

8. Has the Bible been changed?



**A page from the “Forty-two line”
Gutenberg Bible. 1455 AD**

manuscript.

The Bible is the most published book in the history of the world. The books of the Bible are from in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Our English Bible is a translation originally derived from these languages. The story of this process of translation is a mystery to many who search the Bible. By clearing up the confusion of the history of the Bible, we are able to remove obstacles to faith. The Bible spread throughout the earth starts with the spread of Christianity.

As Christianity spread from Jerusalem, to Asia, Africa, and Europe there was a need to translate the scriptures into the native tongues. Each translation is a story in itself. For example, the creation of the Cyrillic alphabet (Slavic Alphabet) was a result of the missionary activities of two brothers St. Methodius and St. Cyril (827 AD). Who had the desire to reach the Slavic peoples. An alphabet was created, so the Bible could be translated into their language. The result of their work still influences the world today.

The process of translation rests on the manuscript source. The question of “has the Bible changed?” is not based on a late date translation such as the English translation. A translation is only as good as the source

The manuscript source for both the Old and New Testaments needs to be examined before this question is answered. However, the importance of these manuscripts as the source of the translations is vital in understanding just how the Bible developed. To understand this dynamic link between manuscript and translations we can examine the history of the King James Bible (1611). Through the KJV is unique to England and English speaking countries, the problems in the history of its translation are not unique.

History of the King James Bible

The history of the King James Bible starts with the history of England. The first written record of England begins with the Roman conquest dating back to the time of Julius Caesar in 55 BC, recorded in his “Gallic War commentaries”. He describes his conquest of England with more than 800 ships. The Celts made peace with Caesar, and he left to manage Gaul (France). As Rome expanded north, England was incorporated into the Empire in 43 AD, under Claudius. The Romans invaded England with 40,000 soldiers. With the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Christianity also became the faith of England by the 3rd century with the missionary work.

The church was well enough established by the 4th century to send three British bishops—of Londinium (London), Eboracum (York), and Colonia Linum (Lincoln)—to the Council of Arles (in modern France) in 314. When the Romans withdrew from England in the 5th century to save the capital, Rome, from invading Germans, the Angles and Saxons invaded England. The Angles and Saxons were German tribes from Saxony; they became a united people with the Celts now known as the English. For the next 1000 years until the time of Henry VIII (1491-1547), England was part of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church dominated both the political and religious spheres of nations.

One of the main issues was the role of the laity and clergy. The Roman language, Latin, became the language of the clergy. Most of the laity could not read or understand Latin. The

Bible, the Latin Vulgate, first translated in the 4th century by Jerome from the Septuagint and then later from the Hebrew was inaccessible to English speaking people.

To remedy the problem of accessibility, John Wycliffe (1320-84) an Oxford scholar, began to translate parts of the Bible into English. Wycliffe also challenged Roman doctrines, such as transubstantiation and the role of the church in national politics. He completed the translation of the New Testament in 1380. Four years after his death the Old Testament translation was also completed by John Purvey (1354-1428), Wycliffe's secretary. The basis Wycliffe's translation was the *Latin Vulgate*, translated from the Hebrew and Greek.

In 1455, Johannes Gutenberg invented a printing press using movable type. Gutenberg's first work was the printing of the Bible, a Latin translation that became known as the Forty-Two-line Bible, because there were 42 lines in a column. Gutenberg's invention solved a major problem for scripture transmission. With the printing press, human error in text copying was virtually eliminated. In addition, copies could be made much quicker and less expensive than hand copies, making books and Bibles available to the masses.

William Tyndale, a Catholic priest, (1492-1536) took on the task of establishing an English translation of the Bible based on the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek text. The first Hebrew Bible was published in 1488, along with the Hebrew Lexicon in 1506. Tyndale planned to use these for an English translation of the scripture. His plans were opposed the Church of Rome. In the dispute someone yelled to Tyndale, "Better without God's Law than without the Pope's" Tyndale's famous reply followed,

"I defy the Pope and all his laws; if God spares my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost."

Efforts to publish the Bible were prevented the Roman Church so Tyndale left for Colone, and later Worms Germany. In Worms he completed two editions and had them smuggled to England (1525). The Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall purchased as many copies as possible and had them burned. Of the 18,000 copies smuggled only two remain. Tyndale was later found guilty of heresy, removed from his priestly office and handed over to secular powers for execution in August 1536. Burning at the stake, Tyndale cried, "Lord open the King of England's eyes". This statement would seem prophetic as Tyndale's version of the New Testament provided the basis for all successive versions between his day and ours. The King James Version is practically a fifth revision of Tyndale's revision.

The atmosphere changed in England as Rome and Henry the VIII came into conflict. Miles Coverdale, Tyndale's assistant and proofreader was given permission to publish a revised version of Tyndale's work. This work became known as the "Great Bible" because of its huge size. The "*Great Bible*" was authorized for use in 1538 in the Church of England.

When Mary Tudor (1553-1538) became Queen of England, she planned to restore Catholicism to England and Protestants were persecuted. Many fled to John Calvin's Geneva, where another translation of the English Bible was prepared, the *Geneva Bible*. Its translation (1557, 1560) was done under the direction of William Coverdale and John Knox and influenced by John Calvin. This Bible became popular in England after Mary Tudor was executed and Protestant persecution stopped. The popularity of the Geneva Bible with Protestants caused the *Great Bible's* revision. This revision later became known as the *Bishop's Bible*¹ (1568).

In 1604, the Puritan Party made a petition to King James I (1603-1625) called the Millenary Petition, about grievances between the Puritans and the English Church. John Reynolds, the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford raised the question of having an authorized version of the English Bible that would be acceptable to all parties. This Bible was to replace both the Bishop's Bible and the Geneva Bible as the English translation. The purpose of this new translation was to have a Bible that could be read in church services and at home.

Six companies of men totaling 54 were assigned with only 47 actually working on the revision of the Bible. Each committee had a set of instructions. All other English translations were to be consulted as well as the Hebrew and Greek Texts but the *Bishops Bible* was to be used as the base in translation. Their finished work is known as the King James Authorized Bible.

¹ Called the Bishop's Bible because most of the translators with Bishops.

The Hebrew Text used was second edition of the Rabbinic Bible prepared by Jacob ben Chayim published by Bromberg (1524-1525). The Hebrew manuscript source for the Hebrew text is known as the Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Manuscript (B19a) dated to 1008 AD. This is a *Masoretic* manuscript based on the ben Asher text.

The New Testament based on the Greek New Testament known as the Textus Receptus or Received Text (1557). Published in 1557 the fourth edition became the dominant Greek text in England. Stephanous Greek was used in both the Geneva Bible (1557, 1560) and the King James Bible (1611). The royal printer of Paris, Robert Estienne (Latinized as Stephanus) referenced 15 manuscripts in his critical apparatus. The manuscripts used were mainly later manuscripts of the Byzantine text type.

To understand reliability of the Bible in English, we need to examine the process known as *manuscript transmission*.

Manuscript Transmission

Autograph:

Writings produced under the authority of an apostle or prophet, whether or not through a scribe or in several editions.²

Manuscript:

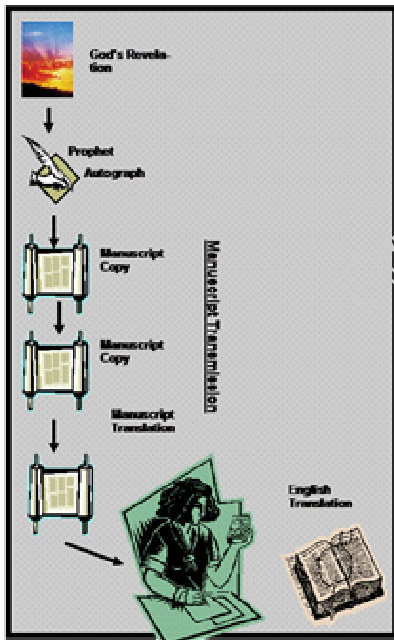
A handwritten literary composition rather than a printed copy.³

Manuscript Transmission:

Is the process of copying manuscripts over time from the original manuscript, autograph. After the revelation, the life of the document, limited by several factors, is transmitted over time.

1. The Environment: Humidity, amount of use, exposure to the outside, etc.
2. Hostile Forces: Those opposed to the message would often try to destroy the documents, examples; Antiochus Epiphanies (165 BC), Diocletian (300 AD)

3. Time: The lifespan of a document was limited by its material. Papyrus was inexpensive and available but had the shortest life. Leather was more durable but over time would deteriorate. Stone and clay are the most resistant to time.



History of Old Testament Manuscript Transmission.

The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible was produced from 1450 BC to 425 BC. The earliest known printing of the Hebrew text was in Soncino, Italy in 1488 AD. Prior to the printing press, the transmission of the text was done entirely by hand, "Manuscript". This means that the oldest parts of the Bible were transmitted by hand for 2800 years. The earliest books of the Old Testament were transmitted by hand for 1900 years. The transmission of the Hebrew "Canon" can be organized into five time-periods.

1. Textual Transmission Before 300 BC

From the hand of the prophet to the parchment God's word was written as revealed. When the words of the "Prophet" passed the "test of a prophet", his writings were added to the "Canon" as inspired writings. His words would become scripture, revealed writings. With time, the autograph would wear out. Copies would be made of the autograph for distribution and teaching. In time, the copies of the autographs, manuscripts, would also wear out, these manuscripts were sacred, and were placed in cemeteries or burned. The original writings of the prophet would be passed down from generation to generation. A major function of the scribe was to make copies of manuscripts.

² A General Introduction to the Bible, Geisler, Norman, Glossary, Moody Press, 1986

³ *ibid*

In the 7th century BC, there was a revival in Judea under the reign of Josiah (637-608 BC), (2 Kings 22:8)

⁸Then Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD."

This revival was short lived, and Judah was punished its apostasy with Babylonian captivity. The Babylonians conquered Jerusalem three times in 18 years, 605, 597 and 587 BC. Finally, in 587 BC the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. This would create two centers of manuscript transmission, Babylon and Egypt.

Egypt

Jeremiah was taken captive to Egypt by Jews refusing to submit to Babylonian captivity. Egypt became a center for Jewish writing and transmission following the destruction of Jerusalem. Some have theorized the Falashi Jews⁴, are descendents of the Jews who fled Babylonian captivity. This exodus from Jerusalem is described in Jeremiah, chapters 41-44. After the conquest of Persia, by Alexander the Great 330 BC, Alexandria Egypt, became a major center for Biblical manuscript transmission. From Alexandria, the Septuagint would be created for Greek speaking Jews. The Elephantine Papyrus dated to 500-400 BC document their existence 583 miles south of Cairo.

Babylon

Daniel and Ezekiel were force to make their home in Babylon in 605, 597 BC, respectfully. When the Persians defeated the Babylonians, the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem. Babylon remained a center for Jewish writing and scriptural transmission. Aramaic became the dominate language of the land, and most Jews spoke and wrote Aramaic. It is at this point, the square Pale-Hebrew script was replaced. During the 4th century BC, the Aramaic or "Square script" replaced the Phoenician or (Paleo-Hebrew) script as the standard alphabet in Palestine. Aramaic was the common language in use during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Jesus indicates this in Matthew 5:18 when He refers to the yod as the smallest letter of the Law verifying the use of Aramaic script in Palestine in the first century AD.

According to two Maccabees Nehemiah founded a library, and Judas Maccabeus continued the practice of Nehemiah.

The same things are reported in the records and in the memories of Nehemiah, and also that he founded a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings. In the same way, Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war which had come upon us, and they are in our possession. 2 Maccabees 2:13-14.

This period of transmission involved individual scrolls. They were made of leather or papyrus. The standard size was 10 inches by 30 feet. Long enough to accommodate the text of Isaiah, Old Testament books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles were all considered single books by the Jews.

Consonantal spelling was another aspect of this transmission period. However, in the nine to 8th century BC helping consonants were introduced they were known as "Matres lectionis". The vowel sounding or "pointing" would develop at a later period.

The traditional view of this period has been the idea of "Continuous writing" or writing without spaces between words. However, scrolls found at Qumran clearly show words were separated.

⁴ Jews gathered from Ethiopia in 1980, 1981.

These updates in the transmission process helped transmit the words to succeeding generations.

2. 300 BC to 135 AD

The victory of the Macabees over the Selucidis who tried to destroy the manuscripts preserved the documents for future transmission. First Maccabees records the attempt by Antiochus to destroy the scriptures.

The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of anyone, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death. I Maccabees 1:56-57

A library in Jerusalem established by Judas Maccabeus as mentioned above was continued after the tradition of Nehemiah. During this period of time the party of the Pharisees would form, from them would come the movement known as *Rabbinical Judaism*⁵. The presence of Jewish populations in Babylon (Descendents of Captivity), Palestine (Jews who returned) and Alexandria (Jews who settled in Egypt) caused three distinct points of canon transmission during this time.

The Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD caused the focus of worship to be centered on learning and scripture reading rather than Temple worship. The Council of Jamnia affirmed the existing Jewish canon. In 135 AD the bar Kochba rebellion led to the scattering of Jews from Jerusalem by the Romans. Babylon and Alexandria remained centers for scripture transmission. This would begin the era of Rabbinical Judaism.

The Dead Sea scrolls revealed the extent of manuscript transmission. The scrolls discovered showed the formation of distinct versions of the Hebrew manuscripts. "Canon" manuscripts were copies of copies. So slight variations in spelling and wording were transmitted to their copies, and many of the fragments and scrolls closely parallel the Masoretic text while others parallel the Septuagint (The Greek translation, LXX). This showed a dual development from the earlier period.

*The Alexandrian Recension*¹. These Hebrew manuscripts were the basis of the Septuagint in Alexandria Egypt. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

The Palestine/Babylonian Recension These Hebrew manuscripts were the basis of the Masoretic text⁶. The basis of most Old Testament translations today. This could be traced to Ezra and Nehemiah period of activity. By 135 AD. The two variations in text type were replaced with a single standard. This would later form into the Masoretic text.

3. 135 AD to 1000 AD

With the standardization of the Hebrew text within the scribal circles. The next period could be divided into two sections. The transmission by Rabbis from 135 A.D. to 500 A.D. and the textual activities of the Masoretes from 500 to 1000 A.D.

⁵ Rabbinical Judaism, the dominate form of Judaism following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD that centered around Rabbinic (Rabbis) teachings and traditions. The Talmudic study is a central part of Rabbinical learning and understanding.

⁶

135 to 500 A.D.

This can be called the age of the Talmud. These heirs of the Pharisaical Judaism played a central role in the New Testament. After the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of Jews from Palestine, Jewish spiritual life focused on scripture and synagogue. The Hebrew text was probably broken down into verses at this time as well as paragraphs.

Chapter divisions would come later and would be of Christian origin in the time of Salomon ben Ishmael (1330 AD). Liturgical divisions were made in the Torah. In Babylon, the Torah would be read once a year in synagogues. So the Torah was divided into 54 "Parashoth" In Palestine the Torah was read every 3 years and was divided into 452 "Sedarim".

500 to 1000 A.D.

This transmission time is the Masoretic "Tradition" period with activity being carried out in Palestine and Babylon. These scribes meticulously copied and codified the scriptures. With the triumph of Christianity in Palestine large numbers of textual scholars emigrated to Babylon in the 2nd century AD.

The conquest of Islam in Palestine in 638 AD led to a revival Jewish textual work on the western shore of Galilee in the town of Tiberias. Jewish scribal scholars migrated back from the Babylonian regions. It would be the work of these Tiberian Masorets that would be reflected in the future copies of the Old Testament.

There were two schools of the Masorets The Western (Tiberian tradition) and the Eastern (Babylonian tradition). The contribution of the Tiberian Masoretetes needs to be described in detail. They created an overall system to ensure the accurate understanding of the Old Testament text. They had 4 major contributions:

"Pointing" symbols to graphically represent the vowel tradition. They conserved the oral tradition. Written symbols to record the accentual character of the Hebrew text.



Specialized notes to accompany the text of the Old Testament.

a. Masorah Parva: (Small Masorah) notes on the side about word use statistics b. Masorah Magna:(Large Masorah) notes recorded on the top and bottom margin. More extensive information than the parvah.

c. Masorah finalis:(Final Masorah) notes found at the end of biblical books. Contains special information about number of words in the book, middle word and middle consonant.

4. Masoretic works with the goal to correct transmission of the Old Testament text.

Ben Asher & Ben Naphtali

These two individuals represented the last of the two Tiberian Masorete families. Their work differed only slightly. The differences were differences in detail and not substance. Differences were mainly in spelling, word division and vocalization. The surviving Masoretic codex's bear their traditions.

4. 1000 AD to 1450 AD

Following 1000 AD the text was fixed with the work of the Masoretes. But the texts could be broken down to two time periods.

Before 1100 AD

Allepo Codex 925 AD Masorah written by Ben Asher.

Leningrad Codex (L) 1008 AD contains all the Old Testament. Copied in Old Cairo by Samuel ben Jacob in 1008 AD, it represents one of the oldest manuscripts of the complete Hebrew Bible.

British Museum Codex (B) 925 AD contains most of the Torah.

Cairo Codex of the Prophets (C) 896 AD written by Moses ben Asher contains the text of all the prophets.

Sassoon 1053 (S1) 10 Century Contains the whole Old Testament except for a few missing pages.

Sassoon 507 (S) 10th Century Most of the Torah, written after Ben Naphtali tradition.

Petersburg Codex of the Prophets (P) 916 AD Contains the text of the later prophets along with Masorah parva and Magna notes.

After 1100 AD

There are more than 3000 extant

Hebrew manuscripts that reflect the Tiberian tradition and were written in the 12 century and later. The close of this period is marked by the invention of the printing press. The Masoretic tradition was transmitted with very little change to the medieval Jewish manuscripts.



The Leningrad Codex, 1008 AD, The Hebrew Manuscript

5. 1450 AD to Present

The Printed Hebrew Bible was the last phase of the Jewish transmission of text. The first complete printed Hebrew Bible was printed in Soncino 1488. By the 16th century printed bibles replaced manuscripts in most of Europe.

A major development was the First Rabbinic Bible edited by Felix Pratensis and published by Daniel Bromberg in (1516-17). Even greater was the 2nd Rabbinic Bible that was edited by Jacob ben Hayyim and printed by Daniel Bromberg (1524-1525 AD). The 2nd edition came complete with notes, Aramaic Targums and Jewish commentaries by outstanding rabbis. It became known as the "Received Edition". The 2nd edition became the basis of the Kittel Bible.

The King James Bible used the 2nd Rabbinic Bible as the source for the Old Testament.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Because of the Jewish practice of copying the manuscript and burying or burning the source manuscript that became unusable with age. Very few manuscripts survived earlier than the 10th century AD.



Qumran caves near the Dead Sea

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls changed everything. Portions or entire manuscripts of every book of the Hebrew canon were found except for the book of Ester. Many being 1000 years older than existing manuscripts.

The transmission of the Hebrew canon could finally be tested. Quoting from Gleason Archer book "Survey of the Old Testament".

in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (980 AD), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. They do not affect the message of revelation in the slightest."

"Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered



Isaiah Scroll discovered at the Dead Sea caves

History of New Testament Manuscript Transmission.

The New Testament manuscripts compared to the Old Testament are closer to the date of writing and in greater number. In fact the number of NT manuscripts is more abundant than any other ancient document. The oldest existing manuscripts of classical Greek authors are more than 1000 years after their author's death.

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	No. of Copies
Homer	Iliad	800 BC	C. 400 BC	400 years	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 BC	C. 900 AD	1350 years	8
Thucydides	History	460-400 BC	900 AD	1300 years	8
Plato		400 BC	900 AD	1300 years	8
Demosthenes		300 BC	900 AD	1300 years	7
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 BC	900 AD	1000 years	10
Livy	History of Rome	59-17 AD	4 th Century (Partial), Mostly 10 th Century	400 years 1000 years	1 partial 19 copies

Tacitus	Annals	100 AD	1100 AD	1000 years	20
Pliny Secundus	Natural History	61-113 AD	850 AD	750 years	7
New Testament		50-100 AD	114 Fragments 200 (Books) 250 (Most NT) 325 (Complete NT)	50 years 100 years 150 years 225 years	5366

The number of ancient Greek classics is also limited. About 50 of Aeschylus, 100 of Sophocles, Only 1 each of the Greek Anthology and the Annals of Tacitus.

Of the New Testament there are almost 5000 Greek manuscripts of all or part of the Greek text. There are 2000 Greek lectionaries and 8000 Latin and 1000 manuscripts in other ancient versions.

The manuscripts include extensive parts of the NT copied hardly more than a century after the original. And 50 or more MSS (Manuscripts), including virtually 2 complete NT codices copied within 3 centuries after the NT books were originally written.

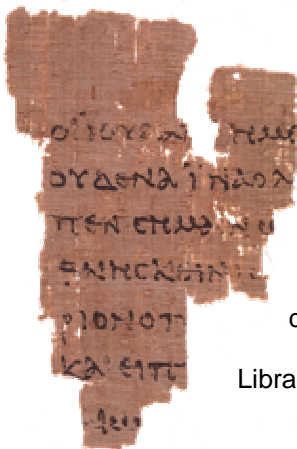
In addition, the writings of ancient church fathers in Greek, Latin and Syriac contain thousands of quotations from the NT. Indeed, the available materials for the text of the NT are so extensive that their adequate study is a complicated task, but with the result is to "Strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable "Word of God"

Sources of Evidence for the NT Text

Like the OT there are no existing copies of the autographs of the NT books. The early books were written on Papyrus rolls the accepted form of publication in the 1st century. The epistles were probably written on Papyrus sheets being more like private communication. The codex form of transmission later became the standard for the transmission of all NT books. No Papyrus rolls have been found of New Testament books.

New Testament Evidences

1. Copies of New Testament Manuscripts



The John Rylands Fragment (p.52) John 18:31-33 (117-138 A.D.)

The earliest known copy of any portion of the New Testament is from a papyrus codex (2.5 by 3.5 inches). It dates from the first half of the second century A.D. 117-138. (P.52) The papyrus is written on both sides and contains portions of five verses from the gospel of John (18:31-33,37-38). Because this fragment was found in Egypt a distance from the place of composition (Asia Minor) it demonstrates the chain of transmission. The fragment belongs to the John Rylands Library at Manchester, England

Chester Beatty Papyri (250 A.D.) (p.45,p.46,p.47) This important papyri

consists of three codices and contains most of the New Testament. (P.45, P.46, P.47). The first codex(P.45) has 30 leaves (pages) of papyrus codex. 2 from

Matthew, 2 from John, 6 from Mark, 7 from Luke and 13 from Acts. Originally there were 220 pages measuring 8x10 inches each. (P.46)The second codex has 86 leaves 11x6.5 inches. 104 pages of Paul's epistles. P.47 is made of 10 leaves from Revelation measuring 9.5 by 5.5 inches.

Bodmer Papyri (200 A.D.) (p.66,p.72,p.75) Dating from 200 A.D. or earlier the Bodmer collection of Papyri (P.66,P.72,P.75) contains 104 leaves. P.66 Contains the Gospel of John 1:1-6:11, 6:35-14:26, 14-21. P.72 has the earliest know copy of Jude, I Peter, and 2 Peter also contains other Canonical and apocryphal books. P.72 measures 6 x 5.75 inches. P.75 is 102 pages measuring 10.25 by 5.33 inches. Contains most of Luke and John dated between 175 and 225 AD. Earliest know copy of Luke. Very similar to the Codex Vaticanus.

Codex Sinaiticus (340 A.D.) (A) (01) Considered to the most important witness to the Greek text of the New Testament dated in the 4th century. Sinaiticus was found at St. Catherine's monastery at Mt. Sinai by Von Tischendorf (1815-1874). It was acquired for the Czar of Russia. Sinaiticus contains over 1/2 of the Old Testament (LXX) and all of the new except for Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11.. Also contains the Old Testament Apocrypha. Sinaiticus is written on 364.5 pages measuring 13.5 by 14 inches. The material is good vellum made from antelope skins. Purchased by the British government for \$500,000 in 1933.

Codex Vaticanus (325-350 A.D) (B) Vaticanus was written in the middle of the 4th century and was not know to textual scholars till 1475 when it was catalogued in the Vatican Library. For the next 400 years scholars were prohibited from studying it. Its includes most of the LXX version of the Old Testament and most of the New. It contains 759 leaves measuring 10 by 10.5 inches. Codex Vaticanus is owned by the Roman Catholic Church and is housed in the Vatican Library, Vatican City.

2. *Lectionaries:*

Lectionaries were the scripture readings for the church organized for each Saturday and Sunday for the year. 2000 Lectionary manuscripts exist dating from the 10th century and later.

3. *Versions:*

The NT was spread to different countries many who did not speak in the Greek language. The scriptures were translated into those languages as early as the 2nd century AD. Including Latin, Syriac and Coptic. We are able to compare the translations to the Greek manuscripts to look for variations.

4. *Patristic Quotations*

Using quotations from the early church fathers nearly the entire NT could be assembled from their writings and sermons.

Textual Criticism.

Because the NT like the OT was transmitted by hand there are bound to be errors in the transmission process. The process of "Textual criticism" is to assemble from the existing documents the closest possible writings to the original autograph.

Textual criticism of both the NT and OT involve a small portion of the writings. With 95% being unquestioned. In most cases the 5% have very little impact on what the meaning of the text actually says. By comparing existing manuscripts were get a more absolute view of the autograph. Errors in the transmission process are repeated in the copying of the manuscript.

Transmission errors in the OT and NT are the same in some aspects but differ in others.

The problems with transmission, OT & NT

Any time human hands are involved in the transmission process there are bound to errors. These are known as transmission errors.

The following are the most common.

- Confusion of Similar letters
- Transposition of Letters: Metathesis, a scribal error
- Incorrect Word Division
- Haplography "Writing only once what should have been written twice".
- Dittography: "Writing twice what should only have been written once"
- Confusion of Similar Sounding Words.
- Omission: Not writing a letter or number
- Inclusion: Including a marginal note that was not meant to be in the body of the writing.

The problems of transmission of the Hebrew Bible were noted by the Masorite scribes in the margins the manuscripts.

Conclusion

To answer the question first posed at the start of this paper. Did God's word change? No God word did not change. However, the paper the message was written on was wrinkled in the process of time and transmission. Which would bring the follow up question "Did the wrinkle destroy the message?" Here again the answer is NO. A crease in page does not destroy the text.

The integrity of the message in the Old Testament is validated by robust verification in both Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Septuagint and the Masoretic text validate the message. In the New Testament, the numerous manuscripts validate the New Testament, many within 100 years of the autographs, the witness of patristic writings and the translations into many languages within the first 400 years of Christianity.