

## THE WORD OF GOD

**Purpose Statement:** The purpose of this session is to demonstrate the authority and life-changing power of the Bible.

**Learning Objectives:** This session will help you to:

1. Understand the divine origin and authority of the Word of God.
2. Understand the purposes of the Word of God in the believer's life.
3. Develop a greater appreciation for God's Word and begin to apply it to your life.

**Scripture Reference:** 2 Timothy 3:14-17

### INTRODUCTION

*[Divide the class into two groups for a mini-debate. Have one group come up with reasons why the Agree/Disagree statement is true and have the other group come up with reasons why the statement is not true. Give them about 5-7 minutes to prepare their arguments and then have a representative from each side share their reasoning with the entire group.]*

**Agree/Disagree:**

**"If the Bible isn't the Word of God, then Christianity is a lie and no one knows one thing about the character and purposes of God."**

*[The point you want to make is that without the Bible's authoritative word on the subject of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection; the fall of man, the judgment of God and the requirements for salvation; not to mention its teachings that touch on every area of our lives, we would know absolutely nothing about God's character, purposes and plans for us in Christ.]*

## I. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

### A. It is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16).

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

The word "inspired" is the translation of the Greek word "*theopneustos*."

Theos = "*God*"

Pneo = "*to breathe*"

*"This is translated 'God-breathed' in 2 Timothy 3:16. The word in the original language of the Bible means 'God-breathed.' The picture is God "breathing" His life into the writings of the authors. As the wind fills the sails of a sailboat and propels it, so the Spirit of God filled and moved the authors to write what they did."*

*"However, they did not merely take dictation. The words reflect their temperament, training and background but the result was exactly the words that God intended. No other writings are like this."*

*"Jesus and the authors of the Scripture clearly claim that the Bible is the unique Word of God. These claims do not by themselves establish the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. But since the Bible clearly claims inspiration, it must either be inspired or be in error."*

*"The claims to inspiration are further substantiated by historical and archeological evidence."*

*[Refer the class to Appendix A and B at the end of this session: "The Bible is Unique in its Continuity" and "Manuscript Evidence and Authority" from Evidence that Demands a Verdict.]*

### B. The Old Testament authors claim that their writings are the Word of God.

1. Over 3,800 times the writers of the Old Testament use the phrase, "Thus sayeth the Lord . . ."
2. Old Testament writers claim God's authority for Old Testament books.

#### ■ Daniel calls Jeremiah's writings the "Scripture."

*". . . I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years." Daniel 9:2*

- David claims divine inspiration for his writings.

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his Word was on my tongue." 2 Samuel 23:2

- Moses claimed that what he commanded the people was the command of the Lord.

"Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you." Deuteronomy 4:2

### C. The New Testament has the same divine authority level as the Old Testament.

#### 1. Peter says that the Old Testament is God's Word (2 Peter 1:16-21).

"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. <sup>17</sup>For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.' <sup>18</sup>We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. <sup>19</sup>And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup>Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup>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." 2 Peter 1:16-21

*"Peter writes that he was an eyewitness when God spoke from heaven, and he says the words of the prophets (the Scriptures) were made even more certain by the voice heard on the mountain. The prophecies of Scripture do not come from the author's own interpretation (v. 20) but rather from God Himself (v. 21), speaking through men by the Holy Spirit. No person can predict the future unless God reveals it. The same is true with the rest of Scripture, as it is truth divinely revealed by God through men."*

*"Peter also calls Paul's writings 'Scripture,' attributing to them the same authority as the Old Testament (2 Peter 3:16)."*

"He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." 2 Peter 3:16

#### 2. Paul calls Luke's writings "Scripture" (1 Timothy 5:18).

"For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'" 1 Timothy 5:18

### D. It is "eternal truth" (Psalm 19:7; Psalm 119:160).

*"Numerous claims are made in the Scripture that attest to its unique truthfulness. The Scripture is perfect (Psalm 19:7), true and eternal (Psalm 119:160). The Bible alone can make these claims because its Author is perfect, true and eternal. 'The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever' (Isaiah 40:8)."*

### E. Jesus acknowledged the divine authority, reliability and relevance of the Old Testament Scriptures.

***"Jesus made extensive use of the Old Testament, which was the only Scripture available at that time."***

1. The Scriptures are God's Word (Matthew 22:29-33).

***"The Sadducees were a Jewish sect. They came to Jesus hoping to trick Him. Jesus silenced their insincere questions by quoting a passage from Exodus in the Old Testament which He says 'was spoken to you by God' (v. 31). Notice the book of Exodus was hundreds of years old at the time and Jesus called it God's Word spoken to them (not just to those who were alive in the day of Moses)."***

2. The Scriptures are reliable. They shall not pass away (i.e., they will never change or be outdated) and cannot be broken (i.e., they cannot be "deprived of their binding authority," Charles Ryrie) (Matthew 5:18, 24:35; John 10:35b).
3. The Scriptures are relevant to everyday living. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, three times He resisted temptation by quoting Scripture (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

## II. THE PURPOSES OF GOD'S WORD

***[Have the class divide into groups of 4-6 and ask the following question. Take 2-4 minutes and then record their answers on an overhead.]***

**What does God want His word to accomplish in our lives?**

***"The Bible plays a variety of roles in our lives. The following list is not exhaustive but addresses some important areas."***

**God's Word:**

- A. ***Saves us (Romans 1:16, 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23).***

The Word of God has unique power to bring us to Christ.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." Romans 1:16

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." Romans 10:17

**B. *Reveals* Christ to us (John 5:39).**

The Word of God teaches us about Christ. It is the only trustworthy source of information about the Person of Christ.

**C. *Builds* us up in Christ (2 Timothy 3:16,17).**

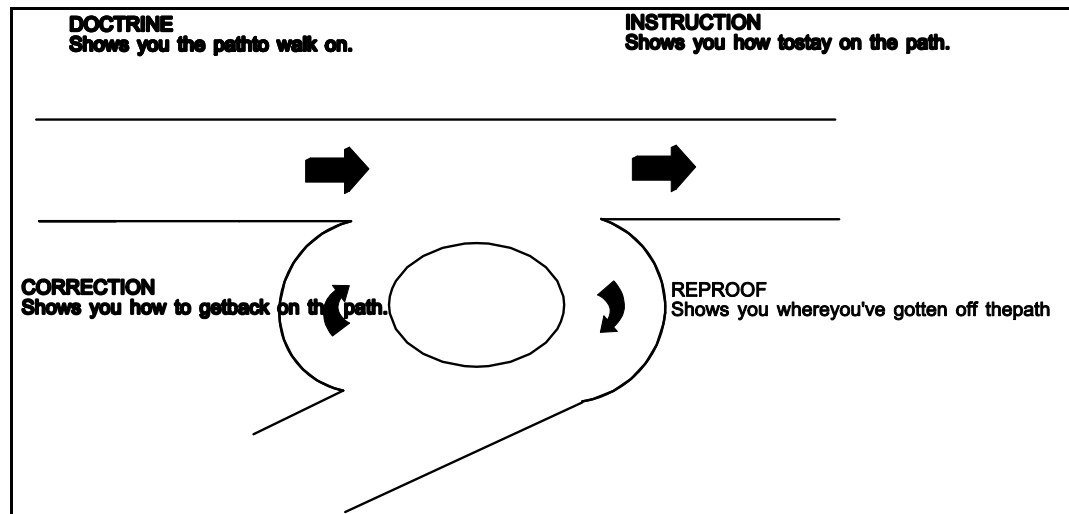
"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. <sup>17</sup>So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." <sup>2</sup> Timothy 3:16,17

The Word is fully adequate to prepare believers for "every good work," and to build them up in Christ (Acts 20:32).

**D. *Leads* and *guides* us.**

*Psalm 119 lists many benefits from God's Word including keeping us from sin (v. 11) and lighting our path (i.e., giving us direction, v. 105).*

It equips us in four ways:



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Navigators

**This diagram is a visual representation of the function of God's Word in the believer's life.** It illustrates how God's Word can instruct us in the path of righteousness. When we drift off this path, God's Word can show us the error of our ways and lead us back to the right way.

1. **Through teaching:** The Word gives instruction on how to live in a manner pleasing to the Lord (**Colossians 1:9-12**).
2. **Through reproof:** The Word calls attention to our wrong-doing. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to point out sin and convict us, even when we try to rationalize our behavior (**Hebrews 4:12**).
3. **Through correction:** The Bible corrects us in order to get us back onto the right path.
4. **Through training in righteousness:** The Bible instructs us in how to live righteously (**Hebrews 5:12-14**).

### III. VALUING AND APPLYING THE WORD OF GOD

Our response to God's Word ought to be to value and apply it to our lives.

#### A. Treasure God's Word.

Godly men in the Bible highly esteemed God's Word:

1. Moses called God's Word his life (Deuteronomy 32:44-47).
2. David valued God's Word above all else (Psalm 19:9-11).
3. The psalmist delighted in God's Word (Psalm 1:1-3).

#### B. Obey God's Word.

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete." Luke 6:46-49

*[Have the class individually read Luke 6:46-49. Then have them answer the following questions:]*

■ What is the difference between the wise man and the foolish man?

*"They both heard God's Word, but only the wise man acted upon it."*

■ What are the consequences of not acting upon God's Word?

■ What principle is Jesus communicating about the relationship between the Word of God and life?

*[Record their responses on an overhead. You should make at least the following points:*

- 1. Verbal acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord is meaningless if we are not applying His Word to our lives.*
- 2. Applying God's word to our life will prepare us to meet all of life's "storms."*
- 3. Failure to apply God's Word to our life is foolish and dangerous.]*

*"When we apply God's Word to our lives, we will be wise and we prove our love for God.*

"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:21

#### IV. SUMMARY

A. The Bible is God's inspired Word to us. Its "precious and magnificent promises" can change our lives (2 Peter 1:4). Pray that God will help you to understand and obey His Word as you get to know and love God more and more.

B. God's Word:

1. saves us;
2. reveals God to us;
3. builds us up in Christ; and

4. leads and guides us.

C. We are to value and apply His Word.

V. APPLICATION

*[Have the class take five minutes and do the exercise on the attached work sheet for one of the passages.]*

*[Close in prayer.]*



WORK SHEET

Look up one of these two passages below and fill out the chart. (Note: Not all passages will necessarily include all four elements: teach, reprove, correct and train.)

	TEACH	REPROVE	CORRECT	TRAIN
	A command, promise, or something about God that is new to me.	Shows me how I fall short or have strayed from the path of righteousness.	Restores me back to God's way.	Shows me how to continue in God's will.
ROMANS 5:3-5	Exult in tribulation.	I usually grumble under hardship.	Know that God is lovingly producing perseverance in me.	Builds endurance, and fix my hope on God.
MATTHEW 6:31-34				
PHILIPPIANS 4:6,7				

## APPENDIX A

### The Bible is Unique in Its Continuity

excerpt from  
Evidence That Demands a Verdict  
by Josh McDowell

2B. The Bible Is Unique. It is the book "different from all others" in the following ways (plus a multitude more):

1C. UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY. Here is a book:

1. Written over a 1,600-year span.
2. Written over 60 generations.
3. Written by 40-plus authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:

Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt

Peter, a fisherman

Amos, a herdsman

Joshua, a military general

Nehemiah, a cupbearer

Daniel, a prime minister

Luke, a doctor

Solomon, a king

Matthew, a tax collector

Paul, a Rabbi

4. Written in different places:

Moses in the wilderness

Jeremiah in a dungeon

Daniel on a hillside and in a palace

Paul inside prison walls

Luke while traveling

John on the isle of Patmos

Others in the rigors of a military campaign

5. Written at different times:

David in times of war

Solomon in times of peace

6. Written during different moods:

Some writing from the heights of joy and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair.

7. Written on three continents:

Asia, Africa and Europe

8. Written in three languages:

Hebrew: Was the language of the Old Testament. In II Kings 18:26-28 called "the language of Judah."  
In Isaiah 19:18 called "the language of Canaan."

Aramaic: Was the "lingua franca" of the Near East until the time of Alexander the Great (6th century B.C.--4th century B.C.) 14/218

Greek: New Testament language. Was the international language at the time of Christ.

9. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. A controversial subject is one which could create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed.

Biblical authors spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: "God's redemption of man."

Geisler and Nix (A General Introduction to the Bible, Moody Press, 1968) put it this way:

"The 'Paradise Lost' of the Genesis becomes the 'Paradise Regained' of Revelation. Whereas the gate to the tree of life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation." 14/24

F.F. Bruce (The Books and the Parchments, Fleming H. Revell) observes that: "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the whole Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body." 6/89

Bruce concludes that:

"The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature-- mainly Jewish. If we inquire into the circumstances under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written

at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years. The writers wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west to Mesopotamia in the east. The writers themselves were a heterogeneous number of people, not only separated from each other by hundred of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most diverse walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests and prophets, a tentmaking Rabbi and a Gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing apart from the writings they have left us. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctively biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic.

"For all that, the Bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together. An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible." 6/88

10. Conclusion of continuity--a comparison with the Great Books of the Western World.

A representative from the Great Books of the Western World came to my house recruiting salesmen for their series. He spread out the chart of the Great Books of the Western World series. He spent five minutes talking to us about the Great Books of the Western World series and we spent an hour and a half talking to him about the Greatest Book.

I challenged him to take just 10 of the authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds with harmony and agreement).

Then I asked him: "Would they (the authors) agree?" He paused and then replied "No!" "What would you have?" I retorted. Immediately he said, "A conglomeration."

Two days later he committed his life to Christ (the theme of the Bible).

Why all this? Very simple! Any man sincerely seeking the truth would consider a book with the above uniqueness.

## APPENDIX B

### Manuscript Evidence and Authority

excerpt from  
Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 46-51, 1971  
by Josh McDowell

#### 2C. MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

*A.T. Robertson*, the author of the most comprehensive grammar of New Testament Greek, wrote, "There are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for the other early versions. Add over 4,000 [Bruce Metzger says we now have close to 5,000. 6/36] Greek manuscripts and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of the early Christian writers." 39/29

*Bruce Metzger* says that: "Of the approximately 5,000 Greek manuscripts . . . they contain all or part of the New Testament . . ." 33/36

*John Warwick Montgomery* says that, "to be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament." 34/29

*Sir Frederic G. Kenyon*, who was the director and principal librarian of the British Museum and second to none in authority for issuing statements about MSS, says, ". . . besides number, the manuscripts of the New Testament differ from those of the classical authors, and this time the difference is clear gain. In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest extant manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament were written in the latter part of the first century; the earliest extant manuscripts (trifling scraps excepted) are of the fourth century--say from 250 to 300 years later.

"This may sound like a considerable interval, but it is nothing to that which parts most of the great classical authors from their earliest manuscripts. We believe that we have in all essentials an accurate text of the seven extant plays of Sophocles; yet the earliest substantial manuscript upon which it is based was written more than 1,400 years after the poet's death." 24/4

*Kenyon* continues in *The Bible and Archaeology*: "The Interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be

regarded as finally established." 56/288

3C. MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED WITH OTHER AUTHORS AND WORKS OF ANTIQUITY

The great scholar F.F. Bruce in The New Testament Doctrine vividly pictures the comparison between the New Testament and ancient historical writings: "Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the contextual material for other ancient historical works. For Caesar's Gallic War (composed between 58 and 50 B.C.) there are several extant MSS, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar's day. Of the 142 books of the Roman history of Livy (59 B.C.--A.D. 17) only 35 survive; these are known to us for not more than 20 MSS of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing only fragments of Books III-VI, is as old as the fourth century. Of the 14 books of the Histories of Tacitus (c. A.D. 100) only four and a half survive; of the 16 books of his Annals, 10 survive in full and two in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on two MSS, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh.

"The extant MSS of his minor works (Dialogus de Oratoribus, Agricola, Germania) and all descend from a codex of the tenth century. The history of Thucydides (c. 460--400 B.C.) is known to us from eight MSS, the earliest belonging to c. A.D. 900, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the History of Herodotus (B.C. 488--428). Yet no classic scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest MSS of their works are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals." 7/16f.

The following is taken from F.W. Hall, "MS Authorities for the Text of the Chief Classical Writers," Companion to Classical Text (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1913).

Author	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	No. of Copies
Caesar	100--44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	59 B.C.--17 A.D.			20
Plato (Tetralogies)	427--347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	7
Tacitus (Annals) also minor works	100 A.D. 100 A.D.	1,100 A.D. 1,100 A.D.	1,000 yrs. 900 yrs.	20 1
Pliny the Younger (History)	61--113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs.	7
Thucydides (History)	460--400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Suetonius (De Vita Caesarum)	75--160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs.	8
Herodotus (History)	480--425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	8
Horace			900 yrs.	
Sophocles	496--406 B.C.	1,000 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	100
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 B.C.		1,100 yrs.	2
Catullus	54 B.C.	1,550 A.D.	1,600 yrs.	3
Euripedes	480--406 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,500 yrs.	9
Demosthenes	383--322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,300 yrs.	200*
Aristotle	384--322 B.C.	1,100 A.D.	1,400 yrs.	5+
Aristophanes	450--385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs.	10

\* All from one copy.  
+ Of any one work.

#### 4C. CHRONOLOGY OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT AUTHORITY

**Dating Procedure:** Some of the factors that help determine the age of MSS are:  
14/242-46

1. Materials
2. Letter size and form
3. Punctuation
4. Text Divisions
5. Ornamentation
6. The color of the ink
7. The texture and color of parchment

*John Ryland MSS* (130 A.D.) is located in The John Ryland Library of Manchester, England (oldest fragment of the N.T.). "Because of its early date and location (Egypt), some distance from the traditional place of composition (Asia Minor), this portion of the gospel of John tends to confirm the traditional date of the composition of the gospel about the end of the first century." 14/268

*Bruce Metzger* speaks of defunct criticism: "Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tubingen professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160." 33/39

*Chester Beatty Papyri* (200 A.D.) is located in C. Beatty Museum in Dublin and part is owned by the University of Michigan. This collection contains papyrus codices, three of them containing major portions of the N.T. 6/182

In *The Bible and Modern Scholarship* Sir Frederic Kenyon says that: "The net result of this discovery--by far the most important since the discovery of the Sinaiticus--is, in fact, to reduce the gap between the earlier manuscripts and the traditional dates of the New Testament books so far that it becomes negligible in any discussion of their authenticity. No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text, and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound." 23/20

*Bodmer Papyrus II* (150-200 A.D.) is located in the Bodmer Library of World Literature and contains most of John.

*Bruce Metzger* says that this MS was "the most important discovery of the N.T. manuscripts since the purchase of the Chester Beatty papyri . . ." 33/39, 40

In his article 'Zur Datierung des Papyrus Bodmer II (P 66)', *Anzeiger der osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist, kl.*, 1960, Nr. 4, pp. 12033, "Herbert Hunger, the director of the papyrological collections in the National Library at



Vienna, dates 66 earlier, in the middle if not even in the first half of the second century; see his article." 33/39, 40

Diatessaron: meaning "a harmony of four parts." The Greek "dia Tessaron" literally means "through four." 6/195 This was a harmony of the gospels done by Tatian (about 160 A.D.).

*Eusebius in Ecclesiastical History*, IV, 29 Loeb ed., I, 397, wrote: ". . . their former leader Tatian composed in some way a combination and collection of the gospels, and gave this the name of THE DIATESSARON, and this is still extant in some places . . ." It is believed that Tatian, an Assyrian christian, was the first to compose a harmony of the gospels; only a small portion is extant today. 14/318-19

*Codex Sinaiticus* (350 A.D.) is located in the British Museum, 12/579 This MS which contains almost all the N.T. (lacks Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11) and over half of the O.T. was "discovered by Tischendorf (of all things in a waste-basket) in the Mount Sinai Monastery in 1844, presented by the Monastery to the Russian Tsar in 1859, and bought by the British Government and people from the Soviet Union for 100,000 pounds on Christmas Day, 1933." 4/183

*Codex Vaticanus* (325-50 A.D.) located in the Vatican Library. Nearly all the Bible. Bruce Metzger says this is one of the most valuable MSS of the Greek Bible. 33/47

*Codex Alexandrinus* (400 A.D.) located in the British Museum; Encyclopaedia Britannica believes it was written in Greek in Egypt. It contains almost the entire Bible.

*Codex Ephraemi* (400's A.D.) located in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that "its 5th century origin and the evidence it supplies make it important for the text of certain portions of the New Testament." 12/579; 6:183

Every book is represented in this MS except 2 Thessalonians and 2 John. This MS is a palimpsest.

*Codex Bezae* (45 A.D. plus) located in the Cambridge Library and contains the gospels and Acts not only in Greek but also in Latin.

*Codex Washingtonensis* (or Freericanus) 450-550 A.D. contains the four Gospels in the following order: Matthew, John, Luke and Mark. 19/39

*Codex Claromontanus* (500's) contains the Pauline Epistles. It is a bilingual MS.

### 5C. An Obvious Conclusion Of New Testament Manuscript Authority

F.F. Bruce says: "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament." 6/178

J. Harold Greenlee continues, ". . . the number of available MSS of the New Testament is overwhelmingly greater than those of any other work of ancient literature. In the third place, the earliest extant MSS of the N.T. were written much closer to the date of the original writing than is the case in almost any other piece of ancient literature." 19/15

F.J.A. Hort rightfully adds that "in the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone among ancient prose writings." 22/561

F.J.A. Hort spent 28 years studying the N.T. text. Alexander Sautes calls his and Brooke F. Westcott's Introduction "an achievement never surpassed in the scholarship of any country." 44/103

Greenlee writes in Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism about the time gap between the original MSS (the autograph) and the extant MSS (the old copy surviving) saying that "the oldest known MSS of most of the Greek classical authors are dated a thousand years or more after the author's death. The time interval for the Latin author is somewhat less, varying down to a minimum of three centuries in the case of Virgil. In the case of the N.T., however, two of the most important MSS were written within 300 years after the N.T. was completed, and some virtually complete N.T. books as well as extensive fragmentary MSS, of many parts of the N.T. date back to one century from the original writings." 19/16

Greenlee adds that "Since scholars accept as generally trustworthy the writings of the ancient classics even though the earliest MSS were written so long after the original writings and the number of extant MSS is in many instances so small, it is clear that the reliability of the text of the N.T. is likewise assured." 19/16

Bruce Metzger in The Text of the New Testament cogently writes of the comparison: "The works of several ancient authors are preserved to us by the thinnest possible thread of transmission. For example, the compendious history of Rome by Velleius Paterculus survived to modern times in only one incomplete manuscript, from which the editio princeps was made--and this lone manuscript was lost in the 17th century after being copied by Beatus Rhenanus at Amerbach. Even the Annals of the famous historian Tacitus is extant, so far as the first six books are concerned, in but a single manuscript, dating from the ninth century. In 1870 the only known manuscript of the Epistle to Diognetus, an early Christian composition which editors usually include in the corpus of Apostolic Fathers, perished in a fire at the Municipal library in Strasbourg. In contrast with these figures, the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of his material." 33/34



