



## 1. SCRIPTURE'S INERRANCY

### A. INERRANCY DEFINED

"The inerrancy of Scripture means that Scripture in the \_\_\_\_\_ manuscripts does not affirm anything that is contrary to fact." (Grudem, Systematic Theology, 90)

**When we talk about the inerrancy of Scripture, we are talking about its truthfulness.**

#### I. The Bible Speaks in Ordinary Language

- Phenomenological language - from the point of view of the observer
- Round numbers or measurements

**Inerrancy has to do with *truthfulness*, not with the degree of scientific \_\_\_\_\_ with which events are reported.**

#### II. The Bible can contain loose quotations

"Written Greek at the time of the New Testament had no quotation marks or equivalent kinds of punctuation, and an accurate citation of another person needed to include only a correct representation of the content of what the person said (rather like our indirect quotations): it was not expected to cite each word exactly." (Grudem, Systematic Theology, 92)

**Inerrancy is consistent with loose or free quotations of the Old Testament or Jesus or someone else as long as the content is not false to what was originally said.**

#### III. The Bible may have unusual grammar

**Inerrancy has to do with the truthfulness of the speech, not the \_\_\_\_\_ of the grammar by our modern standards.**

### B. CHALLENGES TO INERRANCY

#### I. Trying to limit inerrancy only to \_\_\_\_\_

This position would allow for Scripture to have false statements about other areas - such as historical details or scientific facts. However, the Bible affirms that: "ALL" of Scripture is inspired (God-breathed) and profitable (2 Tim. 3:16), completely pure (Ps. 12:6), perfect (Ps. 119:96) and true (Prov. 30:5), we must believe everything (Acts 24:14 & Luke 24:25) and that whatever was written was for our instruction (Rom. 15:4).

**If the Bible spoke falsely about historical details or scientific facts, then what \_\_\_\_\_ could we have that it speaks truthfully about the eternally important details of spiritual truth?!**

## II. Errors in the Transmission of Scripture

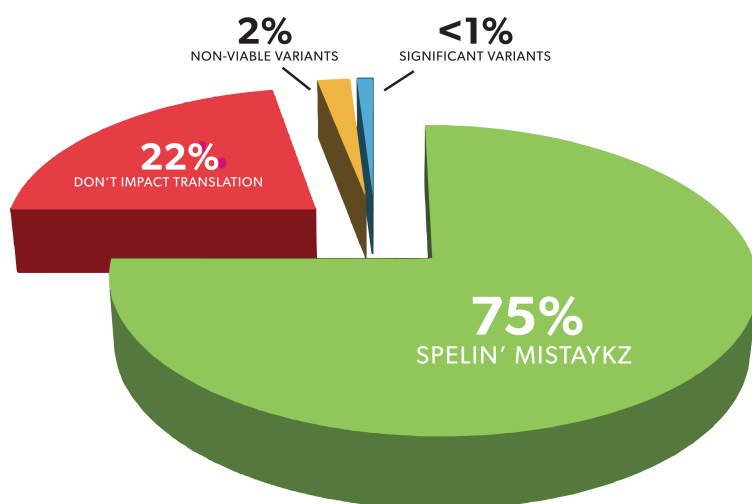
The Bible we hold today is obviously not the same as the parchment upon which Paul, Peter, or Moses wrote upon. What we have today is the product of thousands of copies from the originals which have been passed down through the centuries.

This is commonly referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the text of Scripture.

### The 'Problem' of Variants

Critical scholars such as Bart Ehrman say things like, "there are more variants than there are words in the New Testament." There are some 200,000-300,000 textual variants - and the total number of words in the Greek New Testament is 138,162 words. Sounds like a big problem on the surface...

### What is a Variant?



- Any misspelling, omission of punctuation or accidentally skipping a word or line, etc - these all count as unique variants.
  - The reason we have so many variants is simply because we have so many \_\_\_\_\_!
  - The majority of the variants in the manuscripts are inconsequential and most of them are so minor they can't even be translated.
  - The total number of variant readings that actually have any significance amount to less than 0.5%!

**The 'Problem' of Variants is really NO PROBLEM AT ALL.**

"To be sure, of all the hundreds of thousands of textual changes found among our manuscripts, most of them are completely insignificant, immaterial, of no real importance... In fact, most of the changes found in our early Christian manuscripts have nothing to do with theology or ideology." (Bart Ehrman, Misquoting Jesus)

### What about 'missing verses' from the KJV in modern translations?

There is no conspiracy to remove verses. This is simply explained by the fact that the KJV Bible was originally published in 1611 using a manuscript collection called the *Textus Receptus* (received text). At the time, this was the best collection of manuscripts available to the translators. These "missing verses" appear in those manuscripts of the *Textus Receptus*.

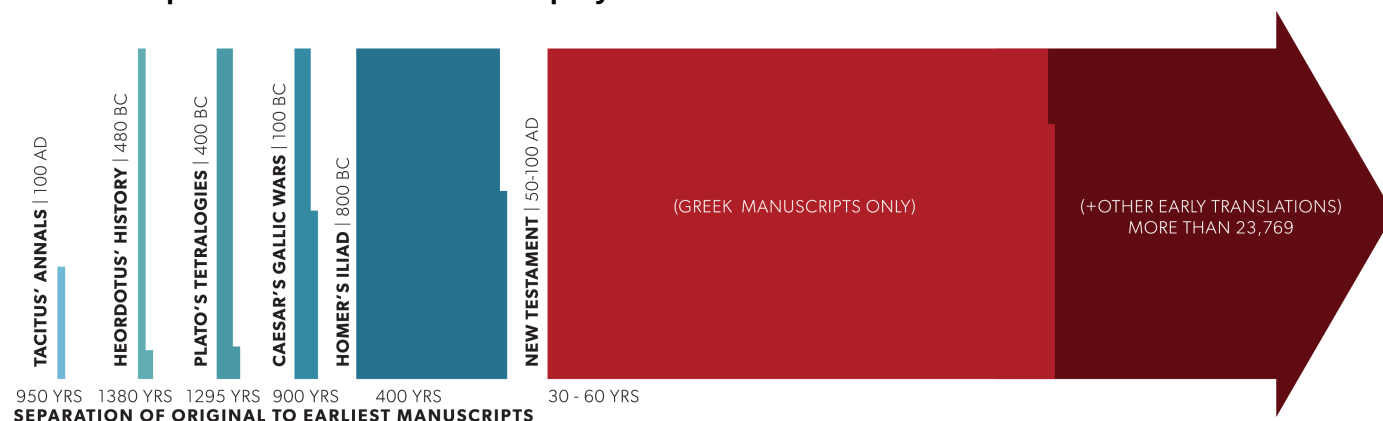
Today we have much more and better \_\_\_\_\_ to translate from - this is why those verses were removed - because it can be proven that they weren't original.

### Two Advantages of Variants

- It shows us that at no time was there some council or powerful religious group that controlled the entirety of the text of the Bible.
- Because there are variants, we are able to trace the transmission of the texts of Scripture.

"The original readings are still present, even when there are a number of options for a given word or phrase, but the benefit of knowing that the text has not been edited in wholesale fashion, as some assert, far outweighs the work we must invest in the study of textual variants." (White, Scripture Alone, p.144)

## The NT compared to other works of antiquity



There are over 5800 Greek manuscripts of the NT (not counting other translations) which is far more than any other comparable work of antiquity! Not only that, the dating of some of those manuscripts are far closer to when the originals were written than even the best comparable work of antiquity.

## THERE IS NOTHING TO HIDE!

Our Bibles use footnotes to indicate different readings (variants), and all the evidence is publicly available to whoever would want to investigate it. (e.g. The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts - [cstm.org](http://cstm.org))

- One of the most famous copies currently is P52 which is a copy of John dated to the beginning of the second century around 125 AD. This is only a few years after the original writing of John in the late first century!
- We also have codices like the "Chester Beatty codex P45, dated c. 250, which contains all four canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), which are followed by the book of Acts." (Michael J. Kruger, Canon Revisited)

## III. Alleged Errors in the Bible

Many of the alleged errors and contradictions in the Bible are not actually errors or contradictions of the text itself, but rather errors in \_\_\_\_\_ and interpretation by the reader. We must not confuse our ignorance of the correct meaning of a text with a legitimate error of the text.

Here are two good resources on wrestling with difficulties in the Bible and alleged 'contradictions' in Scripture:

- Keeping Faith in an Age of Reason: Refuting Alleged Bible Contradictions by Dr Jason Lisle
- Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties by Gleason L. Archer

## C. PROBLEMS WITH DENYING INERRANCY

There are some major problems we run into if we deny the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture:

- I. **The Moral Problem:** Does God lie?
- II. **The Trust Problem:** Can we trust God?
- III. **The Pride Problem:** We put ourselves above God's Word
- IV. **The Doctrinal Problem:** Where do we get our doctrine & theology?

"The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one ever dreams of questioning ...if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt." (F.F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?, pg 10)

## SCRIPTURE'S TRANSLATION

### A. HOW IS THE BIBLE TRANSLATED?

Bible translations today are not based on other translations in different languages, but rather are based on the best information we have about the originals. Every modern translation is produced by going back to the \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts.

### B. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES IN TRANSLATIONS?

#### I. Formal Equivalent

Formal Equivalent translations aim to be as rigidly equal to the original text, even sometimes keeping the word order of the original languages. They are sometimes called "\_\_\_\_\_" or "literal" translations. Examples of a Formal Equivalent are the NASB, KJV and ESV.

- **PROS:** Good for study, less interpretation on the text by the translator
- **CONS:** Sometimes hard to read, no translation can truly be called 'literal' because of differences in languages

#### II. Functional Equivalent

A functional equivalent attempts to convey the thought expressed in the source text using equivalent expressions from a contemporary language like English. They are sometimes also called "Dynamic Equivalents" or "\_\_\_\_\_" translations. Examples of functional equivalents are the CSB and NIV.

- **PROS:** Smooths out the text to be easier to read, re-words expressions, customs, idioms, etc. from the original language
- **CONS:** More interpretation by the translator – danger of translating something wrong, or introducing theological bias to the text.

The majority of popular and scholarly translations are produced by a team of scholars from varying backgrounds and theological persuasions work on a translation. This helps to reduce the factor of individual bias. This is why translations produced by a single person are usually less preferred than translations produced by a team of scholars.

#### III. Paraphrases

Paraphrases are really not to be considered \_\_\_\_\_ at all. They are a summary of what the author/publisher thinks is the main gist or message the Biblical passage is communicating. As a result - there is quite a bit of interpretation that happens and there may be some bias introduced to the text. Examples of paraphrases are the NLT and The Message.

- **PROS:** Good way to get a summary of the big picture of a section of Scripture. Helpful for beginners.
- **CONS:** Some paraphrases are terrible and distort the meaning of Scripture (e.g. The Passion Translation)

### C. WHICH TRANSLATION SHOULD I CHOOSE?

The answer to that question depends on what your goal is and how experienced a Bible reader you are.

In practice, it is totally fine to have one translation for daily use (e.g. CSB) and another more 'literal' one for personal study (e.g. ESV).