

The Reliability of the New Testament Manuscripts

From two minutes to three hours, there are several valuable videos on the manuscript evidence for the New Testament included here. If you think the manuscript evidence for the New Testament is a significant matter, don't avoid the very informative three-hour debate at the end of these pages.

Dr. Craig Evans - First Century Fragment of Mark Found in Egyptian Burial Mask (3 min.)

Click here for video → <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=8kPgACbtRRs>



Click here for video → [Josh McDowell Destroys Ancient Artifacts](#)

Josh McDowell explains how manuscripts are retrieved from mummy burial masks. (2 min.)



Click here for video → [The earliest fragment of a Gospel \(3 min.\)](#)

Dr. Dan Wallace talks about the earliest fragment of a Gospel (at the time of the video). Dr. Wallace started the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts about fifteen years ago. The center is attempting to digitize every New Testament manuscript discovered, and has made great progress, including some new discoveries in the process. www.csntm.org



[Click here for video](#) → **Reliability of our Greek New Testament Text - Bruce Phillips**

This is a nicely done lecture on the reliability of the New Testament from the viewpoint of standard New Testament textual procedure. (1 hour 11 min.)

- ★ 0:00 A little chat about his family.
- ★ 2:11 Intro
- ★ 2:33 Skeptics like to claim the Bible is unreliable.
- ★ 2:49 Most criticisms of Christianity are volitionally-based.
- ★ 3:21 Bart Erhman - Influential Skeptic
- ★ 4:33 Bart Erhman's most popular book: Misquoting Jesus - The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why
- ★ 7:44 Dr. Dan Wallace - The Center for the Study of the New Testament Manuscripts travels the world photographing and digitizing New Testament manuscripts. - <http://csntm.org/> - His book, Revisiting the Corruption of the New Testament, critiques Bart Erhman's skeptical view.
- ★ 9:55 What we're doing in apologetics . . . - How what and why we believe are related.
- ★ 10:52 Apologist William Lane Craig's Approach
- ★ 12:45 Beginning of Three-Point Presentation Every Christian can defend the Greek New Testament Text from three perspectives: 1. Extensive manuscripts - Thousands of copies 2. Early manuscripts - Close to the events 3. Exact reconstruction - Original wording - Textual Criticism
- ★ 13:43 Objective of This Presentation
- ★ 14:49 Building a manuscript timeline
- ★ 18:27 New Testament Manuscript Timeline - First Four Centuries
- ★ 19:02 Papyri - Scroll or Codex (book pages)
- ★ 20:54 Majescules (all upper case) and Minuscules (all lower case) - parchment or vellum (untanned animal hide) - Many have no spaces or punctuation between words or sentences
- ★ 22:31 Palimpsest - scraped, cleaned and reused
- ★ 23:24 Lectionaries - collections of readings
- ★ 24:38 John Rylands Manuscript - earliest "undisputed" manuscript 125 AD
- ★ 28:14 Oxyrynchus - the first modern expedition
- ★ 30:15 The Bodmer Papyri
- ★ 31:14 The Chester Beatty Papyri
- ★ 32:50 Three great, early whole Bibles - Any commissioned by Constantine? Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandinus
- ★ 36:26 Early N. T. Fragment from Mark at Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls)?
- ★ 37:55 The textual integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures was also validated by the Dead Sea Scrolls. The text was shown to be virtually the same during over a thousand years of copying for which we previously had no manuscripts.
- ★ 39:33 Comparison of N.T. and Secular Manuscripts
- ★ 41:40 Variants : When Manuscripts Disagree - Over 95% of NT is variant-free
- ★ 42:28 Bart Ehrman says there are more errors in the New Testament manuscripts (about 400,000 manuscript variants) than there are words in the New Testament. This is true, but very misleading as to its real significance.
- ★ 44:46 Some Meaningful and Viable Variants - Mark 16:9-20 - John 7:53-8:11 - Romans 5:1 and 1 John 1:4 - Matthew 5:22 *No viable variant changes an important issue of faith.
- ★ 47:24 A closer look at John 3:13 as an example of textual criticism
- ★ 48:56 "Rules" of Evidence for Textual Criticism External Evidence - look at the documents - Seeks the most reliable textual witness - Texts are classified by Text Types (Alexandrian: papyri, older, shorter, difficult. Byzantine: numerous, late fathers, edited. Western: later, early fathers, harmonization, longer.) Internal Evidence - look at the text itself - Prefer the shorter or the more difficult - Prefer the reading that "explains" the variants - Prefer what fits the author's style or theology * Internal "Rules" Are Inferences and Hard to Apply
- ★ 51:52 Example of textual criticism
- ★ 56:35 Q & A
- ★ 56:35 How does classic literature compare to Bible in copying and transmission?
- ★ 1:00:36 When were the originals written?
- ★ 1:05:10 What translations best reflect the manuscripts?
- ★ 1:08:18 Greek to English translation question



[Click here for video → Dr. James White - The transmission of the New Test](#)

Dr. White begins with an overview of the reliability of the New Testament text and then compares it to the textual status of the Koran.
(about 1 hour)

- ★ 8:26 Beginning of Talk
- ★ 31:30 Koran Compared



[Click here for video → Textual Criticism Debate between John Tors & Tony Costas - Majority Reading vs. Reasoned Eclecticism \(3 hours 3 min.\)](#)

This is a lengthy but very informative debate between the Reasoned Eclectic viewpoint and the Majority Reading approach to textual criticism. If you have not heard the Majority Reading view (it's not King James Only) you owe it to yourself to hear its cogent arguments before deciding there is only one approach to the manuscript evidence.

- ★ 0:00 Introductions
- ★ 4:44 Begin First Eclectic Presentation
- ★ 24:03 How we got the modern translations we have today.
- ★ 36:01 Reconstructing the Text of the New Testament
- ★ 39:38 End First Eclectic Presentation
- ★ 39:40 Begin First Majority Presentation
- ★ 1:14:41 End First Majority Presentation
- ★ 1:15:19 Eclectic First Response
- ★ 1:35:24 Majority First Response
- ★ 1:54:50 Interactive Questioning Between Both Presenters
- ★ 2:25:02 Majority Concluding Speech
- ★ 2:30:10 Eclectic Concluding Speech
- ★ 2:35:16 Audience Q & A

