

Textual Criticism (Revised January 2022)

Another tool that is both helpful and necessary for *The Toolbox for the Body of Christ* is some basic insight on textual criticism.

This tool was written and published several years ago and as of 2021 this tool will include some Criticism principles that have been clarified and or adjusted over time. Revision will occur upon actual scholarly demonstration of some kind of data update.

Textual criticism is defined as the study of the copies of any documents where the original (the autograph) is unknown or nonexistent. The primary goal is to determine the exact wording of the original. Original text is the form of the text when it left the author's hands (also known as the Ausgangstext or autograph text).

In the book recently published, entitled: "Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism" edited by Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry (including chapters by both of them and 12 other authors and scholars of textual criticism of the New Testament manuscripts, Greek and other languages such as Latin, Coptic, Arabic, Georgian, etc.) one will find important corrections to certain data. Some that are common in textual criticism apologetics and some uncommon. We must have accuracy in our defense of, or defending of, the "God breathed" word in the original Greek and Hebrew, and including some Aramaic.

This book by Hixson and Gurry is correcting myths and mistakes about textual criticism of the New Testament that apologists and textual scholars have essentially been taking for granted.

Data like ancient manuscripts of the New Testament should always, continually, be studied in every detail. The types of manuscripts, quantifying variants, types of variants, number of manuscripts (catalogued number of manuscripts as opposed to number of actual manuscripts), internal and external evidences, continual discoveries of manuscripts, Biblical and non-Biblical, for studying vocabulary, grammar and syntax for translation purposes concerning the Greek, Hebrew and other languages the Biblical text has been translated into through the centuries.

Dr. Daniel B. Wallace of CSNTM, the organization instituted by Dr. Wallace, which is currently digitizing all known, extant (still existing), Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, has written the introduction to "Myths and Mistakes..." Dr. Wallace has also corrected a few facts about certain data he always presents at his lectures or teaching on textual criticism of the Greek New Testament. For instance, Dr. Wallace was previously claiming that there are 5,856 Greek New Testament manuscripts as of January 2016. However, this number was actually the number of "Catalogued" manuscripts, and the present number is about 5,898 as of the end of 2020. Also, it must be stated that the "actual" number of manuscripts is approximately 5,100-5,300. As one would or could expect of ancient manuscripts, many being fragmentary, some catalogued manuscripts are actually part of some other "actual" manuscripts. Every catalogued manuscript retains its catalogued number regardless of its belonging to a certain, other, catalogued manuscript. The book "Myths and Mistakes..." addresses this and provides examples of some that have been discovered to be part of the same manuscript. Dr. Gurry has also recently presented a new Textual Criticism methodology called "Coherence Based Genealogical Method" or "CBGM" and anyone interested in finding out more should begin searching for YouTube videos for interviews and or lectures about it. There is a book, which was recently published, authored by Dr. Gurry (mentioned above) and his co-author Tommy Wasserman, a 146 page book introducing the "CBGM".

Some might ask - Why do we need this tool? It is because of Satan, who is the Devil, a liar and those Jews that do not believe his words are of "your father the devil...the father of lies." Satan, through the serpent, in Genesis 3:4-5 accused God's Word of being untrue, he was speaking to Eve and Adam was there with her, they were in the Garden of Eden. They were the human race and including everyone born of them, to the present time and into the future, are condemned to death and eternal punishment for sin through Adam.

Physical death is a separation of the soul and spirit from the body. Men live on earth in a body that is made of earth (see 1 Corinthians 15:44-49) and is referred to as a tent in 2 Corinthians 5. Satan, the Devil (deceiver) deceived Eve, she became a sinner (see 1 Timothy 2:14) and when Adam took the fruit and ate it in disobedience to the words of God his creator he sold himself and all of mankind, who comes from him, into slavery to sin (see Romans 5-6). Adam separated himself and all of mankind from God spiritually, mankind then and now needing reconciliation with God spiritually, beginning with redemption and justification. God explains that Jesus is the kinsman, the Heavenly Adam, that he sent for attaining reconciliation and even more, for eternity, which could only come through the shedding of blood as the actual purchase price for forgiveness of sins and including freedom from slavery to sin, reconciliation with God, and salvation from God's wrath, or punishment for sins.

The letters or epistles in the New Testament explain this whole chain of events. When Adam sinned sin entered the world/the human race. He was separated spiritually (became unrighteous in God's sight) immediately and was separated from his earthly body (tent or dwelling) hundreds of years later (see Genesis for Adam's years and Romans 5 for sin and death entering the human race). Compare 1 Corinthians 15:44-49 and 2 Corinthians 5 with all of Romans 5-8:9 for a fuller explanation of the earthly and heavenly Adams.

God's plan is constantly explained as he carries it out through the ages and it will ultimately be fulfilled. While God's words go out from Him to man, whether it is when there are no nations until the tower of Babel. Whether it is when there are nations until the Christ returns after Daniel's 70th week of years. Whether it's from Israel's creation to the return of the Christ to rule the world from David's throne for 1,000 years, prior to the New Heaven/Heavens and New Earth, Satan calls God a liar. To reiterate, Jesus, in the Gospels, calls the Devil (another name Satan is called) the father of lies (see John 8:44). Satan is, today, calling the Word of God a lie by saying, through liars (his children, those who have not and or will not believe some or all of God's breathed words, God's own unknowledgeable children, many even being horribly misled or deceived), that our Greek manuscripts are thoroughly corrupted and we "cannot know" what the original documents of the Greek New Testament really said/say and this is the reason for this tool.

These claims defy the overwhelming riches of manuscripts in not only Greek, but in Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, etc. There are over 20,000 manuscripts in the combined languages (and that is a conservative number). We have manuscripts that go back to the 2nd century. These are copies, but of earlier manuscripts as a copied manuscript comes from a manuscript already in existence. Textual critics have to decide, among the variants, which ones are correct and would in all probability be original and this discipline has a methodology of making those choices. We have to decide, among the variants, what they are and this discipline has a methodology of making those choices. The more manuscripts we have the more comparisons we can make in determining the original words. Every believer needs to understand that no 2 Greek New Testament manuscripts are exactly alike.

“God Breathed”

The Bible claims authorship by God. In 2 Timothy 3:16 God’s breathed words say: “All Scripture is “God breathed” and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” The Greek word for where the word comes from does not say inspired, how men came to write it. This verse is addressing the origin of God’s words, their coming literally from God’s mouth just as Jesus claims in his response to Satan in Matthew 4:4, quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 concerning man not living “ ‘...by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ “

Is the Bible thoroughly corrupt? If our Bible translations, which come from ancient manuscripts, are totally corrupt as atheists and any person, Christian (liberal Christian) or non-Christian, may come to believe, then the whole plan of God is clearly affected and we cannot possibly know the truth about God and his will, including his plan.

Remember, some only profess to believe, and when one who has at least a working knowledge of scripture questions a professing only believer who believes even part of God’s word is corrupted, the clear doctrines taught therein, especially doctrines like the Deity of Christ Jesus, of the Holy Spirit, the virgin birth of the Christ, the resurrection of Christ, etc., one usually finds that many of them do not believe most, or all of those doctrines. What is worse is that some of these who do not believe God’s word will write their own popular books denying many, if not most, of the explicit doctrines in the scriptures. They postulate their own beliefs from their imagination with clear contradiction while continuing to claim to be a Christian. One example is the popular book and movie called “The Shack” by a Unitarian who is undoubtedly unsaved according to his own public testimonies. These unbiblical teachings may or may not even simply come from some ancient cultic belief, etc. and many actual Christians, then, purchase these false beliefs and become steeped in unmitigated confusion or doubt about the Bible and the teachings/doctrines therein, even questioning their own salvation. Many Spiritually immature believers who have little knowledge and understanding of scripture will usually enjoy the books or videos because the appeal is based on emotion. Some basic textual criticism will demonstrate that the deceiving individuals are steeped in ignorance of the truth in and about the Bible when it comes to textual criticism of Biblical manuscripts, their being saved, or not, being a separate issue. Their unbelief may be predicated on their ignorance of the facts about the Bible’s claim of being God’s breathed word, because they may have been victimized by ones like themselves, someone who simply ignored the verses and or passages clearly found in the text, or they just do not believe the scriptures are actually God’s breathed words.

When true believers are taught the clear facts about the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts and their transmission, including all of the facts within the textual criticism of them, they will not be so easily deceived, their faith not so easily shaken, provided they are at least somewhat knowledgeable of God’s breathed word. Ignorance, here, meaning not only a lack of knowledge, but a lack of sound instruction.

The Greek New Testament is the main focus in textual criticism for the Body of Christ. The Old Testament and New Testament contain the whole plan of God for mankind and the Old Testament is absolutely necessary for more fully understanding and defending much found in the New Testament. The Old Testament is primarily attacked when and where it is used to defend doctrine in the New Testament. However, the main attacks on the scriptures are by so called Christian cults, Atheists, Islam, or liberal individuals who may or may not be saved, or liberal congregations that simply pick and choose what they are willing to accept from scripture in the New Testament. The most significant attacks concern the deity of, and the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, eternal security, the Trinity, forgiveness of sins, Jesus being the only way to be saved, and so on, though there are clearly many other important doctrines

within the New Testament attacked that are critically significant. Nearly every doctrine in the New Testament is clearly supported, directly, by the Old Testament scriptures, some are not revealed until after the ascension of the Lord and the sending of the Holy Spirit to begin the creation of the Body of Christ at the beginning of the New Covenant as is clearly explained in the New Testament Epistles, especially Paul's letters.

In the New Testament Gospels, the accounts of the Anointed Jesus being sent only to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" per Matthew 15:24 (an earthly people) and his disciples being sent only to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" per Matthew 10:5-6 and all that is written therein is contrasted with all that is written in the Epistles that specifically address the Body of Christ (a heavenly people) about the command to repent and salvation by grace through faith for all of mankind prior to God's wrath coming on the wicked on the set day (see Acts 17: 30-31; Ephesians 2:8-9). Believers not being taught these differences engenders unmitigated confusion for them and cults, Islam, atheists, false teachers, etc. and the ignorant take full advantage, even claiming this as corruption of the text when it disagrees with their own doctrines.

The Apostle Paul himself is even despised for much of his teachings, because believers not understanding the differences between the Gospels and Epistles (there are similarities as well as dissimilarities, which are usually ignored or dismissed or mixed together as all denominational distinctions and cults, etc. do, including the Gospel) will even accuse Paul of contradicting Jesus or making doctrine up, some claim that Paul created or invented Christianity, believers and unbelievers will do this. This is wholly different than errors or variants found among manuscripts, but is added under the heading of textual corruption by the ignorant and or unsaved. Israel in the Old Testament and the New Testament Gospels, including the Lord and Israel, under the law of Moses and the Body of Christ under grace through faith (from the command to all of mankind to repent and everyone who believes in the Lord will receive forgiveness and salvation) in the epistles are under entirely different covenants, earthly compared to heavenly citizenship, specified laws for righteousness for every member of Israel as opposed to God's own righteousness in Christ for the member of the Body of Christ, etc. (see Deut. 6:25; Romans 3:21-22). There is one incredible detail after another given throughout the entirety of the New Testament Scriptures. Men and women will often claim that the Bible doesn't really say or mean what it clearly, literally says, even if there are no textual variants found at that passage, phrase, or word. Often times they are leaving out context, not rightly dividing the facts of Jesus addressing Israel alone under the Laws of Moses as opposed to the Body of Christ being addressed under Grace. However, real variants are in the Gospels and the Epistles, so Christians have a two sided coin to defend, 1) they need to explain the text with context and 2) they need to use knowledge of textual criticism to defend against claims of total corruption of the actual text. Christian cults, for example, abuse context and the actual text. The Jehovah's Witness' NWT is an intentional corruption to remove the Deity of Christ.

Greek New Testament scholars agree that no cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is affected by the 400,000 - 500,000 variants found in the Greek manuscript tradition, which does not include spelling variants. The truth is, there is no cardinal doctrine from Genesis to Revelation, God's plan, affected by the enormous amount of variants. If we had only one manuscript, there would be no variants. If we had two manuscripts, there would be variants. Dr. Daniel Wallace, prior to "Myths and Mistakes..." would say: "The two closest manuscripts have 6-10 variants per chapter in the New Testament." However, because of the news that the 400,000 - 500,000 variants do not include spelling variants the number per chapter must be a little greater than 6-10. At face, with no knowledge of the facts of textual criticism, it is easy to understand that the claims of corruption of the manuscripts could easily shake or shatter the faith of many believers, turn the unsaved away from hearing the gospel and harden those who have heard the gospel but have yet to act by believing in Jesus, our Lord and Savior, etc. This is quite serious indeed, as one can well imagine.

The following list includes only some basic facts of textual criticism of the New Testament:

1. As already stated, it is estimated that there are 400,000 - 500,000 textual variants, not including spelling variants, among the Greek New Testament manuscripts. This is another instance of Dr. Daniel B. Wallace adjusting data concerning "Principles of Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament manuscripts". Dr. Wallace always, until 2020, included spelling variants in the 400,000-500,000 total, approximate, variants. After the research on the number of variants was completed Dr. Wallace adjusted to the scholarly, updated, data. No doctrine or teaching was introduced or deleted from the Greek New Testament manuscripts that exist.

2. There are 138,162 words in the Greek New Testament that most translators use today from these manuscripts. Dr. Wallace does mention this number from lecture to lecture. This number is an approximation as slight changes may occur as additional manuscripts and information come to light. Greek New Testaments will differ on the number of words they contain. The number given above was given several years ago.

3. Upwards of 99 percent approximate variants are not meaningful or viable. They do not change the meaning in any meaningful way and do not have the pedigree to go back to the original autographs. There are four types of variants:

- A. not meaningful but viable
- B. meaningful but not viable
- C. neither meaningful nor viable
- D. both meaningful and viable

Textual criticism is only concerned with this fourth type in the goal to go back to the original autographs or what actually left the hands of the author. All variants should be made known and able to be viewed by believers and unbelievers alike, that is, whatever is possible to be made available. Bear in mind that the Body of Christ has no reason to be in fear of, or ashamed of, the fact of variants. Genesis to Revelation contain a spelled out plan by God, replete with minute details concerning many prophecies, many of which have been fulfilled with many more yet to be fulfilled and no doctrines taught therein have been altered. God's breathed word explains that certain men since Moses are what one would call "authorized agents" speaking and writing by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Peter Gentry speaking at the conference in 2020 held by the Text and Canon Institute, speaking about the Old Testament used the phrase "authorized agents".

4. The more manuscripts we have the more variants we will have, a large percentage of which are simply nonsense and spelling errors. An example of nonsense and spelling variant would be the misspelling of the word onion in a recipe where instead of onion one reads the word union. These kinds of variants are easily recognized, just as when we read a newspaper today where we have any number of misspellings or typos that stand out to us. We read and simply chuckle and move on. Anyone who reads newspapers often even expects these errors before they begin to read the next day's copy. One common type would be an "acoustical" one, hearing a word pronounced in a scriptorium where several scribes are writing what they hear from a manuscript being read. Please see the Appendix for more on spelling variants.

5. Word order variants - Jesus Christ instead of Christ Jesus.

6. Similar endings - A copyist saw a sentence, looked away to write and looked again and saw the same sentence ending but didn't realize he skipped a line. He was actually copying from a sentence, which

had a similar ending.

Note - This is not exactly the same but the following example will give one an idea what the text being copied would have primarily looked like until the 8th- 9th century A.D. when a Greek cursive, in lower case letters called Minuscule, began to be the popular and predominate hand for copying Greek manuscripts of all kinds, Biblical and non-Biblical alike. There is evidence of the Greek Minuscule writing as early as the 6th century A.D., see YouTube video from "Text and Canon Institute": "Clark Bates on the Origin of Greek Minuscule" 1:03:50. The example below has all caps with no punctuation, no verse numbers or breaks, no chapter breaks. A Greek manuscript with all caps like the example below is called a Majuscule. This example is with English words so that many more people (English is spoken around the world) using this tool will understand how easy it would have been for a person copying a manuscript to make an error, quite unintentionally if copying letter for letter. The Greek letter Omicron- O has no line through it, but when copying a Greek manuscript that was written on papyrus it can look like or be mistaken for the letter Theta, example: Theta (Θ). It could be difficult to distinguish because papyrus was made from pressed and dried and polished leaves, 1 layer running one way and another layer running crossways, which had lines or veins running through them (this is just a simple description). Beginning in the 4th century other materials, such as parchment and vellum-which was a higher quality of parchment, were used to write on. Parchment is made of sheep, goat, and calf skins (especially younger animals).

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7. Piety - Out of reverence sometimes a copyist would add, for example, the words Lord and Christ to the name Jesus. The manuscript being copied said Jesus and the new copy now says Lord Jesus Christ in the same verse. This changes nothing essentially because all of the doctrines teaching that Jesus is Lord and/or Christ are contained in many other verses throughout the earlier manuscripts. The shorter readings of a variant in a verse are usually in the older manuscripts according to every textual scholar of the Greek New Testament that this writer has investigated. Some, now, according to the CBGM, say it is not as cut and dry, some shorter readings are in later manuscripts and some longer ones are in the older manuscripts. Greek scholars of the New Testament want to know what the authors of the original text actually said and sometimes they simply said Jesus.

8. Sometimes a copy would have a word noted in the margin, maybe the previous copyist missed it when copying or put it there as a variant he corrected. The new copy now ends up containing the word because the copyist thought it was put there, having been missed.

9. Harmonization - An example of this would be as follows: Ephesians 1:2 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Colossians 1:2 "...Grace to you and peace from God our Father." A later scribe would add "and the Lord Jesus Christ" to Colossians 1:2 in order to harmonize the statement, perhaps because it was a phrase the scribes were accustomed to quoting, making it say the same thing. There would be some intentional and unintentional variants, but again, no new doctrines/teachings and none removed.

10. Lighting, eyesight, etc. - Centuries ago there were no reading glasses or light bulbs. Men had to

copy by candlelight or daylight. They had a limited amount of years for being able to copy before their sight would fail them. To make matters worse, before the 4th century, papyrus was used to copy on and this could be difficult to copy even with good eyesight.

These are just some of the types of variants and/or causes of variants found in the vast majority of the 400,000 - 500,000, not including spelling variants (see appendix), estimated to be in the Greek manuscripts. We are not expert scholars in this discipline of Textual Criticism of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. We have to investigate this discipline just as anyone else would, just as professional scholars have to. This writer has, however, been studying this discipline for some years now and we are trying to point believers to the more complete scholarship about the subject, then, any believer that desires to know more, can do so. We will provide one such expert scholar who is prominent in our present time, Dr. Daniel B. Wallace, mentioned above. He will discuss these and other types of variants as well as the transmission of the text. We would also recommend books on this subject by a few of the prominent Greek New Testament scholars who are often quoted by other prominent Greek New Testament scholars, 2 have departed to be with the Lord and 2 are still with us: Bruce Metzger, A.T. Robertson, Chrys C. Caragounis (his book is mentioned in the appendix) and Dr. Philemon Zachariou (his book is mentioned in the appendix) there are many others one can find and learn from.

Dr. Daniel Wallace is an expert we would recommend everyone to find on *You Tube* and search for the video called *Daniel Wallace: "The Basics of New Testament Textual Criticism"* bearing in mind, however, some data adjustments like the ones mentioned in this tool that he has made since 2020 after the publication of "Myths and Mistakes..." mentioned above. Dr. Wallace gives a clear explanation of "basic" textual criticism principles including all this tool has mentioned and more, such as the internal and external evidence explanation, including examples of variant passages, etc.

Dr. Wallace is also the founder of *The Center for the Study of the New Testament Manuscripts or CSNTM*. Their goal is to digitize every Greek manuscript in the world, some 2.5 million pages, approximately. Along the way they have discovered many new manuscripts and on their website, they make all of their discoveries and digitized work available. We have not researched their website fully as of the present time. We are primarily concerned with textual criticism of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament for this *Toolbox for the Body of Christ*.

Another prominent Greek New Testament scholar is Dr. James White. Before we mention more on James White, we must make something very clear. Dr. White is what is termed Calvinist. For anyone who is not familiar with this term, it means they believe what John Calvin (1509-1564) taught in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion" in 1536, right after the reformation early that century. Calvinists are sometimes called reformed Baptists, as James White is. Some claim that Calvin did not teach every doctrine Calvinism holds to, but one only needs to read "Institutes of the Christian Religion" written by John Calvin to see for oneself exactly what he did write as this tool is not for the study of Calvin's teachings even though we have his books. Dr. White may or may not agree with everything Calvin teaches in his institutes, but, he is a staunch Calvinist.

Calvinism became known for the acrostic TULIP or the 5 points of Calvinism, however, in our tool called "Free Will", our refutation of Calvinism, we include 4 other teachings that have to be true for their 5 points called TULIP to even be possible (unofficially, I call it their "9 points-not 5 points called TULIP"). We point this out because we may be accused of being Calvinists by recommending one of Dr. White's books as well as the books and videos of many others associated with textual criticism of the New Testament manuscripts. Dr. Daniel Wallace is also a Calvinist. We are not Arminian either, many Christians believe that one is either a Calvinist or an Arminian. One will give a non sequitur (without reason) argument like the one applied to me on one occasion. A pastor once asked me if I was a Calvinist and when I said no, he said I must

be an Arminian. He assumed that if I was not one I was the other. His assumption did not follow logic. One may not be a Calvinist or an Arminian and anyone with a basic knowledge of both know that this is true.

We are members of the Body of Christ and we follow no sect. We are saved by grace through faith as Scripture clearly says for obtaining salvation, faith coming by hearing God's message about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, see our "Salvation" tool for more information. The message of repentance today is "God commands all people everywhere to repent" Acts 17:30. A turning "FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, FROM THE POWER OF SATAN TO GOD" (caps are ours), see Acts 26:14-18. The gospel of our salvation since the Holy Spirit was sent at Pentecost and all that ramifies upon believing the gospel is explained throughout the New Testament Epistles, which address the Body of Christ specifically, under grace not law.

Dr. White is a textual criticism scholar and has a superb book called *The King James Only Controversy*. By addressing this controversy with textual criticism, Dr. White dispels the King James Only sect's claims of thorough corruption of God's word by modern translations. This sect is a movement, which absolutely ignores most all of the facts of textual variants in their venerated translation first published in 1611. I personally have, and at times use, a facsimile of the 1611 while most people in this movement do not even have a 1611 King James translation, they have an edition of the 1769 Blayney revision. The letter to the reader written by the 1611 translators, which was in the front of the translation, or revision of the Bishop's Bible, disagrees with the movement at every point of attempted argumentation for KJV Onlyism. This is not a knock against the KJV, it is simply to point out the truth about what happens when some ignore the truth about textual criticism of the plethora of New Testament Greek manuscripts and the kinds of variants found in them that change NO DOCTRINES of the Christian Faith whatsoever. Every single claim King James onlyists have against the so-called modern translations could be said about the 1611 King James translation and the 1611 translators would agree and make it crystal clear in their letter to the reader. Anyone who is interested can search and easily find a copy of the translator's letter and read for his or her self what they actually say about the God breathed word and translations in general and about their task, specifically.

Something everyone listening to Dr. Daniel Wallace or Dr. James White can be assured of, at least by the writers of these tools for the *Toolbox for the Body of Christ*, is that they do not try to incorporate their theological beliefs in their teaching of this textual criticism except that they know that the members of the Body of Christ are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, as the Scriptures say clearly, although we would absolutely disagree and oppose their "when" and "how" one receives faith, regeneration, etc. In other words, Calvinistic New Testament textual critics do not try to create their own Greek text to accommodate their theological beliefs. They are consistently loyal to the principles of textual criticism of the Greek New Testament and Hebrew Old Testament, by all accounts, as any believing or unsaved, or nonbelieving (one who refuses to believe) scholar should be.

Dr. White does debate other believers concerning his beliefs in Calvinism. He is a superb and thorough Greek manuscript scholar, because even while he is giving all of this clear refutation of the King James only belief in his book, which he says may receive a bit of revision in the future because of the CBGM data, he remains focused on textual criticism information therein, even proving that we have in the modern text or translations a much clearer text of some doctrines than the King James translation (such as the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ) this is no knock against the KJV. He refutes their claims that the modern translations "have taken God out the Bible." Dr. White also explains about the printed manuscripts used by the translators of the 1611 King James translation including their eclecticism (making choices of a word or more from various manuscripts or printed Greek editions of the New Testament, which KJV onlyists are absolutely opposed to today) and what is contained in their letter to the reader, which today's King James translation leaves out and much, much, more. To my knowledge, no scholar of Textual Criticism of the New Testament Greek

manuscripts is “anti” KJV, or “liberal” (those who would try and completely remove a doctrine found in the Greek New Testament manuscripts/English translations besides the KJV) as is claimed by most KJV onlyists. Scholars of textual criticism today have available to them thousands of times more Greek manuscripts than Erasmus, Stephanus, or Beza had in the 16th century, or what the translators/revisers of the Bishop’s bible - 1611 KJV- had available to them. It is clear in the letter to the reader by the translators of the 1611 KJV that the 1611 KJV is, in fact, a “revision” of the Bishop’s Bible. We are not making light of the KJV. The KJV is a fine translation but contains variants, even variants that are in NO extant Greek manuscripts whatever.

Dr. White lectures about his book and one who is interested can find other videos to that effect. We only recommend his videos on textual criticism. We adamantly oppose his Calvinistic/reformed teachings/doctrines. To reiterate, there are many scholars teaching on the manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, covering most all points germane to textual criticism of the Greek New Testament manuscripts and one simply needs to do basic research to find them.

This writer has listened to lecture after lecture and I possess more than a dozen books by some of the most well-known New Testament textual critical scholars quoted today and the last hundred years or more. I have listened to many debates by textual scholars verses cults, atheists, Islamists, etc. and I am just trying to point believers, to reiterate, to this discipline for being assured of the “reliability” of the English translations, those that follow or strictly adhere to the Greek New Testament tradition used for English translations. For those from other countries, speaking other languages, there are other scholars of the same qualifications concerning the Old and New Testament, Hebrew and Greek, textual criticism available on line.

Anyone though, can translate any tool on this website for anyone or any group he or she may know, who speaks a language other than English, who thinks these tools are helpful, at any time, for free. No one has permission, though, to change any word in meaning, concerning “doctrine”/ “teachings” in any of the tools in this toolbox when translating. Also, most all digital devices: cell phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc., have translation apps available to them.

So, again, this tool is only to bring attention to textual criticism of Biblical manuscripts, mainly the Greek New Testament manuscripts as they are where most attacks are leveled by the enemies of God’s breathed words, by all accounts. Textual criticism of the New Testament manuscripts (and the Old Testament manuscripts) brings about understanding of our modern translations and reliability in them, which obviously becomes more important with each passing year. Not only do Christian Congregations/denominational distinctions disagree on even fundamental doctrines, including how one obtains salvation, but increasingly they even disagree on the reliability of English translations and differ on the reliability of the actual Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that underlie our translations, which actually add or remove NO doctrines at all. The fact of variants within every manuscript, regardless of how insignificant nearly all of them are, does indeed give fodder to those who are enemies of God’s breathed words. The child of God should be at least as informed as the enemy of God concerning the God breathed words as we live, die, and have our hope in them.

If one wants to hear scholarly instruction on the reliability of the Hebrew Old Testament we recommend at least 2 YouTube videos and an archive where those 2 and others will be found concerning textual criticism of the Old and New Testament manuscripts. “Listening to the Dead Sea Scrolls”- Dr. Anthony Ferguson 45:54 and Dr. Peter Gentry “Chaos Theory and the Text of the Old Testament”-1:05:09. These men spoke at a conference put on by “Text and Canon Institute” Phoenix Seminary. One can go to “Text and Canon Institute Archives-Phoenix Seminary” whose “... mission of the Institute is to encourage research and publication of scholarly work on the history of the canon and the text of the Bible (1) by fostering and supporting scholarly research, academic colloquia, conferences, and professional presentations on Biblical

and related ancient texts,..."

Also, debates, lectures, YouTube videos, websites like this one and books on the New Testament Greek manuscripts as they are where the main battles are fought or accusations are leveled and or defended concerning whether or not the Hebrew Old Testament or Greek New Testament manuscripts contain corruptions (variants or errors), the characterization of them and whether they produce an incoherent and totally corrupted text or not. To reiterate, such resources are primarily Christian Greek New Testament textual criticism scholars verses atheists, cults, liberal theologians, Muslims, etc.

Not all modern translations are good translations though, as some are very liberal. One example of an English Bible that clearly attempts to remove an actual doctrine/teaching, as mentioned above, is the Bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses, the NWT (New World translation). They tried to utterly remove the Deity of Jesus Christ in the New Testament altogether by altering the Greek text in many verses, even adding words to the text, or intentionally mistranslating a word or words altogether. They were unsuccessful per the Holy Spirit no doubt, as there are several verses that they actually failed to alter where Jesus is called God, can do only what God can do, fulfills Old testament prophecies that describe him as God or claims out right to be God, for instance: "Alpha and Omega", etc. Their own "Kingdom Interlinear", which they no longer print, clearly demonstrates such changes. We can recommend the NIV, NASB, ESV, NRSV, NET, KJV, NKJV just to name a few that most are familiar with. There are many more versions that are fine translations in English and excellent Hebrew-English and Greek-English Interlinears are available for purchase, or can be read for free on-line. These are very helpful even to one who has not studied Greek, especially New Testament Greek. Please see the appendix for more about the character of the history of the Greek language and especially, some information concerning spelling variants.

Appendix

Spelling Errors

The average believer is probably, completely, unaware of the fact that there is a major disagreement or great division among the members of the Body of Christ, as well as those who may not be a Christian, concerning the pronunciation of Biblical Greek by those who endeavor to study Greek, be it ancient manuscripts, inscriptions on stone, pottery, artifacts from as early as the 16th century B.C. in linear B or present day Greek or anytime in between. Modern Greek today, since 1976, is officially named “Neo Hellenic” koine or “Common New Greek”.

Why do we bring this up?

Is it really that important for understanding textual criticism of the Greek New Testament? Isn't the focus on variants between manuscripts and discerning what was actually sent out by the authors of the books in the New Testament?

Yes, and it is also important to remember that spelling variants are not included in the 400,000-500,000 number of variants given above that are, so far, estimated to be among the Greek New Testament manuscripts. In the future we may be informed that that number is even higher if one reads “Myths and Mistakes”.

The issue with pronunciation is that there are two completely different types of pronunciation: “Historical Greek Pronunciation” or “HGP” and “Erasmian” according to Greek scholars who use and or teach HGP. Many of the spelling variants in Greek New Testament manuscripts can, according to the HGP, be explained with vowels, or rather, vowel sounds. Some of the vowels share the same acoustical sound and can be ignorantly, or accidentally, interchanged, one vowel with another, within HGP. We will not endeavor, in this tool, to explain the Phonology (the study of the sound system of a language) of the Greek letters, or double vowel sounds, or consonants, or double consonant sounds, etc. Nor will we give Phonological definitions of Orthophonetic, Isochronous, Phonetic, Phoneme, Allophone, Grapheme, Graph, Allograph, or Sound. We will, however, refer the reader to 2 linguists of Greek who will give these definitions and explain how they matter concerning pronunciation of Greek.

The first scholar is of the highest order and we recommend his book for the believer who has studied Greek to some degree and also desires to dive deep into the most serious research of the history of the Greek language while, hopefully, continuing to learn to speak the language, which is “... the oldest European language still in use, being continuously documented in writing for 3,500 years.” (C. C. Caragounis-pg. 2, “Development of Greek and the New Testament”).

He is Chrys C. Caragounis, and his book is entitled: “The Development of Greek and the New Testament” – ‘Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission.’ He is absolutely thorough in this more than 700 page book and includes clear examples of arguments for HGP and against Erasmian pronunciation including how Erasmian came about from the Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, a Catholic priest, in 1528. While C. C. Caragounis is a linguist, he is also a native Greek speaker. He does not

use HGP because he is a native Greek, he instantiates that HGP is correct through historical evidence. This book is, in our opinion, the place to begin.

For those who would like to know about the history of the Greek language and essentially the same kind of information about these two pronunciations, whether one does or does not study Greek or pronunciation of Greek, and are probably not anxious therefore to study deeply over the very technical book by C.C. Caragounis, we would recommend the second linguist and teacher of Greek and English, who is also a native Greek speaker, Dr. Philemon Zachariou.

He has a book that contains about 95% of his 1st volume of a 3 volume set for teaching Greek that also addresses reading and pronunciation of Greek, including historical evidence of authentic sounds. This 169 page paperback book is entitled: "READING AND PRONOUNCING Biblical Greek – Historical Pronunciation verses Erasmian". Dr. Zachariou and C.C. Caragounis give a thorough explanation of the Erasmian pronunciation with its own defenders and their argumentation as well as an explanation of the problems caused by this pronunciation, including many of the spelling variants found in the New Testament manuscript tradition. Also, many English words that come from Greek are transliterated, then pronounced with the Erasmian pronunciation.

Concerning spelling variants, Caragounis is quoted by Dr. Zachariou on page 23 of his above mentioned book. Dr. Zachariou begins, then quotes Caragounis on the number of spelling errors (which would be classified as variants in textual criticism) found in papyrus 66 from c.200 A.D.: *"There are thus no spelling errors of the type seen in the Hellenistic papyri that are not seen in copies of the NT MSS. To show the frequency of orthographical errors in the NT MSS, Caragounis lists 492 errors found in one MS alone, P. Bodmer II (Papyrus 66), which dates to AD 200."* This number "492 errors" is found on page 498 in the book by Caragounis listed above. This is caused, it is explained, by certain interchangeable vowels having the same sound, and that the same spelling mistakes are found throughout the entire history of the Greek language. This writer, while revising this tool, has realized that those textual critical scholars using Erasmian pronunciation and giving examples of spelling errors, as far as my observations are concerned, never give examples of words that are written where the error between them concerns the interchanging of vowels. In other words, a word spelled using a certain vowel and the same word, in the same passage, in another manuscript, using a different vowel in the same place in the same word pointing out that the variant concerns a single vowel or a digraph or double vowel with a single sound. An example of two vowels, that in HGP would sound the same acoustically and would account for the variant/error, and would be immediately recognized by one that was more educated in Greek, including vocabulary and grammar. Erasmian speakers are also well known for claiming that so many spelling errors are because there was no real *"standardized spelling"*, this is not so according to Chrys C. Caragounis and Dr. Philemon Zachariou in their books mentioned in this tool. Remember, the Greek 24 letter alphabet was established officially in 403 B.C. It has been the same 24 letters through every conceivable period of Greek History since 403 B.C.

There are many other problems caused by Erasmian pronunciation that even have to do with the true richness and fuller clarity that this most precise and flexible language gives upon proper translation. To reiterate, No Doctrines in God's breathed out words are removed or changed at all.

Scratching The Surface of God's Plan (a skeletal listing)

God has a plan: He created the earthly man, the earthly man transgressed His command as mentioned above, Eve sinned first, then Adam ate the fruit and transgressed the command of God, God would and did send-Jesus the anointed man (heavenly Adam), God the son emptied himself and put on that heavenly body, being sent to the chosen Nation Israel alone (details about the chosen Nation in the Old Testament), Jesus was born of a woman born under the law of Moses, the Nation Israel being under laws for their righteousness per Deut. 6:25, Jesus being Israel's redeemer, also- an earthly people just like the nations, Jesus told John the immerser (Baptist) that all righteousness had to be fulfilled (remember Deut. 6:25), Jesus was rejected and murdered/sacrificed, his blood being the blood of an entirely new covenant, died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried, was raised from the dead on the third day according to the scriptures, was seen by more than 500 witnesses, Jesus ascended, sent the Holy Spirit, the New Covenant is in place beginning with a heavenly people who are those who believe the different gospel than the one found in the Gospels- "The kingdom of Heaven/kingdom of God is near" NOW, since the Holy Spirit was sent: God commands all people everywhere to repent, the Gospel is: Jesus "died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried, was raised from the dead on the third day according the scriptures..." see 1 Cor. 15:1-11, the Epistles given to and specifically addressing the Body of the anointed (Christ-an English transliteration of the Greek word Xpistos meaning anointed), which explain how one is now forgiven of sins and saved from God's wrath and all that ramifies after believing in Jesus for that forgiveness and salvation, etc., prior to God's wrath coming on a set day- the 70th week of the 70 weeks of years determined on Daniel's people, then Jesus returns to earth for some national judgments, then Jesus reigns for 1,000 years on earth, then more judgment and finally a New Heavens and New Earth when God dwells with mankind on Earth, etc.

The above listing is just scratching the surface of this most intricate plan of God, like looking through a key hole, including its beginning to its fulfillment inspite of the literal billions of peoples who have the ability to either follow God's will or run contrary to it, from Genesis to Revelation. God's plan is given in the Hebrew and Greek, Old and New Testaments. We are to rightly divide/correctly handle the God breathed words given to us and we need to KNOW that we have a proper translation from the Greek New Testament manuscripts, beginning with, and in spite of, the hundreds of thousands of variations between the tens of thousands of manuscripts that still exist, especially since those discovered over the last 150-180 years, of which most were not known about in 1516 when Erasmus published his first printed edition of his Greek New Testament. English Bibles began to be produced from printed Greek New Testaments along with Greek manuscripts in the 16th century. Some men were executed/murdered for their English translations, Tyndale for example, just to name one.

It is important for the Body of Christ to be aware of all variants in the New Testament, at least their existence should be available to whomever is interested, even if easily resolved. However, no believer in Jesus, our Lord, need be unsettled or shaken in his or her faith because of textual variants. Nothing on earth compares with the "God breathed" words given to mankind in the Hebrew (with some Aramaic) or Greek Old Testament, or the Greek New Testament manuscripts. God's breathed words and the facts concerning their transmission through the centuries are the best defense against the enemies of God. The Greek New Testament today is absolutely reliable, and easily accessed by all of mankind. It is translated into many languages today. God's plan never changes and his word accomplishes his will (see Isaiah 55:11). Those who do not possess a Bible translation in their own tongue, but want to know about God, will be able to speak to someone who does and the Holy Spirit of God will see that it is possible for them to go to someone to find out what God's breathed words are. This is consistent with the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts where the Holy Spirit is directing the word of God, sending Paul, Barnabas, Peter, Philip and other

disciples of the Lord/believers to where the gospel and everything that ramifies upon belief of the Gospel needed to go. The Holy Spirit, since He was first sent, dwells in every single believer and will undoubtedly get the gospel of our salvation to anyone at any place, anywhere around the world; he is God. Please read Acts 17:16-32.