

Considering Textual Variants

To Receive These (And Other) Free Bible Studies And Updates Via Email, Contact Mark Tabata @ 606-216-1757 (Text Message) Or hazardhomecoc@gmail.com (Email). This Pamphlet Is A Free Gift Of The Keavy church of Christ. We are located @ 371 Level Green Road Corbin KY 40701 (beside the Keavy Elementary School. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 61 Keavy KY 40737. You can also reach us by text message or phone call @ (606)-216-1757, or by email at keavychurchofChrist@outlook.com. Visit us online @ www.keavychurchofChrist.com. We assemble Sunday mornings at 10:00 for Bible Study, 11:00 (Morning Worship), 5:00 (Evening Worship), and Wednesday evenings @ 5:00 (Bible Study). Our Keavy Support Group for addicts and survivors of domestic violence meets every Tuesday evening @ 6:00. Please come be with us: you will be our honored and welcomed guest! Free Bible Studies And Updates Via Email, Contact Mark Tabata. Follow me on Substack: <http://substack.com/@marktabata>. Also please visit my author page: <http://amazon.com/author/marktabata>

It is written:

2 Timothy 2:15-Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Thousands of manuscripts testify to the integrity of our modern day text of the Holy Bible.

Over time, small changes crept into the manuscripts of the Bible. However, the majority of these “textual variants” were nothing more than simple scribal error. As Jones documents:

The overwhelming majority of these four hundred thousand supposed variations stem from differences in spelling, word order, or the relationships between nouns and definite articles. In other words, a copyist simply switched a couple of letters, misheard a word, or skipped a line of text. Such variants are readily recognizable and, in most cases, utterly unnoticeable in translations!...In the end, more than 99 percent of the four hundred thousand or so differences fall into this category of variants that can't even be seen in translations! (Timothy Paul Jones, *Conspiracies And The Cross, 1531-1540* (Kindle Edition); Lake Mary, Florida; FrontLine)

Let's take a look at some of the major textual variants.

Mark 16:9-20

Mark 16:9-20-“Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. **10** She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. **11** And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. **12** After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. **13** And they went and told it to

the rest, but they did not believe them either. **14** Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. **15** And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. **16** He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. **17** And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; **18** they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." **19** So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. **20** And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

Most Bible versions note that Mark 16:9-20 is not found in many of the ancient manuscripts of the Bible.

First, what are the facts about Mark 16:9-20?

The NKJV Thompson Study Bible has this excellent footnote at Mark 16:9:

"Verses 9-20 are bracketed in NU-Text as not original. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them."

To make it more clear, consider these words by Snapp:

"Some Bible-footnotes mention that 'some manuscripts' lack the passage, and that 'other manuscripts' contain the passage. Such footnotes tend to deceive their readers...Out of the over 1, 500 existing Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark, only two of them clearly bring the text to a close at the end of 16:8. All the others, unless they have undergone damage in chapter 16, include verses 9 to 20." (James Snapp, Jr., Authentic: The Case For Mark 16:9-20, 79-82 (Kindle Edition); no publisher cited)

Second, why is the passage missing from some of the earlier manuscripts? There may be several reasons, but the observations of Thomas B. Warren here are very enlightening:

Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Codex Vaticanus (B). These are two of the three oldest extant Uncial MSS and are the two referred to in the marginal note of the ASV on this passage. But B also lacks from 9:14 to the end of Hebrews, 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. So if one rejected everything which is lacking in Codex B,, these books would have to be omitted....Codex B has a blank space at the end of verse 8, indicating that something has been left out. This perhaps came about as the result of a leaf being broken off of the manuscript from which B was copied. This seems to furnish evidence that the manuscript from which B was copied contained Mark 16:9-20.

(Thomas B. Warren, Is Mark 16:9-20 Inspired? A Defense, 5)

So, there are good reasons why Mark 16:9-20 is not found in two of the early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament (I.e., damage to the scrolls that were being copied from kept the scribes from putting anything in the text, although they left a column in their manuscript to show that they knew something went there, although they weren't sure what).

Further, nearly every other manuscript of the Gospel of Mark contains Mark 16:9-20!!

Third, what are the evidences from the early versions of the Bible?

In his public debate with Baptist preacher Ballard on the subject of baptism, the subject of Mark 16:9-20 was carefully examined. Warren provided a relevant chart which shows that the earliest versions of the Bible demonstrate the text is authentic. The following information from that chart documents the textual evidence in favor of Mark 16:9-20:

Manuscripts That Have Mark 16:9-20: Washington; Alexandrian; Ephheremi; Bezae; Basiliensis; Tischendorfianus; Sangallensis; Monacenis; Cyprus

Versions (Translations Of Greek New Testament Into Other Languages-Many Of These Predate Most Greek New Testament Manuscripts): Peshitto; Curetonian; Coptic;

Sahidic; Tatian's Diatessaron; Vulgate; Gothic; Aethiopic; Jerusalem Syr; Philoxenian; Gregorian

Fourth, what about the evidence from the early church quotations of this passage? Bill Cooper has provided very fascinating material on these matters:

"

Papias alluded to Mk 16:18 in ca AD 100. How he might have achieved that feat if the verses had not been written and in circulation by his day is not explained. Likewise, Justin Martyr, writing in AD 151, directly quotes verse 20 of Mk 16. Irenaeus (ca AD 180) remarks on verse 19. Hippolytus, ca AD 200, quotes verses 17 and 18. In the Seventh Council of Carthage (AD 256), two of the verses were directly quoted, with none of the eighty-seven bishops present raising so much as an eyebrow. With truly delicious irony, the *Acta Pilati* (sometimes called the Gospel of Nicodemus), though a Gnostic work of the 3rd century, quotes verses 15- 18 of this chapter. The so-called Apostolic Constitutions of the same century quotes verses 15 and 16. Eusebius, ca AD 325, discusses favourably at some length the entire section of Mk 16:9- 20. Marinus, a contemporary and student of Eusebius, asks positive questions about the entire section. Aphraates 'the Persian' writes about verses 16- 18 in his First Homily of AD 337. Ambrose, writing ca AD 390, writes about verse 15 four times, verses 16- 18 three times, and verse 20 but once. Chrysostom, ca AD 400, refers to verse 9 and quotes 19- 20 directly. Jerome, in ca AD 400, is perfectly happy to

include the entire section in his own Vulgate translation of the New Testament. Augustine, at this time, writes repeatedly about, and quotes directly from this entire section. Victor of Antioch, ca AD 425, speaks most emphatically and at great length on these verses. A hundred years later, Hesychius of Jerusalem likewise writes at length on them; and all this is not to mention the Synopsis Scripturae Sanctae, ascribed to Athanasius, which also speaks at length on Mark 16:9- 20. 2 Much older than Sinaiticus or Vaticanus, by centuries in fact, are the following early translations and versions of Mark's Gospel, and they all contain 16:9- 20 precisely as we have them: the Peshitta; the Curetonian Syriac; the Recension of Thomas of Harkel; the Vetus Itala (Old Latin); the Gothic; and all the Egyptian versions. 3 What more can we possibly say? How on earth can it ever be claimed that Mark 16:9- 20 was added after Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, when so much written evidence from at least twenty- two more ancient witnesses than they stands to the contrary? It beggars belief. Whenever you read a modern edition of the Bible – in whichever version it might be – which tells you that the 'oldest manuscripts' do not attest to Mark 16:9- 20, then know that that is absolutely false. The oldest manuscripts tell exactly the opposite story, as all the above authorities testify. (Bill Cooper, *The Authenticity Of The New Testament-Part One: The Gospels*, 1418-1434 (Kindle Edition): Creation Science Movement)

There can be no doubt that Mark 16:9-20 belongs firmly in the text of Scripture.

I believe that Farstad hits the nail on the head as to why so many today want to excise this text from the Word of God:

“Frankly, one fears that some would like to be rid of the passage because of verses 16-18 on the doctrines of baptism and miracles.” (Arthur L. Farstad, *The New King James Version: In the Great Tradition*, 113 (Kindle Edition); Nashville, TN; Thomas Nelson Publishers)

John 7:53-8:11

John 7:53-8:11-And everyone went to his own house. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was

left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

We are told that this passage of Scripture does not belong in the Word of God. Many Bible translations contain a note which says that these verses were added after the first century.

What are the facts?

John 7: 53-8: 11 is omitted by the Westcott/ Hort, United Bible Societies, and Nestle Greek texts, by the American Standard Version, the New American Standard, the New International Version, and the Revised Standard Version. It is single-bracketed [of doubtful origin] in Today's English Version. It is double-bracketed [extremely dubious inclusion] in the Common English Bible and the English Standard Version. It is included in the Textus Receptus, and the Majority Greek texts, and in the King James Version, the Living Bible and the New King James Version....The passage is found in twelve (12) uncial manuscripts [dating from the 6th through the 9th centuries] and thirty-five (35) minuscules [dating from the 9th through the 15th centuries], plus the majority of the Byzantine manuscripts, which are not included in the above count. This brings the count of manuscripts to more than nine hundred (900) which include the passage. The majority of the passage (8:

1-11 in one, and 8: 3-11 in the others) is found in six (6) lectionaries, though it is missing in the majority of lectionaries. However, this is not surprising since lectionaries only include select readings. The passage is found in fourteen (14) ancient versions [Syriac, Coptic, Old Latin, Armenian and Ethiopic--dating from the 2nd century to the 13th century]. Seven (7) early writers quote the passage [from the 3rd century to 430 a.d.]. It is interesting to note that from the 9th century on, the passage is firmly accepted on the evidence available. It waits until the 19th century to say the passage is fraudulent. The manuscript evidence, excluding the Byzantine texts (which comprise the vast majority--up to 95%--of manuscripts extant), is numerically seventy-five (75) to fifty (50) in favor of the inclusion of the passage. Once the testimony of the Byzantine texts is added, the result is more than nine hundred (900) manuscripts, plus versions, lectionaries, and early writers in favor of the passage....“Consider all the tests to which the text should be placed—and the answer is clear: the passage belongs in the New Testament. It is a part of the Gospel of John. (Roderick Ross, *Does It Belong in the New Testament?: Omissions from the New Testament* (Preservation of the New Testament Book 1), 201-211 (Kindle Edition); Charleston, AR; Cobb Publishing)

The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of this passage being included in the Bible text.

Acts 8:37

Acts 8:35-39-Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

Most Bible translations relegate verse 37 to the footnotes, claiming that this verse is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament.

However, when you see that the majority of early versions or translations into other languages include the passage, starting with certain copies of the Harclean Syriac, the Clementine Vulgate, Ps-Augutine, Armenian, Georgian, Laudinus, Schlettstadtensis, Legionensis, Ardmachanus, Philadelphiensis, Colbertinus, and Gigas, an eyebrow is raised....Why did these translations include it if there was no manuscript evidence? In addition, the early writers unanimously include the passage: Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrosiaster, Pacian, Ambrose, Augustine, Bede (says it is in the Greek manuscripts), and Theophlact. Why did they include the passage if there was no manuscript evidence?...Following the confession of faith, Phillip

baptized the Ethiopian. He could not have scripturally baptized the Ethiopian, if he did not believe; and, he could not know whether he believed, unless he told him. Verse 37 fits into the flow of the context....“What tips the scales in this instance is the context. Something is definitely missing without the verse in question. The flow of the passage is interrupted without the question of Phillip and the response of the Ethiopian. We could go further into the details of the evidence and the character of their readings, but this should suffice for the time. (Roderick Ross, Does It Belong in the New Testament?: Omissions from the New Testament (Preservation of the New Testament Book 1, 217-220 (Kindle Edition); Charleston, AR; Cobb Publishing)

Clearly, there is strong textual support for this passage of Scripture.

1 John 5:7

1 John 5:7-For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. (1 John 5:7)

This text is commonly referred to as the Johannine Comma. Many Bible translations reject this passage, claiming that it was added by a later scribe. Metzger himself believes this to be the case, as we see in the interview with Strobel.

None,” he repeated. “Now, the Jehovah’s Witnesses come to our door and say, ‘Your Bible is wrong in the King

James Version of 1 John 5:7–8, where it talks about ‘the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.’ They’ll say, ‘That’s not in the earliest manuscripts.’ “And that’s true enough. I think that these words are found in only about seven or eight copies, all from the fifteenth or sixteenth century. I acknowledge that is not part of what the author of 1 John was inspired to write. (Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation Of The Evidence For Jesus*, 58-78 (Kindle Edition, Interview With Dr. Bruce Metzger); Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan)

However, when we study the textual facts about the passage, we see that the Comma appears to be genuine.

ONLY 300 OF THE 5, 300 PLUS MANUSCRIPTS HAVE 1 JOHN. OF THESE 300, ONLY TEN GREEK MANUSCRIPTS RANGING FROM THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY TO THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, CONTAIN THE JOHANNINE COMMA; Manuscripts 61, 629, 918, 2318 , 2473, 88, 177, 221, 429, 636. Nine Latin manuscripts, ranging from the 10th to 16th centuries include the Comma. These facts are used by some scholars to teach that the Comma was never in the original text of 1 John.....First John 5: 9 10 refer to the event recorded in Matthew 17:5 where God the Father spoke out of heaven and testified that Jesus was His Son. If we leave the Comma in, we have the witness of the Trinity and the witness of man in verses 7- 8. Verse 9 contrasts the witness of men, described in verses 6 and 8 with the witness of God

in verse 7 and 10- 11. If we leave out the Comma, we have verses 10- 11 referring back to a non-existent clause...**SEVERAL ANCIENT CHURCH FATHERS QUOTE OR ALLUDE TO THIS PASSAGE.** Cyprian says: The Lord says, ‘I and the Father are one;’ [John 10:30] and again it is written of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, ‘and these three are one ’ [1 John 5:7- 8]. Cyprian, Unity of the Church 6, AD 250...Jerome commented in his Latin Vulgate that the Greek church created a controversy when they decided to leave out the Johannine Comma. **HIS GREEK COPIES, NOW NON-EXISTENT, CONTAINED THE JOHANNINE COMMA AND HE REFUSED TO ALTER THE SCRIPTURES!** The general epistles are not the same in the Greek Church as they are for the Latin Church...The general epistles have been correctly understood and faithfully translated into Latin [from the Greek] in their entirety, without ambiguous or missing information; especially the verse about the unity of the Trinity found in 1 John. Unfaithful translators have created much controversy by omitting the phrase “Father, Word, and Spirit,” while leaving the phrase “water, blood and spirit, ” which only serves to strengthen our faith and show the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are of the same substance. I do not fear those who call me a corrupter of Scriptures; I refuse to deny the truth of Scripture to those who seek it. Jerome, Prologue to the Canonical Epistles, Codex Fuldensis, AD 541-546...Tertullian stated that 1 John 5:7 is saying these three are one in substance, and this is what Jesus meant when He said that He and the Father are One in John 10:30. Jesus did

not mean He was the Father. “‘These Three are one’ in essence, not one Person, as it is said, ‘I and My Father are One,’ in respect of unity of substance, not singularity of number.” Tertullian Against Praxeas 25, AD 200...We have 86,000 quotes of Scripture from the ancient church fathers (AD 32- 325). Here are just a few of the ones who either quoted, or alluded to, the Johannine Comma. 215, Tertullian, Against Praxeas 25 250 , Cyprian, Unity of the Church 6 250, Cyprian, Epistle to Jubaianus 635, Athanasius, Books 1 & 10, cited three times 380, Priscillian, Liber Apologeticus 385, Gregory of Nazianzus, Theological Orientations (Holy Spirit) 390, Jerome, Prologue to the General Epistles 450, Author Unknown, De divinis Scripturis suie Spaculum 500, Jerome, Codex Freisingensis 527, Flugentius , De Trinitate. (Ken Johnson, *Ancient Word Of God: KJV Only Or Not?* 112-117 (Kindle Edition, emphasis added M.T.))

Notice, however, that whether 1 John 5:7 is deemed genuine or not, the doctrine of the Trinity is affirmed in several other passages of Scriptures (Psalm 33:6; 110:1; Isaiah 48:16; John 1:1-5; 10:30; 20:28; Philippians 2:5-9).

Textual scholar Bruce Metzger points out that textual variants do not affect the integrity of the Word of God:

“I keyed in on the most important issue. “How many doctrines of the church are in jeopardy because of variants?” “I don’t know of any doctrine that is in jeopardy,” he responded confidently. “None?” “None,” he

repeated.” (Lee Strobel, The Case For Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation Of The Evidence For Jesus, 58-78 (Kindle Edition, Interview With Dr. Bruce Metzger); Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan)

Scholar F.F. Bruce concurs:

When we have documents like our New Testament writings copied and recopied thousands of times, the scope for copyists' errors is so enormously increased that it is surprising there are no more than there actually are. Fortunately, if the great number of MSS increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. **THE VARIANT READINGS ABOUT WHICH ANY DOUBT REMAINS AMONG TEXTUAL CRITICS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AFFECT NO MATERIAL QUESTION OF HISTORIC FACT OR OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE.** To sum up, we may quote the verdict of the late Sir Frederic Kenyon, a scholar whose authority to make pronouncements on ancient mss was second to none: ‘The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament

may be regarded as finally established. (F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 14-15 (Kindle Edition, emphasis added); Grand Rapids, Michigan; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Downers Grove, Illinois; InterVarsity Press)

When Strobel asked Metzger how his study of textual criticism had affected his personal faith, he responded:

As we stood, I thanked Dr. Metzger for his time and expertise. He smiled warmly and offered to walk me downstairs. I didn't want to consume any more of his Saturday afternoon, but my curiosity wouldn't let me leave Princeton without satisfying myself about one remaining issue. "All these decades of scholarship, of study, of writing textbooks, of delving into the minutiae of the New Testament text—what has all this done to your personal faith?" I asked. "Oh," he said, sounding happy to discuss the topic, "it has increased the basis of my personal faith to see the firmness with which these materials have come down to us, with a multiplicity of copies, some of which are very, very ancient." "So," I started to say, "scholarship has not diluted your faith—" He jumped in before I could finish my sentence. "On the contrary," he stressed, "it has built it. I've asked questions all my life, I've dug into the text, I've studied this thoroughly, and today I know with confidence that my trust in Jesus has been well placed." He paused while his eyes surveyed my face. Then he added, for emphasis, "Very well placed. (Lee Strobel, *The Case For Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation Of The*

Evidence For Jesus, 58-78 (Kindle Edition, Interview With Dr. Bruce Metzger); Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.