabrication at worst. How could there be a “result” if his method for gathering of genealogical evidence was never applied to the manuscripts? Yet, Hort’s “results” have been accepted as fact by many of the so-called textual scholars of today, without the slightest thought being given to his rules of evidence, and the non-application of those rules to the manuscripts! M. M. Parvis, in his article “The Nature and Task of New Testament Textual Criticism,” (“The Journal of Religion,” XXXII, 1952, Page 173) states. “We have reconstructed text-types and families and sub-families and in so doing have created things that never before existed on earth or in heaven. We have assumed that manuscripts reproduced themselves according to the Mendelian law. But when we have found that a particular manuscript would not fit into any of our nicely constructed schemes, we have thrown up our hands and said that it contained a ‘mixed text’.”

Bruce Metzgar (no friend to the Traditional text) stated in his book “Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism,” (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1963, page 67) the “Caesarean” text-type is disintegrating. By this he did not mean the material upon which the text was written was crumbling, but rather, the concept of a “Caesarean text-type” was itself now largely understood to have been a false assumption. He went on to ask: “Was there a fundamental flaw in the previous investigation which tolerated so erroneous a grouping?” The evidence says there is indeed a fundamental flaw in the theory concerning the existence of “text-types.” Those men who have done the most extensive collating of

manuscripts, as a rule, have not accepted the idea of such groups or families. Let's look at the so-called "text-types" themselves and see what we can discover.

1. The Western Text is now generally agreed, even among the proponents of the Critical Text, to have been the result of the over-active imagination of Hermann von Soden, and did not, in fact, ever exist.

2. The Caesarean Text, as we have already seen, is now understood to have been based on less than ideal scholarship.

3. The Alexandrian Text. E. C. Colwell, in his article entitled "The Significance of Grouping of New Testament Manuscripts," (New Testament Studies IV, 1957-1958, pages 86, 88) stated, "After a careful study of all alleged Beta Text-type (Alexandrian) witnesses in the first chapter of Mark, six Greek manuscripts emerged as primary witnesses: Aleph, B, L, 33, 892, and 2427. Therefore, the weaker Beta manuscripts C, delta, 157, 517, 579, 1241, and 1342 were set aside. Then on the basis of the six primary witnesses an "average," or mean, text was reconstructed including all the readings supported by the majority of the primary witnesses. Even on this restricted basis the amount of variation recorded in the apparatus was dismaying. In this first chapter, each of the six witnesses differed from the "average" Beta Text-type as follows: L, nineteen times (Wescott and Hort twenty-one times); Aleph, twenty-six times; 2427, thirty-two times; 33, thirty-three times; B, thirty-four times; and 892, forty-one times. These results show convincingly any attempt to reconstruct an archetype of the Beta text-type on a quantitative basis is doomed to failure. The text thus reconstructed is not reconstructed but constructed; it is an artificial entity that never existed."

So then we now see that it is generally agreed, even among those who hold to the Critical text position, that the so-called "text-types" were (1) the result of over-active imaginations, (2) the result of very poor scholarship, and (3) the result of constructing an artificial entity that never existed! There are only two types of texts, the correct text, and the corrupt text! The overwhelming majority of the evidence indicates the correct text is best represented by the Traditional text that has been preserved by God, and all others represent the corrupt, heretical text that has been decimated by the attacks of Satan and his unbelieving hoards.

The Guardians of the New Testament. Just as God appointed the Jews to be the guardians of the Old Testament, so also He has appointed guardians of the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 3:14, 15, the Bible says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth", and in John 17:17, the Lord Jesus Christ identifies what exactly that truth is, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." The Bible clearly teaches that the local church is the pillar and ground of the truth, and that the truth is the Word of God. Therefore, the local church is the pillar and ground, the guardian, of the Word of God, the Bible. Unfortunately, in this modern age when even so-called fundamentalists have adopted the methodology of the New Evangelicals, and do not practice the primacy of the local church, the God-given guardianship of the Bible has passed by default to the so-called scholars in the Colleges and Seminaries that are not under the authority of the local church, or the leader of the local church, the God-called, God-gifted, and God-ordained pastor! These men may be members of a good local church, but their work done in the schools is not under their pastor's authority and control, and these so-called scholars have usurped the responsibility and authority away from the God-ordained repository of the truth of His Word, the local church.

When we look at the gifts that the Lord has given to the local church for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ, we see in Ephesians 4:11-12, "And he gave some, apostles; and some

prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” There are a couple of things I would like to point out here. First, the gifts of these specially equipped men is given to the local church, for the work of the local church ministry, and for the building up of the local church. Nowhere is the so-called para-church organization, or College, or Seminary mentioned, and nowhere is the “Scholar” mentioned as a specially equipped man who has been given the guardianship of the oracles of God! Second, when you read the description of the last specially gifted man who is given to the local church for its benefit, you will see that man is called a pastor/teacher. There is no semicolon between pastor and teacher, as there is between all of the other titles, because it is all one gift, vested in one man. Therefore the scholars may not usurp the title “teacher” in this context unless they are also bearers of the title and office of pastor. I am of the opinion that we must guard very carefully the office and title of pastor. I have heard camp directors and nursing home chaplains referred to as “pastor” so-and-so. A pastor is a pastor only if he is the shepherd of a flock of born-again, baptized believers, organized, and assembled together, having the ordinances, and officers of a true New Testament Church. In reference to that term “scholar”, don’t get me wrong, I have no problem with scholarly thinking. The men that I studied under, Dr. Richard V. Clearwaters, and Dr. George W. Dollar were, and still are, two of the most scholarly men who have ever lived. Dr. Dollar is, in my opinion, the worlds foremost expert on Church History, especially as it pertains to fundamentalism in America. However, both of these good and Godly men also held the office of pastor. Dr. Clearwaters was pastor of Fourth Baptist Church in Minneapolis for over forty years, and Dr. Dollar was co- pastor of that same great church during his entire tenure at Central Baptist Seminary. The “scholar” that I am referring to is the man who does not hold the office of pastor, but usurps the duties of that office, and often looks down upon the mere pastor from the lofty heights of academia, thanking God he is not like other men, such as this lowly pastor!

Getting back to our subject, we see that the preponderance of the evidence clearly points to the antiquity and superiority of the Traditional Hebrew and Greek texts. These Traditional texts are the only texts that have been in uninterrupted use from the time of the close of the canon of Scripture (about 100 A. D.) until the present, thus fulfilling the requirement of being “preserved” for every generation.

Why is it, then, that so many otherwise good pastors do not take the Traditional text position? I believe there are two reasons for this. The first is ignorance. Many pastors have been educated in the Critical text position in Bible College and Seminary, and almost every College and Seminary in the country has been infected with the Modernist position that the Scriptures are somehow less than God says they are. Almost every school today has bowed the knee to a Modernistic Baal in the area of Manuscript Evidence, and joined hands with the enemy of our souls in his attempt to continue asking his lying question “Yea, hath God said?” These deceived men have accepted all that they have been taught as if it were the Gospel itself. They may have heard of the other position, but have not given it any serious thought, nor have they investigated for themselves to find the truth. They have put their faith in their College and Seminary professors, and that is that! The second reason is less wide spread, but much worse. There are men who are aware of the other position, and even have much of the evidence available to them, but because of their pig-headed stubbornness and sinful pride they are incapable of admitting that they may have been wrong. There are none so blind as they who will not see.

So, we may conclude, based upon the evidence, that any translation, in order to be a correct and accurate rendering of the inspired words of God must be based on the Traditional texts of the Old and New Testament, which brings me to my next point.

The Translators.

The King James Bible was not translated by any one man, or even by one group of men, but by six groups, or committees, meeting in the cities of Cambridge, Westminster, and Oxford, England. These men began their work in 1604 and completed it in 1611. In the cities of Westminster and Oxford there was one committee on the New Testament in each city. In Cambridge there was a committee on the Old Testament and one for the Apocrypha. Yes, the original committee for the translation of the King James Bible included the Apocrypha, however, the translators did not believe the Apocrypha was inspired, but translated these non-canonical books because of their historical significance. These six committees were made up of fifty-seven men altogether, each committee having about ten men on it. I believe these fifty-seven men were superior to any man or committee of men that has translated any Bible since the translation of the King James Bible. By way of illustration let's look at the qualifications of just a few of these great men.

Dr. John Hardinge headed up the Oxford Group. Dr. Hardinge was Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford.

Dr. John Reynolds, the originator of the translation project, who presented the idea to the commission appointed by King James to study divisions in the Church of England, died before the Authorized Version was published.

Dr. Richard Brett was one of the world's foremost experts in Latin, Greek, Chaldee, Arabic and Ethiopic languages.

Dr. John Harmer, Professor of Greek at Oxford was a noted linguist having mastered not only Greek, but Latin and Hebrew as well.

Dr. Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, died in 1605 before the work was truly begun.

Dr. Lawrence Chaderton was skilled in Greek and Hebrew, and a student of the ancient Jewish writings called "The Rabbis."

Dr. Thomas Harrison was noted for his skill in Hebrew and Greek idioms.

Dr. Robert Spalding, successor to Dr. Lively as Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge.

Dr. Lancelot Andrews was selected to work on the Old Testament at Westminster, and worked on twelve books, Genesis to 2 Kings. Dr. Andrews spoke almost all of the languages spoken in Europe in the seventeenth century. He majored in language at Cambridge University, especially studying the Oriental tongues. Dr. Andrews is said to have been completely fluent in fifteen languages, and had his private devotions in the Greek New Testament, and kept a journal of his devotions written entirely in Greek.

Dr. William Bedwell was also selected to work on the Old Testament at Westminster, working on the same books as Dr. Andrews. Dr. Bedwell was not only fluent in Hebrew and other Oriental languages, but produced a translation of the Epistles of John in Arabic and Latin. He also wrote an entire Arabic dictionary by himself! At the time of his death Dr. Bedwell was working on a Persian dictionary which is still in the Bodlian Library at Oxford. Dr. Bedwell's knowledge of the Shemitic and Cognate languages of Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Aramaic, and Coptic made him an uncontestable expert on the translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into English.

Dr. Miles Smith was in the Old Testament group meeting at Oxford, and was selected to translate the books from Isaiah through Malachi. Dr. Smith was so familiar with the Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic languages that they were as familiar to him as his native English.

Dr. Henry Savile was selected to work with the group that was to translate the New Testament at Oxford. He was chosen to translate the Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Revelation. Dr. Savile was said to be as great a mathematician as he was a Greek scholar. He was chosen to tutor Queen Elizabeth in both mathematics and Greek. Dr. Savile was not only famous for his translation of the great history of Tacitus from Latin into English, but also translated the mathematical work of Euclid on geometry from Greek into English. However, Dr. Savile was most famous for his editing and translating of the complete works of John Chrysostom, one of the most famous of the early Greek church fathers, from the Greek into English. This was a work similar in size to eight very large dictionaries!

Dr. John Bois was a New Testament translator at Cambridge. At the age of five he had read the entire Bible in Hebrew. At the age of six he could write the Hebrew language in “a fair and elegant” hand. He was equally skilled in Greek. He was one of the twelve, two from each committee, who were sent to make the final revision at Stationer’s Hall in London. On top of all of his other duties, he was the secretary for the final revision committee, taking notes on all of the meetings. It is largely through his notes that we have knowledge of the inner workings of the committee in this day and age.

The above cited men were of such stature that they cannot be equaled today. Our system of education is not nearly as thorough as was the educational system that produced these great men. There is not a single translator of any modern version that can even come close to the stature of these great men. Our King James Bible is superior to all others not only because it is translated from superior texts, but because it was translated by superior translators.

Their Superior Technique. It is important to understand that the King James Bible was translated quite differently from the other English versions that are on sale today. Here is a brief overview of the technique used to translate our English Bible.

Team Effort. Each translator had to translate all of the books assigned to his group by himself, then all of the translators from the group would meet together to discuss which of the translations was best. After all of the committee, working together, had decided which translation was the best, a copy of the translation of the book would be sent to one of the other cities where another committee was working, and they would meet and review the other committees’ translation, while the first committee was reviewing the second committee’s translation. This process would continue until all six committees had reviewed every book that had been translated. Then the book would be reviewed again by the committee of twelve, two from each of the six committees. If they found any problems, they would send word to the committee responsible for the translation, and their reasons for translating the problem passage in that way would be reviewed. In the end, all of the people on all of the committees would have to be in total agreement before the translation was considered to be complete, and they would go on to the next book! Such a painstaking team effort is unheard of today, which probably explains why there is so much disagreement as to the proper translation of the Bible today. There is almost a “Bible of the Month” club, bringing out some “new,” “better,” and “easier” version before the last one has had a chance to be read.

Verbal Equivalence. The King James Bible Translators used a translation technique that is known as “verbal and formal equivalence.” This simply means that when a word was to be translated, the translator would find the “verbal equivalent” in English. This does not imply that the King James Bible is always a “word-for-word” translation, for there are many Greek words that cannot be accurately translated into one English

word. Sometimes it takes two, three, four, and even five English words to give us the proper meaning of the single Greek or Hebrew word being translated. A perfect example of this is found in 2 Timothy 3:16, where one Greek word *qeopneustos* (*theopneustos*) is translated using five English words, “given by inspiration of God.” Many of the so-called “scholars” love to point out that the “correct” translation of this word is “God-breathed.” WRONG! The correct translation is “given by inspiration of God!” The term “God-breathed” is not action specific. In other words, when you read “God-breathed” it doesn’t tell you anything about the action. “God breathed His Word” gives us very little information. Did God breath out, or in? And how did God breathing affect His Word? But when you read “given by inspiration of God,” you realize that God has breathed into His Word the breath of life, making the Word of God a living thing! Everything that God breathes the breath of life into becomes an eternally living entity. When God breathed into Adam (mankind in federal headship) he became an eternally living entity (every person that was ever born is alive today, somewhere!). So also with His Word. You can see then that the term “God-breathed” focuses our attention on God, when He, in this context, wants us to focus our attention on His Word, thus the correct translation “given by inspiration of God!”

Formal Equivalence means that when a word is translated from the Greek into English, the form of the word must be carried into the new language. In other words, if the Greek word is a noun, the English word must take the same form, that is, a noun. If the Greek word is a verb, the English word must be a verb. If the Greek word is a pronoun, the English word must be a pronoun, and so on. Also, implicit in formal equivalence is the number of the word, such as singular or plural. If the Greek is singular, then the English must also be singular, if plural, the translation must also be plural. Past tense must always be translated as past tense, future tense as future, perfect tense as perfect, and so on. There is a fellow in Los Angeles who has circulated a tape in which he claims that the word “is” in 2 Timothy 3:16 is in italics, and therefore has no support in the Greek, and it is perfectly alright to change it to “was.” According to this fellow’s less than brilliant deduction, the passage should read “All scripture “was” given by inspiration of God.” He doesn’t believe the Bible which we have today is inspired. He must think it has expired. The problem with this fellow is that he doesn’t have a clue about the Greek language. The reason the King James Translators added the word “is” keeping the passage in question in the present tense (as is the Greek), is that they understood that everything that God breathes into is eternal. You will notice that the second “is” before the word “profitable” is also in italics. Does anyone in their right mind suggest we change this word to “was”, indicating the Scriptures are no longer profitable? All Scripture is inspired, and all Scripture is profitable.

None of the modern English versions follow this verbal and formal rule of translation, but rather use a system of translation they refer to as Dynamic Equivalence. Dynamic is a word that means moving, or changing. The idea behind Dynamic Equivalence is that the modern translators feel free to change the words that God inspired anytime they feel like it to produce a “better” translation. If the translators feel like changing a noun to a pronoun, they just do it. If they feel like changing a word from singular to plural, they just do it. If they feel like changing an article from definite to indefinite, they just do it. They add to, subtract from, and change the words to “better preserve the idea, or meaning, or sense, or concept of the original”, while ignoring the words that the Holy God of Heaven has inspired. Did God say that His ideas, or meaning, or sense, or concepts were inspired, or did he say that His words were inspired? I believe His words are inspired, and no man can presume to change the words of God with impunity.

Our present day English Bible, the Authorized Version, is the culmination of over seven hundred years of refinement and purification (Psalm 12:6; 19:8). The first known Word of God in English was the Lindisfarne Gospels dating to about 700 A.D. These were in Latin with an Anglo-Saxon interlinear translation added about 950 A.D. In about 1000 A.D., Aelfric translated a condensed version of the first seven books of the Old Testament. However, due to the Norman invasion in 1066, French became the

dominant language of England, and the Anglo-Saxon tongue became obsolete. In the fourteenth century, English was again dominant, and by the fifteenth century French had almost disappeared.

In about 1300 the *Ormulum* appeared, translated by Orm, an Augustinian monk. This work was originally the Gospels, but later Genesis and Exodus were translated into English.

About the same time, Richard Rolle translated the Psalms into Early Middle English, of which 170 manuscripts still survive.

John Wycliffe (1330-1384) was the first known translator of the entire Bible into English. His first translation was published in about 1400, and a later edition, revised by John Purvey, appeared at a somewhat later time.

Tyndale, born in 1494, translated the Bible out of the Greek and Hebrew and published a New Testament in 1525, based on the first printed Greek New Testament, published by Erasmus in 1516. Tyndale was betrayed by a friend, and was martyred on October 6, 1536, for the crime of giving the people the Word of God in their own language. It has been claimed that as much as eighty percent of the King James Bible is taken from the Tyndale Bible, and thus he has been called the Father of the English Bible. The ecclesiastical authorities hated this Bible so much that only a small fragment of the 1525 edition still exists, in the British Museum, and only two copies of the second edition, published in 1533 are known to exist today. All the rest were burned by the ecclesiastical authorities of that dark day.

Myles Coverdale published a work called "The First Complete Bible to be Printed in the English Tongue" in about 1535. This was mostly based on Tyndale's work, with Martin Luther's German translation used for comparison. This work also contains some corruptions from the Latin Vulgate.

In 1537 a Bible was published with a title page suggesting that the translator was Thomas Matthew. The publisher is now known to have been John Rogers, who was an associate of Tyndale, and much of the work had probably been done by Tyndale prior to his death, and the balance was done by John Rogers working from Tyndale's notes. Later editions in 1540 and 1541 contained a preface by Archbishop Cranmer and became known as the Cranmer Bible.

Coverdale revised the Matthew Bible into what became known as the Great Bible, due to its large size (9 by 15 inches). This Bible was used in most Anglican churches from about 1538 until it went out of print in 1569. Ironically, this Great Bible was widely received, while at the same time John Rogers (Thomas Matthews) was imprisoned and later martyred (in 1555). It was through this Matthew's - Cranmer - Great Bible (all of which was just a republication of Tyndale's 1535 edition) that the most influence was exerted on future English versions.

During the reign of Catholic Queen Mary (1553-1558) no Bible was printed in England, but a group of men in Geneva, Switzerland, produced an English version called The Geneva Bible in 1560, with a second edition published in 1562. The New Testament was edited by William Whittingham, who was married to John Calvin's sister. Calvin wrote an introduction to this work. The Geneva Bible was the Bible used by Shakespeare, John Bunyan, Oliver Cromwell, and which was carried to America by the Puritans. Called "The People's Bible", it was pre-eminent among English Bibles for seventy-five years. From 1560 until 1644, 140 editions were published. The first Bible printed in Scotland, and used to start the Scottish Revivals under John Knox, was the Geneva Bible. The verse divisions of Roberre Estienne (also called Robert Stevens and Stefanus), originally employed in his Greek New Testament of 1551, were used in the Geneva Bible.

The popularity of the Geneva Bible motivated the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of England, after the crowning of Queen Elizabeth, to publish a Bible which could enjoy the authority of the Church of England. Archbishop Parker appointed a committee to work on the new version. This committee was to use the Great Bible as their starting point, and were to compare it to the Greek and Hebrew. Unfortunately, these men were not of the caliber of those who had produced the Geneva Bible. Their finished product was called The Bishop's Bible, and contained very few changes from the earlier work, relying heavily on the Great Bible, and the Geneva Bible, which were, of course, the Tyndale Bible published under other names. Nineteen editions were printed from 1568 until 1606.

The next, and last, Bible of real importance was now ready to arrive on the scene, The Authorized Version of 1611, which we have already dealt with. As you can see, the English Bible has been the product of over seven hundred years of preparation, purification, and publication.

Conclusion.

The Bible itself teaches that it is the Words of God that are inspired, and not just the thoughts, ideas, and concepts, as the proponents of the Critical text argue. Those inspired words have been preserved by God in the Traditional Hebrew and Greek texts, and those superior texts have been translated by superior men using superior techniques to give us an inspired, inerrant, infallible Bible. The unfortunate conclusion we are forced to come to is that the proponents of the Critical text do so due to the influence of Modernists, and Modernistic thinkers and educators in the Colleges, Seminaries, and Bible schools where these men received their educations. The Bible debate is not new. It is the latest battle in the continuing war between the Modernists and the Fundamentalists, and the sooner we identify the enemy, who will snatch away our Bibles, the sooner our erring brothers will become aware of the fact that they have come under the influence of the malignant spirit of Modernism and take the necessary steps to cleanse their minds, hearts, and pulpits of the poison that is destroying otherwise good men everywhere we look. We as Baptists believe the Bible is the very foundation of our faith. It is the Bible that tells us of Jesus, our Saviour. It is the Bible that tells us of heaven, our eternal home. It is the Bible that tells us of the unquenchable fire of hell, reserved for all those who die without Christ. It is the Bible that tells us of the coming time of great tribulation, and of the coming glorious Millennial Kingdom. If we lose our Bibles, we lose all of these great doctrines of our faith. If we begin to doubt the absolute trustworthiness of our Bibles, we will begin to doubt all of the doctrines taught therein. We must guard our Bibles. We must be defenders of the faith. If not, we will surely forfeit everything we hold most dear. As David asked, "Is there not a cause?" Think about it.

Masoretic Text

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Masoretic Text[a] (MT or **מסורה**) (נוסח המסורה) is the authoritative Hebrew and Aramaic text of the 24 books of Tanakh in Rabbinic Judaism. The Masoretic Text defines the Jewish canon and its precise letter-text, with its vocalization and accentuation known as the Masorah. It was primarily copied, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes between the 7th and 10th centuries of the Common Era (CE).

The oldest extant manuscripts date from around the 9th century.[b] The Aleppo Codex (once the oldest-known complete copy but since 1947 missing the Torah) dates from the 10th century.

The ancient Hebrew word mesorah (מסורה, alt. מסורה) broadly refers to the whole chain of Jewish tradition (see Oral law), which is claimed (by Orthodox Judaism) to be unchanged and infallible. Referring to the Masoretic Text, mesorah specifically means the diacritic markings of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures and the concise marginal notes in manuscripts (and later printings) of the Tanakh which note textual details, usually about the precise spelling of words.

Modern scholars seeking to understand the history of the Old Testament use a range of sources other than the Masoretic Text.[2] These include early Greek (Septuagint) and Syriac (Peshitta) translations, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Dead Sea Scrolls and quotations from rabbinic manuscripts. Most of these are older than the oldest surviving Masoretic text and occasionally present notable differentiations.[3] Which of the three commonly known versions (Septuagint, Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch) is closest to the theoretical Urtext is disputed.[4] The text of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Peshitta reads somewhat in-between the Masoretic Text and the old Greek.[5] Although the consonants of the Masoretic Text differ little from some Qumran texts of the early 2nd century, it has many differences of both great and lesser significance when compared to the manuscripts of the Septuagint, a Greek translation (about 1000 years older than the MT made in the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE) of a more ancient Hebrew Scriptures that was in popular use by Jews in Egypt and the Holy Land (and matches the quotations in the New Testament of Christianity, especially by Paul the Apostle).[6] A recent finding of a short Leviticus fragment, recovered from the ancient En-Gedi Scroll, carbon-dated to the 3rd or 4th century CE, is completely identical with the Masoretic Text.[c]

The Masoretic Text was used as the basis for translations of the Old Testament in Protestant Bibles such as the King James Version and American Standard Version and (after 1943) for some versions of Catholic Bibles, replacing the Vulgate translation, although the Vulgate had itself already been revised in light of the Masoretic text in the 1500s.

The Age of the Masoretes

The current received text finally achieved predominance through the reputation of the Masoretes, schools of scribes and Torah scholars working between the 7th and 11th centuries, based primarily in the cities of Tiberias, Jerusalem, and in Babylonia under the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid Caliphates. According to Menachem Cohen these schools developed such prestige for the accuracy and error-control of their copying techniques that their texts established an authority beyond all others.[11] Differences remained, sometimes bolstered by systematic local differences in pronunciation and cantillation. Every locality, following the tradition of its school, had a standard codex embodying its readings. In Babylonia the school of Sura differed from that of Nehardea; and similar differences existed in the schools of the Land of Israel as against that at Tiberias, which in later times increasingly became the chief seat of learning. In this period

living tradition ceased, and the Masoretes in preparing their codices usually followed the one school or the other, examining, however, standard codices of other schools and noting their differences.[9]

Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali

In the first half of the 10th century Aaron ben Moses ben Asher and Ben Naphtali were the leading Masoretes in Tiberias. Their names have come to symbolise the variations among Masoretes, but the differences between ben Asher and ben Naphtali should not be exaggerated. There are hardly any differences between them regarding the consonants, though they differ more on vocalization and accents. Also, there were other authorities such as Rabbi Pinchas and Moshe Moheh, and ben Asher and ben Naphtali often agree against these others. Further, it is possible that all variations found among manuscripts eventually came to be regarded as disagreements between these figureheads. Ben Asher wrote a standard codex[9] (the Aleppo Codex) embodying his opinions. Probably ben Naphtali did too, but it has not survived.[citation needed]

It has been suggested that there never was an actual “ben Naphtali”; rather, the name was chosen (based on the Bible, where Asher and Naphtali are the younger sons of Zilpah and Bilhah) to designate any tradition different from ben Asher’s.[citation needed]

Ben Asher was the last of a distinguished family of Masoretes extending back to the latter half of the 8th century. Despite the rivalry of ben Naphtali and the opposition of Saadia Gaon, the most eminent representative of the Babylonian school of criticism, ben Asher’s codex became recognized as the standard text of the Bible.[9] See Aleppo Codex, Codex Cairensis.

Masorah

See also: Tiberian vocalization

A page from the Aleppo Codex, showing the extensive marginal annotations.

By long tradition, a ritual Sefer Torah (Torah scroll) could contain only the Hebrew consonantal text – nothing added, nothing taken away. The Masoretic codices however, provide extensive additional material, called masorah, to show correct pronunciation and cantillation, protect against scribal errors, and annotate possible variants. The manuscripts thus include vowel points, pronunciation marks and stress accents in the text, short annotations in the side margins, and longer more extensive notes in the upper and lower margins and collected at the end of each book.

These notes were added because the Masoretes recognized the possibility of human error in copying the Hebrew Bible. The Masoretes were not working with the original Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible and corruptions had already crept into the versions they copied.[18]

Etymology

The Hebrew word masorah is taken from the Book of Ezekiel 20:37 and means originally “legcuffs”. The fixation of the text was considered to be in the nature of legcuffs upon its exposition. When, in the course of time, the Masorah had become a traditional discipline, the term became connected with the verb מסר “to hand down” and acquired the general meaning of “tradition.”[9]

Language and form

The language of the Masoretic notes is primarily Aramaic but partly Hebrew. The Masoretic annotations are found in various forms: (a) in separate works, e.g., the *Oklah we-Oklah*; (b) in the form of notes written in the margins and at the end of codices. In rare cases, the notes are written between the lines. The first word of each Biblical book is also as a rule surrounded by notes. The latter are called the Initial Masorah; the notes on the side margins or between the columns are called the Small (Masora parva or Mp) or Inner Masorah (Masora marginalis); and those on the lower and upper margins, the Large or Outer Masorah (Masora magna or Mm[Mas.M]). The name “Large Masorah” is applied sometimes to the lexically arranged notes at the end of the printed Bible, usually called the Final Masorah,[9] (Masora finalis), or the Masoretic Concordance.[citation needed]

The Small Masorah consists of brief notes with reference to marginal readings, to statistics showing the number of times a particular form is found in Scripture, to full and defective spelling, and to abnormally written letters. The Large Masorah is more copious in its notes. The Final Masorah comprises all the longer rubrics for which space could not be found in the margin of the text, and is arranged alphabetically in the form of a concordance. The quantity of notes the marginal Masorah contains is conditioned by the amount of vacant space on each page. In the manuscripts it varies also with the rate at which the copyist was paid and the fanciful shape he gave to his gloss.[9]

There was accordingly an independent Babylonian Masora which differed from the Palestinian in terminology and to some extent in order. The Masora is concise in style with a profusion of abbreviations, requiring a considerable amount of knowledge for their full understanding. It was quite natural that a later generation of scribes would no longer understand the notes of the Masoretes and consider them unimportant; by the late medieval period they were reduced to mere ornamentation of the manuscripts. It was Jacob ben Chayyim who restored clarity and order to them.[19]

In most manuscripts, there are some discrepancies between the text and the masorah, suggesting that they were copied from different sources or that one of them has copying errors. The lack of such discrepancies in the Aleppo Codex is one of the reasons for its importance; the scribe who copied the notes, presumably Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, probably wrote them originally.[citation needed]

Numerical Masorah

In classical antiquity, copyists were paid for their work according to the number of stichs (lines of verse). As the prose books of the Bible were hardly ever written in stichs, the copyists, in order to estimate the amount of work, had to count the letters.[9] For the Masoretic Text, such statistical information more importantly also ensured accuracy in the transmission of the text with the production of subsequent copies that were done by hand.[citation needed]

Hence the Masoretes contributed the Numerical Masorah.[9] These notes are traditionally categorized into two main groups, the marginal Masorah and the final Masorah. The category of marginal Masorah is further divided into the Masorah parva (small Masorah) in the outer side margins and the Masorah magna (large Masorah), traditionally located at the top and bottom margins of the text.[citation needed]

The Masorah parva is a set of statistics in the outer side margins of the text. Beyond simply counting the letters, the Masorah parva consists of word-use statistics, similar documentation for expressions or certain phraseology, observations on full or defective writing, references to the Kethiv-Qere readings and more.

These observations are also the result of a passionate zeal to safeguard the accurate transmission of the sacred text.[citation needed]

Even though often cited as very exact, the Masoretic “frequency notes” in the margin of Codex Leningradiensis contain several errors.[20][21][h]

The Masorah magna, in measure, is an expanded Masorah parva. Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) includes an apparatus referring the reader to the large Masorah, which is printed separately.[22]

The final Masorah is located at the end of biblical books or after certain sections of the text, such as at the end of the Torah. It contains information and statistics regarding the number of words in a book or section, etc. Thus, Book of Leviticus 8:23 is the middle verse in the Pentateuch. The collation of manuscripts and the noting of their differences furnished material for the Text-Critical Masorah. The close relation which existed in earlier times (from the Soferim to the Amoraim inclusive) between the teacher of tradition and the Masorete, both frequently being united in one person, accounts for the Exegetical Masorah. Finally, the invention and introduction of a graphic system of vocalization and accentuation gave rise to the Grammatical Masorah.[9]

The most important of the Masoretic notes are those that detail the Qere and Ketiv that are located in the Masorah parva in the outside margins of BHS. Given that the Masoretes would not alter the sacred consonantal text, the Kethiv-Qere notes were a way of “correcting” or commenting on the text for any number of reasons (grammatical, theological, aesthetic, etc.) deemed important by the copyist.[23]

History of the Masorah

The history of the Masorah may be divided into three periods: (1) creative period, from its beginning to the introduction of vowel-signs; (2) reproductive period, from the introduction of vowel-signs to the printing of the Masorah[9] (1525); (3) critical period, from 1525 to the present time.[citation needed]

The materials for the history of the first period are scattered remarks in Talmudic and Midrashic literature, in the post-Talmudical treatises Masseket Sefer Torah and Masseket Soferim, and in a Masoretic chain of tradition found in ben Asher’s Dikduke ha-Te’amim, § 69 and elsewhere.[9]

The story followed by the supporters of the Septuagint

Frmilovan.wordpress.com

Once upon a time there was a tribe living in the Middle East that had a collection of sacred texts written in Hebrew, Chaldean and Aramaic. It is the nature of sacred texts to be venerated and transmitted from generation to generation unaltered.

As time passed members of this tribe emigrated to areas where Hebrew and Aramaic and Chaldean were not spoken. A large community settled and prospered in the city of Alexandria in Egypt. Greek replaced their tribal language. They needed an accurate translation of their venerated documents into Greek.

Around 250 B.C. seventy rabbis translated the sacred texts into Greek. This translation was not a bootleg edition. The project was approved by the High Priest and the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The Septuagint, the translation of the seventy, was an official document.

A Hebrew Bible exists today. It is used by Jews everywhere. It is called the Masoretic text. It was compiled around 700 A.D. It is almost one thousand years newer than the Septuagint. The rabbis who compiled the Masoretic text were not accountable to the High Priest in Jerusalem. There no longer was a High Priest. The rabbis who compiled the Masoretic text were not accountable to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. There no longer was a Sanhedrin.

The Septuagint predates the first appearance of the Masoretic text by almost ten centuries. The Septuagint is based upon Hebrew texts at least twelve centuries older than the texts upon which the Masoretic version is based. Yet, modern Christian translations of the Old Testament rely on the Masoretic Text, not the Septuagint.

Where is the problem?

Most of the quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament used the Septuagint as their primary source. The integrity and truthfulness of the Septuagint is completely dependent on the Septuagint being a truthful translation. Discredit the Septuagint and there is no New Testament.

There was no controversy about the integrity of the Septuagint from 250 B.C. until 135 A. D.

What had happened to provoke dissatisfaction with the Septuagint among the Jews?

Annas and Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin had rejected the messianic claims of Jesus. The New Testament documents had been written and were circulating by A.D. 70. The Jews knew that the credibility of the Christian Gospels depended on the credibility of the Septuagint. Something had to be done.

Around 95 A.D. Rabbi Akiva, who later proclaimed Bar Kochba as the messiah, hired a man named Aquila to translate a Hebrew to Greek version of the Old Testament that would undermine the messianic claims of Jesus found in the Septuagint. Some scholars believe that the Masoretic text was based in part on this tendentious translation by Aquila.

How is the Masoretic text different from the Septuagint?

Psalm 22:16 the word “pierced” has been replaced by “lion”.

Psalms 145:13 omitted entirely.

Isaiah 53:11 the word "light" is omitted.

On 134 occasions the Tetragrammaton, the name of God, has been replaced by "Adonai".

Psalms 151 was omitted entirely. (It is now omitted by almost all Christian Bibles !)

Exodus 1: The number 75 replaced by 70

Genesis 10:24 some generations removed.

Deuteronomy 32:8 "Angels Of Elohim" replaced with "children of Israel."

Jeremiah 10 verses 6 and 7 have been added in the Masoretic.

Psalms 96:10 "Say among the nations, YHWH reigns from the wood" omitted.

Isaiah 19:18 "city of righteousness" changed to the "city of the sun" or in some versions "the city of destruction."

The Masoretic scribes purposely and willfully rearranged the original chapter order in the prophetic Book of Daniel, so that the chapters make no sense chronologically.

Isaiah 61:1 "recovery of sight to the blind." Omitted.

In Psalms 40:6 "a body you have prepared for me" was replaced by "you opened my ears."

Deuteronomy 32:43 "Let all the messengers of Elohim worship him." Omitted.

Genesis 4:8: "Let us go into the field" is omitted.

Deuteronomy 32:43. Moses' song is shortened.

Isaiah 53 contains 10 spelling differences, 4 stylistic changes and 3 missing letters for light in verse 11, for a total of 17 differences.

Isaiah 7:14. "Virgin" replaced by "young woman."

(When Aquila made his Greek translation of the Old Testament at the behest of Rabbi Akiva, he changed the Septuagint's "virgin" into "young woman". The Masoretic compilers may have followed his lead.)

The Masoretic text differs from the Septuagint in hundreds of places.