

## ~MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE (802)

- **Materials**
- **Styles Of Writing**
- **Copyists**
- **Assurances That The Bible Has Not Been Changed**
- **Manuscripts Of Hebrew Scriptures**
- **Manuscripts Of Christian Greek Scriptures**
- **Papyrus Manuscripts**
- **Vellum Manuscripts**
- **Hebrew And Christian Greek Scriptures**
- **Sinaitic Manuscript**
- **Alexandrine Manuscript**
- **Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus**
- **Reliability Of The Bible Text**

• The Holy Scriptures have a superhuman origin as to content, but a human history as to their writing and preservation. Moses began compiling them under divine inspiration in **1513 B.C.E.**, and the apostle John wrote the final portion thereof more than **1,600** years later.

• The Bible was not originally one book, but as time passed, a demand arose for copies of its various books. This was so, for instance, after the Babylonian exile, for not all released Jews returned to the land of Judah.

• Instead, many settled elsewhere, and synagogues sprang up throughout the vast territory of the resultant Jewish Dispersion. Scribes prepared copies of the Scriptures needed for these synagogues where the Jews gathered to hear the reading of God's Word.

• For from ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the **synagogues** on every Sabbath. (**Acts of Apostles 15:21**)

• In later times, among Christ's followers, conscientious copyists labored to reproduce the inspired writings for the benefit of the multiplying Christian congregations so that there might be an interchange and general circulation of these.

• And when this letter has been read among you, arrange that it also be read in the congregation of the Laodiceans and that you also read the one from Laodicea. (**Colossians 4:16**)

- Before printing from movable type became common, from the **15th Century C.E.** onward, the original Bible writings and also copies of them were handwritten.

- Hence, they are called **manuscripts**, Latin, *manu scriptus*, written by hand. A Bible **manuscript** is a **handwritten copy** of the Scriptures, the whole or in part, as distinguished from one that is printed. Bible **manuscripts** were produced principally in the form of rolls and codices.

## •• Materials

- There are **leather, papyrus, and vellum manuscripts** of the Scriptures. The noted Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, for instance, is a **leather roll**.

- Papyrus, a type of paper made from the fibers of a water plant, was used for Bible manuscripts in the original languages and for translations thereof until about the **Fourth Century C.E.**

- At that time its use for Bible manuscripts began to be superseded by the use of vellum, a fine grade of parchment generally made from calf, lamb, or goat skins, a further development of the earlier use of animal skins as writing material.

- Such manuscripts as the renowned **Codex Sinaiticus [Sinaitic Manuscript]** and the **Codex Vaticanus [Vatican Manuscript No. 1209]** of the **Fourth Century C.E.** are parchment, or vellum, codices.

- A palimpsest, Latin *palimpsestus*, Greek, *pa-lim'pse-stos*, meaning **scraped again**, is a **manuscript** from which earlier writing was removed or scraped off to make room for later writing.

- A noted Bible palimpsest is the **Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus** of the **Fifth Century C.E.** If the earlier writing, the writing scraped off, is the important one on the palimpsest, scholars can often read this erased writing by employing technical means that include the use of chemical reagents and photography.

- Some **manuscripts** of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** are lectionaries, selected Bible readings for use at religious services.

## •• Styles Of Writing

- Bible **manuscripts** written in **Greek**, whether translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, or copies of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**, or both, can be divided, or classified, as to writing style, which is also an aid in dating them.
- The older style, employed especially down to the **Ninth Century C.E.**, is **the uncial manuscript**, written in large, separated capital letters. In it there is generally no word separation, and punctuation and accent marks are lacking.
- The **Codex Sinaiticus** is such an **uncial manuscript**. Changes in writing style began to develop in the sixth century, eventually leading in the **Ninth Century C.E.** to the **cursive, or minuscule**, manuscript, written in smaller letters, many of which were joined in a running or flowing writing style.
- The majority of extant manuscripts of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** have a cursive script. Cursive manuscripts remained in vogue until the inception of printing.

## •• Copyists

- As far as is known today, no handwritten original, or autograph, **manuscripts** of the Bible are in existence. Yet the Bible has been preserved in accurate, reliable form because Biblical copyists in general, accepting the Scriptures as being divinely inspired, sought perfection in their arduous labor of producing **manuscript** copies of God's Word.
- The men who copied the Hebrew Scriptures in the days of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth and for centuries before that time were called scribes, **Hebrew, soh-pherim'**. Among the early scribes was Ezra, spoken of in the Scriptures as, a skilled copyist.
- The said Ezra himself went up from Babylon, and he was a skilled copyist in the Law of Moses, which Yehowah the God of Israel had given, so that the king granted him, according to the hand of Yehowah his God upon him, all his request. (**Ezra 7:6**)
- Later scribes made some deliberate alterations of the Hebrew text. But their scribal successors, the Masoretes, detected these and recorded them in the Masora, or notes appearing in the margins of the Hebrew **Masoretic** text they produced.

- Copyists of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** also made earnest efforts to reproduce faithfully the text of the Scriptures.

## · **Assurances That The Bible Has Not Been Changed**

- Despite the care exercised by copyists of Bible **manuscripts**, a number of small scribal errors and alterations crept into the text. On the whole, these are insignificant and have no bearing on the Bible's general integrity.

- They have been detected and corrected by means of careful scholastic collation or critical comparison of the many extant **manuscripts** and ancient versions.

- Critical study of the Hebrew text of the Scriptures commenced toward the end of the **18th Century C.E.**. Benjamin Kennicott published at Oxford in **1776-1780 C.E.**, the readings of over 600 **Masoretic Hebrew manuscripts**, and the Italian scholar Giambenardo Deuteronomy Rossi published at Parma comparisons of 731 manuscripts in, **1784 to 1798 C.E.**

- Master texts of the Hebrew Scriptures were also produced by the German scholar Baer and, more recently, by C. D. Ginsburg. Hebrew scholar Rudolf Kittel released in **1906 C.E.** the first edition of his **Biblia Hebraica [The Hebrew Bible]**, providing therein a textual study through a footnote service, comparing many Hebrew manuscripts of the **Masoretic text**. The basic text he used was the **Ben Hayim text**.

- But, when the older and superior **Ben Asher Masoretic** texts became available, **Kittel** undertook the production of an entirely new third edition, which was completed by his colleagues after his death.

- The 7th, 8th, and 9th editions of the **Biblia Hebraica (1951-1955 C.E.)** furnished the basic text used to render the Hebrew Scriptures into English in the **New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures** originally published in, **1950-1960 C.E.** A new edition of the **Hebrew text**, namely **Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia**, is dated, **1977 C.E.** This edition was used for updating the information presented in the footnotes of the **New World Translation** published in **1984 C.E.**

- The first printed edition of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** was that appearing in the **Complutensian Polyglott**, in **Greek and Latin**, of, **1514-1517 C.E.** Then in **1516 C.E.** the Dutch scholar **Desiderius Erasmus** published his first edition of a master **Greek text** of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**.

- It contained many errors, but an improved text thereof was made available through four succeeding editions from **1519 C.E.** to **1535 C.E.** Later, Paris printer and editor **Robert Estienne**, or **Stephanus**, issued several editions of the Greek New Testament, based principally on Erasmus text, but having corrections according to the **Complutensian Polyglott** edition of **1522 C.E.** and 15 late **manuscripts**.
- The third edition of **Stephanus Greek text** issued in **1550 C.E.** became, in effect, the **Received Text**, [called **textus receptus** in Latin], which was used for many early English versions, including the **King James Version** of **1611 C.E.**
- Quite noteworthy in more recent times is the master Greek text prepared by **J. J. Griesbach**, who availed himself of materials gathered by others but who also gave attention to Biblical quotations made by early writers such as **Origen**.
- Further, **Griesbach** studied the readings of various versions, such as the **Armenian**, **Gothic**, and **Philoxenian**. He viewed extant **manuscripts** as comprising three families, or recensions, the **Byzantine**, the **Western**, and the **Alexandrian**, giving preference to readings in the latter.
- Editions of his master Greek text were issued between **1774 C.E.** and **1806 C.E.**, his principal edition of the entire Greek text being published in, **1796-1806 C.E.** **Griesbach's** text was used for **Sharpe's English Translation** of **1840** and is the Greek text printed in **The Emphatic Diaglott**, by **Benjamin Wilson**, in **1864**
- A **Greek** master text of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** that attained wide acceptance is that produced in **1881 C.E.** by **Cambridge University** scholars **B. F. Westcott** and **F. J. A. Hort**.
- It was the product of 28 years of independent labor, though they compared notes regularly. Like **Griesbach**, they divided **manuscripts** into families and leaned heavily on what they termed the neutral text, which included the renowned **Sinaitic Manuscript** and the **Vatican Manuscript No. 1209**, both of the **Fourth Century C.E.**
- While **Westcott** and **Hort** viewed matters as quite conclusive when these **manuscripts** agreed and especially when they were supported by other ancient uncial **manuscripts**, they were not bound to that position.

- They took every conceivable factor into consideration in endeavoring to solve problems presented by conflicting texts, and when two readings were of equal weight, that, too, was indicated in their master text.
- The **Westcott and Hort** text was the one used principally in translating the **Christian Greek Scriptures** into English in the **New World Translation**. However, the **New World Bible Translation Committee** also consulted other excellent Greek texts, among them **Nestle's Greek text 1948 C.E.**
- Commenting on the history of the text of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** and the results of modern textual research, Professor Kurt Aland wrote; **It can be determined, on the basis of 40 years of experience and with the results which have come to light in examining manuscripts at 1,200 test places. The text of the New Testament has been excellently transmitted, better than any other writing from ancient times, the possibility that manuscripts might yet be found that would change its text decisively is zero.** [**Das Neue Testament zuverlässig überliefert** [The New Testament Reliably Transmitted] Stuttgart, 1986, pp. 27,28]
- The extant **manuscripts** of the Christian Scriptures, in Greek and other languages, show textual variations. Variations are to be expected in view of human imperfection and the copying and recopying of **manuscripts**, especially by many copyists who were not professionals.
- If certain **manuscripts** had a common ancestor **manuscript**, perhaps came from a particular revision of early texts, or were produced in a particular area, they would probably have at least some variations in common, and hence they are said to belong to the same family, or group.
- On the basis of similarity in such differences, scholars have sought to classify the texts into groups, or families, the number of which has increased with the passing of time, till reference is now made to the Alexandrian, Western, Eastern, Syriac and Caesarean, and the Byzantine texts, represented in various **manuscripts** or in different readings scattered throughout numerous **manuscripts**.
- But despite the variations peculiar to different **manuscript** families, and the variations within each group, the Scriptures have come down to us in essentially the same form as that of the original inspired writings.

- The variations of reading are of no consequence as to Bible teachings in general. And scholastic collations have corrected errors of any importance, so that today we enjoy an authentic and reliable text.
- Since Westcott and Hort produced their refined Greek text, a number of critical editions of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** have been produced.
- Noteworthy among them is **The Greek New Testament** published by the United Bible Societies and now in its third edition. Identical in wording is the 26th edition of the so-called **Nestle-Aland** text, published in **1979 C.E.** in Stuttgart, Germany.

### See Also **CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES**

#### •• **Manuscripts Of Hebrew Scriptures**

- There are possibly 6,000 **manuscripts** of all or portions of the Hebrew Scriptures extant today in various libraries. The vast majority contain the **Masoretic** text and are of the **Tenth Century C.E.** or thereafter.
- The Masorettes, of the second half of the **First Millennium C.E.**, sought to transmit the Hebrew text faithfully and made no changes in the wording of the text itself. However, to preserve the traditional pronunciation of the vowel-less consonantal text, they devised systems of vowel pointing and accenting.
- Additionally, in their Masora, or marginal notes, they drew attention to textual peculiarities and gave corrected readings they considered necessary. It is the **Masoretic** text that appears in printed Hebrew Bibles of the present day.
- Damaged Hebrew Scripture **manuscripts** used in Jewish synagogues were replaced by verified copies, and the defaced or damaged **manuscripts** were stored in a genizah, a synagogue storeroom or repository.
- Finally, when it was full, the **manuscripts** were removed and ceremoniously buried. Doubtless many ancient **manuscripts** perished in that way. But the contents of the synagogue genizah in Old Cairo were spared, probably because it was walled up and forgotten for centuries.

- Following the rebuilding of the synagogue in **1890 C.E.**, the **manuscripts** in its genizah were reexamined, and from there fairly complete Hebrew Scripture **manuscripts** and fragments, some said to be of the **Sixth Century C.E.**, found their way into various libraries.
- One of the oldest extant fragments containing Biblical passages is the Nash Papyrus, found in Egypt and preserved at Cambridge, England. Evidently part of an instructional collection, it is of the second or **First Century B.C.E.** and consists of only four fragments of 24 lines of a pre-Masoretic text of the Ten Commandments and some verses of (**Deuteronomy, Chapters 5,6**)
- Since **1947 C.E.** many Biblical and non-Biblical scrolls have been found in various areas West of the Dead Sea, and these are referred to generally as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Most significant among them are **manuscripts** discovered in a number of caves in and about the Wadi Qumran, Nahal Qumeran.
- These are also known as the Qumran texts and evidently once belonged to a Jewish religious community centered at nearby Khirbet Qumran, Horvat Qumeran.
- The first discovery was made by a Bedouin in a cave about 15 kilometers (9.5 miles) South of Jericho, where he found a number of earthenware jars containing ancient **manuscripts**. One of these was the now-renowned Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah (1QIs<sup>a</sup>), a well-preserved leather roll of the entire book of Isaiah, except for a few gaps.
- It contains a pre-Masoretic Hebrew script and has been dated toward the end of the **Second Century B.C.E.** Hence, it is about a thousand years older than the oldest extant manuscript of the **Masoretic** text.
- However, though showing some differences in spelling and grammatical construction, it does not vary doctrinally from the **Masoretic** text. Among the documents recovered in the Qumran area are fragments of over 170 scrolls representing parts of all Hebrew Scripture books except Esther, and in the case of some books, more than one copy exists.
- These **manuscript** scrolls and fragments are believed to range in date from about **250 B.C.E.** to about the middle of the **First Century C.E.**, and they exhibit more than one type of Hebrew text, such as a proto-

**Masoretic** text or one underlying the **Greek Septuagint**. Studies of such materials are still in progress.

- Among notable vellum Hebrew **manuscripts** of the Hebrew Scriptures is the Cairo Karaite Codex of the Prophets. It contains the Masora and vocalization, and its colophon indicates that it was completed in about **895 C.E.** by the noted Masorete Moses ben Asher of Tiberias.
- Another significant **manuscript** of **916 C.E.**, is the **Leningrad Codex** of the Later Prophets known as the **Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus**. The **Aleppo Sephardic Codex**, once preserved at Aleppo, Syria, and now in Israel, until recently contained the entire Hebrew Scriptures.
- Its original consonantal text was corrected, punctuated, and furnished with the Masora about **930 C.E.** by Aaron ben Asher, son of Moses ben Asher. The oldest dated manuscript of the complete Hebrew Scriptures in **Hebrew** is the **Leningrad Manuscript No. B 19 A**, preserved in the Public Library in Leningrad.
- It was copied in **1008 C.E.** from the corrected books prepared and annotated by Aaron ben Moses ben Asher the teacher. Another noteworthy Hebrew **manuscript** is a codex of the Pentateuch preserved in the British Museum [**Codex Oriental 4445**], consisting of;
  - So Joseph's master took him and gave him over to the prison house, the place where the prisoners of the king were kept under arrest, and he continued there in the prison house. (**Genesis 39:20**)
  - Who was going before you in the way to spy out for you a place for you to camp, by fire at night for you to see by what way you should walk and by a cloud in daytime. (**Deuteronomy 1:33**)
  - One kid of the goats for a sin offering;
  - At this Yehowah said to Moses: (**Numbers 7:4**)
  - And for a communion sacrifice two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five male lambs each a year old. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel. (**Numbers 7:47**)
  - On the seventh day there was the chieftain for the sons of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud. (**Numbers 7:48**)

- **His offering was one silver dish, its weight being a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels by the shekel of the holy place, both of them full of fine flour moistened with oil for a grain offering. (Numbers 7:49)**
- **One gold cup of ten shekels, full of incense. (Numbers 7:50)**
- **One young bull, one ram, one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering. (Numbers 7:51)**
- **One kid of the goats for a sin offering. (Numbers 7:52)**
- **And for a communion sacrifice two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five male lambs each a year old. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud. (Numbers 7:53)**
- **On the eighth day there was the chieftain for the sons of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. (Numbers 7:54)**
- **His offering was one silver dish, its weight being a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels by the shekel of the holy place, both of them full of fine flour moistened with oil for a grain offering. (Numbers 7:55)**
- **One gold cup of ten shekels, full of incense. (Numbers 7:56)**
- **One young bull, one ram, one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering. (Numbers 7:57)**
- **One kid of the goats for a sin offering. (Numbers 7:58)**
- **And for a communion sacrifice two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five male lambs each a year old. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. (Numbers 7:59)**
- **On the ninth day there was the chieftain for the sons of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni. (Numbers 7:60)**
- **His offering was one silver dish, its weight being a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels by the shekel of the holy place, both of them full of fine flour moistened with oil for a grain offering. (Numbers 7:61)**

- One gold cup of ten shekels, full of incense. (**Numbers 7:62**)
- One young bull, one ram, one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering. (**Numbers 7:63**)
- One kid of the goats for a sin offering. (**Numbers 7:64**)
- And for a communion sacrifice two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five male lambs each a year old. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni. (**Numbers 7:65**)
- On the tenth day there was the chieftain for the sons of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. (**Numbers 7:66**)
- His offering was one silver dish, its weight being a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels by the shekel of the holy place, both of them full of fine flour moistened with oil for a grain offering. (**Numbers 7:67**)
- One gold cup of ten shekels, full of incense. (**Numbers 7:68**)
- One young bull, one ram, one male lamb in its first year, for a burnt offering. (**Numbers 7:69**)
- One kid of the goats for a sin offering. (**Numbers 7:70**)
- And for a communion sacrifice two cattle, five rams, five he-goats, five male lambs each a year old. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. (**Numbers 7:71**)
- On the eleventh day there was the chieftain for the sons of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran. (**Numbers 7:72**)
- His offering was one silver dish, its weight being a hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels by the shekel of the holy place, both of them full of fine flour moistened with oil for a grain offering. (**Numbers 7:73**)
- They must not let any of it remain until morning, and they should break no bone in it. According to the whole statute of the Passover they should prepare it. (**Numbers 9:12**)
- And the three-tribe division of the camp of Reuben pulled away in their armies, and Elizur the son of Shedeur was over its army.

### (Numbers 10:18)

- Which are lacking or have been supplied by a later hand and probably dating from the **Tenth Century C.E.**
- Many **manuscripts** of the Hebrew Scripture portion of the Bible were written in Greek. Among those of particular note is one in the collection of the Fouad Papyri [**Inventory Number 266, belonging to the Société Egyptienne Deuteronomy Papyrologie, Cairo**], containing portions of the second half of Deuteronomy according to the **Septuagint**.
- It is of the **First Century B.C.E.** and shows, in various places, the divine name written in square Hebrew characters within the Greek text. Fragments of (**Deuteronomy, Chapters 23-28**), are found in **Ryland's Papyrus iii. 458 of the Second Century B.C.E**, preserved in Manchester, England.
- Another leading manuscript of the **Septuagint** contains fragments of Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Zechariah. In this leather scroll, dated to the end of the **First Century C.E**, the divine name is rendered by the Tetragrammaton written in ancient Hebrew characters. [**See NW appendix, pp. 1562-1564**]

### •• Manuscripts Of Christian Greek Scriptures

- The Christian Scriptures were written in Koine. Though no original autograph **manuscripts** thereof are known to exist today, according to one calculation, there are some 5,000 extant **manuscript** copies, whole or in part, of these Scriptures in Greek.

### •• Papyrus Manuscripts

- Biblical papyri of great importance were among papyrus codices found in Egypt about **1930 C.E**, their purchase being announced in **1931 C.E.**
- Some of these Greek codices, dating from the **Second** to the **Fourth Centuries C.E.** consist of parts of eight Hebrew Scripture books, Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther, and three contain portions of 15 books of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**.
- Most of these Scriptural papyri were purchased by an American manuscript collector, **A. Chester Beatty**, and are now preserved in Dublin,

Ireland. The rest were acquired by the University of Michigan and by others.

- The international designation for Biblical papyri is a capital P followed by a small superior number. The **Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 1 (P 45)** consists of parts of 30 leaves from a codex that probably once had about 220 leaves. P 45 has portions of the four Gospels and the book of Acts Of Apostles.
- The **Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 3 (P 47)** is a fragmentary codex of Revelation containing ten somewhat damaged leaves. These two papyri are believed to be from the **Third Century C.E.**
- Quite noteworthy is the **Chester Beatty Papyrus No. 2 (P 46)** believed to be from about **200 C.E.** It has 86 somewhat damaged leaves out of a codex that probably had 104 leaves originally, and it still contains nine of Paul's inspired letters, Romans, Hebrews, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, and First Thessalonians.
- It is noteworthy that the letter to the Hebrews is included in this early codex of Exodus. Since Hebrews does not give its writers name, its composition by Paul has frequently been disputed. But this letters inclusion in **p 46**, evidently consisting of Paul's letters exclusively, indicates that in about **200 C.E.** Hebrews was accepted by early Christians as an inspired writing of the apostle Paul.
- The letter to the Ephesians appears in this codex, thus also refuting arguments that Paul did not write this letter.
- At the **John Ryland's Library**, Manchester, England, there is a small papyrus fragment of John's Gospel, some verses of Chapter 18, cataloged as **Rylands Papyrus 457**. It is internationally designated as **p 52**)
- This is the oldest extant manuscript fragment of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**, having been written in the first half of the second century, possibly about **125 C.E.** and thus only a quarter of a century or so after John's death.
- The fact that a copy of John's Gospel was evidently circulating in Egypt, the place of the fragments discovery, by that time shows that the Good News according to John was really recorded in the **First Century C.E.** and by John himself, not by some unknown writer well

along in the **Second Century C.E.**, after John's death, as some critics once claimed.

- The most important addition to the collection of Biblical papyri since the discovery of the **Chester Beatty Papyri** was the acquisition of the **Bodmer Papyri**, published between **1956 C.E. and 1961 C.E.**
- Particularly noteworthy are **Papyrus Bodmer 2 (P 66)** and **Papyrus Bodmer 14,15 (P 75)**, both written about **200 C.E.** **Papyrus Bodmer 2** contains a large part of the Gospel of John, while **Papyrus Bodmer 14,15** has much of Luke and John and is textually very close to **Vatican Manuscript No. 1209**

### •• **Vellum Manuscripts**

- Bible **manuscripts** written on **vellum** sometimes include both the Hebrew and Christian Greek Scripture portions of the Bible, though some are only of the Christian Scriptures.

- **Codex Bezae**, designated by the letter D, is a valuable manuscript of the **Fifth or Sixth Century C.E.** Though its actual place of origin is unknown, it was acquired in France in **1562 C.E.**

- It contains the Gospels, the book of Acts, and only a few other verses, and is an uncial **manuscript**, written in Greek on the left-hand pages, with a parallel Latin text appearing on the right-hand pages.

- This codex is preserved at Cambridge University in England, having been presented to that institution by **Theodore Beza** in **1581 C.E.**

- **Codex Claromontanus (D2)** is likewise written in Greek and Latin on opposite pages, Greek on the left and Latin on the right. It contains Paul's canonical letters, including Hebrews, and is considered to be of the **Sixth Century C.E.**

- It was reportedly found in the monastery at Clermont, France, and was acquired by Theodore Beza, but it is now preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

- Among more recently discovered vellum **manuscripts** of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** is **Codex Washingtonianus I**, containing the Gospels in Greek, in the common Western order, Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark.

- It was obtained in **1906 C.E.** in Egypt and is preserved at the **Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.** The international symbol of this codex is **W**, and it is thought to have been written in the **Fifth Century C.E.**, except that apparently, because of damage, Matthew and part of John were replaced in the **Seventh Century C.E.** **Codex Washingtonianus II**, having the symbol **I**, is also in the Freer Collection and contains portions of Paul's canonical letters, including Hebrews. This codex is believed to have been written in the **Fifth Century C.E.**

## · Hebrew And Christian Greek Scriptures

- The most important and most complete extant Bible **manuscripts** in **Greek** were written on vellum in uncial letters.

- **Vatican Manuscript No. 1209** The **Vatican Manuscript No. 1209 [Codex Vaticanus]**, designated internationally by the symbol **B**, is an uncial codex of the **Fourth Century C.E.**, possibly produced in Alexandria, and it originally contained the entire Bible in Greek.

- A corrector of later date retraced the letters, perhaps because the original writing had faded, except that he skipped letters and words he considered incorrect. Originally this codex probably had approximately 820 leaves, of which 759 remain. Most of Genesis is gone, as well as a part of Psalms,

- How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God? (**Hebrews 9:14**) Through to;

- The undeserved kindness be with all of you. (**Hebrews 13:25**)

- And all of First and Second Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. **Codex Vaticanus** is preserved at the Vatican Library in Rome, Italy, and is known to have been there as early as the **15th Century**. However, Vatican Library authorities made access to the manuscript extremely difficult for scholars and did not publish a full photographic facsimile of the entire codex until, **1889-1890 C.E.**

## · Sinaitic Manuscript

- The **Sinaitic Manuscript or Codex Sinaiticus** is also of the **Fourth Century C.E.**, but **Codex Vaticanus** may be a little older. The **Sinaitic Manuscript** is designated by the symbol, **ʿa'leph**, first letter in the **Hebrew** alphabet,

and while it evidently once contained the entire Bible in Greek, part of the Hebrew Scriptures has been lost.

- However, it has all the **Christian Greek Scriptures**. Likely this codex originally consisted of 730 leaves, at least, though the whole or parts of just 393 are now verified to be extant.

- It was discovered one portion in **1844** and another in **1859 C.E.** by the Bible scholar **Konstantin von Tischendorf** at the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. Forty-three leaves of this codex are kept in Leipzig, portions of three leaves are at Leningrad, and 347 leaves are preserved at the **British Museum in London**. It has been reported that 8 to 14 more leaves were discovered in the same monastery in **1975 C.E.**

### •• **Alexandrine Manuscript**

- The **Alexandrine Manuscript [Codex Alexandrinus]**, designated by the letter A, is a Greek uncial manuscript containing most of the Bible, including the book of Revelation. Of possibly 820 original leaves, 773 have been preserved. This codex is generally considered to be of the first half of the **Fifth Century C.E.**, and it is also preserved in the British Museum.

### •• **Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus**

- The **Codex Ephraemi Syri rescriptus** or **Codex Ephraemi**, designated internationally by the letter C, is also generally considered to have originated in the **Fifth Century C.E.** It is written in Greek uncials on vellum and is a rewritten codex, a palimpsest **manuscript**.

- The original Greek text was removed, and a number of leaves were then written over with discourses of Ephraem Syrus or the Syrian, rendered in Greek. This was done probably during the **12th century**, when there was a scarcity of **vellum**. However, the underlying text has been deciphered.

- While C evidently once contained all the Scriptures in Greek, just 209 leaves remain, 145 being of the **Christian Greek Scriptures**. Hence, this codex now contains only portions of Hebrew Scripture books and parts of all books of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** except Second Thessalonians and Second John. It is preserved at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

### •• **Reliability Of The Bible Text**

- **Appreciation of the reliability of the Bible is greatly enhanced when it is realized that, by comparison, there are only very few extant **manuscripts** of the works of classical secular writers and none of these are original, autograph **manuscripts**.**
- **Though they are only copies made centuries after the death of the authors, present-day scholars accept such late copies as sufficient evidence of the authenticity of the text.**
- **Extant Hebrew **manuscripts** of the Scriptures were prepared with great care. Respecting the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, scholar West. H. Green observed: It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted. [Archaeology and Bible History, by J. P. Free, 1964, p. 5]**
- **The late Bible text scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon made this reassuring statement in the introduction to his seven volumes entitled **The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri**; The first and most important conclusion derived from the examination of them, the **Papyri**, is the satisfactory one that they confirm the essential soundness of the existing texts.**
- **No striking or fundamental variation is shown either in the Old or the New Testament. There are no important omissions or additions of passages, and no variations which affect vital facts or doctrines.**
- **The variations of text affect minor matters, such as the order of words or the precise words used. But their essential importance is their confirmation, by evidence of an earlier date than was hitherto available, of the integrity of our existing texts. In this respect they are an acquisition of epoch-making value. [London, 1933, Fasciculus I, p. 15]**
- **Concerning the **Christian Greek Scriptures**, Sir Frederic Kenyon stated: 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. [The Bible and Archaeology, 1940, pp. 288,289]**
- **Centuries ago, Jesus Christ, the faithful and true witness.**
- **And to the angel of the congregation in Laodicea write. These are the things that the Amen says, the faithful and true witness,**

the beginning of the creation by God. ([Revelation 3:14](#))

- **Repeatedly and emphatically confirmed the genuineness of the Hebrew Scriptures, as did his apostles.**
- **And commencing at Moses and all the Prophets he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures. ([Luke 24:27](#))**
- **He now said to them; These are my words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all the things written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled. ([Luke 24:44](#))**
- **For all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope. ([Romans 15:4](#))**
- **Extant ancient versions, or translations, further bespeak the exactness of the preserved Hebrew Scriptures. **Manuscripts** and versions of the **Christian Greek Scriptures** bear unassailable testimony to the marvelous preservation and accurate transmission of that portion of God's Word. We are therefore now favored with an authentic, thoroughly reliable Bible text.**
- **A thoughtful examination of preserved manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures bears eloquent testimony to their faithful preservation and permanence, giving added meaning to the inspired statement. The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered, but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite.**
- **The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered, but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite. ([Isaiah 40:8](#))**
- **For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like a blossom of grass, the grass becomes withered, and the flower falls off. ([1 Peter 1:24](#))**
- **But the saying of Yehowah endures forever. Well, this is the saying, this which has been declared to you as Good News. ([1 Peter 1:25](#))**