

The Textus Receptus and the King James Bible

Key Verses: Isaiah 46:9-11

I Historical Summary

Inspiration-Original Writings

35 AD to 100 AD



Manuscript Period 50 AD to 1600 AD

Hand Written Copies



First Printed Greek NT

1516 AD

II Texts and Manuscripts

A. 3 Main Categories of Ancient Manuscripts 5900+

1. Traditional 92%
2. Alexandrian 4%
3. Western, misc., unclassified 4%

B. Major Modern Printed Texts

1. Textus Receptus
2. UBS/Nestle-Aland (identical NT – called the Critical text)
3. 8000+ differences

C. Editors of the Critical Text

The first, second and third editions of the United Bible societies Greek Text were edited by Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren. The fourth and fifth editions were edited by Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo Martini, and Bruce Metzger. Among these names are individuals who deny that the Bible is verbally inspired and infallible. I will take special note of some of them below.

Bruce Metzger (1914-2007) was George L. Collard Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at the theologically liberal Princeton Theological Seminary. He was the head of the continuing Revised Standard Version translation committee, was the lead catalyst in the translation of the New Revised Standard Version, and was involved in the production of the condensed Reader's Digest Bible. Bruce Metzger was an unbeliever in the literal inspiration, preservation, and inerrancy of the Bible. ¹ He denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), he believed the Book of Daniel was written after the events the book prophesies, he denied Paul's authorship of some of his New Testament Epistles, and questioned the authenticity of other New Testament books. ² He believed that much of the Old Testament was drawn out of a matrix of myth and legend. ³ He did not believe the story of the Genesis flood. Job was a folktale. Jonah was a legend. Peter did not write 2 Peter and the opening chapters of the Old Testament are not history. ⁴ Jesus said, "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46-47)

Kurt Aland was also editor of the Nestle-Aland Text which, as we have said, now matches the UBS text exactly. He rejected verbal inspiration ⁵ and he did not believe in an authoritative, settled canon of Scripture. He rejected the traditional authorship of the four gospels. Everything is to be questioned and doubted. ⁶ Dr. Kurt Aland did not believe in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. He did not believe in the inerrant preservation of the scriptures.

Carlo Martini is a Roman Catholic Cardinal. He was Archbishop of Milan and Professor of New Testament Textual Criticism at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. In one of his articles in O Timothy Magazine, David Cloud said the following about Carlo Martini.

CARLO MARTINI ... was a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, which, in addition to Roman Catholic heresies, promotes the theory of evolution and the heretical documentary views of biblical inspiration, etc. He is past president of the Council of European Bishop's Conferences. A Time magazine article reported that Martini brought together a syncretistic convocation of over 100 religious leaders from around the world to promote a new age, one-world religion. In addressing this meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev said, "We need to synthesize a new religion for thinking men that will universalize that religion for the world and lead us into a new age." Martini is a radical ecumenist and syncretist who is striving to bring all denominations and religions into a "Catholic" unity. The Bible calls this "Mystery Babylon." ⁷

The UBS text has been a completely modernist pro-Catholic production from start to finish. In the Introduction to the Nestle-Aland: Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th edition, page 45, the editors say this about the relationship of the UBS to the Roman Catholic Church.

The text shared by these two editions was adopted internationally by Bible Societies, and following an agreement between the Vatican and the United Bible Societies it has served as the basis for new translations and for revisions made under their supervision. This marks a significant step with regard to interconfessional relationships. ⁸

Matthew Black (1908-1994) was a Scottish minister and a Biblical scholar, ie. textual critic. He has been described thusly.

MATTHEW BLACK is another modernistic editor of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. Black co-edited an edition of Peake's Commentary in 1982. Peake's was originally published in 1919 and boldly opposed fundamentalist doctrine. The editors openly reject the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and preservation of Holy Scripture. Note the following excerpt: "It is well known that the primitive Christian Gospel was initially transmitted by word of mouth and that this oral tradition resulted in variant reporting of word and deed. It is equally true that when the Christian record was committed to writing it continued to be the subject of verbal variation, involuntary and intentional, at the hands of scribes and editors" (Peake's Commentary on the Bible, p. 633). Peake's Commentary also casts doubt upon Trinitarian baptism: "This mission is described in the language of the church and most commentators doubt that the Trinitarian formula was original at this point in Matthew's Gospel, since the NT elsewhere does not know of such a formula and describes baptism as being performed in the name of the Lord Jesus (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:16, etc.)." ⁹

Those who follow this text are following blind leaders who deny the verbal inspiration of Scripture, the veracity of Scripture, and the verbal plenary preservation of the Scriptures. These editors are blind spiritually and those who follow them often do it out of ignorance. If the blind follow the blind ...?

Number of whole verses missing in UBS	17	The UBS Text differs greatly from the Received Text. There are thousands
Omissions of whole and partial verses	1309	

of word differences between the two. Everett W. Fowler evaluated the third edition of the UBS Greek Text compared to the Received Text, which, as mentioned before, is the same text as the fourth and fifth editions. He published the results in *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*. ¹⁰

The total word differences were categorized as follows. These do not include differences in spelling of proper nouns. The category of "words classed as different words" does not include "spelling

variations shown in Greek lexicons as accepted ways of spelling words which have identical meanings but which are not listed as different words (for example: labor=labour)."

Words in the Received Text omitted from UBS	3602
Words classed as different words	3146
Words in UBS not in the Received Text	976
Words spelled different, but not different words	950
Total word differences	8674

Why do we have such concern over individual words, even if some of them do not materially affect the translation? There are a total of 8,674 word differences between the Received Greek Text and the UBS Greek Text. The New Testament was inspired in Greek and every Word of God is important. As we have abundantly seen, God, Himself, emphasizes the importance of every word.

The United Bible Societies Greek text was produced by spiritually blind men. Those who follow the work of these men have blind spots, as well. "If the blind follow the blind ..."

III The Traditional Text

- A. The Textus Receptus is based on the Traditional text.
- B. Do all manuscripts have errors in them?

"Notice that of twenty-one MSS, eleven of their exemplars (copies) were 'perfect', and another five were off by only one variant (the worst was only off by six, for two books)" ¹¹

- C. Is it true that there is no evidence of the Traditional text before the 4th century?

- 1. The following papyri are evidence (I compared papyrus 52, 32, and 64 to the TR)

Papyrus 52: 100-175 AD - 1 spelling difference, 1 scribal error (an O before a word instead of after)

Papyrus 32: 200 AD - 2 spelling differences

Papyrus 66: mixed text 200 AD

Papyrus 64, the Magdalen Papyrus:

P64 consists of three small fragments written on both sides and contains parts of Matthew 26:7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 22, 23, 31, 32, 33.

The fragments are dated 35-70 AD, by Peter Carsten Thiede, archaeologist and New Testament scholar, who wrote a book to present his compelling evidence.¹²

These fragments are categorized as Alexandrian. It is said, "Without any variant of the text Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland."¹³

However, I have examined the fragments and made comparison to the Received Text. I found that the statement above about P 64 having no variance with Nestle is not true in the current NA text. (It doesn't even match the 1811 Westcott and Hort Greek text.)

The front side of fragment three contains part of Matthew 26:22-23. The top line is very hard to read. It reads one of two possible ways. **TΩM -or- TΩN - in English TOM or TON**. One problem with this is that neither option matches the Nestle or UBS texts. See the comparison below.

P64: TΩM -or- TΩN (On the papyrus the Ω was written more like this ω.)

UBS, Nestle: AY**TΩ** ΕΙΣ ΕΣΚΑΤΟΣ ΜΗΤΙ

UBS and Nestle insert two words *between* the TΩ and M. P64 cannot be Alexandrian.

P64 Option 2: **TΩN**

TR: AY**TΩN** ΜΗΤΙ

It matches the TR exactly! P64 is Traditional text!



Carsten Thede’s analysis showed the Greek letters to be TON. *There is a misspelled word in Fragment 2 on the front side. Otherwise, P 64, 35-70 AD, is a match to the Textus Receptus! But, UBS and Nestle are not. P64 is Traditional type Text.* ¹⁴

2. The following “Church fathers” quoted the Traditional text
 - Irenaeus (130-202)
 - Justin Martyr (100-165)
 - Hyppolytus (170-236)
 - Tertullian (160-221)

IV The World of the Middle Ages – What was God doing?

A. The Roman Empire became divided into east and west empires. The west fell about 500 AD. The east remained until 1453 AD. It is known as the Byzantine empire.

B. The Language of the Byzantine Empire was Greek and most of the Traditional text manuscripts were copied there. Why? Was it simply because their language was Greek? Was God doing something, or was history on its own? God is the God of history.

C. God had provided a safe place for the New Testament to be preserved and to grow into thousands of copies, just like He provided a safe place in Egypt for Israel to grow into over a million people.

D. When the Moslems threatened the Byzantine Empire and finally took it in 1453, thousands of Greek speakers and thousands of Hebrew speaking Jews came to Western Europe with scholarship, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and many NT Greek manuscripts. These came to Europe just in time for Erasmus to learn Greek and compile the Textus Receptus for printing.



V The Textus Receptus

In the late 1400’s and early 1500’s, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam examined many manuscripts he found from Paris to England to Switzerland and in between. These manuscripts were predominately Traditional type. He could read Greek, speak and read Latin, and several other languages. He published the first printed Greek New Testament in 1516.

A. The Editors of the Textus Receptus.

1. Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) - 5 Editions
2. The Complutensian Polyglot (1502-1522)
3. Simon Colinaeus – 1 Edition
4. Robert Stephanus (1503-1559) - 4 Editions
5. Theodore Beza (1519–1605) - 10 Editions
6. Abraham (1592-1652) and Bonaventure (1583–1652) Elzevir - 3 Editions
7. Frederick H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891) - 1 Edition

B. Why all the Editions?

1. Most of the changes were spelling and punctuation.
2. Some of the changes were words. There were only about 190-250 changes per edition.
3. An Example: James 5:12 “but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.” This is what you find in the manuscripts (no spaces, no punctuation):

αλλοντιναορκονητωδευμωντοναιναικαιτουουιναμη**υποκρισιν**πεσητε

The problem is with the highlighted letters. Stephanus thought the word εις should be inserted before them. In doing so, he made it read “into hypocrisy.” Beza found that the εις should not be

there and the letters are actually two words. So, he changed it to υπο κριων, into condemnation. So it is in the KJB. This process was providentially guided to produce a completely pure printed text.

C. The Complutensian Polyglott: It was not a Textus Receptus Edition.

While Erasmus was laboring in Central Europe, a group of scholars was working on an edition of the whole Bible in Spain. The effort was led by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), called Cardinal Ximenes. The Complutensian Polyglot was a Bible in Greek, Latin, Aramaic, and Hebrew. Cardinal Jiménez collected a number of Greek manuscripts. The work went on from 1502 to 1517. The Greek New Testament was printed in 1514, but not issued. Erasmus' Greek New Testament was published and issued first. The Complutensian Polyglott was not in circulation until 1522. The Complutensian Polyglot had a strong Traditional Text influence. The King James translators did use it as a source.

D. What was God doing?

1. In 1516, God was preparing for the Reformation.
2. The Reformation began in 1517, with Martin Luther's 95 Theses
3. God had the TR published before the Complutensian. The Protestant reformation would be dead on arrival, if it was based on a text created by a Roman Catholic Cardinal, Cisneros.
4. The TR and Translations were the source of all evangelistic movements, all missions movements, all revivals from 1516 to 1960 (at least).

E. Objections to the Textus Receptus

1. Erasmus only used a few manuscripts (5 or 6)
 - a. Erasmus searched for manuscripts in many countries over ten years and took notes. The five or six manuscripts usually referred to were those he found waiting in Switzerland when arrived there in 1515.
 - b. Stephanus had at least fifteen more.
 - c. Beza had more.
 - d. The additional manuscripts possessed by Stephanus and Beza are ignored.
2. The TR relies completely on late copies.
 - a. Erasmus was aware of the Alexandrian manuscript, Vaticanus, which is dated by the scholars at 350 AD. He was offered numerous readings from it. The Papal librarian offered to supply reading to Erasmus. Also, he spent several years in Italy and had access to the Papal library.
 - b. The TR editors had manuscripts ranged from 5th century to 16th century
 - c. The Traditional text manuscripts they had were consistent representatives of older copies that go back to the second or first century.
 - d. The copies they had were consistent with quotes by the "church fathers" back to the second century.

VI The King James Bible

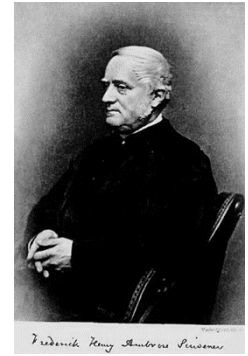
A. The Translation of the KJB, basic facts

1. It was translated in 1611 by 47 learned men.
2. The primary Greek source was Beza's 1598 Edition. The Hebrew text was the Ben Chayim edition of the Masoretic text.
3. The translators sometimes adjusted the Textus Receptus. Beza 1598 was the primary source, but sometimes they chose to use readings from other editions and from the Complutensian Polyglot.
4. They were both translators and Editors of the Received Text.

B. Frederick Scrivener (1813-1891). He produced one Edition of the TR, first published in 1881.

1. First, Scrivener compared each verse of the KJV with Beza 1598 to see if they matched.

2. According to him, he found about 190 places where they were different.
 3. For each difference, he looked for the Greek text that had the reading matching the KJV. He would not make a change in Beza without Greek authority.
 4. He made changes in the 190 places based on what he found in the Greek evidence.
 5. He corrected printer errors in the Beza text.
 6. He corrected Beza for inconsistent and incorrect Greek spelling.
 7. He adjusted the paragraphs and punctuation.
- C. The King James Bible is Unique
1. The KJB translators were both translators and Editors of the Textus Receptus.
 2. Their edits came from the Greek editions of the Textus Receptus or from the Complutensian Polyglot.
 3. The edits were in English, Scrivener put them into Greek.
 4. The KJB edits were the final edits to the TR. The edits in the Elzevir editions did not make it into the Scrivener edition, but the KJB edits did.



The translators that produced the King James Version relied mainly, it seems, on the later editions of Beza's Greek New Testament, especially his 4th edition (1588-9). But also they frequently consulted the editions of Erasmus and Stephanus and the Complutensian Polyglot. According to Scrivener (1884), (51) out of the 252 passages in which these sources differ sufficiently to affect the English rendering, the King James Version agrees with Beza against Stephanus 113 times, with Stephanus against Beza 59 times, and 80 times with Erasmus, or the Complutensian, or the Latin Vulgate against Beza and Stephanus. Hence the King James Version ought to be regarded not merely as a translation of the Textus Receptus but also as an independent variety of the Textus Receptus.¹⁵

Steve Combs, 2023, www.bpsglobal.org

¹ La More, Gary E, Ph. D. (in Greek Philosophy and M. Div. in Greek and Hebrew). Bruce Metzger: a Princeton Apostate. Pastor's Helps. Grace Missionary Baptist Church. Web. 22 July 2017.

² La Moore

³ La Moore

⁴ La Moore

⁵ David Cloud. Textual Criticism Drawn From the Wells of Infidelity. O Timothy Magazine. Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature. 2009. Web. <https://www.wayoflife.org/database/wellsofinfidelity.html>.

⁶ David Cloud. *The Modern Version Hall of Shame*. PDF edition. Web. 2005. https://www.wayoflife.org/free_ebooks/modern_bible_version_hall_of_shame.php.

⁷ David Cloud. Textual Criticism Drawn From the Wells of Infidelity. O Timothy Magazine. Port Huron, MI: Way of Life Literature. 2009. Web. <https://www.wayoflife.org/database/wellsofinfidelity.html>.

⁸ Introduction, Nestle-Aland: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th revised edition. 2006. Cited. Aren't Newer Translations Based on a Better Text? The King's Bible. www.kingsbible.org. Web. 14 July 2017

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Fowler, Everette W. *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*. (Watertown, WI: Maranatha Baptist Press, 1981) p. 28-66. Print. 19 August 2014.

¹¹ Wilbur Pickering. *In Defense of the Objective Authority of the Sacred Text*.

¹² Carsten Thiede. *The Jesus Papyrus: The Most Sensational Evidence on the Origin of the Gospel Since the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Doubleday: New York. 1996.

¹³ Biblical Archaeology. www.la-via.es/english/archivo/MagdalenEN.htm. Web. 2014.

¹⁴ The Magdalen Papyrus P64: possibly the earliest known fragments of the New Testament (or of a book!). Magdalen College of Oxford University: 2023. <https://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/blog/the-magdalen-papyrus-p64-possibly-the-earliest-known-fragments-of-the-new-testament-or-of-a-book>.

¹⁵ Edward F. Hills. *The King James Version Defended*. (Des Moines: Christian Research Press. 1979) Print. Chapter 8.