

The Textus Receptus and the King James Version

Isaiah 46:9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me,
10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:
11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

Too often we treat events in past history as if they were purely human events and God had no involvement at all. Since God has promised to preserve all His words, we should for God's activity in events that involve His Word. The history of the Received Text is one history that Textual Critics treat as being purely human.

Inspiration-Original Writings

35 AD to 100 AD



Manuscript Period 50 AD to 1600 AD

Hand Written Copies



First Printed Greek NT

1516 AD

God has guided His Word all the way as it has traveled through history. The New Testament was inspired in the common Greek of the first century (called Koine). God preserved it in hand-written manuscripts (MSS) for fifteen hundred years. Now it is preserved in printed books. The first Greek New Testament was published in 1516, called Textus Receptus.

Inspiration



Transmission

Manuscripts – Printed Greek Text



Translation

God's plan began with inspiration. He inspired men to write the exact words He wanted written. Every word of the new Testament is inspired and the entire NT was inspired. Then He transmitted the all of the same words through history. Finally he provided the very same words to translators who translated them into the languages of the nations.

3 Categories of Ancient Manuscripts

1. Traditional 93%
2. Alexandrian 5%
3. Western 2%

2 Modern Texts

8,000+ differences in words

There are over 5700 ancient Greek partial manuscripts. Scholars have divided them into 3 major categories. The Traditional text includes about 93% of them. These MSS are almost entirely in agreement with one another. These categories have resulted in 2 major Greek texts today: the Textus Receptus and the Critical Text.

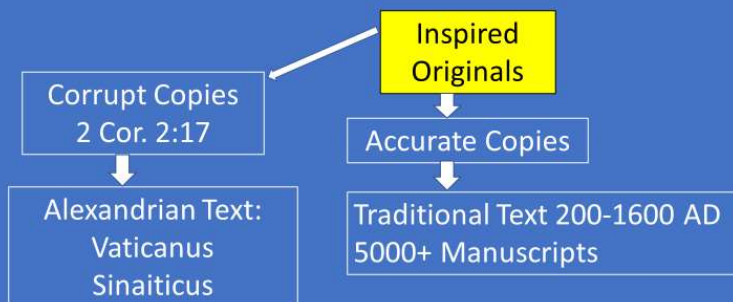
Corrupt Copies

2 Corinthians 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

1. Gnosticism
2. Docetism
3. Antinomianism
4. Ascetism
5. Greek Philosophy

Where did the differences in these manuscripts come from? Some are errors made by the copyists. Others are deliberate changes by heretics. The Word of God was being corrupted in Paul's day. He told the pastors in Ephesus that after he died Wolves would arise among them, not sparing the flock (Acts 20:29-30). God preserves his Word, but the Devil fights it.

New Testament in Greek 30-100 AD



This graphic illustrates that some copies of the original were good accurate copies, but some were corrupt copies. Other copies were made from these. Two of the corrupt copies are Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Some of the good copies had copyist errors and misspellings, but few major problems.

The Received Text (TR)

From a Group of Traditional Greek Text Manuscripts



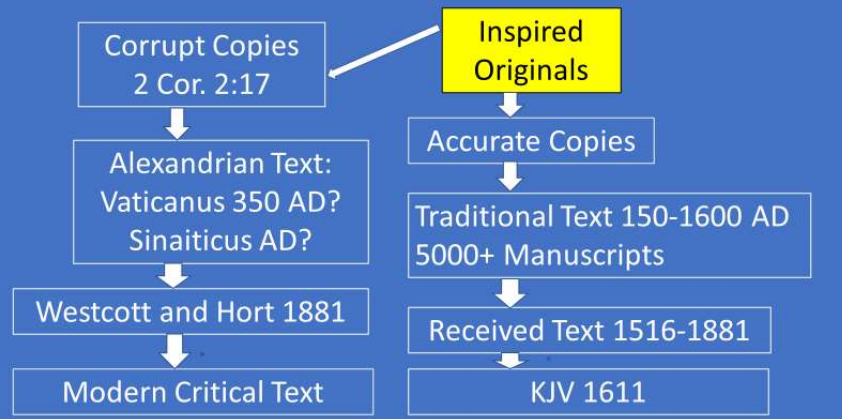
Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)



The First Printed and Published Greek New Testament 1516

The first printed Greek NT was edited from Traditional text manuscripts by Desiderius Erasmus and published in 1516.

New Testament in Greek 30-100 AD



The Textus Receptus is based on the vast majority of ancient manuscripts.

The Critical text is based on the theories of Westcott and Hort who said the Alexandrian text was best. So, it is based on the minority of MSS, which can be shown to be corrupt.

Editions of the TR How the TR Developed

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

How the TR developed.

Several other editors followed Erasmus. These editors made a few improvements in what the previous edition. The differences were never over about 250 between editions. Most of these were minor spelling, grammar, and a few word changes. The last editor was Scrivener.

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
4. The TR and Translations – Source of all evangelistic movement, all evangelistic movements, all revival from 1516 to 1960 and beyond.

God is the God of history. What was He doing in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? Western Europe was under the heavy hand of the Roman Catholic Europe for 1,000 years. God's plan was to free them. The Greek NT was a necessary part of that plan. God guided the publishing of the TR to give power to His plan. He chose the Traditional Text and the TR for this work.

James 5:12

αλλοντιναορκονητωδευμωντοναικαιτοου
ουιναμηυποκρισινπεσητε

ΑΛΛΟΝΤΙΝΑΟΡΚΟΝΗΤΩΔΕΥΜΩΝΤΟΝΑΙΝΑΙΚΑ
ΙΤΟΟΥΟΥΙΝΑΜΗΥΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΝΠΕΣΗΤΕ

Why were progressive editions of the TR needed? All the manuscripts were hand-written and some were incomplete and other hand a few errors. So it took time to discern the correct readings. The manuscripts looked somewhat like the example to the left. All the letters ran together and no punctuation.

James 5:12

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ΑΛΛΟΝΤΙΝΑΟΡΚΟΝΗΤΩΔΕΥΜΩΝΤΟΝΑΙΝΑΙΚΑ
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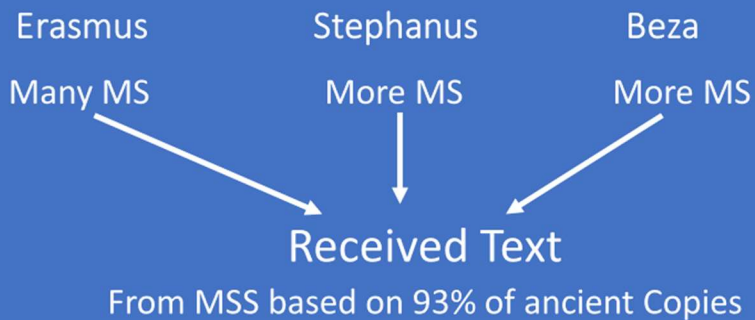
The letters in red are an example of the issues the editors faced. The letters can be read as one word or two words. If the letters are read as one word, it means "hypocrisy." If they are read as two words, it means "into condemnation." Stephanus had it the first way. Beza had it the second way. The KJB followed Beza.

Objections to the Received Text

1. Erasmus only used a FEW manuscripts.
2. Erasmus' manuscripts were LATE.

Many criticisms have been made of the Textus Receptus. These are two of the most often used, and they relate to Erasmus. It is said that he only had about a half dozen manuscripts and the earliest one was dated in the 11th century. The critics teach that the oldest manuscripts are the best.

Only a FEW Manuscripts?



Erasmus said he had many MSS. He traveled to many countries and searched libraries and monasteries for MS. The few they say he had were those he found in Basel, Switzerland in 1515. He had been working on his NT since 1505 starting in England. Stephanus had more MSS, and Beza had more. Scrivener studied even more.

Only Late Copies?

1. Manuscripts Ranged from 5th Century to 16th Century
2. Ancient copies of Traditional Text go back to 2nd Century
3. Writings of Church "Fathers" back to 2nd Century.

The Reformers had access to old manuscripts. Erasmus had access to the Vatican Library. He had access to the Vaticanus manuscript, which is usually dated 350 AD. Many hundreds of MSS were available in Western Europe. Erasmus was aware of most of the textual problems that today's scholar are.

The King James Bible

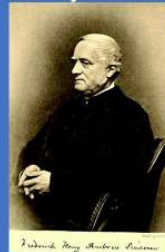
1. Translated in 1611.
2. Based on Beza's 1598 Edition.
3. Translators Adjusted the Received Text
4. They were both translators and Editors of the Received Text.

The King James version was translated almost one hundred years after Erasmus' first edition.

Did they use the TR because it was the only thing they had? No, the God of history saw to it that the TR was what they had. It was HIS choice. The KJB translators did not follow the 1598 Beza text entirely.

Frederick H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891)

- 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 a Greek text that had the reading matching the KJV. He would not make a change in Beza without Greek authority.



Frederick Scrivener saw that the KJB had some differences from the Beza text. He set out to learn where the translators got the differences. They started with Beza 1598 text, and they sometimes chose reading from other TR editions or from the Complutensian Polyglot.

Frederick H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891)

- 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.

The last slide and this shows the step Scrivener took to adjust the TR according to the choices of reading made by the KJB translators.

The KJB 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.

Some say the King James corrects every Greek text, but that is not entirely true. They did make edits to the TR text of Beza 1598. More precisely, the KJV translators helped to make an already excellent text better, by choosing alternative readings that already existed in the historic Traditional Greek Text that the Biblical church had used since the first century. God has preserved all His inspired Greek words. They were already pure (Prov. 30:5) and are available.

So, on the one hand, the men of the KJV translated God's Words that had been in existence since the days of the Apostles. On the other hand, the King James translators were also editors of the Received Text. Their edits were made in English, rather than Greek. It was Dr. Scrivener, who placed those edits into the Greek Received Text after searching for and finding the Greek source of the edits. Then, he produced the Greek text that underlay the KJV. It should be noted that the edits in the Received Text made by the translators of the King James Bible **were the final edits made to the Received Text**. Elzevir's edits did not flow into the Scrivener text. The KJV translators' edits did. God, who is sovereign in history, did not make a mistake here. The God of history led the work to be done on the edition of the TR by Dr. Scrivener, which was the last edition of the TR.

We at Bearing Precious Seed Global believe that God's preserved Greek text is the Received Text as represented in Scrivener's 1881 text, printed also in 1894, and now published by the Trinitarian Bible Society. Therefore, we have embraced the 1894 Scrivener edition of the TR as the Greek text to be used in translation work