

## New Testament History, Literature, and Theology

Session #4: Inspiration, canonicity and the transmission of the text.

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### **A. Introduction [00:00-00:50]**

Alright, welcome back we would like to shift now, we've been talking about the historical backgrounds of the Persians, Greeks, Maccabeans, the Hasmoneans down to Herod. And we've talked about the various Jewish sects: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots. We have talked about institutions of the Sanhedrin, the institution of the synagogue, the Diaspora, the Samaritans and others like that.

### **B. Inspiration [00:50-2:11]**

What I would like to do now is to tackle a different question. We at this school will hold that the Bible is the word of God. So we are going to be talking about the text of the New Testament. How does the New Testament come down to us? We are going to say the Bible and the New Testament is from God and has come down to us in the in our NIV, NRSV or different translation. How does the Bible get from God to us? I want to trace that process out of how the New Testament went from God to us. So we are going to go from inspiration to translations from God to us. Here is a big picture of the whole thing. First of all where did I get my NIV from? So we got first we start of the process of inspiration, in the process of inspiration, there are four processes that are involved here. In inspiration there is God speaking to a prophet or an apostle and the apostle or the prophet writes it down. So we've got the process of inspiration God speaking to an apostle and then he writes it down. Next after the apostle or prophet has written it down.

### **C. Canonization [2:11-3:12]**

There were many prophets some of which wrote God's word down that we don't have. It was never collected into what is called Canonical scriptures. Canonical scriptures is the collecting of books that God wrote. For example, in the Old Testament we know of the prophet Huldah, and we know that she was around the time of Jeremiah. She was a prophetess, God spoke to her. We've got another prophet Ahija who prophesied against Jeroboam and Rehoboam and around that time Ahija the prophet is reported in the book of Kings. We know of his writings. Solomon wrote 3,000 proverbs and we only got about 375 proverbs about 1/10. He wrote 1,000 songs and we've only got one Song of Solomon and a couple in Psalms. That was probably enough. But anyway, so the books and the canonicity process is the collecting of authoritative books. Some books are not collected and others are. This is the process of canonization.

#### **D. Transmission [3:12-5:28]**

After you get inspiration, God's speaking, the books are collected into a group. Now you have to copy them over and over again. They were copied by hand for thousands of years both Old Testament and New Testament. New Testament for 2,000 years was copied over and over again by scribes. Scribes are human beings. Scribes make mistakes. We've got copies of what the scribes copied over the period of 2,000 years thousands of scribes that early copied the word of God. When they copied it, sometimes they made spelling errors. Sometimes they did other things. We can look at the types of errors they made. But these scribes made manuscripts. Hundreds of years later we pick up the manuscript that was made by a scribe say in Alexandria. We've got a scribe that was in Mount Sinai in St. Catherine's monastery and he copied the scriptures. We have got a copy named Sinaiticus. As so basically the scribes copied these. As they copied them, they copied them on different materials too and that would affect how long these materials would last. If they copied them on vellum, or animal hides, it would last a long time. Animal hides leather last a long time. But if they copied it on papyrus--papyrus is kind of like a cross between a bamboo ruin and a bull rush and basically the fibers of that organic material cross together to make paper. But the problem is that they are made out

of organic plant and what happens is that if there is any moisture in the air then the papyrus just disintegrates. Papyrus only last in places like Egypt. So the scribes had all sorts of problems there. Now once we've got these manuscripts and we collect these manuscripts from all over the world. Scholars like Bruce Metzger and other people, Kurt Aland collect these manuscripts from all over the world and they compare them one with the other. Then they give us an edited text saying, "Okay, we've got 10 manuscripts like this, 10 manuscripts like that. They weigh all the manuscripts and then they give us the Greek text. That's what we have in the Aland New Testament or the UBS Greek New Testament and it will tell you which manuscripts have which.

#### **E. Translation [5:28-6:16]**

Then we translate from those, the UBS Greek text over into English. Whenever you go between two languages like Greek in the New Testament, we are going from Greek to English. There are going to be differences in how translators translate. So the Kings James Version is going to be different from the NIV. It is different from the Living Bible, different from the NLT [New Living Translation], the ESV or the NRSV. Each translation group is going to be translate it differently. Eugene Peterson's, The Message, will be different yet. So they will be different in the process of translation then between languages after the scribal differences have taken into account. So that's basically the four processes.

#### **F. Verses on Inspiration [6:16-8:16]**

What I would like to do is look at them in just a little bit more detail. We've done some of this before in Old Testament. This is the classic verse on inspiration. Let me just read this. This is 2 Timothy 3:16. It is a very famous verse, very important verse to the process of inspiration. "All scripture is inspired by God,"-- actually the word there is "God breathed." "All scripture is God breathed and is useful to teach us what is true and make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right." I think that is the NLT. You can see the NIV up here. "All scripture is God

breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting and training for righteousness.” What is interesting is that Paul is talking to Timothy here and he says Timothy your mother has taught you the scriptures and your grandmother has taught you the scriptures from when you were a little kid. What scriptures is he talking about? The scriptures that Paul is talking about when he says “all scripture,” he’s talking about the Septuagint because Timothy was Greek in orientation and he would have been taught the Greek scriptures-- the Septuagint. So it is important to realize this. Now here is a great verse too. In 2 Peter 1:21-- this is another classic verse on inspiration. It says this: “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” Now the point of this is that the prophecy did not come from the will of man. It wasn’t human beings making up legends and stories and passing them down. Scripture never had its origin from the will of man. But man spoke from God and was carried on by the Holy Spirit. This was the work of God. So these two verses then, as well as others highlight the notion of God speaking and the prophets writing things down in the inspiration.

### **G. Advantages of Written Records: Preservation [8:16-9:25]**

What are the advantages of written records? God spoke many things, Jesus spoke many things for example at the end of John 21, I believe it is. John said “Jesus spoke many other things that are not recorded in these books. But these are recorded that you might believe.” So Jesus spoke many times, Jesus preached many sermons that aren’t recorded in our Bibles. But Jesus spoke orally. So what are the advantages of having things written down and moving from oral to written? One of the benefits of written texts is the notion of preservation. When I speak in a class to 100 students the words come out of my mouth and within ten minutes most of them have forgotten what I said. So words come out and they go into people’s heads and they last only so long. When something is written down, that can last for 100 years easily. When something is written down it can be preserved whereas the oral stuff goes out into the airwaves and is gone. So there is benefit in terms of preservation.

## H. Precision [9:25-12:38]

A second thing is precision. When a person speaks, things go by rather quickly. You have to catch them quickly and they pass by and it is hard to analyze things. When you've got a written text, you can take it read it and mull it over, look over, think it over. You can exegete it, you can do studies on various words, do studies on syntactical grammar. You can look at discourse features and rhetorical features of it. There are all sorts of perspectives, you can look at and take it from various perspectives. So precision, when something is written down it is very interesting to, even in terms of doing these videos. When somebody is speaking and I find myself in many of these videos, I speak very sloppily. When I write I write in a much more precise way. There is a big difference in terms of how something is written down and if any of you have written college papers, you realize that you don't talk like those papers that you write. When you write, it's with much more precision and much more accuracy, and much more conciseness. When I speak, often I repeat myself. If you repeat yourself in writing, what would your English professor do? Well they would write the word redundant. Because in written form you really don't write the same thing twice. It is considered redundant. It is negative, whereas when you speak, you most often do repeat yourself. If anybody has listened to the most recent political discourse, you know that they repeat the same talking points over and over and over and over again. Even in major speeches where they speak to the State of the Union half of these phrases we've heard already so it is just a repetition. So when a person writes, it is much more precise than when one talks "the oral aspect of things."

So precision is writing things down and also propagation. When a person talks, it goes by word of mouth--you speak and it goes out to say 100 people here and now. But when I write, you can put it on the internet and billions of people can see it. A video can go viral and 17 million people can watch this video. So basically when you've recorded something or you've written something down it can be propagated. The Bible is one of the most published books in the world. Millions and millions of copies are going out

across the world in almost all the languages of the world. So when something is written down it can be propagated. It can be spread. Scribes can copy it. Multiple scribes can copy it. It can multiply and multiply and multiply, more so than a spoken word.

So it is very beneficial for us that the records were written down. The Scripture that God spoke to the prophets “Thus saith the Lord” – he spoke to the prophets and the prophets/apostles wrote it down in the New Testament. So now we’ve got God speaking to the apostles and the apostles writing it down. We will have a talk about Mark and Luke and authorship and see how things work out.

### **I. Writing the New Testament: Apostles dying out [12:38-14:48]**

Why did the early church start to collect the books of the apostles into what we know as the New Testament? What forces were pushing the writing? Why did the disciples decide to write this stuff down? Jesus had spoken to them, they had heard the sermons. They knew the stories of Jesus. Why did the apostles start writing these down? Why did most of the gospel writers? Most of the gospel writers we think are written in the 50’s. After Jesus there is a 20 or 30 year period there were they weren’t written. They may have been written in short stories or fragments and then collected. We are not sure about all of that. There is a prehistory kind of thing about the documents. Why in the 50’s and 60’s was there a big push for these things to be written down so that the gospel writers wrote? Because of the death of the apostles. The apostles were eye-witnesses. Mark was not an apostle but he was probably an eyewitness in Jerusalem. Matthew was an eye-witness. John was an eye-witness. Peter and Paul were witnesses. So as these people were dying off it became a great need to have these stories written down because when they are written down, they last.

I have got an example of my own family when my son got back from Afghanistan, he’s got these really interesting stories. So he tells these stories in oral format and things but they are not written down. So what happens is the stories change from time to time. Also then they are not recorded, they go into the air. My wife and I hear them and then

they are kind of gone. There is a need to preserve something and you want to write it down. But anyways the apostles are dying off. The stories of Jesus, they need to write those down. The people are probably clambering after the apostles, “Hey Matthew, it’s nice to know you know all these stories about Jesus and you have told us all these stories but write it down because it’s going to last, you’re going to die” and mostly all of the apostles were killed. Almost all 12 of them except John possibly died of martyrdom. They were dying so it pushed the stories to be written down.

### **J. Writing NT: Geographic Spread [14:48-15:39]**

There is also a geographic spread of Christianity. Before when it was in Jerusalem, all the apostles were in Jerusalem. They could check with one another and recite the stories of Jesus and go over different things. But as things began to spread out there was more need to write them down so that the record could be taken to other places taken to the church of Ephesus, for example, or to the church of Corinth. They wanted it to be taken to Rome and the story had to be written and taken from them to Rome. So the geographical spread of Christianity led to this unity and diversity as it spread. When you wanted to make sure things were right, there is a need to write things down and preserve it.

### **K. Heresies [15:39-17:17]**

Here is another big one. In the early church, this is coming in the second century-day after 100 AD. You started to have Heresies creep up. You had Montanism- prophets coming and saying they are speaking from God. And you say, “wait a minute you are going to have the same thing as what we had in the New Testament.” So you say, you’ve got to have some New Testament documents to discern what is true and what is erroneous. Gnosticism, in the second century in particular was growing where it was this clear cut favoring of the spirit over the body and the secret knowledge that was supposed to be claimed by the Gnostics. What happens is that the Christians are saying “No, that is not Christianity.” You needed your documents written down. You need to be able to pull

your documents together. You will know how to refute these errors that were creeping up in the heretical types of things. Marcion... Dr. Willson has a section of Marcion in his book *Our Father Abraham*. Marcion basically looked at the Old Testament and he didn't like the God of the Old Testament so he dismisses the Old Testament and accepts only the New Testament. Well, that is not right. So the early church had to deal with these kinds of opinions which were foisted on the church and the church had to defend itself. So they had to decide which books are we going to accept as holy and from God. And which books do we reject? The opinion of Marcion was rejected. The Old Testament is good and referred to as the "first testament" as Dr. Wilson calls it.

#### **L. Writing the New Testament: Pastoral Concerns [17:17-18:14]**

Now there were also pastoral concerns. When a preacher gets in the pulpit and preaches which sermons are from God? The preacher just doesn't want to preach his own ideas. He wants to speak from a text that is from God. God to his apostles to his peoples. So if he is going to preach the word of God which books is he going to use to preach to his people? Which books are not from God? Now, by the way, there may have been some interesting, for example, the Shepard of Hermes or the letter from Clement of Rome. The Letters of Clement might have been interesting to the early church fathers who were also writing letters. Those letters may be interesting and homiletically helpful to the early church but the preachers are going to want to know what is the word of God and what Clement is going to say. Clement is going to say something that is interesting but is not actually the word of God. It may be beneficial to his church in terms of stories but it's not the word of God.

#### **M. Writing the New Testament: Persecution [18:14-19:35]**

Lastly, this one is pretty big: persecution. In the early church there was persecution. Now a lot of the persecution came locally. Local communities as you see in Paul in the first missionary journey when he gets beat up usually due to local causes. Matthew makes a point about this. Mathew was a Roman tax collector and if you would



squeeze out the Christians to totally decimate Christians from Rome's perspective, Rome didn't really care too much. It was mainly local communities that put the pressure on Christians. What books are you going to die for? You've got a book that is The Shepherd of Hermes and you've got the gospel of Matthew. Are you going to die for The Shepherd of Hermes? The Shepherd of Hermes is not the word of God. That is a problem. The book of Matthew is the word of God. That is a problem. So the early church had to decide which books they were going to die for and which books they're not going to die for. They wanted to know which ones recorded the word of God, and which ones are that important. So for these reasons then, the church had to decide which books are merely human and which books are the word of God.

### **N. Canonicity [19:35-22:29]**

Now, how is canonicity discovered? What are the key questions on how they figured out which books were inspired and which books came from God? First question you ask is, was it inspired? Is the book inspired? Did the New Testament writers as they were writing, did they know they were writing scripture or did they just think they were writing a letter to the church to Colossi or Ephesians and it's not really the word of God? It came to be considered the word of God but it really wasn't. What you have is some interesting passages here. Let me read you Revelation 22:18, John at the end of the book, at the end of the apocalypse he says this: "If anybody adds to them these words he's written, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away these words away from the book of this prophecy, God will take away from him, his share in the tree of life." So in other words, I wrote this book. These words are from God. You don't add to these words and you don't subtract to these words. If you add them you are going to have problems because you are adding to yourself the plagues from this book. If you take away from them, you are going to take away the tree of life from yourself. By the way, that's very similar to what happened in Deuteronomy when Moses was writing. Moses said in Deuteronomy 4:2, "Don't add or subtract." So there is this kind of saying that these things are from God. You can't mess with these things. It is

interesting over in 1 Corinthians 14:37, Paul makes this comment concerning the commands of the Lord “If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.” So Paul was aware that what he was writing to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14 was the Lord’s command. It was from the Lord. And so he acknowledges that in 1 Corinthians 14:37. What I am trying to say is as he writes in 1 Corinthians 14 he seems to have awareness that what he is writing is not from himself. You can go back to the 2 Peter 1:21 that the Scripture was not from the will of man but Holy men were carried along by the Holy Spirit. They were aware that something special was going on in that process. So is it inspired? Does it make the claim? Does it make the claim to be from God? Now Clement from Rome was considered inspired by many but it is not in the canon. It was not accepted.

#### **O. Canonicity: Agreement with Previous Revelation Criterion [22:29-24:03]**

Second criterion, I’m kind of putting these things together. Does it agree with previous revelation? And this becomes a problem. Polycarp is orthodox. So what he wrote agrees with previous revelation. James was questioned because James said “Faith without” what? “Faith without works is dead.” Well then you’ve got Paul saying, “it’s by faith through grace that not of ourselves. Not by works of the law lest anyone should boast.” – It is not of works that any man should boast. James says “faith without works is dead.” Don’t tell me about your faith! The devil has the belief that there is a God! So you’ve got to face it. Whereas Paul says, “No, no, don’t work and boast.” So James was questioned. Some of you are probably aware of Martin Luther. Martin Luther said of the book of James that it was “a right strawy epistle.” Luther questioned James because Luther was pushing justification by faith and by faith alone. So it didn’t fit his scenario so he says James writes a “strawy the epistle.” He pushed it to the back of the New Testament then because he questioned it thinking it disagreed with previous revelation as he understood it. So this seems to be one criterion you see the books being questioned on the basis of this criterion. Does it agree with previous revelation?

**P. Canonicity: Prophetic or Apostolic [24:03-26:01]**

Here is another category. Is it prophetic or apostolic? Is it written by a prophet or an apostle? You've got the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. They are all prophets. If you say Moses--Moses is the big prophet of the Old Testament. David again, King. In the New Testament you ask, if this person is an apostle? Matthew will be written by an apostle. Acts and Luke will be written by Luke probably under the oversight of Paul. Paul will be an apostle out of due time coming to the Lord late. There is an interesting connection there with Jude who is possibly the brother of Jesus. Is it apostolic or is it prophetic? Did it come through channels that God had to approve as either from a prophet or apostle? In many of the Pseudepigrapha notice they pick up and associated their gospels with an apostle. For example, there is the Gospel of Thomas or the Apocalypse of Peter or the Acts of Paul. So in the Pseudepigrapha they used these names of the apostles to give it stature. So they could tell and see the authorities in these names. So this seems to be one of the things here. By the way the book of Hebrews was questioned, because who is the writer of Hebrews? Hopefully when you take this course at the end of this course you will know who the writer of Hebrews is. I don't think so. The writer of Hebrews is a great mystery. But the book of Hebrews was questioned because they were not sure who wrote it. Was it Luke that wrote it? Was it Paul who wrote it? Was it Apollos that wrote it? We don't know who wrote it. So the book was questioned on the basis of this principle.

**Q. Canonicity: Acceptance by the People of God [26:01-33:16]**

Was it received by the people of God? This is another category that comes up. Was it received by the people of God in the early church? Did the people of God receive it as the word of God? There is a beautiful verse in 2 Peter 3:15. I just want to talk about that for a second. Here is what it said, but first let me just lay the background of Peter and Paul. Peter and Paul in the early church, Peter was the "Peter upon this rock I will build my church." Peter was the big guy. In the first nine chapters of the book of Acts, Peter is

one of your major characters. Peter is the one that comes to Cornelius and the Jerusalem council. Peter is the man. But what happens is Paul comes out in the scene late. Paul is let's say on his way to Damascus which is chapter 13 in the book of Acts. So Paul is saved later. Jesus meets Paul later so he is made an apostle by Christ directly. So what you have in the early church then is a conflict between Peter and Paul. Paul is ministering to the Gentiles as Peter was ministering to the Jews. Now the question is, do the Gentiles have to be circumcised in order to become Christians? In other words, did the Gentiles have to become Jews first? And then become Christians? Or could the Gentiles become Christians without becoming Jewish, with no circumcision? All the Gentiles voted against that. They all said, "No, we don't like this circumcision." But anyways did the Gentiles have to be circumcised? And also did they have to eat kosher? Could they not eat pork or lobster and all these kosher rules? Did they have to abide by those kosher rules? Paul said, "No, they don't have to eat kosher and they don't have to be circumcised. Abraham was justified by faith just before he was circumcised. So the Gentiles don't have to be circumcised." Peter said, "You know, I've never eaten anything unclean."

In the book of Galatians Paul says that he confronted Peter to his face and rebuked Peter to his face. Galatians records the interactions between Paul and Peter saying Paul rebuked Peter. Now Peter was the big guy in the church. Paul was kind of an up-start. Paul is now rebuking Peter. What do you think Peter's attitude is going to be towards Paul? He's going to be the person in power. What is Peter's response to Paul? In 2 Peter 3:15, Peter makes a comment back about Paul and his writings. Here is what he says, and this is actually quite interesting. 2 Peter 3:15 says, "Just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom God gave him." Now notice here, Peter recognizes that God has given Paul a lot of wisdom. Right up front he recognizes it. God is speaking through Paul. With the wisdom that God gave him, "he writes the same way in all his letters speaking in them of these matters." Peter seems to be aware of a Pauline collection. He is aware that Paul wrote more than one letter. Apparently there is some sort of Pauline

collection. I'm not saying that it was totally complete to what we have, but he was aware that Paul wrote more than one letter. And he's got this little, and "in all these letters he writes the same way speaking of these things. His letters contain." Now this is interesting coming from Peter. Peter was a what? Peter was a fisherman. Peter was a fisherman--not a highly educated person. Paul, who, on the contrary, studied under the Gamaliel, one of the greatest rabbis of all time. Paul was a very gifted thinker and studied under Gamaliel and knew Judaism very well. He was trained under the Pharisees of the Pharisees. And Paul was incredible. Okay? So now how does Peter react to Paul's letters? Peter the fishermen. Peter says, "his letters contain some things that are hard to understand which ignorant and unstable people distort"--now here is the punch line... "which ignorant and unstable people distort as they do the other scriptures." "As they do the other scriptures... to their own destruction." Peter is saying that Paul's letters are just the same as the other scriptures. They refute unstable people as they do the other scriptures. Peter is putting Paul's letters on the same level as the other scriptures. So Peter is now acknowledging that what Paul is writing is from God. This is the same level as the other scriptures. That is a very important interaction between Peter and Paul. 2 Peter 3:15 is a great verse.

Now let me take a different tactic and go over and pick up 1 Timothy 5:18. What is interesting here is this phrase that is fairly famous. It says "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the corn. Do not muzzle the ox as it is treading out the grain." Okay? Where does that come from? That comes from Deuteronomy chapter 5:4: "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain, For the scripture says..." This is how they introduce it "For the scripture says do not muzzle the ox while he is treading out the grain." And that is like the book of Deuteronomy. "As scripture says," and he quotes Deuteronomy 5:4. Then the next part of this verse says, "And the worker deserves his wages." He is now quoting from Luke 10:7. The scripture says that is from Deuteronomy and then he puts those scriptures back to back as Scripture. Both being labeled as those scriptures say "Do not Muzzle the Ox. And a worker deserves his wages." This is a very

interesting verse here. He is putting Deuteronomy and Luke at the same level. Again, so what I'm trying to say is early on it wasn't hundreds and hundreds of years later. The Scripture gained authority and became more and more prominent hundreds of years later. No! We are talking Timothy right there. He puts Luke and Deuteronomy side by side. We are saying Peter is already aware of Paul's collection; they distort them as they do the other scriptures putting them on the same level as scriptures. Immediately Peter dies about 40, 65AD. So already about 65AD you've got Peter talking about the collection of Paul's writings and that they were Scripture.

### **R. Canonicity: Is it dynamic to change lives? [33:16-33:57]**

The last question people ask is "is it dynamic?" Is the book dynamic? Does it come with the power of God? Does the book have the ability to change people's lives? This is the pastoral concern. Some people question the book of Luke for example, saying that it really doesn't come with the power of God. So the question on the book of Jude on the basis of this: the word of God comes with the power of God. So these are some criteria. Again it is not some criteria that makes up this canonicity but these things play the role as the church was analyzing these documents to figure out which ones were the God as they were being collected.

### **S. Circulation Problem [33:57-36:43]**

Now there is a problem in what is called the Circulation problem. Paul wrote a letter to the Ephesians. That meant that the church of Ephesus got the letter. But there were a group of Christians up at Philippi who didn't have the letter. So basically the letter to the Ephesians was known in Ephesus but not known in Philippi. The Corinthian church Paul wrote 3/4 or 2,3,4 letters to the Corinthian church. The Corinthian Church letters were not known over in Colossae. Paul also wrote letters to the Colossae for a small time. So what happens is that the churches had to share these letters. Basically, then there was a circulation problem. Then with the church of Ephesus, that document has to be copied and then sent off to Philippi. Then the people at Philippi wonder is this really a

letter from Paul to the Ephesians? Is this really legitimate? How do we know this? So then the documents just got circulated from these various churches that had them. So the process of circulation took a long time. Then what are you going to do if you are down in Egypt? Paul is writing all these letters up in Greece and Turkey and your down in Egypt and things. And so it could be 20 or 30 years before you get a copy of say 1 Corinthians or something like that or in Thessalonians. I mean it could be 30 or 50 years before you see that. The church then had these letters to be circulated around to other churches. As they were circulated and then you will ask is this really from Paul. Is this really from Peter or Paul or James or whatever? So it is important I think to realize that none of the New Testament writers got to see the New Testament. Matthew never saw it. Thomas never saw it. Philip never saw it. They never got to see the full New Testament.

Actually the book of John will be early. The book of Revelation will be probably not written till the 90's. Well, in the 90's Peter is dead in 65 or so and Paul is dead in 68 or so. Most of the apostles are long gone before the book of Revelation in 95/97, somewhere around there. All the apostles are gone. They never saw the completion of the New Testament Canon. The New Testament canon, that document would be sent to the Asian Minor--to the western part to the seven churches of Asia Minor and would get circulated but the people in Rome wouldn't have that until quite a bit later or a century later before the document actually got over there. So I think that is an important thing to realize. None of the New Testament writers could see the New Testament put together.

### **T. Collecting by the Church [36:43-38:08]**

Circulation problems--Ephesus had it but Jerusalem didn't. Basically, what had happen was Philippi would get a letter from Ephesians saying that okay? Now we've got Ephesians. Then we got Thessalonica and Philippi is next to Thessalonica. So they swap pretty early. This is difficult then. So each church kind of collected them as they got them, but it would take a long time to swap these books. It wasn't like you could just go and say okay we've got a letter from Paul sit down with a Xerox machine and just Xerox it on. Put it and Xerox or Fed-ex it over to a church. No these things had to be hand

carried and had to be hand copied. This was a long process and so the church was very meticulous. And I think that is what I would like to say. There was a problem with collecting the books that were circulated around.

The church was very meticulous in collecting and very meticulous in deciding which books were considered the word of God. Because they were so meticulous the process took hundreds of years. It took a while before the whole thing was put together. So the collection process taking time and authentication needed so these documents would have to be authenticated before they could be accepted. And the collection process took quite a while.

#### **U. Canon—2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Century AD [38:08-40:01]**

Here are just some things and I don't want you to know these things, but there was a guy named Lee MacDonald and he was a friend of mine, you know the BBR or IBR people who did the research and who did 100 pages on the canonization process on the New Testament and how the New Testament was collected including the early church fathers and describing various councils and various things and how they interacted with the canon. So I recommend these types of books on the canon. The Muratorian Canon was all but 1, 2 Peter and James and Hebrews. So it has the New Testament. This comes from about 170 AD. So that is about 80 years after John finished the New Testament there a little under 75 years or so. 75 years later it got a hold of the whole New Testament. They had the Wisdom of Solomon and there is a dispute over the Wisdom of Peter near The Shepherd of Hermes, but not in the canon. So this was the Muratorian Canon.

You see this in one of the early church fathers. You see he is going to write about 325 AD. 325 AD is pretty important because that is when- does anybody remember 325 AD and the Roman Empire? 325 is the date for Constantine. 325AD is about when Constantine becomes a Christian. Now all of a sudden you've got an emperor and you've got a person in Rome who is a head of the Roman Empire who is a Christian. So



everything is going to change now from antagonism or this tension between the Romans and Christians. Now all of a sudden you've got a Christian emperor. So Eusebius is studying right around that time and he's got what is called the homologomena going on where everyone accepts the gospels; Acts, the Pauline epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John and Revelation.

#### **V. Antilegomena [40:02-46:10]**

Another question is whether they accepted these things and they have got what you call the "Antilegomena." Now what are the Antilegomena? Some of you have had me for the Old Testament and you will realize that the Antilegomena in the Old Testament is where there are five books in the Old Testament that were questioned. "Anti" means "against" and "legomena" means "to speak" or "speaking against." There were books that were spoken against. There were five books in the Old Testament and that would be what? Proverbs because of the answering not a fool and there is answer a fool in the next verse. In Proverbs 24:5 it says to answer a fool. The book of Esther was questioned because the name of God does not appear in the book of Esther. What other books? Song of Solomon, for sexual reasons there were early books and Jews didn't know what to do with the sexual aspects of things. The book of Ezekiel was questioned because the temple mount that was described there was way too big. And then, of course, Ecclesiastes was another one. Ecclesiastes "vanity of vanity, all is vanity", I know you've heard that one. It tends to be a very pessimistic book although some don't consider it to be pessimistic at all. It asks the big questions but doesn't provide you with the answers. Anyways let's get out of there. So those are the antilegomena of the Old Testament.

The New Testament also has a series of books that are Antilegomena - books that are spoken against and the ones that are questioned. One would be James. Why would James be questioned? Because you read James after you read Paul. So you read Romans and Corinthians and Colossians and Ephesians. You read all of Paul's emotion and then you come to James. By the time you get to James, you are starting to think what? Faith

and then you don't do works because then you would boast. So then James comes along and says faith without works is dead. So then it looks kind of ridiculous. So then there is this tension between James and Paul and so James was questioned. Jude is a very strange book. It talks about Michael and angels. There are strange things in the book of Jude. Jude was probably the brother of Jesus and it is also parallel to 2 Peter. So Jude and 2 Peter are also very similar books and actually word for word similarities exist between 2 Peter 2 and Jude. So some people say you really don't need the book of Jude but you've got the book of 2 Peter that has Jude embedded in it. 2 and 3 John just small books and some raised questions in regards to what the relevance and situations that may not be relevant. Books that were rejected; The Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepard of Hermes, the Apocalypse of Peter and other books were rejected but some of them are answered and some of those are in 325. There is another one, sorry to dump all these things on it. Clearly, let me just narrate through it just to set a background. As you are looking for a manuscript of Sinaiticus, Sinaiticus has the best New Testament in it. One of the earliest and best manuscripts is Sinaiticus and it has the whole New Testament in it. Hebrews apparently is grouped with Paul's epistles and why are the epistles ordered the way they are? This is an interesting point. Why are the epistles put into things that Romans is first and 1 Corinthians is second. And Galatians, Philippian, Colossians seems like the letters are not arranged in chronological order. Romans was not the first letter. It was probably Thessalonians or Galatians first. Why is Romans and why is 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians? We know 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians were not the first ones. Basically, the larger letters were put first. Romans and Corinthians were put first because they were larger. So it seems to be a size consideration believe it or not in the ordering of the Pauline collection. So Paul's letters were there. "The Catholic epistles" were generally books not by Paul. The book of Revelation, of course, would come last because it is an apocalypse about the end of the world. So it makes a nice conclusion about the end of the New Testament.

Few would have seen a complete New Testament. Few would have seen a whole New Testament. The early council for the church- there is an East vs. a West. The Eastern Church vs. the Western Church is still seen to this day. Between the East and the

West there was some variation. The Council of Carthage in 397 AD establishes a New Testament that are these books. So you have the 27 books of the New Testament. So we know by 397 we have an account that says that these books are strictly the canon of the New Testament. So it is by 397.

We see that right from the beginning there were collections- Paul's collections... a little bit here and there. The churches put this together right from the start. But actually they had all of them together in 397. One of the church fathers Athanasius at 367. Athanasius was an early church father. He lists the 27 books of the New Testament. So by 367, you know you are talking a couple of hundred years and 50 years after in the New Testament was written, it is all together. Again it would take a long time to collect and circulate those books. So that is kind of the process of canonization of how things came together. They collected the various books over time. It shows that the church was meticulous. It shows that the church was careful on how they selected the books and approved them over time and spread them.

### **W. Manuscripts [46:10-48:54]**

Now let's switch. God speaks these prophets and to the apostles and the apostles and prophets write it down. That is the process of inspiration. Then we had the various letters collected, which is the process of canonization "bringing them together." Which ones are inspired by God? Which ones are accepted as the word of God? Which ones are not? And so which ones are collected and which ones are not. Which ones are rejected? Now once we've got all 27 of them have been collected, we have to copy them over and over and over again for 2,000 years. Up to the present they've got to be copied. Now the process of copying manuscripts and the process of copying them all over the world we see the manuscripts being found right now.

Manuscripts are still being found. I've got a friend I used to teach with, his name was Dr. Dan Wallace. Dr. Dan Wallace is one of the most intense scholars that I've ever had the privilege of teaching with. Very, very intense guy. He is really into Greek

manuscripts. I told you he's growing a Greek beard now. And over in Istanbul he found out that there is a Greek Manuscript right now, I'm talking 2011 now or 2012 actually. He's wanted to go over to Istanbul to get this manuscript out of Istanbul and publish it for the world and so they are still finding manuscripts till this day. Dan is going after that manuscript and I wonder if he's got it by now, when you compare the different manuscripts there is differences in the manuscripts. Some people like a Bruce Metzger Princeton will spend all his life reading manuscripts to determine the exact perfect text of the original because we've got all these different manuscripts that need to be correlated. So they correlate these manuscripts that have been copied by the scribes that have been found now and have been put together. These scholars will study them and put them together.

So the copying of the Bible, I should mention the fact about Christian scribes; Christian scribes versus Jewish scribes. Jewish scribes were excellent. Jewish scribes copied the word of God. They had quality control procedures, for example they would read through a document and they would follow all the letter "A's." So on this page there was supposed to be 27 A's on that page. If you didn't have 27 A's on the page then you would have to rip up your manuscript. So these guys were real meticulous. Jewish scribes that copied scriptures were professionals. They were professionally trained and had meticulous procedures for checks and balances and the proof reading and the balancing your reading to make sure that it was absolutely perfect and it was done perfectly.

#### **X. Christian Scribes [48:54-50:34]**

The Christians on the other hand, to be honest, what was the problem with the early Christians? 1) The Christians were not trained like the scribes. Most of the Christians were what? Most of them were apostles or fishermen. These guys were not trained scribes. They were fishermen and tax collectors. So the early Christians were not trained as professional scribes. Also, most of the early Christians were poor. When a person is poor, you have to worry about putting food on the table. You are not worried

about copying things and scribal techniques. So they were poor and probably most devastating was and they were most prescribed. Christians were persecuted from place to place in very local contexts. When you are persecuted and you have to flee from one place to another you are not going to produce good manuscripts and things. So there were many things that worked against the Christians becoming good scribes and producing good manuscripts. So there is a big difference between Christians scribes and Jewish scribes and you've got to be aware of that.

Now by the way the Old Testament had commanded the king to copy the law. The king of Israel was commanded to make a personal copy. He was to personally copy the law himself. At the Jewish feast they would read the various things of the Jewish feast were into much of reading Scripture. It was mentioned that these things be read in public and shared and the Christians scribes would be aware.

#### **Y. Written vs. Oral [50:34-59:15]**

Now there is a difference between the written records versus the oral. Did Jesus ever write anything down? We've got Jesus's sermons. We've got the Sermon on the Mount. We've got the Olivet Discourse and various sermons that Jesus preached if you think about it, just to set a background for the synoptic problem, when Jesus preached he went from one place to another. He went from Chorazine to Bethesda over to Capernaum to Nazareth and then they went down to Jerusalem. Did Jesus ever preach the same sermon twice? Most likely he did. So he would go from place to place. The disciples would here the sermons three or four different times.

I know that my first job was teaching the Bible down in Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tennessee. We're down there in Tennessee and when I was down there I wasn't making much money at the time and so I was teaching scriptures at this Bible College and so in order to make ends meet, I had a young wife I had to support and we had a trailer and we were taking care of some guys cattle who was allowing me to live in this trailer virtually for free.

Various people were helping us. I was a circuit rider preacher, and so I would go to five different churches and I would preach at one, preach at the next one, over 5 weeks. I would make my way around five churches and then I would start all over again. It was kind of interesting. When I did that, I would preach the same sermon at each church, and my wife always said when you first preached it was terrible; she's honest with me. Then the second time it was much better, the third time, she said the third time was the best. She said by the fifth time I could tell you were bored with your own sermon. Jesus undoubtedly preached the same sermon multiple times, or at least different aspects of it. We got a guy here at Gordon College named Dr. Graham Bird, who plays jazz piano, as well as he's trained in the classics. He would play the same song; one time he'll play it as a classical piece and be played in a classical way, and then all of a sudden he'll decide ok, I'm going to play the same song again, only now he'll play it as jazz. He plays the same song, but now it sounds like jazz. Then he'll take the same song he'll stop again and start up again and he'll play it now as a gospel tune. So what happens is it's all the same song but it sounds different in the different ways. How he plays tells you the audience that he's with. If he's got classical audience, he plays classical. If he's got gospel audience, he plays gospel. So he is able to take the same thing and do jazz with it. I like that metaphor because I think that's what Jesus probably did as he goes from place to place. Depending on the audience he would speak differently. A lot of the times it would be the same content but in different form and shape according to the needs of the audience he was addressing. So that's why I think in some of Christ's sermons when you get in the gospels there's going to be variations on how he says things was because I think he preached the same thing more than one time in various places. Getting back to this oral vs. written Jesus spoke kind of like Socrates. Do you remember Socrates? Socrates didn't write anything down. Socrates was a teacher, it was Plato his student that wrote it down and that raises the great Socratic problem how much of this is Plato reading back his own ideas into Socrates. How much of is really Socrates? We're lucky to have the word of God. So we have got to guarantee that it's from God. Plato, and then Aristotle, one generation later, gets us from Socrates to Plato and then to the Aristotle.

We have got Jesus and the apostles writing it down. But it started out oral and Jesus is going to preach sermons. A lot of when Jesus talks to his hearers would not be written down initially. Did Jesus write anything? The answer is “no.” His apostles were the ones who wrote it. Jesus told stories like the Sermon on the Mount and the Olivet Discourse (Mat 24-25) which were remembered by his followers.

Now this is important to distinguish between our culture and their culture a very important distinction. In our culture when you hear something do you remember it? In our culture the answer is “no.” We hear hundreds of things every day. It goes in one ear goes through the hollow space and comes out the other side and we don’t remember what we just heard because we don’t remember things very well in our culture. In their culture back then they trained people to remember by hearing it once and so therefore there’s a book out called *Memory and Manuscripts* by a guy named Gerhardson I remember reading it, it explains how this whole oral thing that in ancient cultures a person would preach a sermon and you would have a person that could remember it almost word for word and recite that back. So they trained themselves they disciplined their minds to remember the audio. So one scribe in Egypt, I remember, in ancient Egypt was not wanting his children to learn how to write because he says if they learn to read and write they won’t remember what they hear. By the way, is that true? I think that’s what’s happened today people just write it down what they ought to remember it and so this Egyptian scribe of ancient times didn’t want to because they said they’ll learn to forget. I taught the maximum security prison for probably a decade up in Michigan City, Indiana and in there was a fellow named Probo, and Probo was an amazing man. He was a Vietnam vet. He was put behind the DMZ. They had a thing called the demilitarized zone. He would be dropped behind the demilitarized zone and he was given no weapons. He was dropped there with a knife and his lethal hands. They didn’t want a weapon because if he shot a gun it would make a noise and then they would know he was there and what he was doing was supposed to be illegal because he was behind the demilitarized zone. So he was dropped behind enemy lines and then he would just use

his hands and knife and do his thing. Probo was in my class. He was an Indian at the time, he was not a Christian. He would argue with me in class all the time it was really great I would love it he's probably about 3 or 4 or 5 years older than I was. And so we had some great argumentations I noticed he was taking Old Testament and he never took a note in the class. I thought, okay Probo, you think you're hot stuff, and we give this first exam and you're going to bomb this exam." Well, I gave the first exam and Probo scored the highest score of anybody in that class. So I went up to him after and I said, "You didn't take a note in this class, how'd you do that?" And I knew he didn't cheat, he's above that, he'd never do that. What happened? He said that he was trained, he had like a photographic ear, he could remember what was said because he said that in the military they trained him. He would get commands, the commands were not written down, the commands were oral through this radio transmitter, and he had to remember exactly what he was commanded. So he had trained himself to remember, he could quote back for me word for word some of the lectures I had said, when I couldn't even remember what I said. He could remember it word for word because he had trained himself. What I'm suggesting is people in Gerhardson's book *Memory and Manuscripts* demonstrated that many of the people in the ancient world were trained to remember what they heard. So it was very much an oral culture then. Walter Ong and others are doing kind of a modern media how orality is coming back in kind of a secondary orality now. People are moving away from books into the digital world. So anyway, just going back to it's important to remember that Jesus was oral, Jesus taught in an oral manner. An oral medium is different than a written medium. You have got to remember that even as a video medium you're getting here is different than the writing medium.

## **Z. Scribes and manuscripts: Miniscules, Uncials, and Papyri [59:15-68:26]**

Now let's go down to the scribes and the manuscripts. Here's basically the manuscripts, and they fall under three different types of manuscripts, okay, so when we look and we collect from all over the world New Testament manuscripts from ancient times. They fall into three types of manuscripts. First of all, you have the miniscule. The



miniscule (miniscule, “mini” means small, “scules” means writing), so minuscule is kind of like cursive. Similar to when you guys write cursive when you’re taking notes in class. It is cursive, scribble script, kind of cursive writing, lowercase cursive writing. These miniscules date from about 500 AD, a lot of them are from around 1000 AD, so this is the thousand years after Christ. They are writing Greek manuscripts, the scribes are copying Greek manuscripts, in minuscules, and there are thousands of these. You can see how the number system that they used is like 1099, 1087, or, 2300, and so they just give them a number. So, each one of the minuscules is given a number. There’s about 2800 of these, okay, and there are thousands of them. Now the miniscules are the latest, they come from a 1000 AD, and they were copied the latest.

Now, what happens is they have found another batch, about 300 of these uncial manuscripts. The uncial manuscripts are capital letter manuscripts. These are capital letter manuscripts, and this one here would be “A”, you see how they give them a symbol, they don’t give it a number because there is only, “A” would be like Alexandrianus, “b” would be Vaticanus, Alexandrianus was found where probably? Vaticanus comes out of the Vatican in Rome. This one here is Sinaiticus because it comes out of Sinai, it’s given a Hebrew letter, aleph. It’s from Mount Sinai, very early when it was found, it was found actually in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, I think around 1865 or so. This one was found “D” and so this is how they do it. The uncial manuscripts come from 300-500 AD. So the uncial manuscripts are earlier and better than the miniscule manuscripts then. By the way, can you tell immediately the difference between the minuscule and the uncial? The uncials will be all capital letters. By the way, the other thing is very interesting. In the uncial manuscripts, there’s no spaces between the words, so the words are all put back to back, no spaces between the words. Is that going to be hard to read? And so the people make the problems dividing the words up. The minuscule and uncials, these are our best manuscripts. This is Sinaiticus today, the Alexandrinus, these are our best manuscripts. This is basically what the New Testament

is built off of the uncial manuscripts. They weren't found until 19<sup>th</sup> century, until the 1800s.

Now the papyri is not a style of writing, that is the type of material that its written on. A lot of the uncials would be written on animal hides called vellum, animal hides hand leather, they would write on the leather. The papyri is basically a material that's kind of like a bull-rush bamboo combination. It stands pretty tall, and they'll push the fibers this way and that, and they'll push them together to make paper out of it, and they make a type of paper called papyrus. Now the problem is because it's made out of organic material, it breaks down. So papyrus in all other cultures doesn't last very long, a couple hundred years and the moisture in the air, the humidity, destroys it. But in Egypt, Egypt is so dry that the papyrus has lasted. And so we have found the papyrus, and they give it numbers like this P52, P46, and there's collections of about 96, actually there's many, many more fragments of these papyrus fragments, and the problem is the papyrus breaks. It's real brittle. Imagine after 200 years that's written on organic material. Its very, very brittle, and just breaks. Someone just picks it up and it breaks in their hands, But the date is 120 to 300 AD, and why that is really interesting is that some of the early manuscripts like P52 dates from about 120-125 AD. That is within 30 years of when John lived. In P52, we have a document from Egypt on John chapter 18, that they had to get all the way from Ephesus which is probably most likely where John was all the way down into Egypt 30 years from when John lived. We get a piece of the New Testament, from 30 years within John's lifetime we've got a piece on John chapter 18.

So what does a person like Bruce Metzger at Princeton do? He's an editor, he takes all these manuscripts, and he has to weight them: which ones are going to be considered the most important? You have a papyri, you see how early it is? That's some good data, you see this one, you got a whole book of things, the miniscules they're later, and so they may not be given as much weight. So now, here's a picture, this is a picture of P52, very interesting picture of John chapter 18 verses 31 through 33. You can see that its fragmentary, you see how its broken? That's just because of the nature of the material,

you can actually see, the oral strands of the ribs of the papyrus plant, you can see the ribs of the plant going here. In this paper you can also see the Greek letters that are written on there and actually, I can see the word, I believe its “kai” up there see that’s the word in Hebrew or the Greek words, the word “kai” means “and.” So this is basically a fragment out of John chapter 18 versus 31. P52 as they call it. This comes from down in Egypt, so it had to go all the way across the Mediterranean, go down into Egypt in 30 years of when John lived. That was kind of amazing actually. Now here is Codex Sinaiticus. Now this one’s very interesting. This Sinaiticus is a bug manuscript. It came from Mount Sinai. There was a guy named Tischendorf who went down to Sinai, I think this is about 1865 whereabouts, somewhere in the 1800s. And a little bit after Tischendorf went down there several times, he tried to get this manuscript. He actually made claims that the monks were tearing manuscripts and throwing it in the trashcan and burning it to stay warm, and so he rescued this manuscript. Other people say he stole the manuscript from the monks. The monks are still mad at him for stealing Sinaiticus. What he did was he got it out of the Sinai monastery in the 1860s and he brought it out to the rest of the world. This is pretty important. What you see is this is an uncial manuscript. Can you see that it’s all capital letters? It’s all capital letters, and there are no spaces between the words. They all run together, but in capital letters, and if you can read this: here’s the word “eidon” which means “I saw” and he goes on. You can read it but you have to know there are no divisions between the words and so you have to break it up in your own head when you go to read it. So this is a copy of manuscripts Sinaiticus. The papyrus, the miniscules, you see how are they the same, how are they different? And so an editor like Bruce Metzger will have to go through and say, these are the same over this way, these are all the same this way, make decisions on this as far as what is going to be the basic Greek text for us to translate from. So we’re asked to translate them. Here’s a blow up of Sinaiticus, and this starts off here, and then “hagios thetw,” and this is part of the Lord’s Prayer: “Pater hemon ho en tos ouranos” and then this is part of the Lord’s Prayer, as you can see, all the words run together, and how they’re all capital letters. This a sigma looks like a c now, it’s a little different than what were used to seeing sigma look

like--a different symbol than that, but c's were sigmas, and then this is *kai*. Anyways, this is part of the Lord's Prayer, you see all the words run together, there's no spaces between the words. So that is kind of neat.

### **AA. Other Greek Manuscripts [68:26-73:02]**

Now external sources in the New Testament, there are about 5000 different Greek manuscripts that are put together that come from all over the world--St. Katherine's Monastery is from Mount Sinai were found in 1865. Some papyrus as early as 125 AD. So 125 AD we have got the papyrus, going back the papyrus was found by Deismann, and some of those guys did a lot of the work with the papyrus around 1890, around 1910 right around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between 1880 say, and 1920. What's interesting is before the papyrus was found, the people picked up the Old Testament and the Septuagint and Greek in the New Testament. They couldn't figure out what type of Greek it was. They knew it wasn't classical Greek, and so some people suggested that the Greek of New Testament and Old Testament Septuagint was called, what they called, Holy Spirit Greek. It was a special Greek that the Holy Spirit designed especially for the Septuagint and the New Testament, so they called it Holy Spirit Greek. When Deismann and these guys found these papyri in 1880s to 1920, all of sudden they realized that the New Testament isn't Holy Spirit Greek at all. The Holy Spirit on this papyri were a lot of everyday documents. A document of a divorce, a document of "this guy owed me a \$100," and going back and forth just regular street talk. What they decided was the Koine Greek which is largely from 300 BC to 300 AD, the Koine Greek was the common language of the day. That brings up a very important point, and I need to make this point more often than I have: God always speaks the same language. What language does God speak? I tell my students, we should learn Hebrew because God obviously speaks Hebrew; he called Adam "a-dam" which is a Hebrew name meaning "dust," so he calls Adam "Dusty." Why? Because he formed Adam out of the *adamah* (ground). He forms Adam out of the dust. He calls him "Dusty." In Hebrew, Eve's name is "hava." It's a Hebrew name, "the mother all living," "the living one," and so those are Hebrew names.

Therefore when you go to heaven you better know Hebrew because otherwise you're going to have to take a two year crash course before he lets you into heaven. You've got to know Hebrew before you can get in and talk to him. What language is it that God speaks? When the Jews spoke Hebrew, Hebrew is nothing more than the Canaanite dialect coming down from 1800 BC or so. Hebrew is a Canaanite dialect. When they spoke Hebrew, he spoke Hebrew to them. When the Jews switched to Aramaic, in time of Daniel, when they went to Babylon, what did God do? God switched to Aramaic, and so some of the Old Testament is written in Aramaic. When Alexander the Great came through in 333 BC, what had happened? God switches to Greek. God always speaks the language of the people whether it's Hebrew, whether it's Aramaic, or it's Greek. He always speaks the language of the people.

What is the language of people today? That's why I'm so big on this digital stuff because the language of the people today is digital. It seems to me as Christians that we need to use the digital for the glory of God and the good of others. We need to put God's word into this new language, the digital language. So anyway, by the way, you have 26 letters in the alphabet, how many are in the digital alphabet? The digital alphabet has two: a 0 and a 1. With that 0 and 1 we can write letters like you do in your texting, we can write pictures as you do in your jpeg images, you can do mp3, you can do audio, you can do video like this H.264 mp4 video. With the 1 and the 0 we can explore all these mediums and hopefully use them to proclaim God's word.

### **AB. Comparing Translations from Greek, Latin Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic [73:02-75:02]**

So anyway, going back, Greek manuscripts, we've got 5000 Greek manuscripts and we gather all these manuscripts together and we compare them, to see where they disagree, to see where they agree with one another, and some as early as 125 A.D., 30 years after within the apostles.

Now the Greek New Testament was translated about 400 AD into Latin. As there was a shift from Greek to Latin, there was a guy named Jerome, and he was in Bethlehem and other places. He largely translated the Bible into Latin. This Latin Vulgate then was used for a 1000 years from about 400 to about 1400, 1500 AD and even to the present, I've heard monks chant out of the Latin Vulgate even until this day. The Latin Vulgate ruled for a 1000 years. We have about 8000 Latin manuscripts. Now we pair the Latin manuscripts with the Greek manuscripts. The Greek manuscripts are older and more original, but we can consult with the Latin manuscripts as well. There are 8000 of those and 400 AD from Jerome.

There are other early versions. The Coptic Church actually is still in Egypt to this day. You realize actually in the last year or so the Coptic Church has been burning down by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. It's really a shame. The Coptic Church has been in Egypt for over a 1000 years there. So we have a Coptic version of the New Testament, we also have a Syriac Version. With a Syriac version, from Aram or Syria, we can compare Syriac to the Coptic and the Greek that we have. We can compare the Syriac and see where it is different.

### **AC. Early Church Fathers' Quotes & Lectionaries [75:02-76:35]**

We have quotes from the early church fathers. The Early Church fathers are always quoting the New Testament. Now when an early Church father is quoting it, is it possible that he is misquoting it. Perhaps he missed a word or maybe, he's paraphrasing it. Sometimes we paraphrase the Bible we're not quoting it word for word, we're just giving a summary of what it says. But often times, they will quote it word for word, and so the scholars will go though and pull out those quotes from the early Church fathers. And you say, how is this similar, how is this dissimilar for what we have in our uncial manuscripts, and our papyri manuscripts, and in our miniscule manuscripts? How do the early Church fathers agree or disagree with that? So there are those 1000 of quotes that are sifted through.

Then there are also lectionary readings. Now you all know what lectionary readings are? They are in the back of your hymn book in most churches. We go down to Park Street church in Boston with Dr. Gordon Hugenberg, in the back of the hymnal there will be these scriptural readings. These scriptural readings are lectionaries, they're special readings that are compiled for the church and to be read at different seasons at Easter, Christmas, or whatever. There will be different readings on, prayer and repentance, you know, comfort, or whatever, they'll pull out several Scripture passages from different places and put them together. We've got early Church lectionary readings that we can compare. How are these similar or dissimilar to what we have in our early manuscripts, our early manuscripts being the miniscules, the uncials, and the papyrus?

**AD: New Testament compared with other ancient Manuscripts [76:35-78:22]**

Now, I want to compare the New Testament to something like Plato. Plato, the student of Socrates, we've got about 7 manuscripts on Plato from about 900 AD. You see the difference between that and five thousand Greek manuscripts of the New Testament going back to 125 AD within 30 years of when John lived. Plato lived, what, back what 400 BC, and our first and our best manuscripts are coming from 900 AD? Now this data may be old, my guess is they have found new manuscripts of Plato as they have found new manuscripts of the Bible but this coming from just a few years ago this is what we had about seven, a handful of manuscripts. The same thing is true with Aristotle. For Aristotle we've got basically 5 manuscripts. They date from 1100 AD. Where's Aristotle? Aristotle taught Alexander. Aristotle taught Alexander. Alexander's 333 BC. So we're talking, 300 years before Christ. Our earliest best manuscripts are 1100 AD. There's only about 5 or 6 of them. There are a handful of them. So I'm saying that it's very different compared to the Greek New Testament where there are over 5000 Greek manuscripts. Some of them go back within 50, 100 years to the time when the New Testament was originally written. So all I'm saying is that our manuscript evidence for the New Testament is very substantial and it is very early and there's no other document

like it. There is no other ancient document that can hold a candle to it. It's absolutely incredible. So we should be very proud and very confident in the Word of God that we've got.

### **AE. Uncial manuscript families [78:22-84:02]**

Now, when these manuscripts come, let's look at the Greek manuscripts. These editors that put the manuscripts together that pull all these thousands of manuscripts together that the scribes copy they group them into families. Now what's a family? You have a parent manuscript and a parent manuscript is copied by one scribe, two scribes, three scribes, or four scribes. But you see that all of these four scribes will all go back to that parent. So you have a parent and you have a child. You have a parent and it's copied five times you have five children. So those five children, if there's an error, suppose the original guy copied it wrong. He spelled "there," "t h i e r" he spelled it wrong, flipped the letters. Then these guys here in their five may also have that same error that the parent transmits down to the child. Then this child will group them into families. So this is the best family. This is the family of uncials considered the Alexandrian family, and there's three big manuscripts families. These are the three big ones. That much of the New Testament and Old Testament for that matter is based on. Codex Vaticanus, it's given the letter "B", Vaticanus and it comes from the 4th century period about 300 AD. This is going to be a big codex. Codex is a book. Do you realize? Before about 100 AD, we have scrolls. Prior to 100 AD things were written on scrolls. Then about 100 AD and following that's when we get book-bound books or codices. What is the difference between a scroll and a book? Well if you want to access something in a scroll you've got to scroll through it and you know you've got this big long scroll that you have to turn. When you have a book you have like almost instant access because you can jump into a book. It's bound and you can jump into a place and so it allows for easier access. With a book or codex was coming into vogue about 100 AD. It was a shift from scrolls to books, right about the time of the first century thereabouts and you know there's slop on both sides where it goes. Codex Sinaiticus comes from again, the 300s, 400s AD you know



they have trouble dating these things exactly. Then Codex Alexandrianus is the letter “A” and then it will be a fifth century 400s. So these are three of the big uncial manuscripts. They are considered the Alexandrian family. Alexandria was the place where they had the ancient Library of Congress. Alexandria is where they collected books from all over the world. They have some of the best books Codex Alexandrianus comes from probably that Alexandrian collection. There’s a Caesarean family and there’s a Western family. Now I’m going down, the Alexandrian family is given priority because we’ve been able to check it out and it seems to be the most accurate. You get all these other manuscripts and you check out which one’s the most accurate. The Alexandrian family seems to be the best. Caesarean a little bit worse. Western is a little bit down. The Byzantine texts come from the time of the Byzantines. So it’s going to be much later. There are many Byzantine texts. During the time as it gets later, you get more into the you know 600s, 700s up to 1000AD, the scribes are copying more and more manuscripts. Christians are no longer being persecuted. You’ve got the Roman Catholic Church. Then the Roman Church produces many manuscripts. So the Byzantine manuscripts are often called the Textus Receptus. Some people abbreviate this as the TR, the Textus Receptus, or the Majority Text. Some people call it the Majority just because there are so many of these minuscules. These are texts that are usually minuscules. There are 100s or 1000s of these minuscules texts as we’ve said there’s 2-3000 of these minuscule texts. So it’s called the Majority Text just because there are many more of the texts. But notice that though there are many more they’re much later. So they’re later than the other ones. The other ones are earlier, much earlier. We’re talking 3, 4, 500 years earlier. So these are the majority that they have the most. The Textus Receptus is what the King James is based on. King James’ version was done in 1611. King James sponsored it and they had you know 40, 50, 60 translators and he hired them basically and they did the translation, the King James translation. It’s an incredible translation, was very well done. It was done at about 1611. 1611, think about, William Bradford coming over to Boston and then the Mayflower and Thanksgiving in 1620. So that’s 9 years after this, they’re just America, people are coming, pilgrims are coming to America. So anyways, this is the majority text.

This basically is the background for the King James Version. Now, by the way, did the King James translators, know about Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, or Alexandrianus and the answer is no. They had no clue, Sinaiticus was only found in around 1865. So it was like 2-300 years later that these uncial manuscripts came and that people knew about them. So I don't fault the King James translators, they did the best with what they had. They had a lot of minuscules. So they used the minuscules. We know today that the minuscules are the latest, they came you know 1000 AD, so they're much later. We've got much earlier and much better documents now today, and we're able to coordinate 1000s of them. The King James' translators did not have computers and other things that they can coordinate manuscripts.

#### **AF. Evaluating Manuscripts [84:02-86:58]**

Here are some rules for evaluating manuscripts. These are rules that a person like Bruce Metzger at Princeton will use to evaluate. You've got two manuscripts and they have different readings, one says one thing, and another says another. How do you evaluate it? Well, one way you do is you say the earlier the manuscript is the better. That's not necessarily always the case but most of the time I'd rather have the document that's written in 200 AD rather than one that's written in 1200AD because if it's written in 1200AD it's been copied and copied over, every time it gets copied over you're going to have more likelihood of someone making some mistakes. Where something's earlier 200 it hasn't even been copied once or twice and doesn't have that much propensity to error. So the earlier is the better. Not always necessarily the truth, but that's a general rule.

The wider geographical spread is better. Let me give an example of this. Let's suppose you've got a thousand manuscripts in Boston, and let me say, they read the text one way: "For God so loved the world." Okay? And there are a thousand manuscripts that had it "For God so loved the world." What happens if you have five manuscripts that are from New York, five manuscripts that are from, let's say Philadelphia, five manuscripts

that are in Miami, five manuscripts from L.A., and five manuscripts from Seattle, and five manuscripts from Dallas, and all those thirty manuscripts from those six or seven different places, they all say “Then God Loved the world and gave his only begotten son.” They say “then” instead of “for.” Which would you take? Would you take the thousand manuscripts in Boston, would you take the other ones? See, if they’re spread out and they all agree from L.A. to Seattle to Dallas to Philadelphia and Miami, all those are spread out, the likelihood of those being corrupted is very small. Whereas if a thousand manuscripts are in Boston, yes, Boston may have more manuscripts but the problem is they probably copied off each other and so therefore that error is just reproduced, reproduced, and reproduced a thousand times. So the greater the geographical spread, the more likely it is to be correct. Not always, but generally, that’s a good principle.

Another is the family type. You check the family. The Alexandrian family, as far as they’ve been able to check is much more accurate than the Byzantine family. The Byzantine family is the Majority Text; mostly minuscules. It’s late, and the Alexandrian is very early uncial text and more likely to be correct. So you judge on the basis of family and family heritage.

### **AG. Types of Scribal Errors: Sight and Sound [86:58-97:26]**

Now, this section should be kind of fun. These are the types of errors the scribes made, and I just want you to think, suppose you were a scribe copying the New Testament. I’d give you a pen and ink, and I’d give you a piece of paper and I give you two reams of paper and you’re going to, say, how long do you think the New Testament is, copy by hand for 4 or 5 hundred pages. What types of mistakes would you make as you copied it by hand? First of all, there’d be errors of sight. Maybe you see the manuscript in front of you, it’s also hand written and you can’t make out what the guy’s done. So there may be confusion of similar letters, and so here’s an example of where the letter amicron and the letter sigma, you can both see that that they both kind of look alike, and so you could confuse those two letters. You could confuse those two letters, and so

sometimes letters will be confused because people write them in a weird way, so you can't tell exactly what the letter is. In English, the letter r and the letter r, I just did this in my own handwriting, the girl's name was "Mann" and I either spelled it, and when I typed it in my notes, it was "M a r r." I had her name as Marr rather than Mann. And so it's very interesting, the "n" and the "r," I got it confused in my own handwriting. So, you can confuse letters and that type of things. Homoeoteleuton, what is Homoeoteleuton? "Homo" means same, "teleuton" is from "telos" in Greek means "end." So Homoeoteleuton means having the same ending. Have you ever copied down a page and there you copy across, and the same word is here is found down here, and what happens is when your eye jumps back to the page after you've written it down and you jump back, the same ending as here is down here, your eye jumps down the page. You skip three or four verses, because it has the same ending. Homoeoteleuton, same ending and your eye jumps down the page because you came over here to write it and when you jumped back you jumped down the page, and you skipped three or four verses. By the way, if this happens do we have other manuscripts that we can correct this? We've got a thousand manuscripts, and we say, the guy just did this Homoeoteleuton, he just jumped down the page because of the similar endings here.

Haplography means it's written once and it should have been written twice. There may be a passage where Jesus repeats himself, and he says the same thing in two different places, and the scribe then when he writes it once he goes back and he says, oh I just wrote that, and he skips it then. It should have been written twice, but it was only written once.

The opposite of that one is, and this one is more frequent, is that the scribe writes something once. Actually I've done this too, when I'm typing, I'll type a line and then I type it over here and then I come back and I type the same line again. So I'd be typing the same thing twice. They call that dittography, like "ditto." It's written twice, the scribe copies it twice, but it should have only been written once, but he just he repeats himself, because his eye jumped back to the beginning of the line.

Now, what is Metathesis? How many of you have spelled this word “t h i e r”? You’ve switched the “e” and the “i.” “i” before “e” except after “c,” and so you switch them there automatically. So that’s called metathesis. This is when you take two letters and you switch them. And by the way, if you see this spelled, “t h i e r” is that going to confuse you? If you ever saw a manuscript a Greek manuscript of the New Testament, and it’s spelled “t h i e r,” would you know the writer just switched the letters? You’d know that instantly, and so this metathesis problem is usually fairly easy to come down.

Here’s one called “fusion.” Read this statement. Remember I told you the uncial text you saw Sinaiticus, all the words are put together. Fusion means two words are put together when they shouldn’t be then they should have been split apart. What does this read? CHRISTISNOWHERE. Is it “Christ is nowhere” or “Christ is now here.” What’s the difference? Reads exactly from the same root letters depending whether you split it “nowhere” or whether you split it here, “now here.” So this is an example of fusion. Things are fused together that should have been split apart.

Fission is the opposite. People split it apart when it should have been together. So fission and fusion whether the two words are stuck together or whether they’re pulled apart, and so these are errors of sight.

There are also errors of sound. Maybe the best way to do this is to do just do this in English. For example, write down for me the word “their.” Write down for me the word “their.” The word there is a homophone. Similar sounding, “their” can be spelled what? “T h e i r” and we just did it. “There” can also be spelled, you don’t know what the difference is between “their” and “there” sound wise. Then if someone wants to get creative you can say “there” is what “t h e y ‘ r e” for they are. Their book or their car or they’re here. There would be the other one. In Greek you’ve got the same thing. This word is pronounced “auton.” This word is pronounced “autwn.” So “auton,” “autwn” are pronounced exactly the same way. So if a guy is up standing in front of a group of scribes and they’re taking dictation from him orally, and he says outone, how do those

scribes know whether it's written like this auton or that autwn? They're pronounced exactly the same way. So those would be errors of sound.

There are also errors of mind. Errors of mind, one way would be substituting a synonym. Over the last couple of years I've had my students do these transcriptions, and sometimes when I listen, so they'll have to listen to a lecture and type it up. What is interesting to me is often times I go through and they have mistyped the word and they have substituted a synonym. You know Dr. Vannoy or MacRae will say this and then they will put in another word for that. So they'll switch a synonym for it. It's interesting our brains do this kind of automatically, harmonizing corruptions. Sometimes the writers didn't like to write certain texts in Scripture. Job is the classic example. In the book of Job, Job's wife says to him and I'll quote the exact the way the Hebrew, it's "Bless God and die Job, you know God's taken away your children, he's taken away all your wealth, you've got boils all over you now. Bless God and die." Well, everybody knows the text really should read, "Curse God and die." She wasn't saying bless God and die, she was saying "curse God and die," but the scribes did not like writing "curse God" so they wrote "bless God", and everybody knows that they need to switch that, that they need to flip it, but it's called harmonizing corruptions.

Conflation. This is an interesting one, would you rather add words to Scripture or take them away? Say you're a scribe and you've got one manuscript. This is actually out of the book of Acts where it says, "the church of the Lord." One manuscript says "the church of the Lord." Another manuscript says "the church of God." So one manuscript says, "the church of the Lord," the other manuscript says "the church of God." Do you know what you find 100 years later? What did the scribe do? In one manuscript it says "the church of the Lord," the other manuscript says "the church of God." 100 years later you know what you find? "The church of the Lord God." Now what did the scribe do? The scribe says he's got one manuscript that says "the church of God," one says "the church of the Lord," I don't know which one it is so if I make it "the church of the Lord God," I know I've got one, it's right either way. So what happens is the text had a

tendency to grow, now this is, now that's the important point. The text had a tendency to grow. Scribes would rather not delete stuff so they kept it in, so "the church of the Lord," "the church of God" becomes later on "the church of the Lord God." The text then has a tendency to grow. The title of the book of Revelation was originally, "the book of the apocalypse of John", and then it was "the apocalypse of John, the beloved disciple of Jesus", and then it was "the Apocalypse of John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, the pastor of the church of Ephesus" or something, and so the title of the book of Revelation just grew and grew and grew over the over the centuries. So the text had a tendency to grow, so which one of is probably right, the longer or the shorter? The shorter reading is to be preferred. So that's how these editors will go back and say no the longer reading is probably not right, so they go back to the shorter reading.

#### **AH. Rules for Evaluating Variants [97:26-99:15]**

Now, let's switch to this evaluating of variance. You've got two manuscripts and variance, they vary from one another. How are you going to evaluate the variance? Here's how people like Metzger the editors do it. They'll say the more difficult reading is to be preferred. The one that's harder to make sense out of. Scribes usually smooth things out to make it have meaning. So the more difficult reading is to be preferred, the one that's harder to understand. Scribes normally would have softened them so that the original reading is probably the more difficult one.

Here's what we just talked about. The shorter reading is to be preferred. The text had a tendency to grow. Therefore the more original is probably the shorter reading. Now these are not absolute people that are editors just weigh these things off. The shorter reading is usually to be preferred,. You don't always take the shorter reading but you have to work with these are the rules that they've noticed after examining all these thousands of manuscripts. The more difficult reading is preferred, and the shorter reading is preferred.

The reading that best fits the style of the writer, when you're in the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John, for example, and it says, "alhlwn" "one another." John uses that word, "one another," all over the place. So if you see one manuscript has "one another" and the other one doesn't have it, it probably was "one another" because that fits the style of writing of John. "Amen, amen legw humin"—"truly truly I say unto you" another idiom that John uses. So you see that you know as soon as it says, "amen, amen" you know that it should be "legw humin" because that's what he always says. So usually the reading that best fits the style of the writer is chosen.

### **AH. 3 Major Textual Problems in the New Testament: Mark 16, John 8, 1 John 5:7 [99:15-101:55]**

Now, there are three big examples of problem text in the New Testament, and these three big examples. In other words, these are three places where the manuscripts disagree with each other. You see we've got 5000 manuscripts there's three places that are big and crucial. Most of the problems between the manuscripts don't amount to a hill of beans. Most of them, it's the difference between spelling "t h i e r" and "their," when you see it, you know immediately it's no big deal. None of these textual variations effect any doctrine. So it's just you know, these aren't really critical things but some people say, the Bible's got all these textual variations, it's not a big deal it doesn't really affect that much to be honest with you, I just want to reduce them down and then we'll talk about them next time. The ending of the book of Mark is really important Mark chapter 16 verses 8, 9 and following, there's a break there, at the ending of the book of Mark. The ending of the book of Mark is one of the major problems in text criticism.

John 8, the story about the woman caught in adultery, and these Pharisees are trying to stone her to death, they come to Jesus. Should she be stoned, she's committed adultery, and Jesus says "whoever's perfect let them pick up and cast the first stone", and Jesus says to the woman, "I don't condemn you, go and leave your life of sin." That is the pericope [story] on the adulterous woman in John 8 is also in question.



Then the third one that's huge is 1 John 5:7, and this talks about the Trinity: the father, the son, and the Holy Spirit. 1 John chapter 5 verse 7, now by the way, does the trinity depend on this verse? No, we've established the trinity from other verses but this verse has the clearest statement of the Trinity in 1 John 5:7 if you use the KJV.

These three are the big three places, where there are these textual variations in the New Testament, and we'll talk about those next time. Thanks for your attention. Have a great day.

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