

# Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

Doctrine of the Bible Part 4: The Greek New  
Testament and Affirmations of Faith

The Heights Church October 25, 2015

# The Big Picture

- We seek to **become** and then **make** disciples (believing learners) by:
- Knowing what we believe.
- Why we believe it.
- Being able to communicate what we believe and why in an effective, winsome manner to fulfill the commands for all Christians in Matthew 28:18-20 and 1 Peter 3:15-16.

# History of the Bible (post reformation A.D. 1517)

**1516 Erasmus compilation of Greek NT**

**1522 Luther's German NT**

**1526 Tyndale NT**

**1534 Luther's Complete German OT and NT**

**1560 Geneva Bible**

**1611 King James Bible**

**1881/1885 English Revised Version**

**1901 American Standard Version**

**1952 Revised Standard Version**

**1971 New American Standard Version**

**1973 New International Version**

**1979/1982 New King James Version**

**2001 English Standard Version**

# Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

The Greek NT contains about 138,000 words. Of the 5700 Greek NT manuscripts there are about 400,000 textual variants divided into 5 categories.

1. Spelling or nonsense errors make up the largest group and do not affect meaning.
2. The second largest group involve minor changes and synonyms that do not affect meaning.
3. The third largest group are variants that have some possibility of reflecting the original text: *The gospel of God versus the gospel of Christ* 1 Thessalonians 2:9
4. Less than 1% of the variants changes the meaning to some degree: *we have peace versus let us have peace* Romans 5:1
5. The earliest and best manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11.

# Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

Three Greek Texts have been primarily used by Protestants.

1. *Textus Receptus* (Latin for the received text)

a) First collated by Erasmus

b) Basis for Tyndale, Geneva Bible, and King James

2. *Majority Text* based on majority of all available copies of the Greek NT

3. *Critical Text*

a) First release in 1881 using the oldest available manuscripts

b) based on less than 20% of available documents

c) Basis for: Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard Version

d) American Standard Version and New American Standard Version

e) NIV and ESV

# Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

NT Scholars recognize about 60 cases where the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text agree but are “significantly” different from the Critical Text.

- a) 30 occur in Gospels, 7 in Acts, 5 in Romans, 3 in 1 Corinthians and 1 John. The remaining 12 are spread over 10 Books.
- b) Generally the Textus Receptus and Majority Text have added something not in the Critical Text that is not necessarily untrue and sometimes occurs in another passage.
- c) Example: Matthew 17:21 is omitted in the Critical Text. The literal translation is: **However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.** Note: Mark 9:29 ESV says, **“this kind does not go out except by prayer”**

In the ESV **17:20** He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.” **17:22** As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men,

# Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

NT Scholars recognize about 22 cases where the Critical Text and Majority Text agree but are “significantly” different from the Textus Receptus .

a) 11 occur In Revelation, 5 in Acts and the remaining 6 are spread over 5 Books

b) Example: The literal translation of Matthew 27:35 is:

TR: Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” **KJV**

MT/CT: Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots. **ESV**

# Variants in Greek New Testament Manuscripts

**“nothing we believe to be doctrinally true, and nothing we are commanded to do, is in any way jeopardized by the variants. This is true for any textual tradition. The interpretation of individual passages may well be called in question; but never is a doctrine affected.” D.A. Carson**

# 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith 1:1

**The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience, although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and his will which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in diverse manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the Holy Scriptures to be most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.**

# New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith A.D. 1833 I. OF THE SCRIPTURES

**We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.**

# Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith

- **We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired by God, and without error in the original manuscripts.**
- **We believe that God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.**

# Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith

- **We believe God's intentions are revealed through the intentions of inspired human authors, even when the authors' intention was to express divine meaning of which they were not fully aware, as, for example, in the case of some Old Testament prophecies. Thus the meaning of Biblical texts is a fixed historical reality, rooted in the historical, unchangeable intentions of its divine and human authors. However, while meaning does not change, the application of that meaning may change in various situations. Nevertheless it is not legitimate to infer a meaning from a Biblical text that is not demonstrably carried by the words which God inspired.**

# Bethlehem Elder Affirmation of Faith

- **Therefore, the process of discovering the intention of God in the Bible (which is its fullest meaning) is a humble and careful effort to find in the language of Scripture what the human authors intended to communicate. Limited abilities, traditional biases, personal sin, and cultural assumptions often obscure Biblical texts. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is essential for right understanding of the Bible, and prayer for His assistance belongs to a proper effort to understand and apply God's Word.**

# The Heights Church Affirmation of Faith

- **We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.**

# Ultimately How do we know the Bible is true?

**We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to an high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.** 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith 1:5

# Ultimately How do we know the Bible is true?

**When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.** John 16:13-14

**These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.** 1 Corinthians 2:10-12