



Faithful Latter-day Saint scholars let the biblical text speak for itself, looking through the lens of restored truth.

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# Searching for God’s Word in New Testament Textual Criticism

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Some Latter-day Saints may fear that biblical criticism means calling into question significant saving doctrines or even the divinity of Jesus Christ. Perhaps some biblical scholars tend to approach the discipline of biblical textual criticism in this way. However, one caution in the field is to recognize and beware of our own set of presuppositions and biases. Ideally, the idea is to try to let the text speak for itself, to avoid proof-texting,<sup>1</sup> and to look at the text through the lens of the Restoration. Those who try to be responsible in their exegesis and to be guided by the text understand that criticism in relation to the scriptures does not mean that the Bible is to be criticized. On the contrary, responsible critics seek to find the original inspired word of God in the biblical manuscripts. In fact, textual criticism involves making a judgment as to which manuscripts or parts of manuscripts are closest to the original.

Concerning New Testament textual criticism in particular, no original manuscripts (that is, autographs) of the New Testament dating to the time of the authors exist. However, nearly fifty-five hundred later manuscripts—purportedly copies of copies—have been preserved. All of these manuscripts date from as early as the second and third centuries AD to 1600. The task of the New Testament critic is to try to determine whether the readings in these manuscripts are original to the biblical author, later insertions, or errors.

After surveying the writing surfaces and styles of New Testament manuscripts available to scholars (papyrus [uncials and majuscules], parchment, and minuscules), I will explore and discuss some of the

major variants among these manuscripts. Finally, I will show how New Testament scholars study these variants using textual criticism to determine which may be the original reading and which are later scribal errors—accidental or intentional.

### **A Survey of Existing New Testament Manuscripts (Witnesses)**

The majority of the nearly fifty-five hundred extant New Testament manuscripts date from after the eighth century, meaning that at least seven centuries had elapsed from the time of the original writing before the bulk of the surviving manuscripts were copied. A majority of these manuscripts were produced in the medieval period after the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup> However, we should not automatically conclude that later manuscripts are not as reliable as earlier manuscripts. Scholars have found instances in which earlier manuscripts contain errors but later ones contain original readings.<sup>3</sup>

New Testament textual critics divide surviving manuscripts into two main groups: lectionaries and continuous-text manuscripts. Lectionaries are manuscripts of specific reading blocks for daily worship services that correspond to the needs of the church calendar. They do not contain the whole New Testament but are essentially focused on a part of it. They were used in monastic life, public worship, and private study. Lectionaries date to as early as the fourth century.<sup>4</sup> Continuous-text manuscripts are written on two types of material, papyrus and parchment. On these manuscripts, the two types of writing are majuscule (capitals) and minuscule (lower case). These manuscripts also survive in two formats: scroll (rolled) or codex (leaves, book).

### **Important Papyrus Manuscripts**

Papyrus manuscripts are significant because they represent the earliest New Testament texts. They also preserve the text before it circulated in codex form, and universally they are more fluid, meaning they contain more variant readings in their text. In other words, the earlier the manuscript, the more variants it contains and the more fluidity one can find in the text. Papyrus manuscripts are identified with the letter *P* and a superscript number indicating its place in the corpus of papyri. So far, approximately 116 papyrus fragments have been catalogued. What follows are some of the most important papyri:<sup>5</sup>

The fragment  $P^4$  (portions of Luke 1–6),  $P^{64}$  (portions of Matthew 26), and  $P^{67}$  (portions of Matthew 3, 5) together “represent the oldest four-Gospel manuscript known to exist.” These papyri derive

from a single codex dating to the second century and likely originally contained all four of the Gospels, which attests to an earlier, more complete collection and order of the four Gospels.<sup>6</sup>

In the Chester Beatty collection, fragments of all four Gospels and Acts are found in P<sup>45</sup> and date to the first half of the third century, whereas the number and order of many of Paul's epistles are attested in P<sup>46</sup>, which dates to about AD 200.<sup>7</sup>

Housed in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, P<sup>52</sup> (John 18:31–33; 37–38) is considered to be the oldest and smallest surviving fragment, dating to about 125.

In the mid-1950s, Martin Bodmer discovered more New Testament papyrus fragments. One of the most significant is P<sup>66</sup> with John 1:1–6:11 and portions of 14–21, which contains about 440 variations. For instance, in 13:5, where Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, He uses a “foot-basin” instead of a “basin.”<sup>8</sup> Other important Bodmer papyri include P<sup>72</sup>, the earliest known copy of Jude and the two epistles of Peter (third century), and P<sup>75</sup>, the earliest and largest known fragment of the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John, which is dated somewhere between AD 175 and 225. Interestingly, two of these fragments, P<sup>66</sup> and P<sup>75</sup>, do not have the story of the adulterous woman in John 7:53–8:11.

Finally, some of the most recent discoveries come from the cache of papyri discovered at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt. For instance, P<sup>115</sup> (late third to early fourth century) contains a fragmentary text of the book of Revelation. It is interesting that in 13:18, this manuscript, as well as a few others, uses 616 as the number of the beast as opposed to the usual 666. Some scholars argue that P<sup>115</sup> is the correct reading.<sup>9</sup> It is certain that with the large number of papyri found in Oxyrhynchus or other places, scholars will continue to make new discoveries.

### Important Majuscule Manuscripts

Majuscule manuscripts signal the rise of the fixed text after Constantine (early fourth century) and also the rise of the codex form. Similar to most papyri, the text is written in all capitals. *Uncial* is the Greek term for capitals, and *majuscule* is the Latin term for capitals. Majuscules are significant because they represent the beginning stages of the definitive codification of the New Testament text. In addition, they give rise to the text families and the post-Constantinian commission to copy fifty Bibles for the churches.<sup>10</sup> Though many majuscules exist, only a few of the most significant ones will be briefly mentioned. The following appear regularly in the critical apparatus of the Greek New Testament.<sup>11</sup>

**Ⲛ or 01.** In the 1850s, Constantin von Tischendorf visited the St. Catherine Monastery near Mount Sinai and discovered one of the most important majuscule manuscripts, known as the “Codex Sinaiticus,” which is identified by the Hebrew alphabet’s first letter (Aleph). This manuscript represents the oldest complete Greek New Testament and dates to the fourth century. It also contains much of the Old Testament and the epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. It is one of the only manuscripts written in four columns.

*A or 02* represents the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus, which contains most of the New Testament and the Old Testament and 1–2 Clement. It was discovered in Alexandria, Egypt.

*B or 03* represents the Codex Vaticanus, which is kept in the Vatican. It is a fourth-century manuscript containing most of the New Testament and the Old Testament.

*D or 04* represents the fourth- or fifth-century Codex Bezae. It is a bilingual manuscript with Greek and Latin on facing pages. It contains the Gospels, much of Acts, and a part of 3 John. Some scholars contend that D 04 is a derivative of a second-century original text “and therefore one whose readings must be considered carefully if one is hoping to get back to the earliest and possibly original form of the NT itself.”<sup>12</sup> Other textual scholars argue that this text is questionable and are hesitant to openly endorse it.<sup>13</sup>

### Important Minuscule Manuscripts

Minuscule manuscripts are written in lowercase (cursive) Greek in columns, usually with no divisions between words.<sup>14</sup> Minuscules have not been an important source for textual studies. In fact, only some of them have been transcribed for scholarly use, but they are rarely considered in text-critical studies. The following are a few exceptions.

*Families 1 and 13.* Family 1 (1, 118, and so on) and Family 13 (13, 69, and so on) include two different groupings of manuscripts. These are medieval manuscripts from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. One interesting feature of the manuscripts from Family 13 is that the episode about the adulterous woman is not found in John 7:53–8:11 but is found after Luke 21:38. Family 13 is considered to be one of the most important collections of manuscripts, as it is cited often in the critical apparati agreeing with many older manuscripts.

*Manuscript 33.* MS 33, dating from the ninth century, is commonly referred to as the “queen of the cursives” and contains the entire New Testament except the book of Revelation.

*Manuscript 61.* MS 61, which dates to the early sixteenth century, is of interest in that it is the only Greek manuscript that contains what is commonly called the “Three Heavenly Witnesses” or the “Johanne Comma,” found in 1 John 5:7–8. Further discussion will show that this passage is certainly spurious but was included by Erasmus in his Greek New Testament (textus receptus) and therefore made its way into the King James Version.

### Other Ancient Versions of the New Testament

Beyond the New Testament papyri, majuscules, and minuscules, many New Testament manuscripts are available in such languages as Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Armenian, and Arabic. These manuscripts derive from the Christian tradition and date between the fourth and nineteenth centuries with Syriac, Latin, and Coptic as the earlier versions and Armenian and Arabic as the later. A few important examples of these texts include the following:

*The Peshitta version or Syriac Vulgate.* This fourth-century New Testament version contains all the books of the New Testament except 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.<sup>15</sup>

*The Latin Versions.* Many Latin manuscripts have survived, spanning from the fourth to the thirteenth century. Among the most famous are the Vulgate versions of the Bible, which Jerome initially produced towards the end of the fourth century. Unfortunately, the more than eight thousand Vulgate manuscripts since Jerome's day exhibit a high degree of corruption.<sup>16</sup>

*Coptic.* Coptic is a late derivation from the ancient Egyptian language, and New Testament manuscripts from as early as the third century have survived in Coptic dialects such as Sahidic and Boharic.

*Armenian.* Because of the beauty and accuracy of its translation, the Armenian version is often referred to as the “queen of the versions.” This text dates from some time prior to the eighth century.

*Arabic.* Christian Arabic translations of the Gospels date to the eighth century; and other parts of the Bible have been translated into Arabic as well. Some manuscripts were translated into Arabic from Greek, Syriac, and Coptic (Sahidic and Boharic).<sup>17</sup>

### Patristic Commentary on the New Testament

Many manuscripts have survived that contain scriptural quotes and commentary from early Christians such as Clement of Alexandria (died ca. 212), Tertullian (died after 220), Gregory of Nyssa (died 394),

Augustine (died 430), and Ephraem the Syrian (died 444), helping readers to have a window into how the manuscripts of the New Testament in early Christianity were read and understood.

One of the most famous and controversial of these patristic manuscripts is Tatian's (flourished ca. 170) Diatessaron, or harmony of the four Gospels. His harmony became very famous during the fourth and fifth centuries, but because Tatian was thought to be a heretic, copies of the Diatessaron were destroyed, and only fragments remain. Scholars are certain that Tatian's text influenced later manuscripts and even the modern Bible. But the type and extent of this influence are still under debate.<sup>18</sup>

### Groupings of New Testament Manuscripts: Text Families or Text Types

New Testament manuscripts are also divided into broad groups distinguished by certain textual characteristics. In general, scholars have discerned four groupings of manuscripts, called families or types:

*Alexandrian.* *Aleph 01* and *B 03* have a similar text type that seems to be associated with Alexandria, Egypt. Thus, these manuscripts are sometimes referred to as Alexandrian. Scholars have found that this text type is generally shorter than the other families and has not gone through as much polishing or systematic grammatical changes. Many scholars view the Alexandrian text type as the best of the families and most closely reflecting the original.<sup>19</sup>

*Western.* Other manuscripts, such as *D 01* and *Old Latin*, share characteristics and fall into the Western text type. This text type is the longest and is marked with paraphrase, or a restatement of the text, which has given rise to secondary additions, omissions, and other types of changes.<sup>20</sup>

*Byzantine.* Most of the later manuscripts belong to the *Byzantine* text types. When the Byzantine text type is the only support for a given reading, it is usually considered secondary.<sup>21</sup>

*Caesarean.* Another text type is the *Caesarean*, which mixes both the Alexandrian and the Western text types. This mixing makes this the least homogeneous text type and therefore much less distinctive than the others.<sup>22</sup>

Most textual critics have used these groupings to aid in judging variants in the manuscripts. Using this approach in New Testament textual criticism, "one will find in the literature a general disapproval of the Byzantine type, a general suspicion of the distinctiveness of the Western type and a general approval of readings that belong to the

Alexandrian text-type."<sup>23</sup> However, in recent years, New Testament scholars have increasingly taken a more eclectic approach and do not follow these text groupings as rigidly as their predecessors.<sup>24</sup>

### **Problems Encountered in Studying Variants in New Testament Manuscripts**

Every manuscript should be treated individually, as each has its own story. Sometimes very early manuscripts contain copying errors, but later ones may have readings closer to the original. Because no autograph of a New Testament book exists, we should clearly understand that the date of a manuscript will differ from the date of the text.

All the roughly fifty-five hundred New Testament manuscripts date from periods of time after the original text was created and are therefore copies of copies. This means that over the many centuries since the authors first penned the originals, scribes had been hard at work producing copies of copies of copies. However, as well trained and capable as many of these scribes may have been, they were human and sometimes introduced errors into the text—errors that could be passed on for centuries. Most times these changes were unintentional; however, some were intentional. The task of the textual critic is to try to determine as best as possible what parts of texts are original readings and how each variant, or copying error, occurred.<sup>25</sup>

Textual critics use rules and methods to identify errors and navigate through the variants. For instance, textual critics will generally analyze external and internal evidence. If a textual critic is looking at the manuscripts externally, the provenance of the manuscript will be considered, and the number (not the best criterion) and quality of the manuscripts or witnesses will be examined. When analyzing the internal evidence, the textual critic will study such issues as the vocabulary and style of the variant verses. We should remember that the rule of thumb in New Testament textual criticism is to try to determine the original reading that may have given rise to the variants. In general, the original reading is also a more difficult reading than the variant because the original has not gone through as much polishing. The following is a discussion of the common types of errors that were introduced into a text. Examples from specific passages will illustrate some of the challenges textual critics face in determining original readings amidst the variant readings.

*Additions or omissions.* A large portion of the discussion concerning the manuscripts concerns whether a longer or shorter reading should be preferred. Often the shorter reading is to be preferred because copyists

were more inclined to add text than omit it. For example, according to some scholars, Matthew 9:34, “But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils,” was likely intentionally added to harmonize with the similar text in Matthew 12:24 or Luke 11:15.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, scribes often accidentally, or unintentionally, omitted text when a manuscript was visually copied. Also, in theological texts, it was quite common to omit words or phrases that did not seem to correspond to the understanding of the doctrine or principle at the time. When scribes or others tried to harmonize two manuscripts, they would either shorten or lengthen parallels to make them conform to each other. Variant readings could also be introduced through explanatory glosses (secondary comments) or liturgical readings, thus creating a longer text. Below are a few of these types of changes:

Perhaps the preeminent example of a shorter versus longer reading is Mark 16:9–20. External analysis reveals that the last twelve verses of Mark are absent from many of the oldest manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus [Ⲛ and B], as well as an Old Latin codex, a Sinaitic Syriac manuscript) and about a hundred Armenian texts. Two of the most important church fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origen, seem not to know about the additional verses. However, the traditional ending of Mark is confirmed through a number of other witnesses, including the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus (A) and some of the earliest patristic witnesses, Irenaeus and the Diatessaron.<sup>27</sup> Internal investigations have also led textual critics to conclude that the vocabulary and style of the last twelve verses of Mark 16 do not belong to Mark.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, both external and internal evidence seem to support the shorter ending of Mark 16 at verse 8. So how did the extra verses find their way into the text? Likely, the last twelve verses were put in later by someone in an attempt to harmonize the text of Mark with the other Gospels concerning the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In deference to the antiquity of the longer ending and its importance in the textual tradition, verses 9–20 have been included between double brackets in the Greek New Testament to indicate that its originality is uncertain.<sup>29</sup> We should understand that even though textual scholars conclude that the last twelve verses of Mark were not written by Mark, this conclusion does not mean that the story in those verses is false.<sup>30</sup>

One other important example of a large group of verses not found in most manuscripts is the story of the adulterous woman in John 7:53–8:11. Interestingly, the account is inserted in five other locations in various manuscripts, such as after John 7:44, 21:25, and even after Luke 21:38. Textual critics argue that the vocabulary and style

(internal evidence) of these verses differ considerably from the rest of the Gospel of John and that it interrupts the sequence of 7:52 and 8:12. Yet scholars generally agree that the antiquity of the story and its place in Christianity result in a beloved account that merits it a double-bracketed place in the Greek New Testament.<sup>31</sup> Again, that John did not write these verses does not mean that the story of the adulterous woman is not true. However, the question of addition and omission is an important aspect of the textual critics' work of determining whether a text is original.

*Omission by homoeoteleuton.* Another very common way for a scribe to accidentally shorten a text is through homoeoteleuton. This outcome occurs when text between two identical words or similar word endings is deleted as the scribe's eye jumps from the first word to the second and omits the intermediate text. Mark 10:7, for example, reads "And for this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and [unite with his wife and] the two will become one." Here the text in brackets is accidentally deleted when the eye of the copyist jumps from "his mother and" to "the two will become one," skipping the text in between (i.e., "unite with his wife and"). Note that the scribe's eye has omitted the text ("unite with his wife") between the first and second "and." The above translation from the Greek with the missing text in brackets makes more sense.<sup>32</sup>

*Substitution.* When a word or phrase in a variant reading is replaced by another word or phrase, it is termed substitution. This often results from harmonization. Sometimes a scribe may have felt a word or phrase was not precise enough or that the Greek grammar needed to be corrected or polished. Scholars need to resolve many of these issues through the use of Greek dictionaries, grammars, and concordances. In addition, textual critics should possess a firm grasp of the development of Christian theology and history.<sup>33</sup> A few of the most prominent examples follow.

In Mark 1:2, the KJV phrase "in the prophets" can be found in some of the manuscripts, whereas other manuscripts read "in Isaiah the prophet." Likely, a careful scribe recognized that the quotation is a conflation and includes part from Isaiah and part from Malachi. This explanation suggests that the original reading was probably "in Isaiah the prophet."<sup>34</sup>

When Jesus sent out His disciples in Luke 10:1, 17, did He send seventy-two as some manuscripts read or seventy as others attest (such as the King James Version)? Some textual scholars conclude that "seventy-two" was replaced with "seventy" because the latter is more common and in harmony with the Old Testament.<sup>35</sup>

A difficult reading in Hebrews 2:9 has Jesus dying “without God.” In Greek, the phrase “by the grace” and “without” look very similar; the phrase could be a scribal error. Some scholars believe the original reading is “by the grace” and that it gave rise to the variant “without” when a scribe thought that Jesus was never without God (even though it is an idea in the Old Testament and in Mark 15:34, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me”).<sup>36</sup>

*Theological variants.* Sometimes learned scribes made changes in the text to try to emphasize particular theological points, giving rise to certain variants. This practice includes changes that affected ideas about the nature of Christ. For instance, in Colossians 2:2, a certain manuscript reading equates Christ with God. If this were an original reading, it would explain the numerous variants making Christ unequal with God, for the idea of an equal relationship of Christ with God was avoided by the church.<sup>37</sup>

One of the most obvious theological variants in the New Testament is the Johannine Comma (that is, a short clause of a sentence) or “Three Witnesses,” in 1 John 5:7–8, which reads, “For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The bracketed portion identifies the variant part of the verses.

As the story goes, Erasmus, who is credited with producing the *textus receptus*, or received text, which became the precursor to the King James Version, was criticized for not including this clause in his New Testament. In answer, Erasmus replied that to his knowledge, no Greek manuscript with this clause existed. Later, a Greek manuscript was found or, more likely, was created to give this clause veracity. However, scholars have determined that this manuscript was likely written in Oxford about 1520 by a Franciscan friar who purportedly translated it out of the Latin Vulgate.<sup>38</sup> In any case, this clause is not found in any Latin manuscript before the fourth century AD and not in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century AD.<sup>39</sup> In the end, Erasmus may have included this clause, which is surely a late interpolation, because of pressure from his ecclesiastical leaders.

Other variants were created through such means as assimilation, which is the effort to smooth out both discrepancies in two (or more) parallel stories<sup>40</sup> and the peculiarities of Greek word order and punctuation.<sup>41</sup>

## New Testament Textual Criticism Today

Today, the search goes on for the original writings. With computer technology and the finding of more and more manuscripts, textual critics have the best possible tools available to them. As a result, scholars are moving into what is called an “eclectic” approach, which means they prefer readings that have good manuscript support (that is, widespread support across text families, papyri, geographical witnesses, and patristic sources) and that are compatible with the context of the verses, demonstrating how a passage could have been the cause for variant readings.<sup>42</sup> As we move into the twenty-first century, one thing is clear: the area of New Testament textual criticism is a dynamic field wherein scholars will continue to rethink the discipline, looking for new and better ways to advance the study of the text of the New Testament.<sup>43</sup>

## Conclusion

“Criticizing” the New Testament is not the role of New Testament textual studies. On the contrary, this discipline was created to aid the researchers in discovering the original inspired words of the authors. This task is certainly not an easy one. Sifting through the thousands of manuscripts in the form of papyri, majuscules, minuscules, and lectionaries; reading them in Latin, Syriac, Armenian, or another language; and using patristic commentary to identify what the New Testament authors originally wrote require skill, ingenuity, and talent. Textual criticism is a proven method to identify and appreciate the original words of God revealed to the New Testament authors.

Although it is not essential that Latter-day Saints become adept at textual criticism, it is interesting to see how this sacred text has given rise to such a large, complex field of study. Additionally, for Latter-day Saints in particular, it is important to know that a thorough textual study of the New Testament reveals one very important fact: the vast majority of variants between the manuscripts are minor and are not theologically significant. In other words, New Testament textual criticism assures us that we can have confidence in the word of God found in the New Testament. ■

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## Notes

1. For more information of presuppositionless criticism, see Graham N. Stanton, “Presuppositions in New Testament Criticism,” in *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 60–71.

2. See Keith Elliot and Ian Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 10.

3. Most of the time, these examples can be argued both for early and late manuscripts. For example, see the discussions for Matthew 27:16–17 about the name “Barabbas,” which can be found in both early and late manuscripts and which is also absent in both early and late manuscripts (see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994], 56).

4. Some lectionaries are written on paper, but most are on parchment. They are catalogued with an italic letter *l* and followed by a number. The highest number so far is *l*2403 (see Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 12–13).

5. For a fuller discussion of the available papyri, see Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 53–61. For a list and brief description of papyri 1–96, see Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 96–102.

6. Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 53.

7. Acquired by Sir Chester Beatty of London in 1930–31.

8. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 57.

9. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 61. The authors also say, “It is interesting to note that if ‘Caesar Neron’ is spelled in Hebrew letters, their numerical value is 666—unless, that is, the optional nun is omitted at the end, in which case the total is 616.”

10. See the discussion on the Vaticanus MS and the fifty Bibles in Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 67–69.

11. See Eberhard Nestle and others, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1999), 49–83.

12. Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 16–17. For a fuller treatment of these and many more manuscripts, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 62–86. For a descriptive list of the majuscules, see Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 107–28.

13. For discussion and sources, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 307–10.

14. For a fuller treatment of the minuscule manuscripts, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 86–92. For a descriptive list of the minuscules, see Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 129–42.

15. The Gospels in the Peshitta are closer to the Byzantine type of text. This was a major point in J. Reuben Clark, *Why the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), wherein he argues that the Byzantine type of text is more reliable than the others (that is, Western and Alexandrian) because he perceived the Syriac would be closer to Jesus’s Aramaic original words. Likely, however, the Peshitta is a Syriac translation from a Greek prototype. The King James Version of the Bible is based on the Byzantine type of text.

16. Of course, this would be from a more Protestant perspective. Roman Catholics would likely consider the Greek manuscripts defective and the Latin Vulgate a later corrective.

17. For a fuller treatment of the ancient versions of the New Testament, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 94–126.

18. For a fuller treatment of the Patristic citations of the New Testament, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 126–134.

19. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 312.

20. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 308.

21. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 306.

22. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 310–12; see also Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 24.

23. Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*,

24. For a discussion of Eclecticism, see Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 222–26.

25. See Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 37. Scholars estimate that as many as three hundred thousands variants have been found in all the manuscripts to date. Some Greek New Testaments have upwards of fifteen thousand, and other English New Testaments may have five hundred (Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 20–21).

26. See Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 41.

27. For more detailed information on these sources, see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 102–3.

28. For a more complex discussion of the internal evidence (mostly concerned with the style of wording and content) in support of the shorter versus longer ending of Mark 16, see Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 292–93.

29. See Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 105–6. Double-bracketed passages indicate the verses are of questionable origin.

30. Note the similarities of Mormon 2:22–24 with Mark 16:15–18.

31. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 187–89.

32. See Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 46. Elliot and Moir also give examples of homoeoteleuton in Matthew 12:15; 14:30; Mark 1:40; 3:32; Luke 17:24; 22:16; John 5:44; 13:32; 1 Corinthians 13:1–2; 2 Corinthians 11:3; and Revelation 13:7. In addition, Elliot and Moir discuss other examples of various types of additions or omissions (47–50). See also Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 104–5.

33. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 50.

34. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 50–51, 73.

35. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 52, 150–51; see also Ezra 2:3–4 and Nehemiah 7:8–9. These examples show only that the number 72 is used as an ending for higher numbers such as 372 for Ezra 2:4 and Nehemiah 7:8. To me, I am not convinced enough to conclude that the number 72 was preferred in the Old Testament.

36. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 53, 664.

37. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 59, 662. This was a major theological discussion in the early fourth century (see also Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason, Hugh Pyper, eds., *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 37–38).

38. See Metzger and Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, 146–47.

39. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 647–49.

40. For examples of assimilation, see Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 67–68.

41. See also Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 69–76.

42. See Elliot and Moir, *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament*, 31.

43. See David Alan Black, ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).