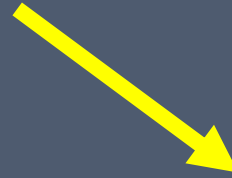


HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

LESSON 6 – TEXTUAL CRITICISM

FROM GOD TO US

INSPIRATION



CANONIZATION



TRANSMISSION

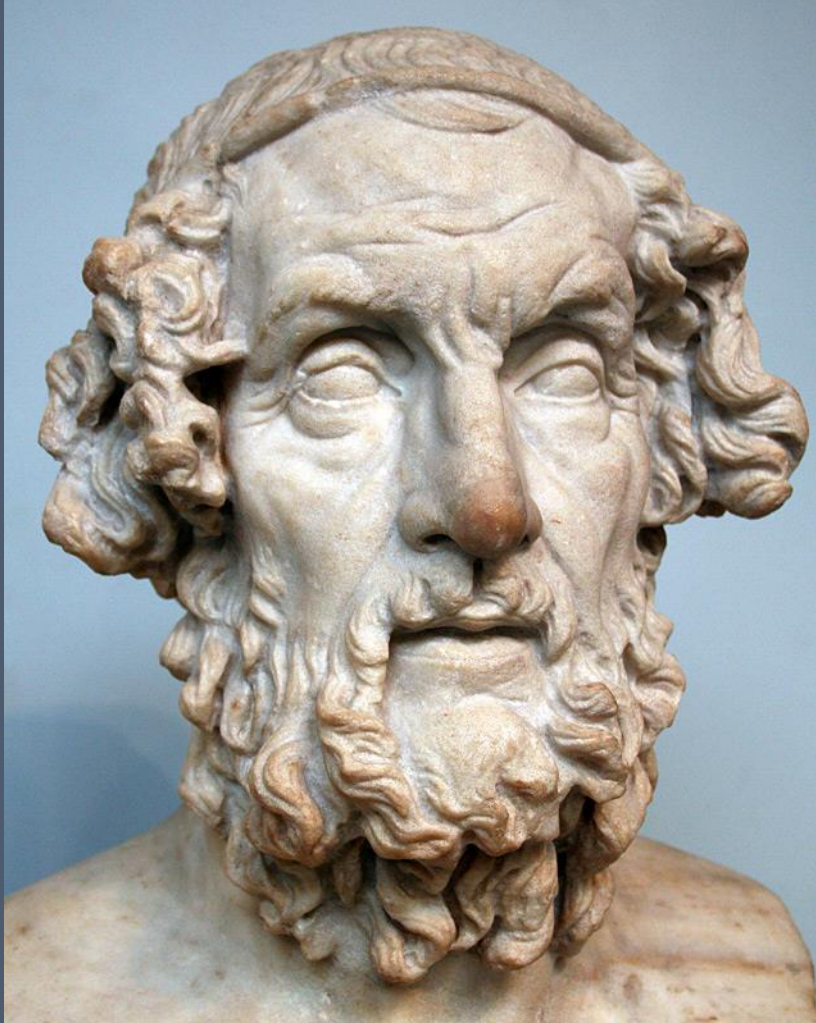


TRANSLATION

Transmission of the Bible

Textual Criticism

Textual Criticism



Bust of Homer from the
2nd century AD
Image from Wikipedia

- Textual Criticism is concerned with the textual variants in either manuscripts or printed editions in order to reconstruct a specific reading of the text (e.g. original)
- The rise of textual criticism is connected with the epics of Homer (*Iliad* & *Odyssey*)
 - Librarians at Alexandria, Egypt would use manuscripts to restore a more accurate text of Homer's epics
 - They used special marks and employed critical methods that have influenced the way the church has applied them to NT studies
- Earliest known application of textual criticism to the Bible was by Theodotus (2nd century AD) who was excommunicated by Pope Victor I for using logic, grammatical exegesis, mathematics and empirical science in the interpretation of the Scriptures – later followed by Origen, Jerome & Augustine

Practice of NT Textual Criticism

- **Two Fundamental Criteria**
 - Choose the reading that best explains the origin of the others
 - The reconstruction of the history of a variant reading is prerequisite to forming a judgment about it
- **External Evidence**
 - The date of the witness
 - The geographical distribution of the witnesses that agree with variant
 - The genealogical relationship of texts and families of witnesses
- **Internal Evidence**
 - **Transcriptional probabilities (paleographical details and habits)**
 - In general, the more difficult reading is to be preferred
 - In general, the shorter reading is to be preferred
 - Least grammatically smooth reading preferred
 - **Intrinsic probabilities (what author more likely wrote)**
 - Style, vocabulary, theology of author
 - Immediate context

Nations Present at Pentecost (33 AD)

© Mark Barry 2009 | visualunit.me | Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.

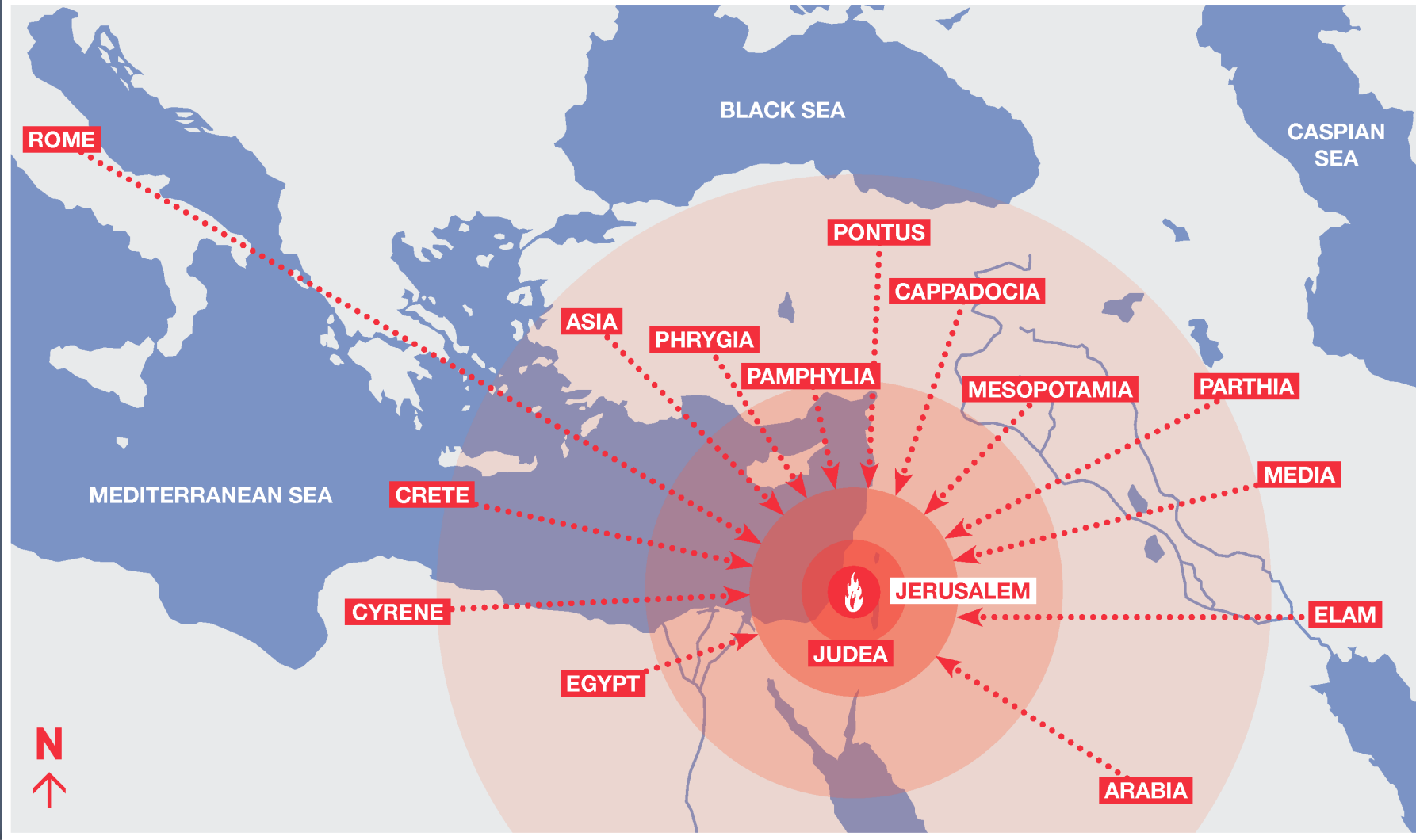
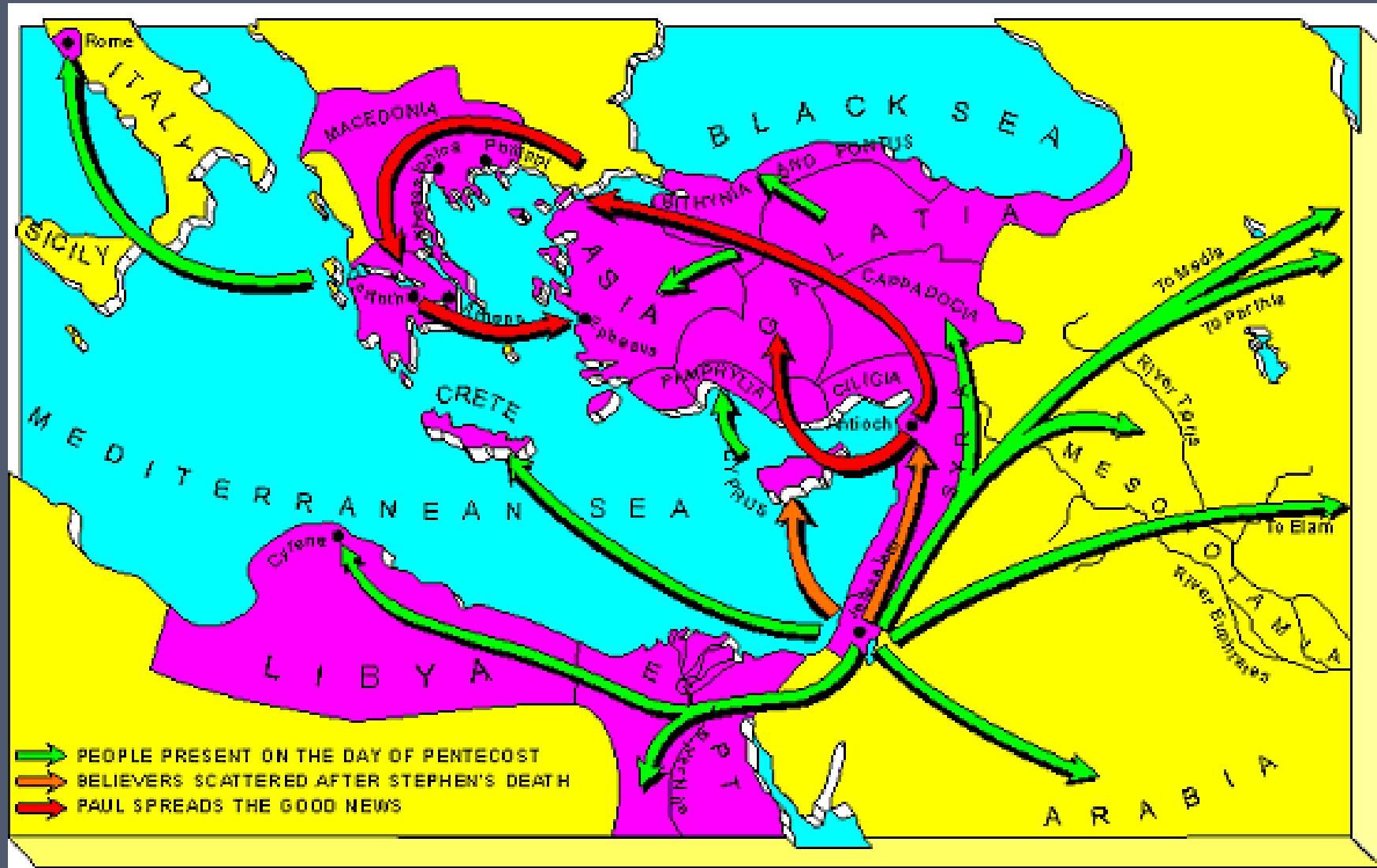


Image from <https://visualunit.me/2015/08/28/the-nations-of-pentecost/>

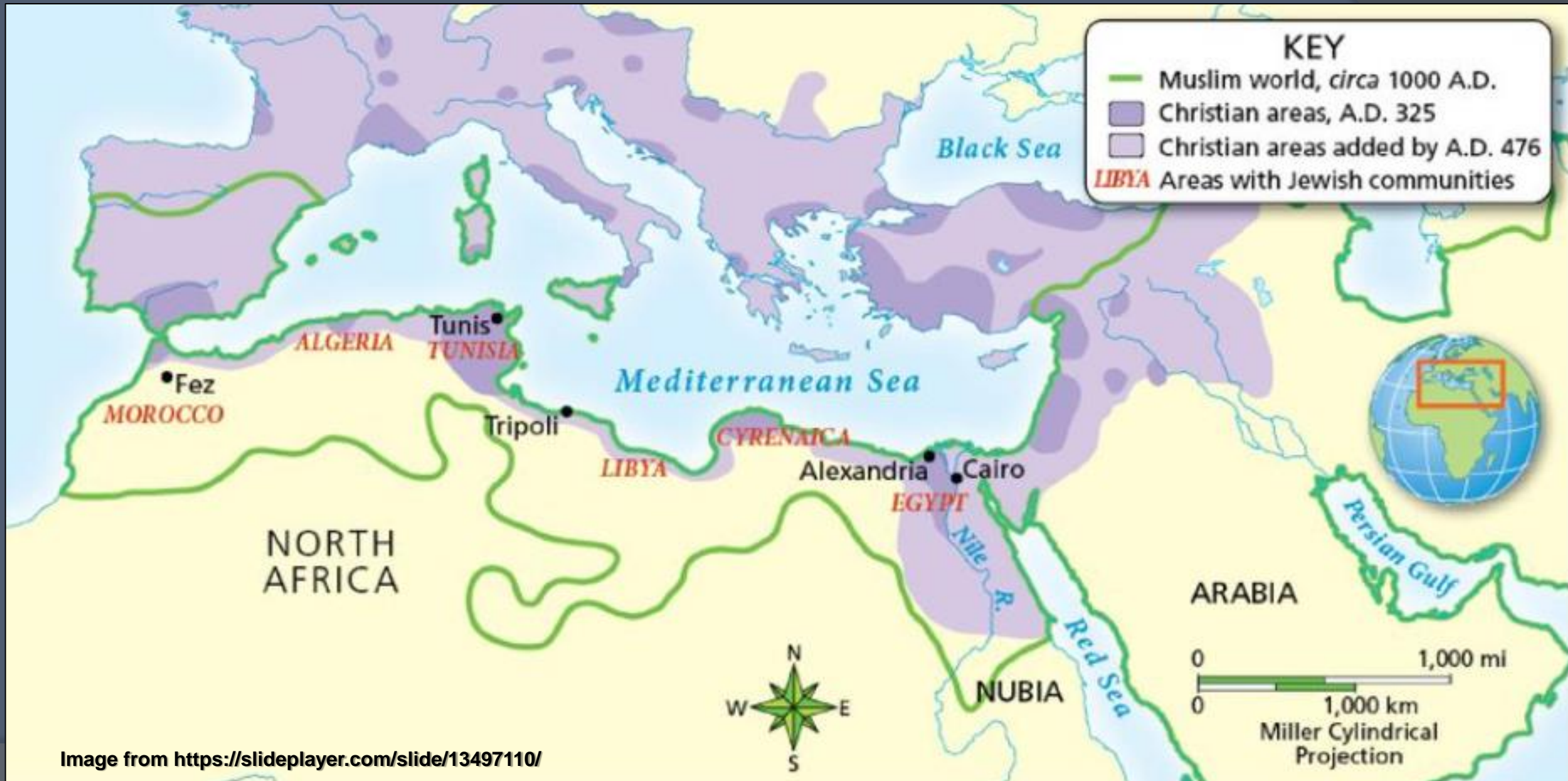
Spread of the Gospel in Acts (33-62 AD)



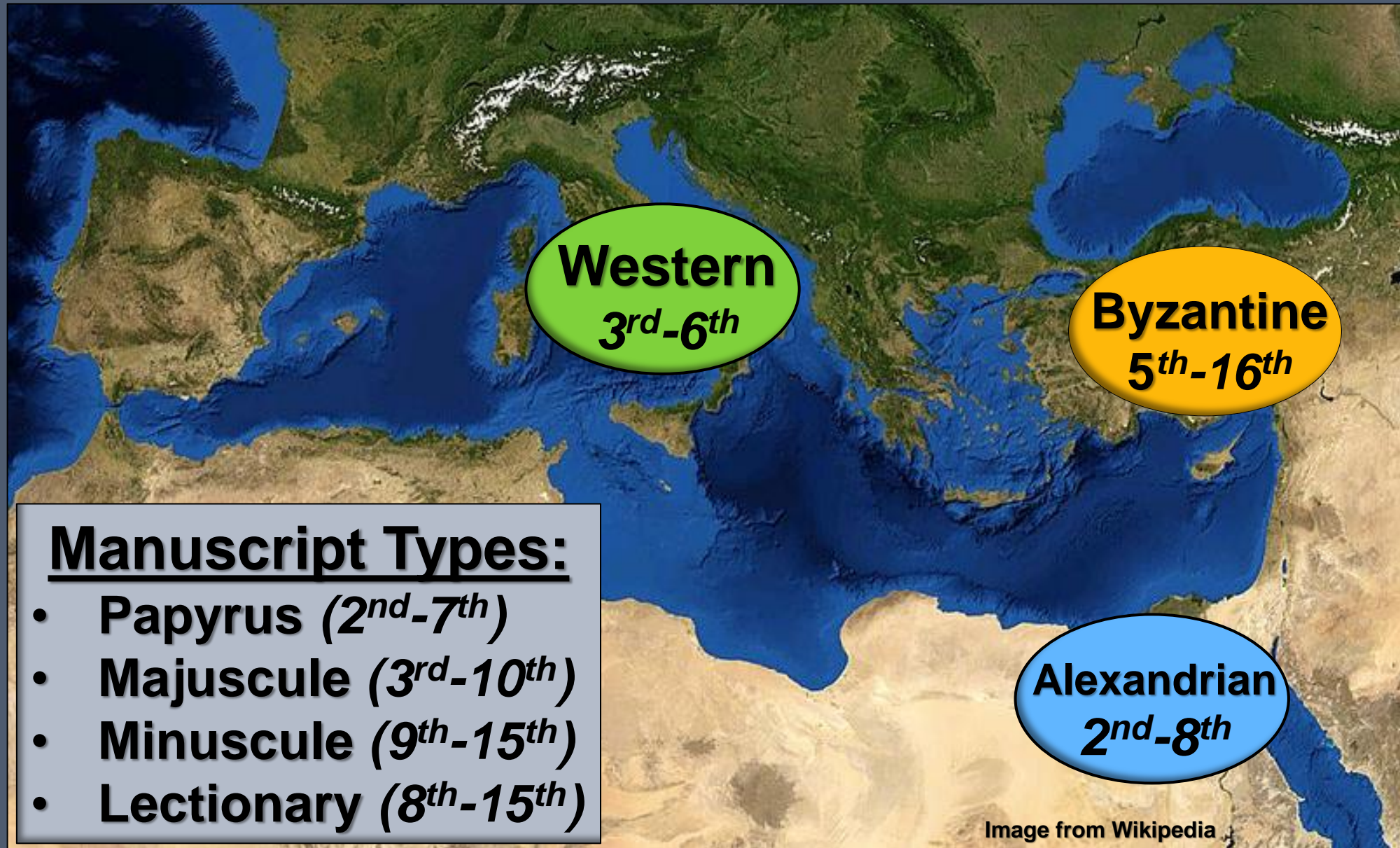
Spread of Christianity by 325 AD



Christianity & Islam in 1000 AD



New Testament Manuscript and Text Types



New Testament Textual Families

1. Alexandrian Text (2nd-8th centuries)

- A. Earliest text, comes from the area of Alexandria, Egypt
- B. Known for its often short, terse, rough, less-harmonized readings
- C. Carefully controlled and supervised text
- D. Underlies most modern English New Testaments

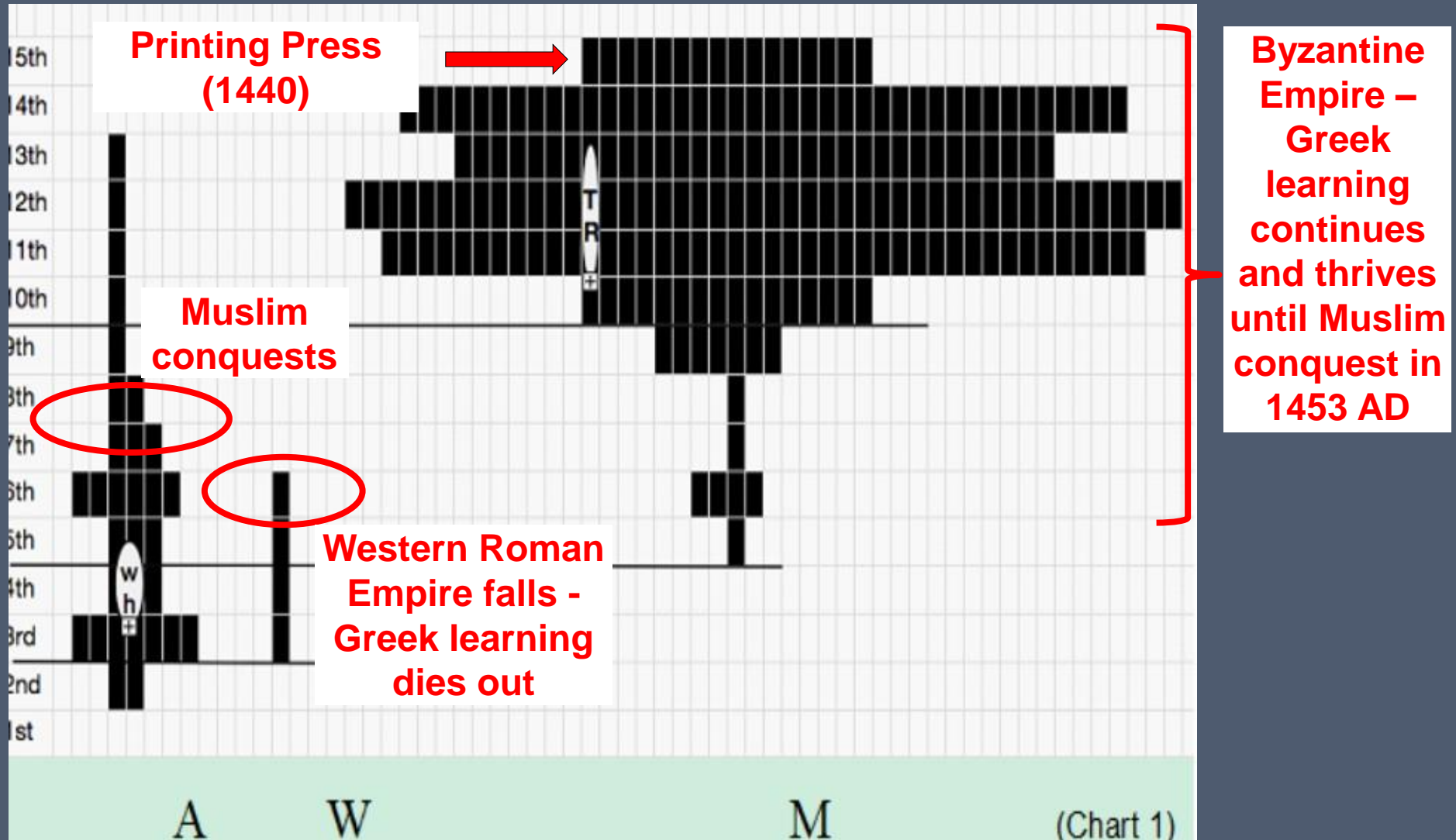
2. Western Text (3rd-6th centuries)

- A. Early text found over a wide area (France/Italy to N. Africa to Syria)
- B. Much less controlled, known for paraphrases and other corruptions
- C. Found in some Greek mss. and underlies much of the Latin tradition

3. Byzantine Text (5th-16th centuries)

- A. Found in the majority of NT manuscripts (>80%)
- B. Dominant in the Byzantine Empire
- C. Contains the most harmonistic, paraphrasing and significant additions; believed to be secondary readings
- D. Underlies the *textus receptus*, used for the KJV

NT Text Types by Manuscript Dates



Types of Errors

- **Unintentional Changes**

- **Faulty Eyesight**

- Confusing similar letters
- Parablepsis (a looking to the side)
- Homoeoteleuton (looking back to a similar ending)
- Haplography – omission due to homoeoteleuton
- Dittography – repeating letters or words due to homoeoteleuton

- **Faulty Hearing**

- **Errors of the Mind**

- Substitution of synonyms
- Transposition (switching word/letter order)
- Assimilation (familiar parallel passages)

- **Errors of Judgment**

- **Intentional Changes**

- Spelling and Grammar
- Harmonistic Corruptions
- Addition of Natural Complements and Similar Adjuncts
- Clearing up Historical and Geographical Difficulties
- Conflation of Readings
- Alterations Made Because of Doctrinal Considerations
- Addition of Miscellaneous Details

The scribe of minuscule 109 (dated 1326 AD) copied Jesus' genealogy in Luke 3 as follows "... Seth, *the son* of Nashon, *the son* of Adam, *the son* of Amminadab, *the son* of God, *the son* of Aram, *the son* of Hezron, *the son* of Perez."

The Origin of this Heresy

ΜΕΛΕΑ	ΝΩΕ
Μεννά	Λάμεχ
Ματταθιά	Μαθουσαλά
Ναθάμ	Ἐνὼχ
Δαυίδ	Ἰάρετ
Ἰεσσαί	Μαλελεήλ
Ἰωβήθ	Καϊνάμ
Βόος	Ἐνὼς
Σαλά	Σήθ
Νακασών	Ἀδάμ
Ἀμναδάβ	θεοῦ
Ἀραμ	
Ἑσρώμ	
Φάρες	

end

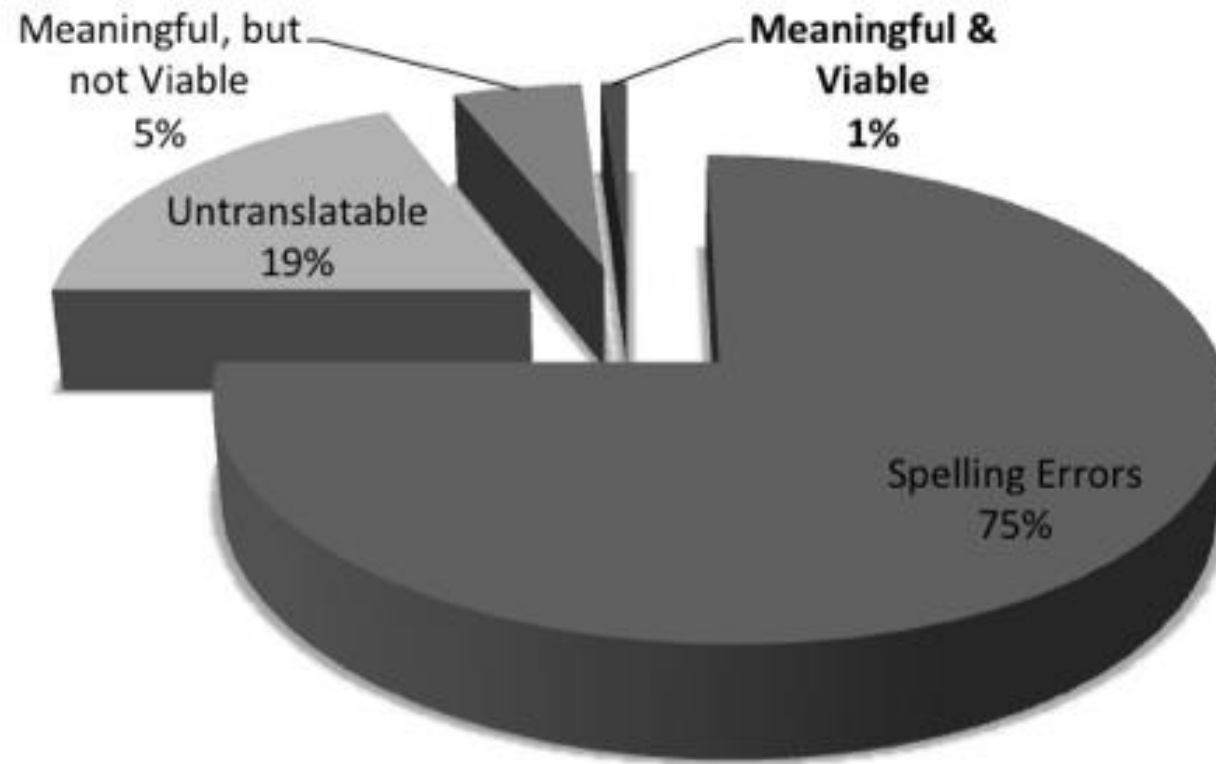
Ἐλισσαίμ	Σήμ
Μελεά	Νώε
Μεννά	Λάμεχ
Ματταθιά	Μαθουσαλά
Ναθάμ	Ἐνὼχ
Δαυίδ	Ἰάρετ
Ἰεσσαί	Μαλελεήλ
Ἰωβήθ	Καϊνάμ
Βόος	Ἐνὼς
Σαλά	Σήθ
Νακασών	Ἀδάμ
Ἀμναδάβ	θεοῦ
Ἀραμ	
Ἑσρώμ	
Φάρες	

end

This mistake was caused by the scribe copying an exemplar manuscript with the genealogy in two columns reading down.

The scribe then copied the names while reading across the two columns.

Types of NT Manuscript Variations



Taken from Dr. Daniel B. Wallace's interview with Justin Taylor, Mar. 21, 2012

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

Leiphart-Harp Community Group (2017)

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

- Overview
 - Participants copied the Book of Colossians from the ESV just like a faithful scribe
- Objectives
 - Grow closer to the Lord by reading aloud, memorizing, reciting & writing His Word
 - Introduce the concepts of textual criticism
 - Reproduce/restore the text of the ESV by comparing participants' manuscripts
 - Compare this exercise to the restoration of the original NT writings

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

Methodology

- Pick a manuscript to be the base text
- Go through each manuscript comparing each to base text
- Note every variant
 - Includes: spelling, abbreviations, additions, subtractions, word order differences, etc...
 - Excludes: capitalization, punctuation
- Tally how many variants each manuscript contains to see which are most accurate and reliable
- Assign a confidence to each variant based on how many manuscripts (and which ones) agree with a certain reading
- Determine confidence in restoring original ESV
- **You don't need to see the ESV to do this!**

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

- Book Statistics
 - Chapters 4
 - Verses 95
 - Words 1582
- Participants

A

C

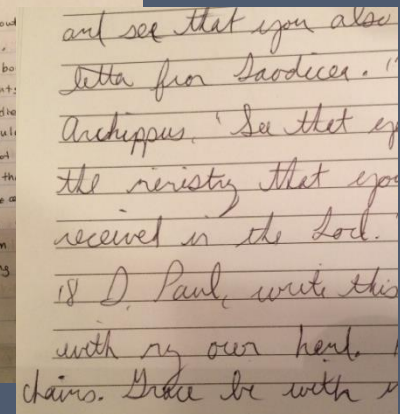
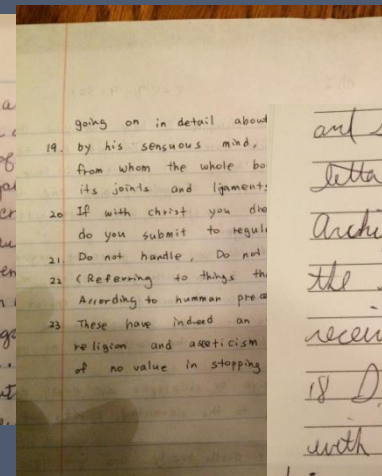
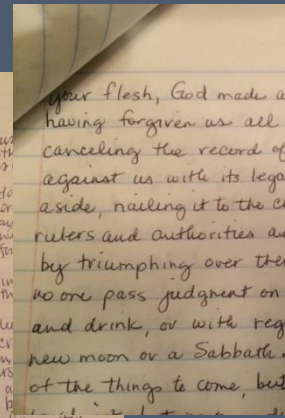
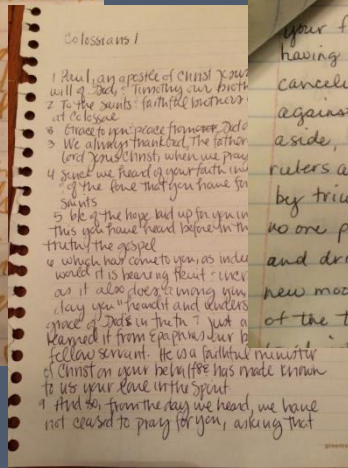
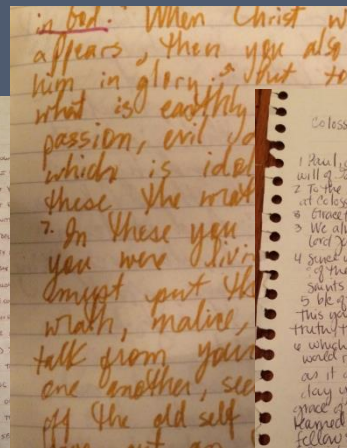
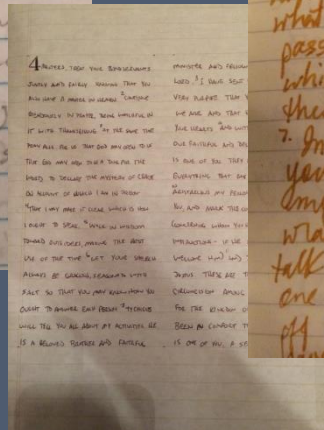
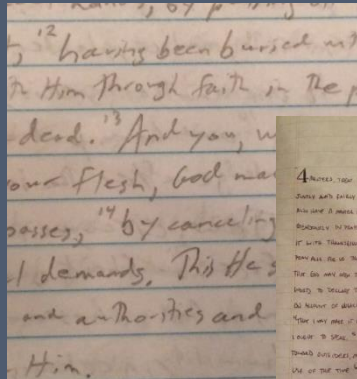
E

F

G

H

J



Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

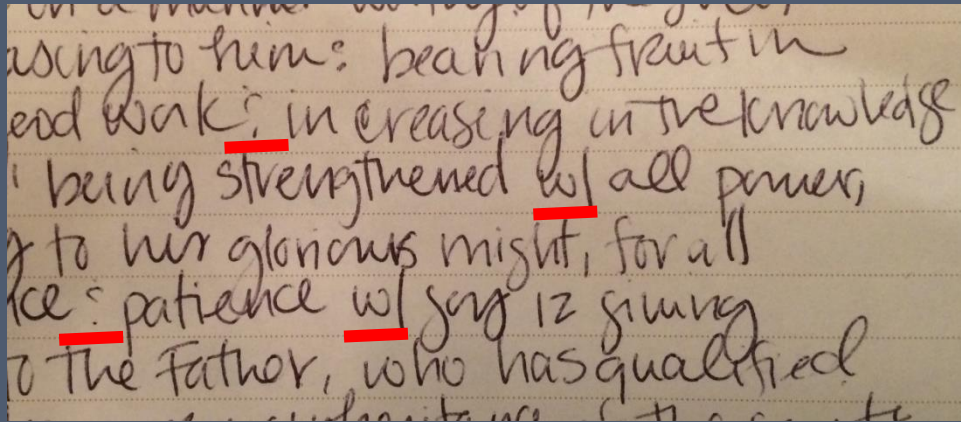
Results

- Variants 95 (6% of total words)
- Variants / Chapter 23.75
- Variants / Verse 1.0
- Variants by Participant
 - A 31 variants 98.0% accurate
 - C 9 variants 99.4% accurate
 - E 24 variants 98.5% accurate
 - F* 17 variants 94.0% accurate
 - G 3 variants 99.8% accurate
 - H 15 variants 99.1% accurate
 - J 4 variants 99.7% accurate

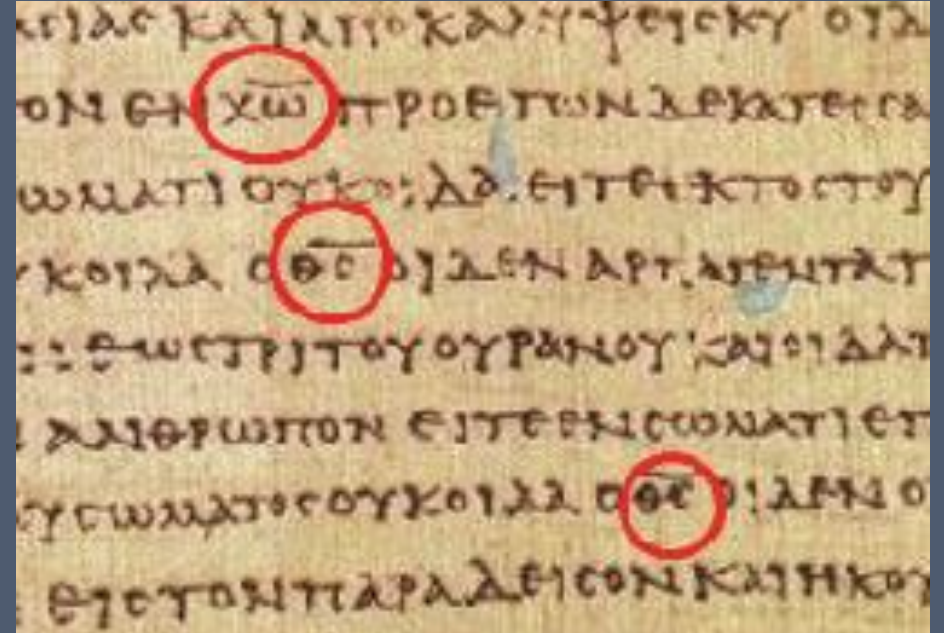
* F is a partial manuscript containing only 1:1-17

Abbreviation

F



Papyrus 46



The scribe of [F] abbreviated the word “and” with “&” and “with” with “w/” to save time and space

Abbreviations are usually very easy to figure out based on manuscript comparisons and scribal & cultural practices

Many scribes would abbreviate sacred words and names often writing the first and last letter(s) and connecting them with a bar. These are called *Nomina Sacra*.

Spelling

A

of Christ, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which
raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God,
from the dead." ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses
of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having
our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood
before Him, setting it aside, nailing it to the cross

The scribe of [A] misspelled "trespasses" the first time but got it right the second time

F

you may be filled w/ knowledge of his will in al
spiritual wisdom & understanding. ¹⁹ so as
to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,
fully pleasing to him

Spelling mistakes are easy to spot when you know the original language

Transposition

H

Lord Jesus christ,
of your faith in Jesus christ
saint, because of the hope
ave heard before in the word

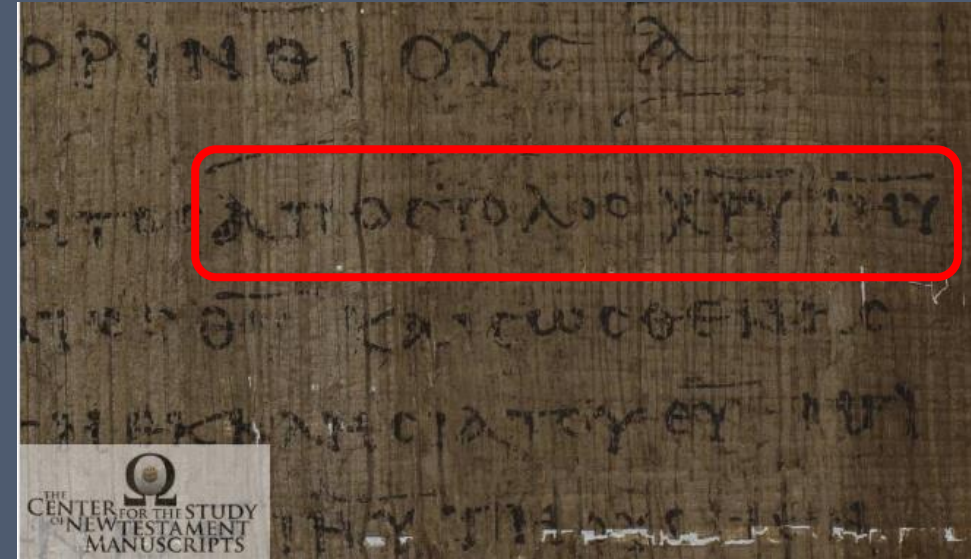
F

when we pray for you
your faith in Christ Jesus
you have for all the

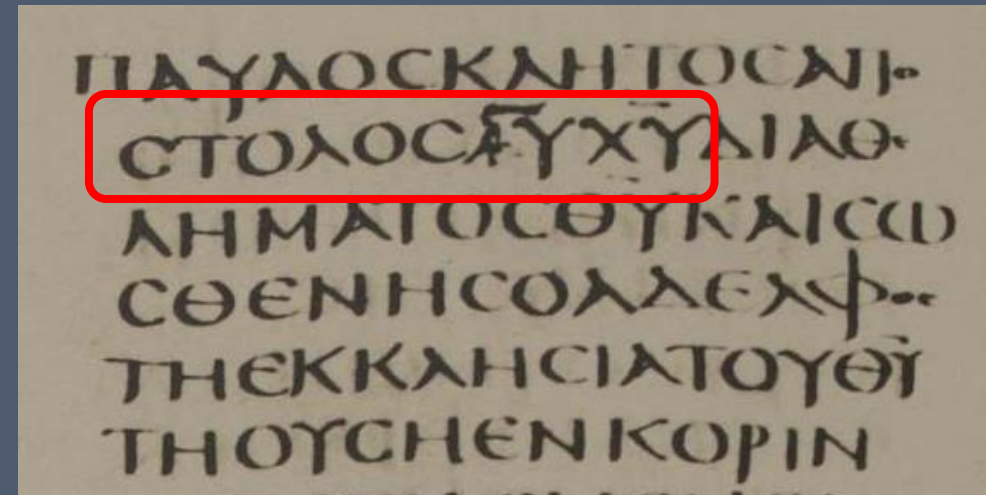
Scribes [H] and [F] have switched the order of the words “Jesus” and “Christ” in Colossians 1:4

The two Greek manuscripts read
“an apostle of Christ Jesus” and
“an apostle of Jesus Christ”
respectively in 1 Corinthians 1:1

Papyrus 46



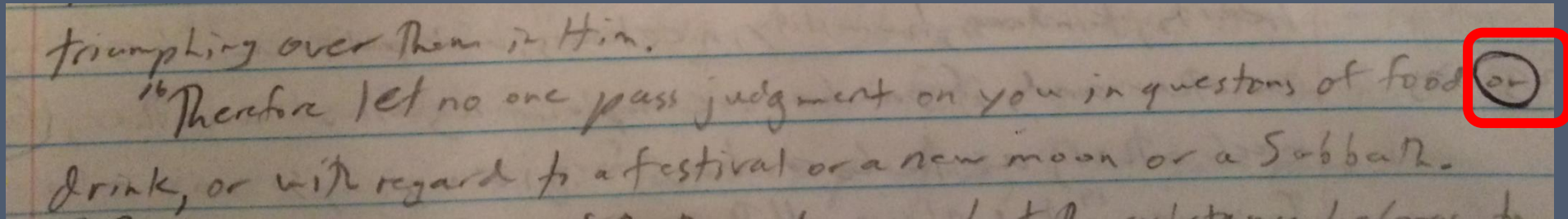
Codex Sinaiticus



Images from CSNTM

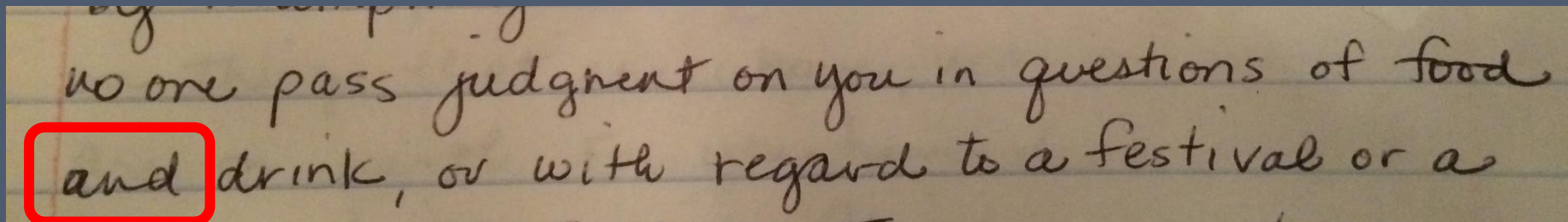
Substitution

A

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript on lined paper. The text is written in cursive. The first line is partially visible: "triumphing over them in Him." The second line reads: "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food or". The word "or" is circled in red. The third line reads: "drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath." The word "or" at the end of the third line is also circled in red.

The scribe of [A] accidentally substituted the word “or” for “and” in Colossians 2:16

G

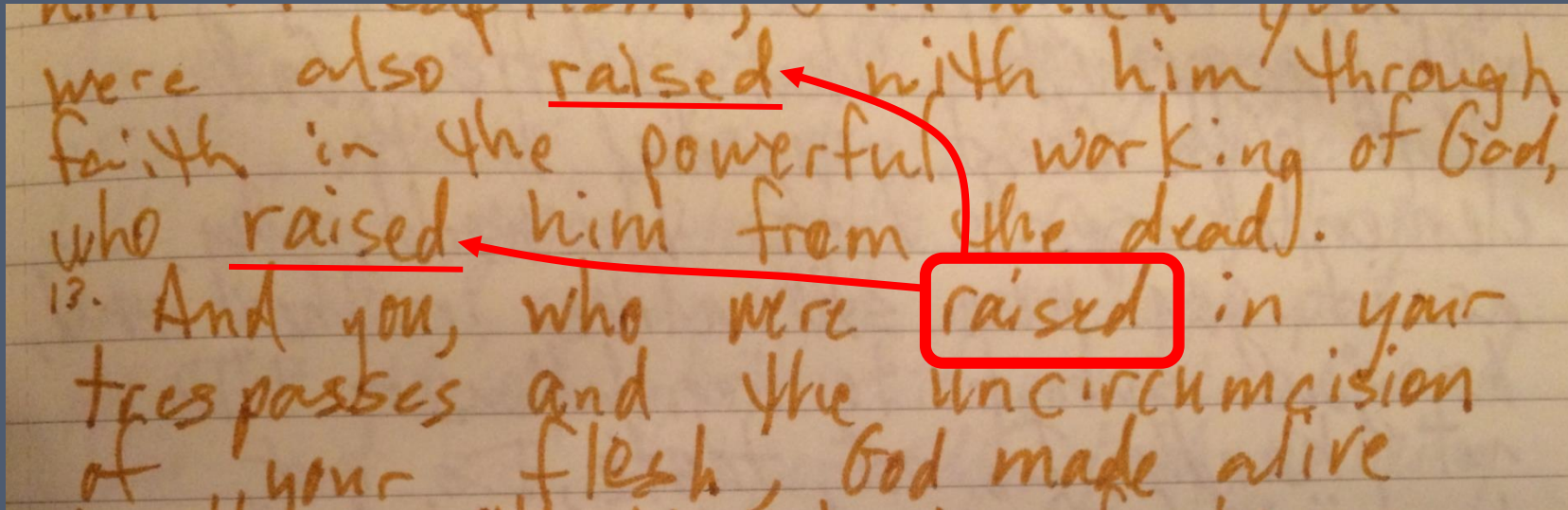
A photograph of a handwritten manuscript on lined paper. The text is written in cursive. The first line is partially visible: "no one pass judgment on you in questions of food". The second line reads: "and drink, or with regard to a festival or a". The word "and" is circled in red.

The scribe of [G] correctly copied the word “and” which agrees with all manuscripts except [A]

Sometimes a similar word can unintentionally be substituted without making much difference in meaning

E

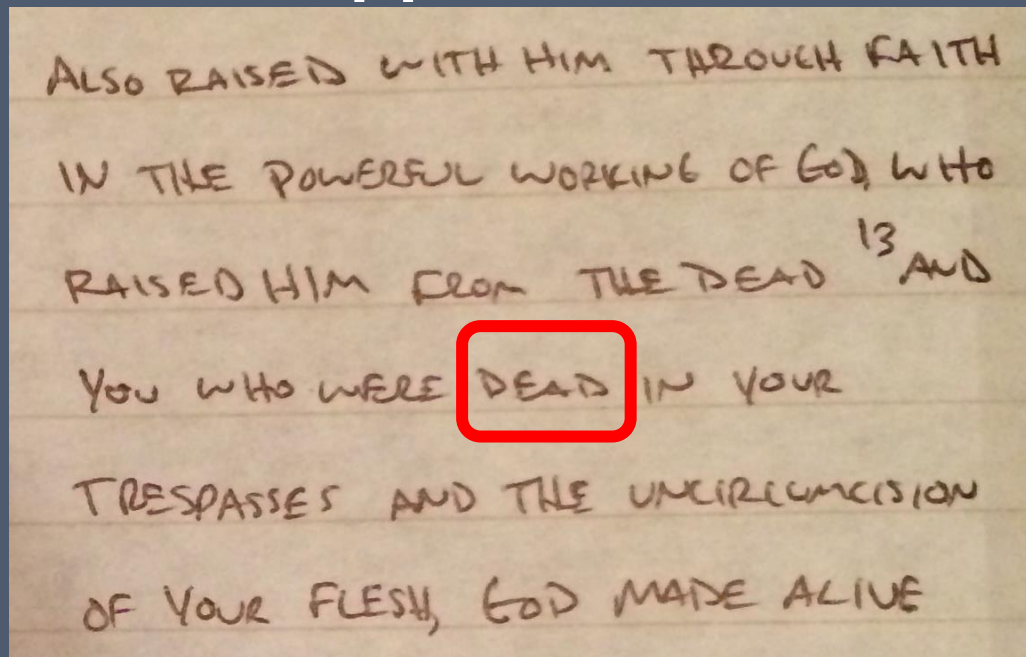
Substitution



...were also raised with him through
faith in the powerful working of God,
who raised him from the dead.
13. And you, who were raised in your
trespasses and the uncircumcision
of your flesh, God made alive

This image shows a handwritten manuscript snippet labeled 'E'. It contains a portion of Colossians 2:13. The word 'raised' is underlined in the first line, and 'raised' is underlined in the second line. A red box highlights the word 'raised' in the third line. Red arrows point from the boxed 'raised' to the underlined 'raised' in the first line and the underlined 'raised' in the second line, illustrating a substitution of the word 'raised' for 'dead'.

The scribe of [E] substituted the word “raised” for “dead” in Colossians 2:13



ALSO RAISED WITH HIM THROUGH FAITH
IN THE POWERFUL WORKING OF GOD, WHO
RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD ¹³ AND
YOU WHO WERE DEAD IN YOUR
TRESPASSES AND THE UNCIRCUMCISION
OF YOUR FLESH, GOD MADE ALIVE

This image shows a handwritten manuscript snippet labeled 'C'. It contains a portion of Colossians 2:13. The word 'DEAD' is underlined in the third line. A red box highlights the word 'DEAD'.

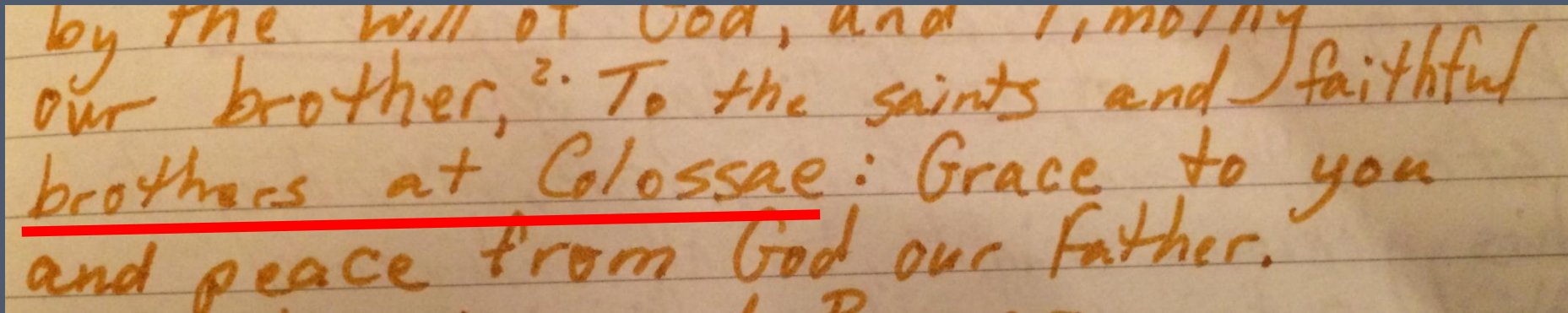
The scribe of [C] correctly copied the word “dead” which makes more sense in the context.

Sometimes a word that is repeated often can stick in our minds, even if the word is theologically incorrect!

C

Omissions

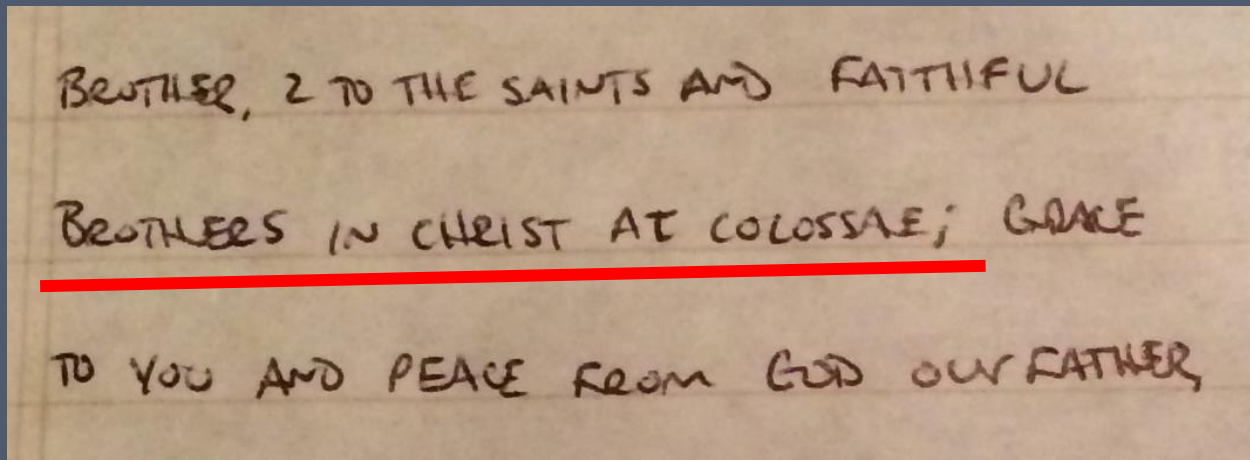
E



by the will of God, and I, making
our brother,². To the saints and faithful
brothers at Colossae: Grace to you
and peace from God our Father.

The scribe of [E] accidentally omitted the words “in Christ” in Colossians 1:2

C

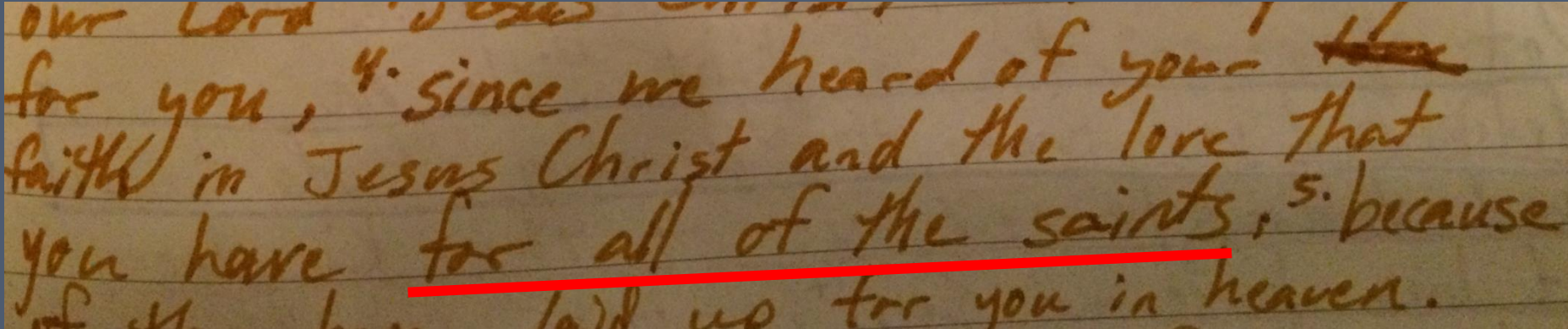


BROTHER, 2 TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL
BROTHERS IN CHRIST AT COLOSSAE; GRACE
TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER,

The scribe of [C] correctly copied the words “in Christ” which agrees with all other manuscripts except [E]

Additions

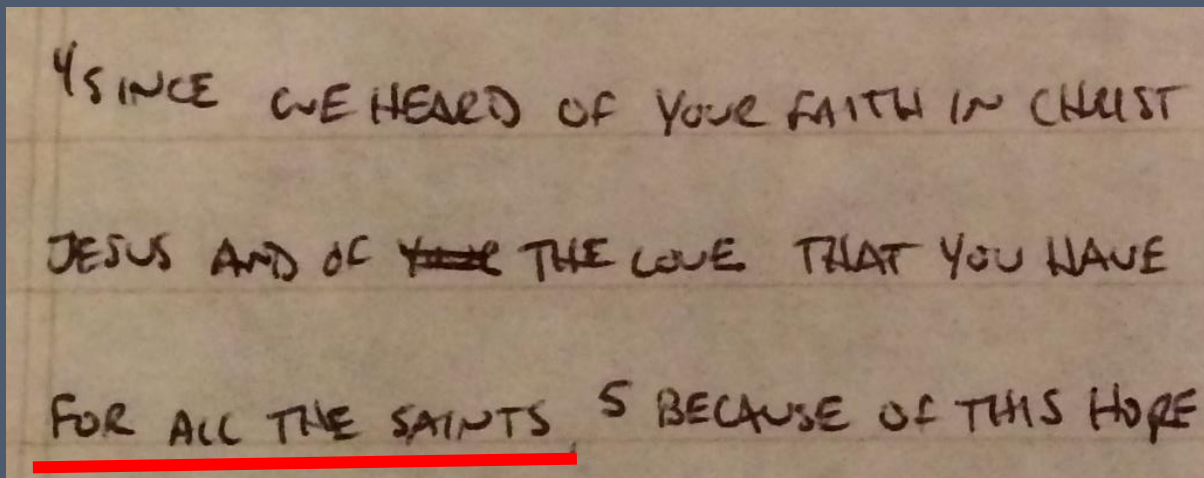
E



our Lord Jesus Christ
for you, 4. since we heard of your ~~the~~
faith in Jesus Christ and the love that
you have for all of the saints, 5. because
of this hope we laid up for you in heaven.

The scribe of [E] accidentally added the word “of” in Colossians 1:4

C



4 SINCE WE HEARD OF YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST
JESUS AND OF ~~THE~~ THE LOVE THAT YOU HAVE
FOR ALL THE SAINTS, 5 BECAUSE OF THIS HOPE

The scribe of [C] correctly copied the words “for all the saints” without the word “of”, which agrees with all other manuscripts except [E]

E

Additions

Colossians

Greeting

1. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother," 2. To the saints and faithful brothers at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4. since we heard of your love that

The scribes of [C & E] added titles

C

COLOSSIANS

1 GREETING

1 PAUL, AN APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS BY THE WILL OF GOD, AND TIMOTHY OUR BROTHER, 2 TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BROTHERS IN CHRIST AT COLOSSAE; GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER, 3 AND

THANKS GIVING AND PRAYER

3 WE ALWAYS THANK GOD, THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHEN WE PRAY FOR YOU,

There is no partiality.

4. Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

2. Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving

3. At the same time, pray also for us

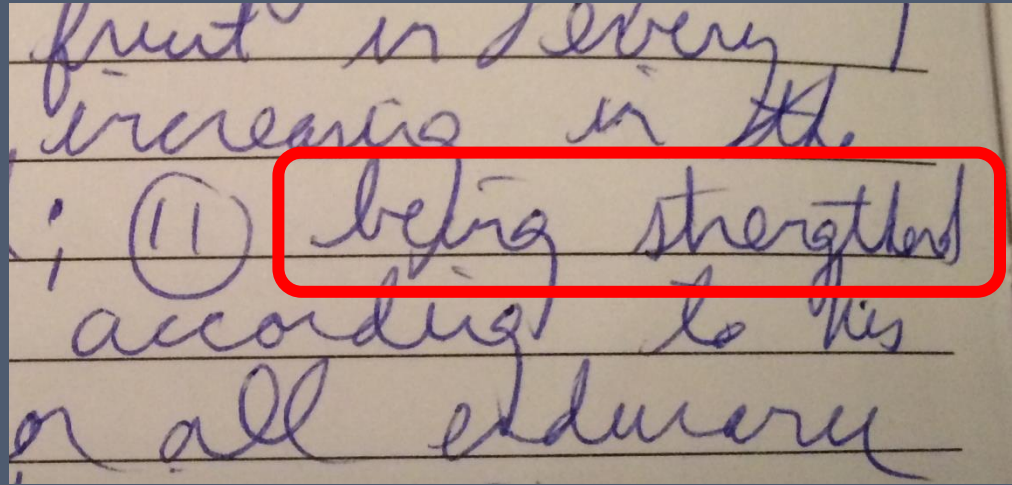
4. + God may open to us

But [C] stopped while [E] continued, which tells us the titles are later additions. No other manuscripts contain titles.

4 MASTERS, TREAT YOUR BONDSERVANTS JUSTLY AND FAIRLY KNOWING THAT YOU ALSO HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN. 2 CONTINUE STEADFASTLY IN PRAYER, BEING WATCHFUL IN IT WITH THANKSGIVING 3 AT THE SAME TIME PRAY ALSO FOR US THAT GOD MAY OPEN TO US

Alternate Vorlage

J - ESV Original



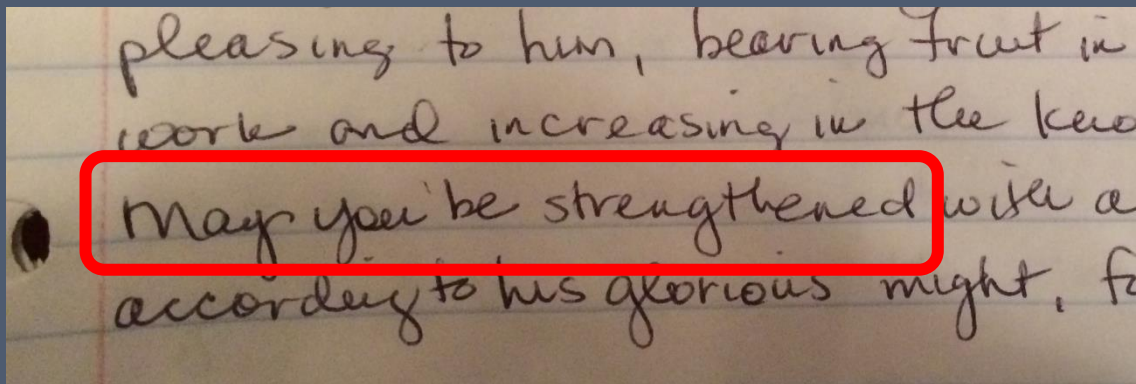
fruit in every
increasing in the
; (11) being strengthened
according to his
on all edifying

A handwritten manuscript snippet on lined paper. The text is written in cursive. A red rectangular box highlights the phrase "being strengthened".

The scribe of [J] was very reliable but copied “being strengthened” in Colossians 1:11

Which one is right?

G - ESV 2016



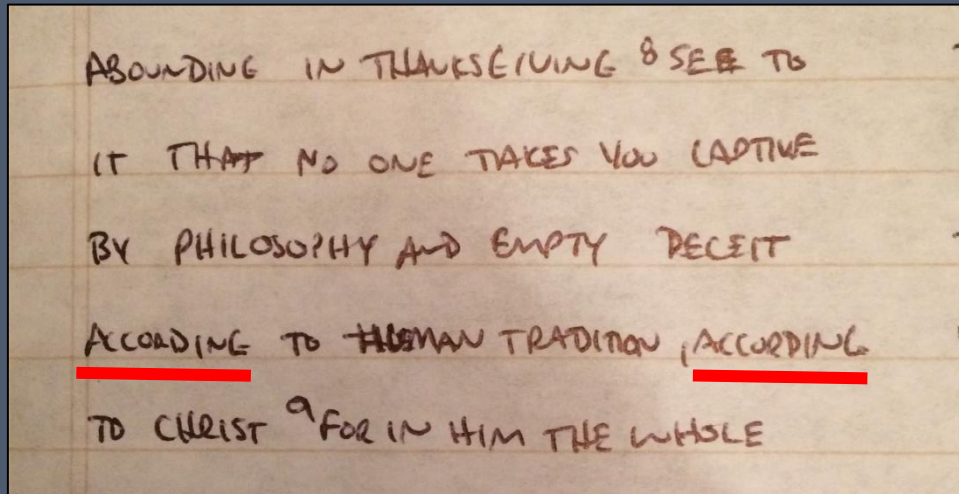
pleasing to him, bearing fruit in
work and increasing in the know
May you be strengthened with a
according to his glorious might, fo

A handwritten manuscript snippet on lined paper. The text is written in cursive. A red rectangular box highlights the phrase "May you be strengthened".

The scribe of [G] was very reliable but copied “may you be strengthened” in Colossians 1:11

Haplography

C



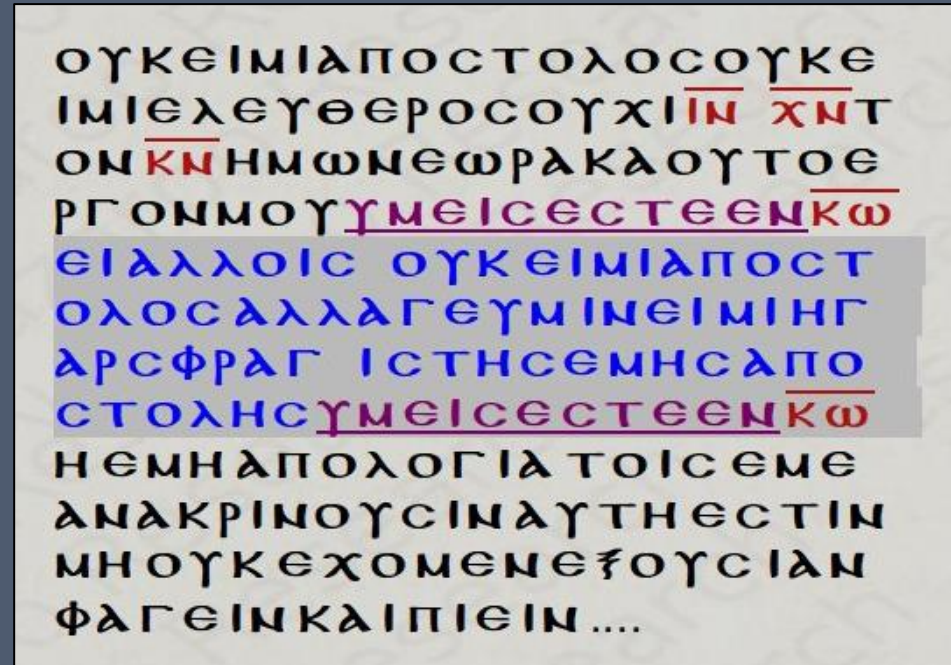
The scribe of [C], seeing the “according” skipped forward to the next “according” omitting the phrase underlined below

Colossians 2:8 (ESV)

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Codex Alexandrinus (A)

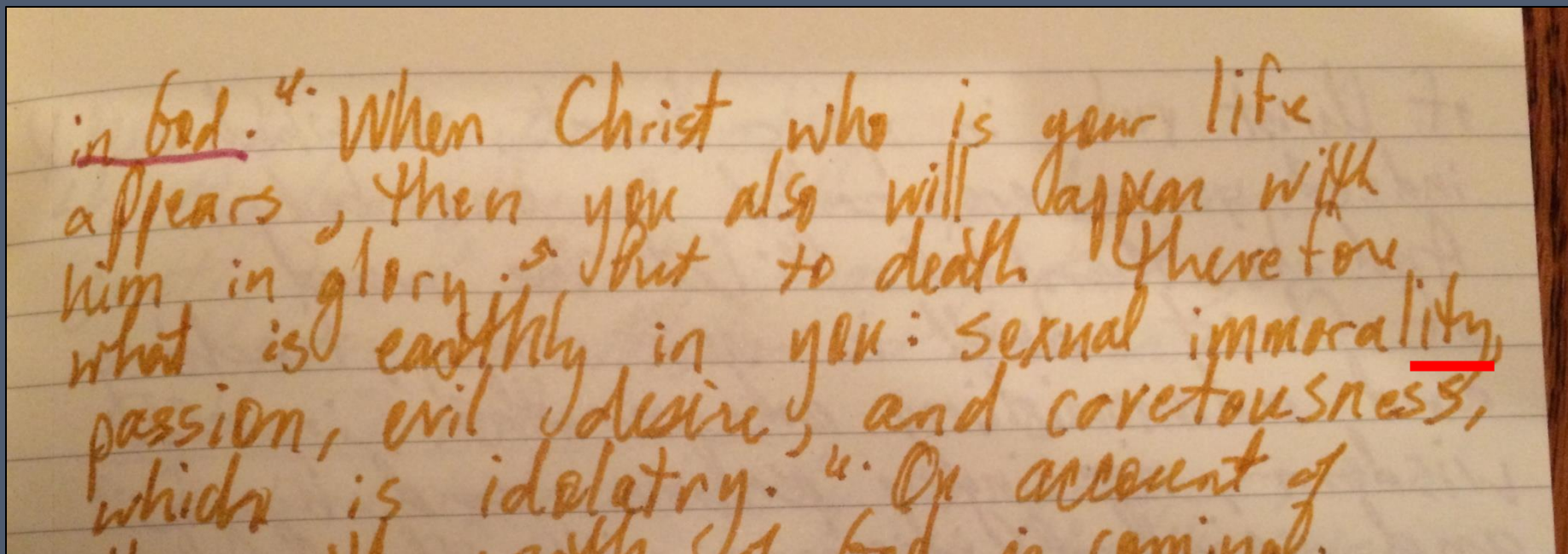
1Cor. 9:2



The scribe of A omitted verse 2 because the last four words of verse 1 are the same as the ending of verse 2.

E

Haplography



The scribe of [E] omitted the word “impurity” after “sexual immorality” likely because of the similar ending, “-ity”

Colossians 3:5 (ESV)

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

H

Haplography

going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason
19. by his "sensuous mind," and not holding fast to the Head,
from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through
its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God
20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world,
do you submit to regulations
21. Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch

The scribe of [H] omitted the phrase underlined below by skipping from the first "world" to the next "world."

Colossians 2:20 (ESV)

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—

C

Dittography

4 MASTERS, TREAT YOUR BONDSERVANTS
 JUSTLY AND FAIRLY KNOWING THAT YOU
 ALSO HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN. ² CONTINUE
 STEADFASTLY IN PRAYER, BEING WATCHFUL IN
 IT WITH THANKSGIVING ³ AT THE SAME TIME
 PRAY ALSO FOR US THAT GOD MAY OPEN TO US
 THAT GOD MAY OPEN TO US A DOOR FOR THE
 WORD, TO DECLARE THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

The scribe of [C], seeing the “to us”
 skipped back to the “for us” and copied
 the next phrase a second time

Colossians 4:3 (ESV)

³ At the same time, pray also for us, that
God may open to us a door for the
word, to declare the mystery of Christ,
on account of which I am in prison—

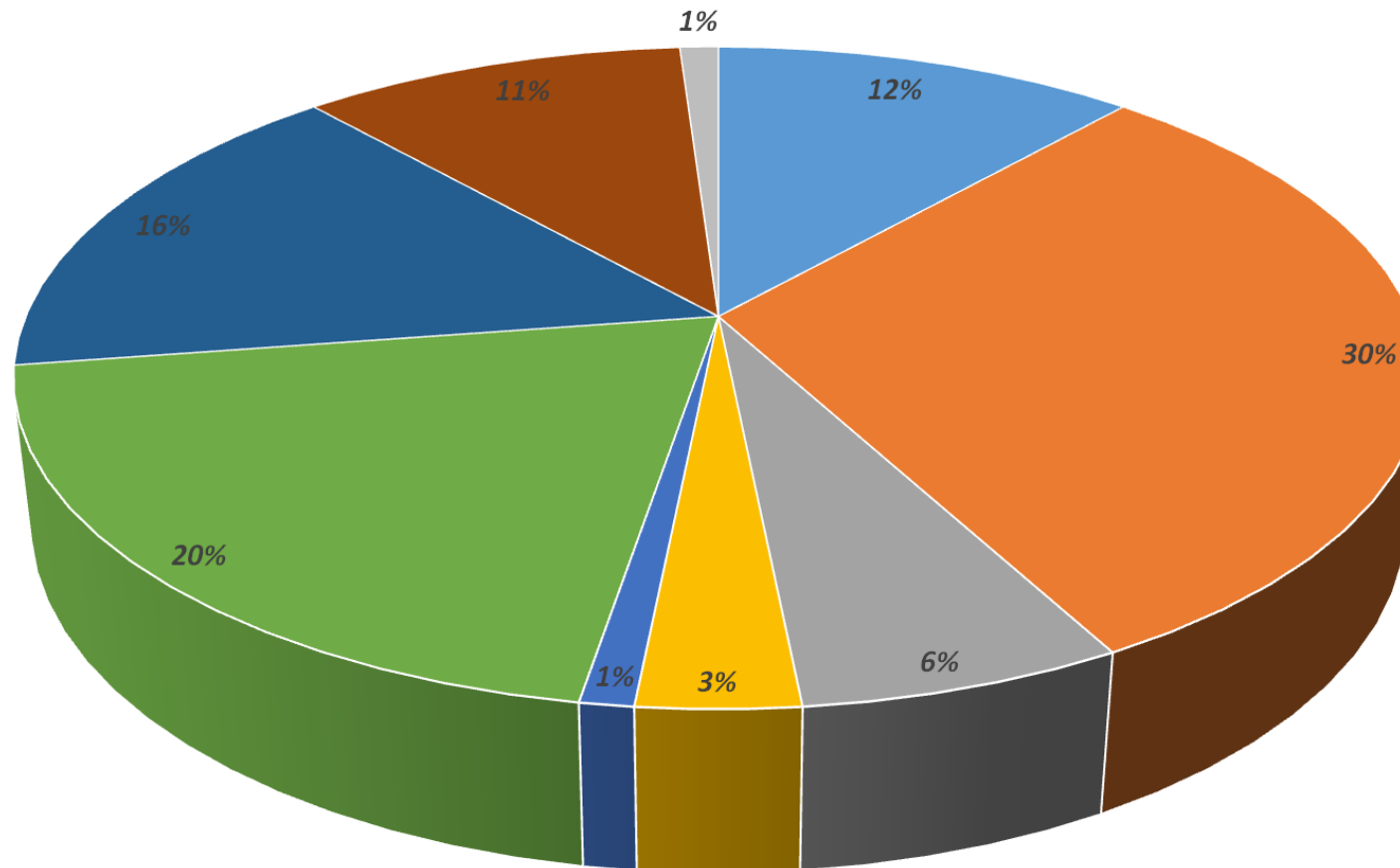
Codex Vaticanus (B) Acts 19:34

ΛΟΓΕΙΣΘΑΙ ΤΩ ΔΗΜΩ Ε
 ΠΙΓΝΟΝΤΕΣ ΔΕ ΟΤΙ ΤΟΥ
 ΔΑΙΟC ΕΣΤΙΝ ΦΩΝΗ ΕΓΕ
 ΝΕΤΟΜΙΛΕΚΠΑΝΤΩΝ
 ΩC ΕΙ ΕΠΙΩΡΑΣ ΔΥΟ ΚΡΑ
 ΖΟΝΤΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΗ Η ΑΡΤΕ
 ΜΙC ΕΦΕCΙΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΗ
 Η ΑΡΤΕ ΜΙC ΕΦΕCΙΩΝ.

The scribe of *Codex Vaticanus* copied
 the cry, “Great is Artemis of the
 Ephesians,” twice due to a slip of the
 eye, likely seeing the ending in
ephesion and skipping back to the
 similar ending in *krazonton* and
 copying the phrase a second time.

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

Variant Types

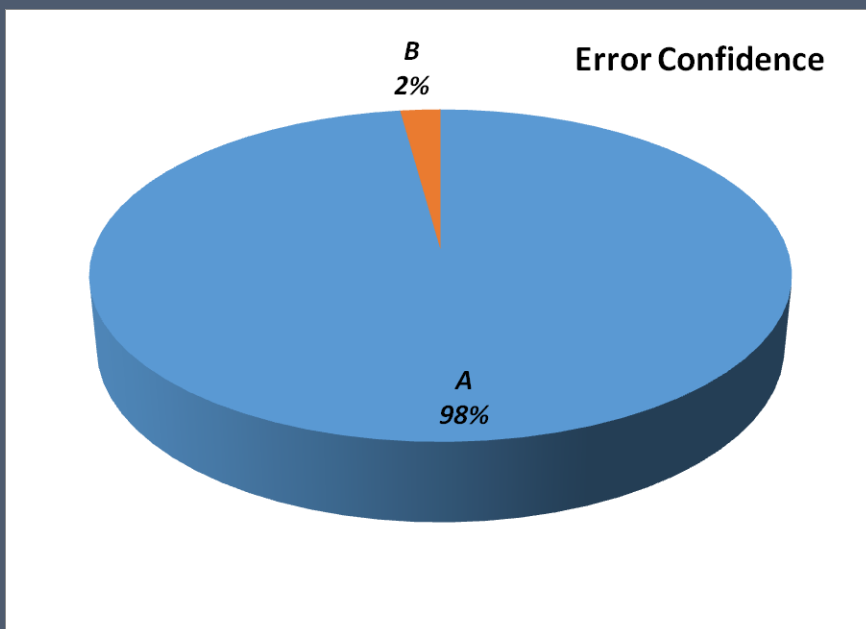


■ Spelling ■ Substitution ■ Transposition ■ Haplography ■ Dittography
■ Other +/- ■ Abbreviation ■ Additions ■ Alt. Vorlage

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

Variant Confidences

- A – Original wording is certain (100% confidence)
- B – Original reading is nearly certain (75% conf.)
- C – Original reading is difficult (50% conf.)
- D – Original wording is very difficult (25% conf.)



B Variants

1:5

- “**of the truth**” – C, E, F, G, H
- “**of truth**” – A, J

1:11

- “**May you be strengthened**” – A, C, E, G, H
- “**Being strengthened**” – F, J

Colossians Textual Criticism Exercise

ESV Restoration Confidences

Even with 95 variants (1 variant per verse), with 7 manuscripts to compare, we are...

99.97%

confident that we can restore the original wording of the ESV!

- Despite greater ages, variances and uncertainty, the 5,800+ Greek manuscripts, 18,000+ translations and 1,000,000+ church father quotations give us great confidence in restoring the original NT writings

Textual Criticism

New Testament Example:

Acts 8:37

External Evidence for Textual Variant in Acts 8:37									
Date	Shorter Reading (without verse 37 present)			Longer Reading (some form of vs. 37 present)					
				Non-KJV/TR form			KJV/TR form		
	Greek Evidence	Vers.	Pat.	Greek	Vers	Pat	Greek	Vers.	Pat
1									
2									Iren. Cyp.
3	P45	Cop ^{sa}							Pont. Dio. Tert.
4	01, 03,	Cop ^{bo}							Ambr. Pac., Ambst.
5	02, 04,	Syr ^p ,	Chr		it ^e , Geo Cop ^{meg}	Spec Chrom		Arm, Geo,	Aug.
6		A, F,		08					
7	P74	Syr ^h	Eth ^{pp}		Eth ^h ,	Bede		Syr ^{h**}	
8	044,	S, Theoph ^a			Slav, it ^p	Theoph ^b		it ^r	
9	014, 020, 025, 049, 33, 82, 1424, 1841, 1862, 1895,	C, G, I, U, K		1851,	It ^{ar} it ^t				
10	056, 0142, 93, 175, 181, 221*, 326, 398, 450, 454, 456, 457, 605, 619, 626, 920, 1066, 1073, 1175, 1720, 1829, 1837, 1845, 1874, 1880, 2147,			307, 1735, 1739, 1891, 221 ^{margin} ,					
11	35, 42, 81, 104, 131, 133, 142, 177, 250, 256, 302, 312, 424, 436, 437, 451, 458, 459, 462, 465, 491, 506, 547, 617, 623, 635, 638, 639, 699, 796, 901, 910, 919, 1162, 1243, 1244, 1270, 1277, 1311, 1521, 1668, 1724, 1734, 1828, 1838, 1847, 1849, 1854, 1870, 1888, 2138, 2191, 2344, 2475, 2587, 2723, 2746, 2833			464, 606, 607, 641, 945,					
12	1, 2, 3, 43, 57, 88*, 97, 105, 110, 122, 189, 203, 226, 319, 321, 330, 337, 365, 431, 440, 441, 452*, 618, 625, 637, 656, 911, 916, 917, 922, 927, 1058, 1127, 1240, 1241, 1245, 1315, 1319, 1359, 1360, 1448, 1490, 1505, 1526, 1573, 1611, 1646, 1673, 1718, 1737, 1740, 1743, 1752, 1754, 1850, 1863, 1867, 1868, 1872, 1885, 1893, 1894, 1897, 2127, 2143, 2194, 2242, 2401, 2412, 2541, 2712, 2718, 2815,			88 ^{margin} , 94, 103, 180, 323, 452 ^{margin} , 610, 876, 1853, 2298, 2805, 2818,	it ^{dem} it ^{ph} it ^p			it ^c	
13	5, 6, 38, 51, 141, 172, 204, 206s, 218, 234, 263, 327, 328, 378, 383, 384, 390, 404, 460, 468, 469, 479, 483, 496, 567, 592, 601, 614, 632, 665, 676, 757, 912, 914, 915, 941, 997, 999, 1069, 1070, 1072, 1094, 1103, 1107, 1149, 1161, 1242, 1251, 1292, 1297, 1352, 1398, 1400, 1404, 1456, 1563, 1594, 1595, 1597, 1717, 1719, 1722, 1736, 1742, 1759, 1827, 1839, 1842, 1843, 1855, 1857, 1860, 1864, 1865, 1873, 2180, 2374, 2404, 2423, 2483, 2502, 2516, 2558, 2576, 2627, 2696, 2772, 2774,			455, 1501, 1509, 1609, 1642, 1780,					
14	18, 62, 76, 201, 209, 216, 223, 228, 254, 308, 363, 367, 386, 393, 394, 421, 425, 489, 498, 582, 603, 604, 608, 621, 628*, 633, 634, 642, 680, 794, 808*, 824, 921, 928, 935, 959, 986, 996, 1022, 1040, 1075, 1099, 1100, 1102, 1106, 1248, 1249, 1354, 1390, 1409, 1482, 1503, 1524, 1548, 1598, 1599, 1618, 1619, 1622, 1637, 1643, 1723, 1725, 1726, 1732, 1733, 1741, 1746, 1747, 1753, 1761, 1762, 1831, 1856, 1859, 1877*, 1886, 1890, 1892*, 1896, 2080, 2085, 2086, 2175, 2261, 2279, 2303, 2356, 2431, 2466, 2484, 2492, 2508, 2511, 2675, 2705, 2716,			429, 429 ^{margin} , 453, 628 ^{margin} , 629, 630, 913, 1678, 1830, 1832, 1877 ^{margin} , 1892 ^{margin} , 2200, 2494,	it ^w				
15	69, 102, 149, 205, 400, 432, 444, 616, 664, 801, 1003, 1105, 1247, 1250, 1367, 1405, 1508, 1617, 1626, 1649, 1656, 1729, 1744, 1750, 1763, 1767, 1876, 2131, 2201, 2221, 2288, 2352, 2495, 2523, 2554, 2652, 2653, 2691, 2704, 2816*,			322, 385, 467, 636, 1610, 1751, 2816 ^{margin} ,					
16	61, 90, 1652, 1702, 1749, 1757, 1861, 2218, 2255, 2501, 2544*,			296, 522, 1704, 1884, 2488, 2737 2544 ^{margin} , ,			1883	Vg ^{cl}	
17	1721, 1748, 2243, 2674,			1869, 1903, 2473,					
18				1104, 2619,					
19		Vg ^{ww} Vg st							

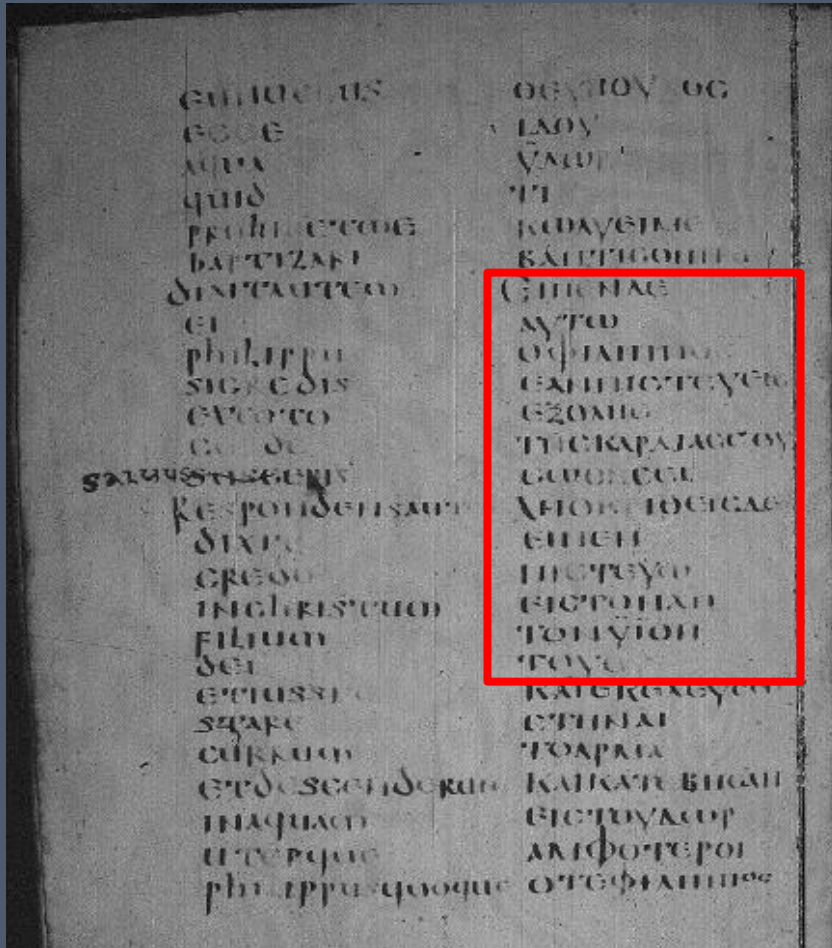
Acts 8:37

Textual Evidence

37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (KJV)

Acts 8:37 – Early Support



Codex E (6th Century) is the earliest manuscript containing the verse

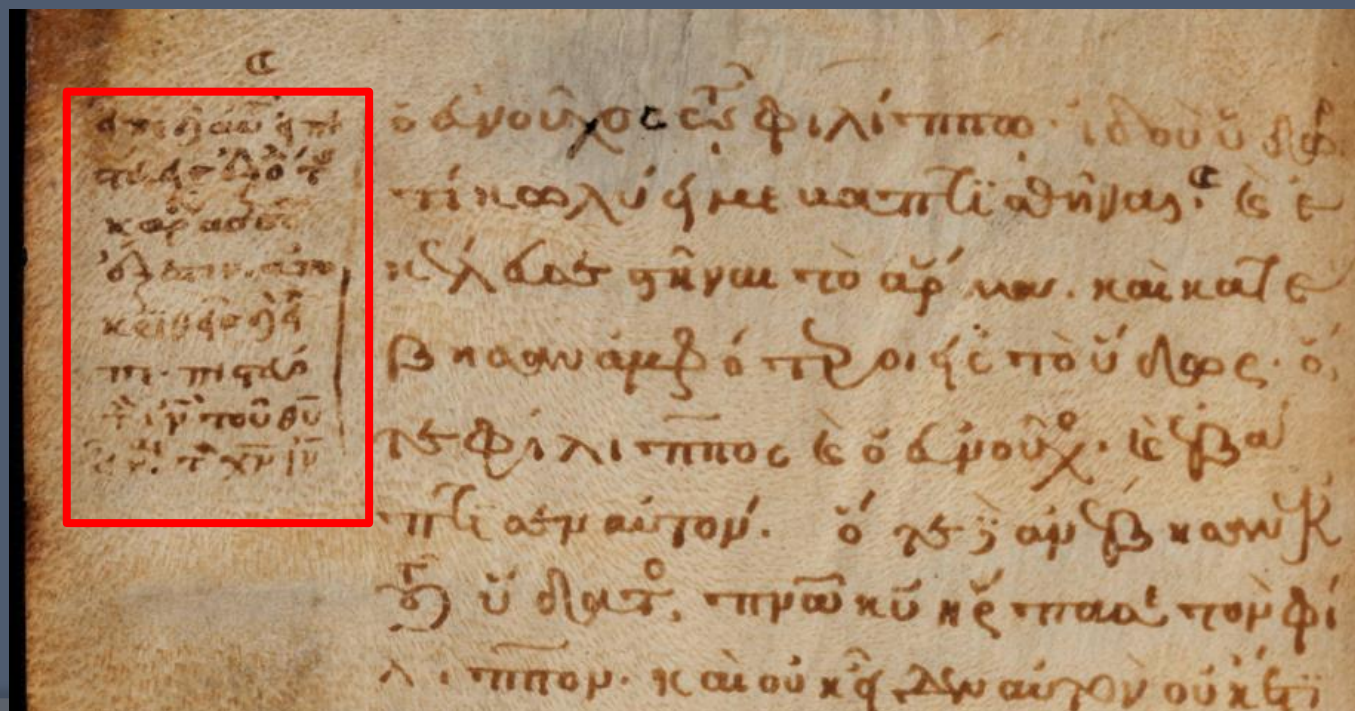
“...as did also the believing eunuch himself: and, immediately requesting to be baptized, he said, ‘I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God.’”

- *Irenaeus, Against Heresies, III xii 8 (~180 AD)*

Irenaeus' quote of this confession is the earliest extant

Acts 8:37 – Erasmus' Witness

Acts 8:37 was only present in one Greek manuscript available to Erasmus (ms. 2816 – 15th Century) and only in the margin (see below)



Acts 8:37 – Erasmus' Method

- In his first edition of 1516, Erasmus claims that the verse “is not found in the Greek manuscripts.”
- But because it is in the Latin version and in the margin of 2816, he believes, “However, I think the omission was the result of negligent scribes.”
- BUT, when he added the verse to his Greek edition, he back-translated his Latin Vulgate into the Greek instead of using the margin text of 2816
- THIS version has been transmitted into the *Textus Receptus* and into the KJV, BUT it is found in only 1 late 16th century ms. (copied after Erasmus!)

Is Acts 8:37 Missing?

- What we now know as Acts 8:37 was unjustifiably added by Erasmus in 1516
- Verse designations were added to the Greek edition of Stephanus in 1551
- The KJV translated from a Greek edition that contained the text and verse designations
- Therefore, this text was assigned a verse BEFORE it was considered non-original. When it is correctly removed... verse 37 disappears!

Acts 8:37 – The Decision

8:37 omit verse {A}

Ver. 37 is a Western addition, not found in ℣45, ⋈ A B C 33 81 614 vg syr^p, cop^{sa}, eth, but is read, with many minor variations, by E, many minuscules, it^{gig}, vg^{mss} syr^h with * cop^{G67} arm. There is no reason why scribes should have omitted the material, if it had originally stood in the text. It should be noted too that τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν is not a Lukan expression.

The formula πιστεύω ... Χριστόν was doubtless used by the early church in baptismal ceremonies, and may have been written in the margin of a copy of Acts. Its insertion into the text seems to have been due to the feeling that Philip would not have baptized the Ethiopian without securing a confession of faith, which needed to be expressed in the narrative. Although the earliest known New Testament manuscript that contains the words dates from the sixth century (ms. E), the tradition of the Ethiopian's confession of faith in Christ was current as early as the latter part of the second century, for Irenaeus quotes part of it (*Against Heresies*, III.xii.8).

Although the passage does not appear in the late medieval manuscript on which Erasmus chiefly depended for his edition (ms. 2), it stands in the margin of another (ms. 4), from which he inserted it into his text because he “judged that it had been omitted by the carelessness of scribes (*arbitror omissum librariorum incuria*).”

Metzger, B. M., & United Bible Societies. (1994). A textual commentary on the Greek New Testament, second edition a companion volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.) (563). London; New York: United Bible Societies.

So, is the New Testament Text Reliable?

- We learned that God inspired the original writings without error in their meaning BUT...
- TRUE: we do not have the original manuscripts and there are hundreds of thousands of variations in the manuscript copies BUT...
- This is because...
 - We have an abundance of those manuscripts AND...
 - Human beings have produced those manuscripts BUT...
- We know that in these variations...
 - About 99% are untranslatable, insignificant or not possibly original
 - Only about 1% are significant and possible BUT...
 - No Christian doctrine is affected in any way THEREFORE...
- We have very high confidence in reconstructing the original NT