

A TEXT-CRITICAL COMPARISON OF THE KING JAMES NEW TESTAMENT WITH CERTAIN MODERN TRANSLATIONS

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With 2011 marking the 400th anniversary of the first edition of the King James Version (KJV), much has been written in celebration of this remarkable Bible that has had such a profound impact on Western society.¹ It seems especially fitting, however, to reconsider the venerable KJV from the perspective of biblical studies. Toward that end, I wish to explore how the New Testament (NT) text of the KJV and certain modern versions differ. My aim is not to examine translational differences but, rather, to identify and evaluate the text-critical differences between them.²

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1. On the KJV's impact on Western society, be it theological, linguistic, or political, see Robert Alter, *Pen of Iron: American Prose and the King James Bible* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 227-50, 461-98; Alister E. McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); and Benson Bobrick, *Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution It Inspired* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

2. The process or method of evaluating differences and variants between biblical manuscripts in an attempt to determine the most likely original reading is known as textual criticism. For an introduction to biblical textual criticism, see Bart D. Ehrman,

To illustrate what I mean by “text-critical” differences, let’s consider Mark 7:16, which in the KJV reads, “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” If we turn to this verse in one of the many modern English versions, chances are that we will see nothing but the verse number and a dash. In fact, in most modern translations of the NT, this verse does not exist. Some might assume that the verse was deliberately suppressed,³ but the reason for this omission is not that sinister. Rather, the reason is that many ancient Greek manuscripts have no equivalent of Mark 7:16 but skip from verse 15 to verse 17.⁴ Thus the Greek subtext of a particular NT version can have a significant impact on the English rendering of the text.

This study will examine twenty-two NT passages that appear in the KJV but are omitted in most modern translations. In evaluating whether the KJV readings for select verses can be defended by ancient manuscript evidence or ought to be rejected as later interpolations, I do not intend this study to be either an apology for the KJV or an indictment of its NT text. While the KJV NT text has come under increasing scholarly criticism over the past century for certain readings that cannot be considered authentic or original, I will show that it also contains readings that, though omitted in various modern translations, are likely to be authentic. In setting forth and clarifying the text-critical differences between the KJV

The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writers, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 487-99; and Paul D. Wegner, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

3. This line of reasoning may derive from 1 Nephi 13:28-29, where Nephi reports that many “plain and precious things” have been expunged from the Bible. In some cases such corruption could certainly have included the addition of spurious material.

4. For convenience and per modern convention, all NT material will be cited by chapter and verse. It should be noted, however, that the versification of the NT is a relatively modern phenomenon. The versification followed by the KJV NT and most modern translations was first devised by the famous Parisian printer Robert Estienne (1503-1559) in his 1551 printed edition of the Greek NT. Chapter divisions as we know them today in the NT were first introduced into the Latin Vulgate in the thirteenth century by Stephen Langton (ca. 1150-1228), the Archbishop of Canterbury. See Robert L. Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2006), 14.

NT and modern editions, I simply hope to inform readers of the KJV NT about its text-critical strengths as well as its weaknesses.

The Greek Text of the King James Bible⁵

When King James I of England decided to sponsor a new Bible translation at the Hampton Court Conference in January 1604, one of the first stipulations he made was that the translation would be based not on the Latin Vulgate but on original-language manuscripts—Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament: “A translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this is to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service.”⁶ The Greek text that the translators settled on was from an edition of the NT published in 1589 by the French Calvinist Theodore de Beza (1519–1605).⁷ Beza’s Greek NT text was based largely on the 1522 Greek NT text published by the famous Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536).⁸ Because Erasmus’s edition, which would come to be known as the “Received Text” (Lat. *Textus Receptus*), is the Greek textual basis for the KJV NT, it is worth examination.⁹

5. A more detailed sketch of this section can be found in Lincoln Blumell, “The New Testament Text of the King James Bible,” in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2011), 61–74.

6. McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 163–64. In collaboration with Richard Bancroft, the Bishop of London, King James drew up a series of fifteen guidelines for the translators. For these guidelines, see McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 172–75.

7. Beza produced nine different editions of the Greek NT. His tenth edition was published posthumously in 1611. Only four of Beza’s editions (1565, 1582, 1588–89, and 1598) were independent editions, the others being simply smaller reprints. See Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 151–52.

8. Beza relied heavily on Robert Estienne’s 1551 edition of the Greek NT, which in turn was essentially based on an earlier edition by Erasmus.

9. The term *Textus Receptus*, used to designate the Greek NT text essentially produced by Erasmus, was first coined in 1633 by two Dutch printers, Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir. In the preface to a 1633 edition of a Greek NT they printed, one based on an earlier edition by Beza, they wrote, “Therefore you have [dear reader]

After the invention of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, the first book to be widely printed was the Bible, specifically the Latin Vulgate used by the Roman Catholic Church. Half a century later, an enterprising printer named Johannes Froben from Basel, Switzerland, approached Erasmus in the summer of 1514 about preparing a Greek edition of the NT for publication. After some delays and additional goading, Erasmus finally agreed to the project, and in the following summer he began the work of putting together a Greek New Testament in Basel. The only Greek manuscripts available in Basel were in the Dominican Library, and not one of those seven different manuscripts predated the twelfth century.¹⁰ To save time, he simply submitted two of these manuscripts to Froben for publication (one that contained the Gospels and another that contained Acts through Revelation) with corrections written between the lines or in the margins.¹¹ Remarkably, by the following spring (1516), Erasmus's first edition of the Greek NT was published. Though it would undergo four subsequent re-editions (1519, 1522, 1527, 1535), because it was the first Greek NT to be printed and widely circulated, Erasmus's text became the "Received Text" of the NT for many centuries.

During the past century, the KJV NT has come under increasing criticism because of the limited textual basis behind its translation. As two notable critics of the KJV NT text have stated:

It [i.e., the *Textus Receptus*] lies at the basis of the King James Version and of all principal Protestant translations in the

the text now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted." From Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 152.

10. One such manuscript that contained Acts and the Pauline letters was obtained from the family of Johann Amerbach of Basel. See William W. Combs, "Erasmus and the *Textus Receptus*," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring 1996): 45.

11. On these manuscripts, see Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 142-45; P.-Y. Brandt, "Manuscripts grecs utilisés par Erasme pour son édition de *Novum Instrumentum* de 1516," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 54 (1998): 120-24; Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 4-6; and C. C. Tarelli, "Erasmus's Manuscripts of the Gospels," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1943): 155-62.

languages of Europe prior to 1881. So superstitious has been the reverence accorded the *Textus Receptus* that in some cases attempts to criticize or emend it have been regarded as akin to sacrilege. Yet its textual basis is essentially a handful of late and haphazardly collected minuscule manuscripts, and in a dozen passages its reading is supported by no known Greek witness.¹²

At the heart of this criticism lies the fact that since the publication of Erasmus's Greek NT in 1516 a number of much older—and by implication more reliable—NT manuscripts have been discovered. Some of these predate the Greek manuscripts employed by Erasmus by more than one thousand years. For example, complete copies of the Greek NT have been discovered that date to the fourth century, complete copies of certain NT books to the late second century, and fragments of certain NT books to the early or mid-second century.¹³ Significantly, sometimes these newly discovered texts contain readings that differ markedly from those found in the *Textus Receptus* and hence the KJV.¹⁴ Since these textual variants appear in manuscripts, or fragments of manuscripts, that are rather early, it is often thought that they more accurately reflect original NT readings. As a result, many modern editions of the NT have incorporated these “newer” readings into their translations. However, the appearance of a textual variant in an ancient manuscript is no guarantee that it represents the original text or that the reading

12. Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 152.

13. Despite the early dating of some of these texts, not one is an autograph copy (i.e., the original text written by one of the various authors of the NT books).

14. To put this in quantifiable perspective, of the roughly 5,400 NT written manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts that we currently possess, the cumulative differences (i.e., textual variants) between them number anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000. As Bart Ehrman has put it: “Perhaps it is simplest to express the figure in comparative terms: there are more differences among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament.” See Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writers*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 490. However, this does not mean that the NT text is completely unreliable. The overwhelming majority of such differences is relatively insignificant and has to do with spelling errors and other minor variations.

must be preferred to an alternative reading found in a later manuscript. A number of other factors have to be considered, as I hope to demonstrate later in this study.

Ancient Texts of the New Testament

What follows is an overview of the most important ancient manuscripts used in contemporary scholarship for establishing the earliest text of the NT. I will refer to these in the course of my analysis of the KJV NT passages that are often omitted in modern translations of the NT.

Papyri (P)

Various Egyptian papyri from the second through sixth centuries AD supplement our knowledge of the NT text by preserving the earliest attestations of certain NT passages. To date there are about 125 known NT papyrus fragments (numbered P¹, P², P³, P⁴, etc.) that range in length from a verse or two to entire codices containing NT books. These fragments can predate the oldest ancient Bibles by as much as 200-250 years. Notable fragments include P⁵², a small fragment containing John 18:31-33 on one side and 18:37-38 on the other and possibly dating to the first quarter of the second century AD (the earliest-known NT text);¹⁵ P⁴⁶, dating to about AD 200 and containing many of Paul's letters;¹⁶ and P⁶⁶, a virtually complete codex of John's gospel dating to the late second or early third century AD.¹⁷

15. Precise dating of papyrus fragments is not possible since the typical paleographic means employed gives a window of twenty-five or fifty years. While the earliest date proposed for P⁵² is around AD 125, it could date from the middle to late second century. In any case, there is wide consensus in scholarship that it is a second-century fragment. See Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P⁵²: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *Harvard Theological Review* 98/1 (2005): 23-48.

16. While a date of ca. AD 200 is often proposed for P⁴⁶, a third-century dating cannot be ruled out.

17. For a useful introduction to the various NT papyri, see Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, eds., *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts: New and*

Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ)¹⁸

The fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus contains complete copies of every book in the NT as well as the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the Septuagint (LXX).¹⁹ It could even potentially be one of the fifty Bibles commissioned by Constantine in the year AD 331 and produced under the direction of Eusebius of Caesarea.²⁰ This Bible, written with four Greek columns per page, was discovered in the 1850s at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai by Constantin von Tischendorf, who took it back with him to St. Petersburg. In 1933 this codex was purchased by the British government for £100,000 and is presently housed in the British Library.

Codex Vaticanus (B)

This Bible from the fourth century contains complete copies of all the books in the NT except part of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. 9-13), all of the pastorals (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), and Revelation. Like Codex Sinaiticus, it may have been one of the fifty Bibles commissioned by Constantine. It also may have been one of the copies prepared for the emperor Constans by Athanasius during his exile at Rome about AD 341.²¹ Called the Codex Vaticanus because it resides in the Vatican Library, this Bible is written in capital Greek letters (uncial script) and is laid out with three columns of text per page.

Complete Transcriptions with Photographs (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001). Compare Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-24; and Charles E. Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 249-50.

18. The letter represents the siglum (or abbreviation) used in scholarly studies to refer to the specific codex.

19. The Septuagint, or LXX as it is commonly known, is simply the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

20. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4.36, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:549 (hereafter *NPNF*).

21. Athanasius, *Defense before Constantius 4* (*NPNF* 4:239).

Codex Alexandrinus (A)

This fifth-century codex contains every NT book except portions of Matthew (chaps. 1-24), John (chaps. 6-8), and 2 Corinthians (chaps. 4-12). It also includes *1* and *2 Clement* as well as the majority of the Septuagint. Called the Codex Alexandrinus because its earliest-known location was the city of Alexandria in Egypt, it is written with capital Greek letters and is laid out with two columns per page. Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Alexandria during the early part of the seventeenth century, sent this Bible as a gift to King James I of England. Because King James died (in March 1625) before it arrived, it was instead presented to his successor, Charles I, in 1627. Today it is housed in the British Library.

Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C)

In the twelfth century, this fifth-century codex was erased and reused for some thirty-eight hymns of Ephraem.²² Its 209 folia, or leaves (145 of which belong to the NT), contain both the Septuagint and the NT, though damaged portions of this ancient Bible are riddled with lacunae.²³ It is written with capital Greek letters and

22. This text is a palimpsest, a manuscript that has been reused after the original text has been largely erased or removed by scraping or washing. The erased script is typically referred to as the “underscript” and the newer script as the “overscript.” Ephraem the Syrian, whose tractates were written over the removed biblical text, was an Eastern church father who lived in Nisibis and Edessa in the latter part of the fourth century.

23. The NT lacunae are as follows: Matthew 1:1-2; 5:15-7:5; 7:26-18:28; 22:21-23:17; 24:10-45; 25:30-26:22; 27:11-46; 28:15-to the end; Mark 1:1-17; 6:32-8:5; 12:30-13:19; Luke 1:1-2; 2:5-42; 3:21-4:25; 6:4-36; 7:17-8:28; 12:4-19:42; 20:28-21:20; 22:19-23:25; 24:7-45; John 1:1-3; 1:41-3:33; 5:17-6:38; 7:3-8:34; 9:11-11:7; 11:47-13:7; 14:8-16:21; 18:36-20:25; Acts 1:1-2; 4:3-5:34; 6:8; 10:43-13:1; 16:37-20:10; 21:31-22:20; 3:18-24:15; 26:19-27:16; 28:5-to the end; Romans 1:1-3; 2:5-3:21; 9:6-10:15; 11:31-13:10; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 7:18-9:6; 13:8-15:40; 2 Corinthians 1:1-2; 10:8-to the end of the book; Galatians 1:1-20; Ephesians 1:1-2:18; 4:17-to the end of the book; Philippians 1:1-22; 3:5-to the end of the book; Colossians 1:1-2; Thessalonians 1:1; 2:9-to the end of the book; 2 Thessalonians completely lost; 1 Timothy 1:1-3:9; 5:20-to the end of the book; 2 Timothy 1:1-2; Titus 1:1-2; Philemon 1-2; Hebrews 1:1-2:4; 7:26-9:15; 10:24-12:15; James 1:1-2; 4:2-to the end; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 4:5-to the end of the book; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 1:1-2; 4:3-to the end of the book; 2 John completely lost; 3 John 1-2; Jude 1-2; Revelation 1:1-2; 3:20-5:14; 7:14-17;

is laid out with one broad column per page. This important biblical codex is presently housed in the Bibliothèqure Nationale in Paris.

Codex Freerianus (W)

Codex Freerianus is a fifth-century codex that contains a copy of the four Gospels written on 187 folia and ordered as follows: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark. While it contains Matthew and Luke in their entirety with relatively few lacunae, large sections in Mark (part of chap. 15) and John (part of chaps. 14-16) are missing because of damage. Written in Greek uncial script in a single column per page, this manuscript was obtained in 1906 by Charles Lang Freer, a wealthy American railroad-car manufacturer from Detroit, via an antiquities dealer in Egypt. It is housed in the Freer Gallery of Art as part of the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, and is sometimes referred to as the Freer Codex or Codex Washingtonianus.

Codex Bezae (D)

This fifth- or sixth-century codex contains many NT books, but owing to damage, many sections are missing.²⁴ As in the Codex Freerianus (W), the order of the four Gospels is Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark. In various places this Bible contains unique readings that are not attested elsewhere, though many of them probably represent later interpolations. This ancient Bible is a Greek and Latin diglot, meaning that it contains Greek text in a single column on the left-hand page and Latin text in a single column on the right-hand page. It is called Codex Bezae because it once belonged to Theodore Beza, who donated it in 1581 to Cambridge University, where it still resides.

8:5-9:16; 10:10-11:3; 16:13-18:2; 19:5-to the end of the book. On the lacunae, see Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA²⁶), 689.

24. The missing sections are Matthew 1; 6-9; 27; Mark 16; John 1-3; Acts 8-10; 22-28; Romans 1; James; 1 and 2 Peter; 1-3 John; Jude; and Revelation. See Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 368-78; and David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 8.

Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece (NA²⁷)

This Greek version of the NT is the standard critical edition used in contemporary scholarship. In 1898 Eberhard Nestle (1851-1913) assembled a Greek text of the NT based on previous editions. Over the last century this version was constantly updated and revised, and in 1993 the twenty-seventh edition was produced (designated NA²⁷), primarily under the direction and editorship of Kurt Aland (1915-1994). The text is edited and produced by the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung (Institute for New Testament Textual Research) at the University of Münster. The Greek text of NA²⁷ is known as an “eclectic text” since it is based on readings from a wide array of ancient manuscripts and does not represent a single manuscript.²⁵

KJV Passages Omitted in Various Modern NT Translations²⁶

1. Matthew 12:47 KJV²⁷

Then one said unto him, Behold,
thy mother and thy brethren stand
without, desiring to speak with thee.

εἶπε δέ τις αὐτῷ, Ἴδοῦ, ἡ μήτηρ
σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου ἕξω
ἑστήκασι, ζητοῦντές σοι λαλήσαι.

This verse forms the middle section of a narrative unit (Matthew 12:46-50) in which Jesus tells those listening that “whosoever shall do the will of my Father” are “my brother, and sister, and mother” (v. 50). This verse is omitted in some modern translations (ESV, RSV) but present in others (CEV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV,

25. For an English introduction to this text, see pp. 44*-83* of NA²⁷.

26. This study does not take into account passages in which only portions of a verse have been removed, with the exception of 1 John 5:7b-8a; that is because the omission constitutes a significant part of the two verses.

27. The Greek text herein is taken from F. H. A. Scrivener’s 1894 edition of the Greek NT. I have drawn from this source throughout this study in order to parallel the KJV translation at the beginning of each section with the corresponding Greek text, which essentially constitutes the *Textus Receptus* and would have been the Greek text employed by the translators of the KJV NT. Scrivener’s edition is based on Theodore Beza’s 1598 edition of the Greek NT.

NWT, REB, TEV).²⁸ This is because it is not found in certain ancient manuscripts, such as Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) and Codex Vaticanus (B), yet is attested in Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), Codex Freerianus (W), and Codex Bezae (D); a later corrector added it to Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ*²⁹).²⁹ Though the NRSV and NIV include this verse, a footnote placed after it briefly explains its omission in select ancient witnesses.

While this verse is not attested in the most ancient manuscripts, it may have originally been part of Matthew's gospel but then was accidentally omitted through *homoioteleuton*.³⁰ Since both Matthew 12:46 and Matthew 12:47 end with *λαλῆσαι* ("to speak"), it is conceivable that after a scribe finished writing verse 46, he looked back at his exemplar only to have his eye skip to the end of verse 47, causing him to inadvertently omit that verse. Furthermore, because verse 47 seems necessary for the following verses to make sense, it is likely an authentic verse and not a later scribal interpolation. Interestingly, when this story is told in Mark 3:31-35, verse 32 (the equivalent of Matthew 12:47) is securely attested in the manuscript tradition.

Though it might be tempting to suppose that some modern NT translations have omitted this verse in an attempt to propagate or

28. For modern versions of the Bible, see *The SBL Handbook of Style for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 72-73, and www.biblegateway.com.

29. Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ), as well as some of the other ancient NT manuscripts (principally Codex Freerianus [W] and Codex Bezae [D]), had various correctors over the ages who both inserted and omitted verses as they saw fit to correct the various readings preserved in these Bibles. While their corrections are secondary, they still offer some valid text-critical insights into the potential authenticity or inauthenticity of select verses. For the correctors of Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ), see Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007), 9-20. For the correctors of Codex Bezae (D), see Parker, *Codex Bezae*, 35-48. Codex Alexandrinus (A) is defective for much of the Gospel of Matthew, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

30. *Homoioteleuton* refers to an omission that occurs when two words or phrases have identical endings and the scribe's or copyist's eye skips from one to the next, resulting in omission of the intervening material. On this phenomenon, see Wegner, *Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible*, 49-50.

defend the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary³¹ and to obfuscate the fact that Jesus had any biological siblings, it is already evident from verse 46, as well as from the corresponding Markan account (Mark 3:31-35), that Jesus had “brethren” in the biological sense. The omission of Matthew 12:47 in modern translations has far more to do with its absence in certain ancient manuscripts than with any doctrinal issue.

2. Matthew 17:21 KJV

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but
by prayer and fasting.

τοῦτο δὲ τὸ γένος οὐκ ἐκπορεύεται
εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ.

Matthew 17:21 concludes a narrative unit (vv. 14-21) in which Jesus expels a demon from a boy after the disciples fail to do so and are then chided by Jesus for lacking the necessary faith to perform the exorcism (v. 20). In the KJV, verse 21 ostensibly clarifies further why the disciples were unsuccessful. In most modern NT translations, this verse is omitted (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it is not found in either Codex Sinaiticus (ⲛ)³² or Codex Vaticanus (B).³³ It is present in Codex

31. This doctrine holds that Mary remained a virgin throughout her lifetime, that Jesus was her only biological offspring, and that she never “knew” Joseph in the biblical sense of the word (*virgo intacta*). This tradition is held principally in Roman Catholicism and in Eastern Orthodoxy. The idea of Mary’s perpetual virginity was first introduced into the *Protoevangelium of James*, where it is argued that the “brethren” of Jesus were actually children of Joseph from a previous marriage. It is not until the fourth century that Mary is referred to as “ever virgin” (*ἀειπάρθενος*); in the fifth century this doctrine becomes fairly established. See F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), s.v. “Mary, the Blessed Virgin,” 1047-48. In his discussion of this verse, Erasmus treats the various issues surrounding the perpetual virginity of Mary at some length by referencing various patristic authors. See Anne Reeve, ed., *Erasmus’ Annotations on the New Testament: The Gospels. Facsimile of the Final Latin Text (1535) with Earlier Variants (1516, 1519, 1522 and 1527)* (London: Duckworth, 1986), 58-59.

32. However, the questionable verse was added much later by one of several correctors of Sinaiticus (ⲛ^ϵ).

33. Codex Alexandrinus (A) does not contain most of the Gospel of Matthew, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), Codex Freerianus (W), and Codex Bezae (D). The verse's omission in the two earliest manuscripts is relatively strong evidence against its authenticity, notwithstanding its inclusion in later manuscripts. Without a plausible explanation to the contrary,³⁴ it would seem that the verse is not original to Matthew.

This verse may represent a deliberate addition to Matthew by a later scribe who assimilated it from the same account in Mark 9:14-29. Mark 9:29 reads, "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."³⁵ Thus there is reason to suspect that Matthew 17:21 was added in select manuscripts to deliberately harmonize the accounts in Mark and Matthew. Indeed, verse 21 is somewhat intrusive and foreign to the narrative block (vv. 14-20) that naturally ends with verse 20, where Jesus straightforwardly makes the point that the disciples lacked the necessary faith to cast out the demon.

34. There is no evidence for scribal error due to *homoioateleuton* (see note 30 above) or *homoioarcton*. *Homoioarcton* is an omission that occurs when two words or phrases have identical or similar beginnings and the scribe's or copyists' eye skips from one to the next, causing omission of the intervening material. See Wegner, *Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible*, 49-50.

35. While Matthew 17:21 is not an exact citation of Mark 9:29, it is remarkably close. Certainly an attempt at harmonization is being made here. In Mark 9:29, "and fasting" (καὶ νηστεία) does not appear in Codex Vaticanus (B) or Codex Sinaiticus (S), nor does it seem to appear in P⁴⁵, an early third-century papyrus codex containing sections of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. While one cannot be absolutely certain that P⁴⁵ did not contain "and fasting," since the text is damaged in that part of the verse, the line spacing suggests it was not present. On this codex, see Comfort and Barrett, *Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, 155-201 (esp. p. 171). On the other hand, "and fasting" does appear in Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), Codex Freerianus (W), and Codex Bezae (D). Nevertheless, a number of modern versions have dropped "and fasting" from their translations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV). Commenting on this specific verse, Bart Ehrman has argued that "and fasting" was likely added to Mark 9:29 in a later monastic context where fasting was a part of the daily ascetic regimen. See Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 97; see also Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary: Commenting on the Variant Readings of the Ancient New Testament Manuscripts and How They Relate to the Major English Translations* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), 130.

3. Matthew 18:11 KJV

For the Son of man is come to save
that which was lost.

ἦλθε γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου
σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός.

In the KJV this verse serves as the effective beginning of the parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:11-14), but it is omitted in a number of modern translations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it does not occur in either Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ) or Codex Vaticanus (B).³⁶ Moreover, the church fathers Origen (ca. AD 185-254) and Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. AD 260-340) show no awareness of this verse in their commentaries.³⁷ Interestingly, Luke's version of the parable of the lost sheep (15:4-6), which is somewhat similar to Matthew's rendering, does not include the equivalent of Matthew 18:11. However, this verse does appear in both Codex Freerianus (W) and Codex Bezae (D).

Given that this verse is unknown in any manuscript before the fifth century, is absent from the two most important NT manuscripts, and was apparently unknown to both Origen and Eusebius, it seems fairly certain that it was a later interpolation and thus is not authentic to Matthew. Because Luke 19:10 shares a number of distinct parallels with Matthew 18:11, it is possible that at some point a scribe inserted the verse into Matthew's account to provide a connection between verse 10 (the end of a short discourse on temptations and sin, vv. 6-9) and verses 12-14 (the parable of the lost sheep).³⁸ Luke 19:10 concludes the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus (vv. 1-10) and reads, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." With the exception of two words (ζητῆσαι

36. Codex Alexandrinus (A) does not contain most of the Gospel of Matthew, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it once contained this verse. Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) is also damaged in this section of Matthew.

37. Origen wrote a commentary on the Gospel of Matthew around AD 246-48 (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.36; *NPNF* 1:278-79), and although it is only partially preserved, it is evident that he was not aware of Matthew 18:11, for his commentary skips from verse 10 to verse 12 without comment. Similarly, it is evident in Eusebius's work on Matthew that he too had no knowledge of Matthew 18:11.

38. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2002), 36.

καὶ, “to seek and”), Luke 19:10 shares an exact verbal overlap with Matthew 18:11.³⁹ Because verse 11 talks about saving “that which was lost,” it is easy to see why some scribe or copyist might have been inclined to insert it into Matthew, for it provides a nice segue into the parable of the lost sheep, which would otherwise have a seeming semantic gap between verses 10 and 12.

4. Matthew 21:44 KJV

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

καὶ ὁ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον τοῦτον συνθλασθήσεται· ἐφ’ ὃν δ’ ἂν πέσῃ λικμήσει αὐτόν.

This verse occurs in the concluding section of the parable of the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33-46). Verse 44 is spoken by Jesus to the chief priests and Pharisees to clarify his quotation of Psalm 118:22 in verse 42: “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.” In a number of modern Bible versions, this verse is either completely omitted (NJB, RSV, TEV) or included with an explanatory footnote (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NLT, NWT, NRSV, REB) because it is absent from certain ancient manuscripts, most notably Codex Bezae (D). Additionally, with the publication of P¹⁰⁴, a second-century papyrus fragment that contains Matthew 21:34-37 on one side and the remains of some subsequent verses on the other side (vv. 43 and 45?), it has been tentatively asserted that verse 44 seems to be absent and that the text skips from verse 43 to verse 45.⁴⁰ If this fragment could serve as evidence for

39. In some manuscripts of Matthew, 18:11 appears exactly as it is cited in Luke, which lends some support to the claim that it was probably borrowed from Luke 19:10. See Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, 52-53.

40. This fragment was first published as P.Oxy. LXIV 4404. While the editor of the fragment, J. D. Thomas, raised the possibility that verse 44 was missing, he was reluctant to do so with certainty since the text is very badly effaced on the back of the fragment where verses 43 and 45 seem to appear. The reading on the back of the papyrus is so tentative that, with the exception of one letter, Thomas wrote every other letter with an underdot to signify the uncertainty of the reading. More recently, Comfort has argued that verse 44 is missing from the fragment (*New Testament Text and*

the omission of verse 44, it would be very significant given its early date. Yet the text on the back side is so effaced and illegible as to preclude determination either way.⁴¹ On the other hand, the verse is attested in both Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Σ), as well as in Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Freerianus (W).

Given the nature of the evidence, it is difficult to determine with much certainty whether verse 44 is a later interpolation or is actually authentic. Those who argue the former assert that the verse was borrowed from Luke 20:18 to more fully harmonize Matthew's telling of the parable with Luke's account (20:9-18):⁴² "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (v. 18).⁴³ However, while the two verses certainly share similarities, they begin differently and their placement is different. In Luke, verse 18 immediately follows Jesus's citation of Psalm 118:22, whereas Matthew has an intervening verse (v. 43) in which Jesus declares that the "kingdom of God" shall be given to another nation. If Matthew 21:44 is a case of scribal harmonization, why was the verse not inserted right after verse 42 so that it would be exactly parallel with Luke?

If, on the other hand, the verse is original to Matthew, then it could have been lost from certain manuscripts as a result of a scribal slip. Bruce Metzger has raised the possibility that if verse 44 is original to Matthew, it could have been accidentally omitted in some manuscripts as a result of *homoioarcton*. In verse 43 the last

Translation Commentary, 65); however, his assertion is based on Thomas's suggestion and offers no additional argumentation. Having examined a digital image of the back side of the papyrus fragment, I do not think that one can confidently argue that verse 44 is not attested. In the section where verse 45 supposedly begins, Thomas reads ακου]σα [ν]τες ο̅ι̅, the beginning words of verse 45. Alternatively, one could read κ̅αι̅ π̅ρο̅σ̅ω̅ [ν], the beginning words of verse 44.

41. Origen's *Commentary on Matthew* skips this verse completely, possibly because it was missing in his copy of Matthew.

42. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, 65.

43. Although Mark 12:1-12 also contains a version of the parable of the wicked tenants, it does not include a verse comparable to either Matthew 21:44 or Luke 20:18. The passage does, however, include the quotation of Psalm 118:22 (compare Mark 12:10).

word is αὐτῆς (“of it”), and in verse 44 the last word is αὐτόν (“it”).⁴⁴ A scribe could have finished writing verse 43, looked back to his exemplar, and inadvertently skipped ahead to the end of verse 44, thus omitting this verse.⁴⁵ In light of the ancient manuscript evidence, especially the fact that verse 44 is attested in both Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ) and Codex Vaticanus (B), the case for authenticity is reasonable. All the same, if the back side of 93¹⁰⁴ can ever be convincingly read and verse 44 is indeed omitted, this would be strong evidence that Matthew 21:44 is likely a later interpolation.

5. Matthew 23:14 KJV

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι, ὑποκριταί, ὅτι κατεσθίετε τὰς οἰκίας τῶν χηρῶν, καὶ προφάσει μακρὰ προσευχόμενοι· διὰ τοῦτο λήψεσθε περισσώτερον κρίμα.

In Matthew 23, verse 14 functions as one of a number of “woes” pronounced by Jesus against the scribes and Pharisees at the Temple Mount (Matthew 23:1-36). This verse is omitted in most modern translations of the NT (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NWT, NRSV, REB, RSV, TEV) since it does not appear in any of the most important ancient manuscripts, namely, Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ), Codex Vaticanus (B), or Codex Bezae (D).⁴⁶ This verse is first attested in Codex Freerianus (W), where it is placed before verse 13.

While a scribal slip due to *homoioarcton* is conceivable, since verses 13, 15, and 16 all begin with the word *woe* (οὐαὶ) and a scribe could have overlooked verse 14 because it too begins with *woe*, this seems unlikely because of the early and widespread absence of the

44. Both αὐτῆς and αὐτόν are different genders of the Greek personal pronoun αὐτός, αὐτή, αὐτό that may be variously translated depending on the context. The translations provided are based on the context of the respective verses.

45. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 47.

46. Codex Alexandrinus (A) does not contain most of the Gospel of Matthew, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse. Likewise, Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) is also damaged in this section of Matthew, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

verse in a number of different manuscripts. It is highly unlikely that multiple scribes working independently of one another all accidentally skipped the very same verse. A more plausible explanation is that verse 14 is an interpolation derived from either Mark or Luke, where remarkably similar sayings are directed specifically against the scribes:⁴⁷ “which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation” (Mark 12:40); “which devour widows’ houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation” (Luke 20:47).⁴⁸ That Matthew 23:14 is an interpolation is further evidenced by that fact it appears in relatively late manuscripts in different places within Matthew 23, either before or after verse 13.⁴⁹ Here it is worthy of note that even though the *Textus Receptus* put this verse before verse 13, the KJV (as well as the NKJV) moved this verse to its present location after verse 13.

6. Mark 7:16 KJV

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. εἴ τις ἔχει ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούτω.

This verse comes from the middle section of Jesus’s rather extended discourse against the “traditions of the elders” among the Pharisees (Mark 7:1-23). Prompted by the Pharisees finding fault with Jesus’s disciples for partaking of food without first washing their hands (vv. 1-5), this discourse may be divided into two sections: verses 6-15, in which Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and verses 17-23, in which the disciples question Jesus about what he had said to the Pharisees. Thus, verse 16 acts as a mediating verse between the two sections. Most modern NT trans-

47. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, 69-70.

48. Both Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47 are otherwise securely attested in the manuscript record. It is interesting to note that whereas Mark has parallel particles (κατεσθίοντες/προσευχόμενοι), Luke changes these to finite verbs (κατεσθίουσιν/προσεύχονται). Matthew first employs a finite verb and then a particle (κατεσθίετε/προσευχόμενοι).

49. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 50.

lations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) omit this verse since it does not appear in either Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ) or Codex Vaticanus (B). It does, however, appear in later manuscripts, namely, Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Freerianus (W), and Codex Bezae (D).⁵⁰

The context of verse 16 would not appear to have facilitated the loss of the verse through scribal error. Similarly, since verse 16 has no apparent theological implications and since elsewhere in the Gospel of Mark the very same saying is attested (at 4:9 and 4:23), one cannot easily suppose that this verse was deliberately expunged. A more likely explanation is that it was inserted to provide a sequel to verse 15 and to bridge the two sections that comprise Jesus's discourse. One commentator has noted about the verse: "It appears to be a comment by a copyist (taken from 4.9 or 4.23), introduced as an appropriate comment coming after v. 14."⁵¹

7. Mark 9:44 KJV

Where their worm dieth not, and
the fire is not quenched.

ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ,
καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

Mark 9:44⁵² forms part of a narrative unit in which Jesus admonishes his followers that it is better to cut off any offending body parts (i.e., hand, foot, eye) and be maimed (metaphorically speaking) than to be cast into hell on account of those offenses (Mark 9:42-50). Within this context, verse 44 vividly reinforces the consequences of sin that are associated with the torments of hell (vv. 43, 45, 47, lit. *Gehenna*). This verse is omitted in most modern NT translations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it is not attested in the two oldest manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ) and Codex Vaticanus (B). Similarly, it is omitted in Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Freerianus (W).

50. Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) is damaged in this section of Mark, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

51. Omanson, *Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament*, 77.

52. What is said in this section about verse 44 is equally true for verse 46 in no. 8 below.

On the other hand, this verse is attested in Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Bezae (D).

The omission of this verse is not crucial in terms of meaning because the very same saying appears in verse 48, which is otherwise securely attested in the ancient manuscript tradition: “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” It is possible that a scribe or copyist added verse 44 in order to balance out this narrative unit by reemphasizing the punishments awaiting those who sin. Indeed, each time Jesus speaks of cutting off a body part, his warning is reinforced with a reference to the torments of hell—specifically worms and fire—for greater effect. This repetition, or epistrophe, was a well-known literary trope in antiquity used for effect and balance. Because Jesus does not employ this kind of repetition anywhere else in Mark, its presence here supports the argument that it was added by a scribe. All the same, the fact that epistrophe does not occur elsewhere in Mark does not preclude the possibility that it is used in Mark 9:44. In any case, the nature of the manuscript evidence strongly suggests that verse 44 was a later interpolation based on verse 48.

8. Mark 9:46 KJV

Where their worm dieth not, and
the fire is not quenched.

ὅπου ὁ σκόληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ
τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

See notes on Mark 9:44 in no. 7 above.

9. Mark 11:26 KJV

But if ye do not forgive, neither
will your Father which is in heaven
forgive your trespasses.

εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀφίετε, οὐδὲ ὁ
πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
ἀφήσει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν.

Mark 11:26 forms part of a narrative unit in which Jesus instructs his disciples on the meaning of a withered fig tree and teaches about the principle of faith (vv. 20-26). Previously in the

chapter (one day earlier) Jesus had cursed this very fig tree on his way to Jerusalem because it did not have any figs (vv. 12-14). The very next day, on a return trip to Jerusalem, Peter notices that the fig tree is now completely withered, which prompts Jesus to give the discourse of which Mark 11:26 is the concluding verse. In most modern translations of the New Testament (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV), this verse is omitted since it does not appear in Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ), Codex Vaticanus (B), or Codex Freerianus (W). It does, however, appear in Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), and Codex Bezae (D).

Although a case could be made for omission due to *homoio-teleuton*, since both verses 25 and 26 end with ὑμῶν (“your”), the absence of verse 26 in a number of different codices makes that scenario somewhat unlikely, as one would have to assume that multiple scribes working independently all made the very same error. A more plausible explanation, as Erasmus already pointed out in his notes on the NT (see below), is that this verse was added at some point in imitation of Matthew 6:15, where Jesus gives instruction concerning prayer (following the Lord’s Prayer, vv. 9-13): “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” In Mark 11:24-25 Jesus talks about prayer and the necessity of forgiveness, especially the necessity of forgiving an offender so that God might forgive the offended person’s trespasses in his prayerful petition. Because verse 26 is remarkably similar to verse 25—so close, in fact, that it runs the risk of being redundant—it may have been added later for emphasis and thus should really be seen as an expansion of verse 25. As the narrative unit currently stands (vv. 20-26), this verse can be omitted with no apparent impact on the overall meaning of the pericope.

Erasmus’s notes on this verse: “But if you should not forgive.’ In most Greek manuscripts [lit. books] these things are not added [i.e.,

present]. Theophylact⁵³ neither reads nor interprets. It seems possible that this has been inserted from Matthew 6.”⁵⁴

10. Mark 15:28 KJV

<p>And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.</p>	<p>καὶ ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή ἡ λέγουσα, καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογίσθη.</p>
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This verse is part of the narrative unit that comprises Mark’s crucifixion narrative in verses 21–32. Mark 15:28, which is a quotation from Isaiah 53:12b, appears right after the report that Jesus was crucified between two thieves (v. 27). In virtually every modern NT translation, this verse is omitted (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) since it does not appear in any of the ancient manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲁ), Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraem Syri Rescriptus (C), or Codex Bezae (D).⁵⁵ In fact, this verse does not appear in any NT manuscript until the end of the sixth century.⁵⁶ There is no reason why this verse should be absent from every major ancient manuscript except that it was added at a much later date to Mark’s gospel. The addition is almost certainly drawn from Luke 22:37, where at the last supper Jesus foretells his crucifixion (quoting Isaiah 53:12b): “For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, *And he was reckoned among the transgressors*: for the

53. Theophylact of Ohrid (b. ca. 1055; d. after 1125) was a Byzantine exegete who eventually became Archbishop of Ohrid in the region of the Bulgarians. His principal works include a series of commentaries on several books in the Old Testament as well as commentaries on every NT book except Revelation. Erasmus was influenced considerably by his writings and frequently refers to him in his notes. See *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. “Theophylact,” 1607.

54. My English translation is based on the Latin text of Erasmus given in Reeve, *Erasmus’ Annotations of the New Testament*, 139. Subsequent citations herein of Erasmus are likewise based on this edition.

55. Codex Freerianus (W) is defective in this part of Mark, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

56. Uncial 083 (sixth century) was discovered in the early 1970s at St. Catherine’s Monastery. Other manuscripts with this verse include Uncial 013 (ninth century) and Δ 037 (ninth century).

things concerning me have an end” (emphasis added). Beyond the textual data, which firmly indicates that this verse was added, its authenticity may be further doubted since as a general rule Mark (unlike Matthew and to a lesser extent John and Luke) rarely quotes from the Old Testament.

11. Mark 16:9-20 KJV

⁹Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. ¹⁰And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. ¹²After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. ¹³And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. ¹⁴Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. ¹⁵And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall

⁹ἀναστὰς δὲ πρῶτῃ πρώτῃ σαββάτου ἐφάνη πρῶτον Μαρίᾳ τῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, ἀφ’ ἧς ἐκβεβλήκει ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια. ¹⁰ἐκείνη πορευθεῖσα ἀπήγγειλε τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ γενομένοις, πενθοῦσι καὶ κλαίουσι. ¹¹κάκεῖνοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ’ αὐτῆς ἠπίστησαν. ¹²μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα δυσὶν ἐξ αὐτῶν περιπατοῦσιν ἐφανερῶθη ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ πορευομένοις εἰς ἀγρόν. ¹³κάκεῖνοι ἀπελθόντες ἀπήγγειλαν τοῖς λοιποῖς· οὐδὲ ἐκείνοις ἐπίστευσαν. ¹⁴ὕστερον, ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἑνδεκα ἐφανερῶθη, καὶ ὠνειδίσει τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγγηγεμένον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν. ¹⁵καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα, κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει. ¹⁶ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται. ¹⁷σημεῖα δὲ τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ταῦτα παρακολουθήσει· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου δαιμόνια ἐκβαλοῦσιν, γλώσσαις λαλήσουσι καιναῖς, ¹⁸ὄφεις ἄροῦσι, κἂν θανάσιμόν τι πίωσιν, οὐ μὴ αὐτοὺς βλάψει, ἐπὶ ἄρρώστους χεῖρας ἐπιθήσουσι, καὶ καλῶς ἔξουσιν. ¹⁹ὁ μὲν οὖν

recover.¹⁹ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.²⁰ And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

κύριος, μετὰ τὸ λαλήσαι αὐτοῖς, ἀνελήφθη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν, καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ.²⁰ Ἐκεῖνοι δὲ ἐξεληθόντες ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ, τοῦ κυρίου συνεργοῦντος, καὶ τὸν λόγον βεβαιοῦντος διὰ τῶν ἐπακολουθούντων σημείων. ἀμήν.

These last twelve verses of Mark⁵⁷ contain Jesus's postresurrection appearances to the disciples (vv. 9-14) and a charge, which is accompanied by divine promises (vv. 17-18), to take the gospel "to every creature" (v. 15). The final verse (v. 20) then concludes with a summation of the apostles' ministry: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

While these twelve verses are not omitted in any modern NT edition, they are placed in either double brackets or italics with a note about their absence in certain early manuscripts. Most notably, Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in Codex Vaticanus (B) or Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ). It is also omitted in certain Latin, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic copies of the gospel.⁵⁸ On the other hand, these verses are attested in Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), and Codex Bezae (D). Additionally, an unusual variant (see below) of these verses is attested in Codex Freerianus (W).

The patristic literature on these verses is mixed; some authors seem to have been aware of them in their copies of Mark while others seem not to have known about them or were unsure of their authenticity. Noting in his *First Apology* (ca. AD 150) that the apostles "went forth and preached everywhere,"⁵⁹ Justin Martyr (ca. AD

57. The literature on the textual authenticity/inauthenticity of Mark 16:9-20 is large and can hardly be cited here. For a fairly recent bibliography of the subject, see N. Clayton Croy, *The Mutilation of Mark's Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 190-230. For a good LDS analysis, see Thomas Wayment, "The Endings of Mark and Revelation in the King James Bible," in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, 75-94.

58. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 102-3.

59. Justin Martyr, *Apology* 1.45, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (1885; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:178 (hereafter *ANF*).

100-165) uses language that is basically identical to a phrase that otherwise only appears in the Gospels at Mark 16:20.⁶⁰ Since this is a short verbal overlap, one cannot be certain that Justin is referencing Mark 16:20. In any case, the first definite reference to one of the final twelve verses in Mark comes from Irenaeus (ca. AD 130-200). In his work *Against Heresies* (ca. AD 180), he states, “But at the end of his gospel, Mark says, ‘And then after the Lord Jesus spoke to them, he was received up into heaven and sits on the right hand of God.’”⁶¹ Here Irenaeus is definitely referencing Mark 16:19 even though his wording does not exactly agree with that in the Vulgate.⁶² One other second-century author that may have been aware of Mark 16:9-20 is Tatian (ca. AD 120-80). In his *Diatessaron* (ca. AD 150-60), an edition of the four canonical Gospels in one continuous narrative, he includes the final twelve verses of Mark. However, the problem with this evidence is that the *Diatessaron* survives only in much later Latin and Arabic versions that may not be accurate transcriptions of the original composition.⁶³

While Justin, Irenaeus, and Tatian may have been aware of Mark 16:9-20, other patristic writers such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. AD 150-215) and Origen likely were not aware of these verses because they were absent in their copies of Mark.⁶⁴ Eusebius of Caesarea, in response to a question from a friend named Marinus about an alleged discrepancy between Matthew and Mark on the exact timing of the resurrection,⁶⁵ reports that the concluding verses of

60. In Mark 16:20 the order of the last two words is reversed (ἐξεληθόντες ἐκήρυξαν πανταχοῦ), but this makes no difference to the meaning of the phrase.

61. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.10.5-6 (ANF 1:426); the English translation is mine.

62. In the Vulgate, Mark 16:19 reads: *et Dominus quidem postquam locutus est eis adsumptus est in caelum et sedit a dextris Dei.*

63. It seems most likely that Tatian originally composed his work in either Greek or Syriac. On his use of Mark 16:9-20, see *Diatessaron* 53-54 (ANF 9:125-29).

64. Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 322.

65. The question Eusebius was addressing was how it is that Matthew appears to say that Jesus was raised “late on the Sabbath” (Matthew 28:1) when Mark says he was raised “early on the first day of the week” (Mark 16:2). Though Eusebius will not use this argument, the Greek adverb ὄψέ that is used in Matthew and is often translated as “late” can also be translated as “after.” See Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott, comp., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), s.v. ὄψέ. Therefore,

Mark (vv. 9–20) are likely spurious and do not appear in the more “accurate” copies of the Gospel of Mark:

The solution to this might be twofold. For, on the one hand, the one who rejects the passage itself [Mark 16:9–20], namely the pericope which says this, might say that it does not appear in all the copies of the Gospel according to Mark. At any rate, the accurate copies define the end of the history [i.e., Gospel] according to Mark with the words of the young man who appeared to the women and said to them, “Do not fear. You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene” [Mark 16:6]. In addition to these, it says, “And having heard this they fled, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” [Mark 16:8]. For in this way the ending of the Gospel according to Mark is defined in nearly all the copies. The things that follow [Mark 16:9–20] are in some but not in all of the copies and may be spurious; this is particularly so because it is a contradiction to the witness of the other gospels.⁶⁶

Later, Jerome (ca. AD 345–420) will basically echo Eusebius’s comments and similarly remark that the concluding verses of Mark were missing in most copies of the scriptures: “It [Mark 16:9–20] appears rarely *in copies* of the gospel [i.e., Mark]; almost all Greek copies do not have this pericope at the end.”⁶⁷

If Eusebius is right, Mark’s gospel concludes at 16:8: “And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.” However, such an ending hardly seems fitting for a “gospel” (Mark 1:1) whose express purpose is to declare the “good

many translations of Matthew 28:1 read “after the Sabbath” and remove any apparent discrepancy.

66. Eusebius, *Questions to Marinus* 1.1. Translation is adapted from James A. Kelhoffer, “The Witness of Eusebius’ *ad Marimum* and Other Christian Writings to Text-Critical Debates concerning the Original Conclusion to Mark’s Gospel,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 92 (2001): 84–85.

67. Jerome, *Epistle* 120.3; translation is mine (emphasis added).

news” of Jesus’s resurrection. Even though from a text-critical standpoint Mark 16:8 is currently the earliest attested ending for Mark’s gospel (appearing in Codex Sinaiticus [Ⲭ] and Codex Vaticanus [B]), its abruptness is problematic, giving rise to various theories against its authenticity.

One widely held theory is that the original ending of Mark’s gospel was lost very early and was subsequently copied and recopied without the conclusion (hence Eusebius and Jerome could state that most copies of the gospel did not have anything after Mark 16:8). Some have even speculated that the ending was lost when an early manuscript containing the gospel lost its final page.⁶⁸ Proponents of this theory argue that Mark’s gospel has a tendency toward narrative fulfillment—that is, whenever something about Jesus’s ministry is promised or prophesied in the gospel, Mark tends to narrate its realization.⁶⁹ For example, in Mark 7:29, when the Syrophenecian woman comes to Jesus and entreats him to heal her daughter and Jesus responds that “the devil is gone out of thy daughter,” Mark completes the story by narrating how the woman went home and found her daughter healed (Mark 7:30). Later, in Mark 10:52a, Jesus tells blind Bartimaeus, “Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.” Again, Mark demonstrates the fulfillment of Jesus’s words, narrating in 10:52b, “And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.”⁷⁰ However, there is one notable exception to this rule in Mark 14:28, where Jesus promises the disciples, “But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.” This prophecy never has narrative fulfillment if one takes Mark 16:8 as the concluding verse. Some commentators have therefore used Mark 14:28 as evidence that Mark did not originally intend to end his gospel at 16:8.

The current ending for Mark’s gospel in the KJV, often referred to as the “longer” ending, is widely attested in most later

68. Croy, *Mutilation of Mark’s Gospel*, 12, 18–32.

69. Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 1009.

70. For these and other examples of narrative fulfillment in Mark, see Croy, *Mutilation of Mark’s Gospel*, 57–60.

manuscripts. While it is not without textual problems, and even some who argue that Mark 16:8 is not the original ending also reject it, it cannot be dismissed offhand as inauthentic. If it is not the original ending to Mark, then at the very least it probably contains some of the characteristics of the original ending (i.e., postresurrection appearances and a charge to spread the gospel).

The following ancient endings for the Gospel of Mark are attested:

1. The Gospel of Mark ends at Mark 16:8: “And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.” This ending is attested in both Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ).

2. The “shorter” or “intermediate” ending of Mark, as it is known, adds one verse after Mark 16:8 that reads: “But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.” This ending is first attested in Codex Regius (L) of the eighth century and Codex Athos (Ψ) of the eighth or ninth century.⁷¹

3. The “longer” ending of Mark (16:9-20) is the one contained in the KJV and is widely attested in many manuscripts, most notably Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), and Codex Bezae (D).

4. A variant of the “longer” ending is attested in Codex Freerianus (W). After Mark 16:14 and before verse 15, this codex adds the following: “And they excused themselves, saying, ‘This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal your righteousness now’—thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, ‘The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for

71. However, these same codices also contain the “longer” ending of Mark. The vocabulary used in this ending is totally foreign to Mark and suggests that this ending is definitely non-Markan and a later interpolation.

those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, that they may inherit the spiritual and imperishable glory of righteousness that is in heaven.”⁷²

12. Luke 17:36 KJV

Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

δὺο ἔσονται ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ· ὁ εἷς παραληφθήσεται, καὶ ὁ ἕτερος ἀφεθήσεται.

Luke 17:36 forms part of a narrative unit in which Jesus, responding to the Pharisees, discourses on the future coming of the kingdom (Luke 17:20–37). This passage shares a number of parallels with a section of the Olivet discourse in Matthew 24:29–41. Verse 36 of Luke 17 is excluded from almost every modern NT translation (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it is absent in most ancient manuscripts: Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Alexandrinus (A), and Codex Freerianus (W). The verse is also absent from \mathfrak{P}^{75} , a third-century papyrus codex from Egypt that contains large blocks of Luke’s and John’s gospels.⁷³ While Codex Bezae (D) lacked the verse too, it was inserted by later correctors.

Although it is not impossible that verse 36 was accidentally dropped due to *homoioleuton*, since verses 35 and 36 end with the word ἀφεθήσεται (“will be left”), the cumulative evidence from early manuscripts against the verse’s authenticity is overwhelming. The most likely scenario is that at some point verse 36 was added to Luke 17 in light of the very similar saying in Matthew 24:40 (“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left”), although the scribe harmonized it to the style of Luke 17:35.

It is noteworthy that Erasmus could not find this verse in any of the Greek manuscripts he was consulting (see his notes below).

72. Translation from Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 81.

73. For a detailed description and analysis of \mathfrak{P}^{75} , see Comfort and Barrett, *Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, 501–608 (see p. 554 on the missing verse in this codex).

While this verse is not present in the *Textus Receptus*, it was included in the KJV through the influence of the Latin Vulgate.⁷⁴

Erasmus's notes on this verse: "Two men in the field.' This portion is not present in Luke among the Greek [manuscripts], although the divine Ambrose⁷⁵ recollects fields. On the contrary, in the copy belonging to Paulinus there is no mention except concerning the bed. Theophylact read just two, concerning the bed and millstone; the third, concerning the field, seems to be taken from Matthew, chapter 24."

13. Luke 22:43-44 KJV

⁴³And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

⁴³ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ἐνισχύων αὐτόν. ⁴⁴καὶ γενόμενος ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ, ἐκτενέστερον προσήχετο. ἔγένετο δὲ ὁ ἰδρῶς αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι αἵματος καταβαίνοντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.

These two verses form part of Luke's Gethsemane narrative in which Jesus prays to God in great agony on the night before the crucifixion (Luke 22:39-46).⁷⁶ Although in the RSV verses 43 and 44 are omitted, they appear in the CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, and TEV (sometimes in brackets to highlight their dubious nature). These verses are absent from Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Alexandrinus (A), the third-century papyrus manuscript P⁷⁵, and P⁶⁹ (a papyrus manuscript dating to the middle of the third century and containing portions of Luke 20:41, 45-48, 58-61).⁷⁷ Addi-

74. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary*, 221.

75. Ambrose of Milan (ca. AD 339-397) was one of the most famous Latin church fathers of the fourth century. Though he had grown up in a Christian family, he was not baptized until immediately before his ordination as bishop of Milan in either 373 or 374. As bishop he would play an important role in the conversion of Augustine (ca. AD 386). He wrote a number of treatises and left behind numerous letters. See *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Ambrose," 49-50.

76. In his gospel, Luke never mentions Gethsemane, only the Mount of Olives (v. 39). Gethsemane is mentioned only in Matthew 26:36 and Mark 14:32.

77. P⁶⁹ is otherwise known as P.Oxy. XXIV 2383. The editor of the papyrus, E. G. Turner, noted that while verses 43 and 44 are not on the papyrus, the lacuna between verse 41 and verse 45 is too small to accommodate them. "The scribe's large omission

tionally, in some later manuscripts (post-eighth century) the two are marked with asterisks or obeli to signify their questionable nature, and in later manuscripts they have been placed after Matthew 26:39 or 26:45a, indicating that they were not necessarily fixed in Luke.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Luke 22:44 is attested in a fragmentary parchment codex that contains portions of Matthew and Luke from Hermopolis Magna, in Upper Egypt, that dates to the late third or early fourth century AD (0171 = PSI II 124).⁷⁹ Likewise, a case should really be made that verses 43 and 44 are attested in Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ) since both Ⲛ* and Ⲛ² give the verses, though Ⲛ¹ suppresses them.⁸⁰ These verses are also included in Codex Bezae (D).

Given the disparate nature of the manuscript evidence, it is difficult to determine whether or not these verses are original to Luke's narrative. Early patristic evidence suggests that the story of Jesus's suffering and bleeding in the Garden of Gethsemane (which appears only in Luke) was known by a few early Christians. The most notable such witness is Justin Martyr, who comments on these very verses in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (ca. AD 135), although he does not mention in which gospel they were contained: "For in the memoirs [Gospels], which I say were drawn up by his apostles and those who followed them, [it is written] that 'His sweat fell down

on the recto is easier to explain (ll. 3-4 nn.) if his exemplar did not in fact contain verses 43-44, the incident of the appearance of the angel and of the bloody sweat." E. Lobel, C. H. Roberts, E. G. Turner, and J. W. B. Barns, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part XXIV* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1957), 2. More recently, see Kurt Aland, "Alter und Entstehung des D-Textes im Neuen Testament. Betrachtungen zu P69 und 0171," in *Miscellanea papirologica Ramón Roca-Puig*, ed. Sebastià Janeras (Barcelona: Fundacio Salvador Vives Casajuana, 1987), 57-60; and Thomas Wayment, "A New Transcription of P. Oxy. 2383 (P⁶⁹)," *Novum Testamentum* 50 (2008): 351-57.

78. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 151.

79. This parchment fragment contains Matthew 10:17-23, 25-32 and Luke 22:4-50, 52-56, 61, 63-64. On this fragment, see Comfort and Barrett, *Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, 635-41. This parchment codex is broken off right before verse 44, so there is no way to know if it also included verse 43.

80. After Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ) was completed, the first corrector (Ⲛ*) of the text, who was a contemporary of the scribe who produced Luke (in fact, he was the *diorthōtēs* [διορθωτής] who checked the manuscript before it left the scriptorium), added these verses because they were missing. Subsequently the verses were removed by a later corrector (Ⲛ¹) only to be restored by an even later corrector (Ⲛ²). In my opinion, Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ) ought to be considered a genuine witness for Luke 22:43-44.

like drops of blood' while he was praying, and saying, '[Father] if it be possible, let this cup pass.'"⁸¹ The phrase "His sweat fell down like drops of blood" can only refer to Luke 22:44b.⁸² Thus Justin clearly was aware of this story, knew that it was in some "memoir" (i.e., gospel), and is an early witness to the authenticity of these verses (although not necessarily in Luke).

Irenaeus of Lyons is another early witness to the suffering of Jesus in Gethsemane as described in Luke 22:43-44. In a section of his *Against Heresies*, in which he criticizes Christian docetists who denied that Jesus actually assumed flesh and experienced (as God) a fully human existence, he remarks that Jesus, among other things (being hungry, weary, and pained), "sweated great drops of blood."⁸³ This confirms that Irenaeus was aware of the suffering in Gethsemane that is described only in Luke 22:43-44. Interestingly, since all the examples of Jesus's humanity in this section of Irenaeus's treatise are scriptural proof texts, it is evident that in using the phrase "sweated great drops of blood," Irenaeus was not relying on some oral story but was quoting a scriptural source.⁸⁴

Another early Christian writer who was aware of the Gethsemane account and definitively references it is Hippolytus of Rome (ca. AD 170-236). In a fragmentary exegetical commentary on Psalm 2, he states that Jesus "sweated under the agonies and was strengthened by the angel."⁸⁵ Thus Hippolytus was aware

81. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 103.8 (ANF 1:251). My translation is based on the Greek text in Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris Dialogus cum Tryphone* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 249 (103.8).

82. While Justin does not specifically mention blood (αἷμα) (as Luke does in 22:44b: θρόμβοι αἵματος), θρόμβος usually carries the connotation of blood. See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. θρόμβος; and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. θρόμβος.

83. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.2 (ANF 1:454). The accompanying Greek in this section reads: ἰδρωσε θρόμβους αἵματος.

84. Elsewhere in his writings, Irenaeus seems to allude to Luke 22:43-44. See *Epi-deixis tou apostolikou kerygmatos* 75 (*Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*), Ancient Christian Writers 16, trans. Joseph P. Smith (New York: Newman, 1952), 96.

85. Greek text taken from G. Nathanael Bonwetsch and Hans Achelis, eds., *Hippolytus Werke: Erster Band, Exegetische und Homiletische Schriften* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1897), 146.

of the tradition recorded in Luke 22:43-44, for both references—“sweating under agonies” and being “strengthened by an angel”—appear only in Luke’s gospel. Consequently, that passage has a very ancient pedigree, even if it is not necessarily borne out by the manuscript evidence.⁸⁶

In his treatise *On the Trinity* (ca. AD 356-360), Hilary of Poitiers (ca. AD 315-368) highlights the disparate nature of the manuscript evidence with respect to Luke 22:43-44:

We must not ignore the fact that in several manuscripts, both Latin and Greek, nothing is written of the angel coming or of the bloody sweat. It is therefore ambiguous whether this is an omission, where it is wanting, or an interpolation, where it is found (for the disparity of the copies leaves the question uncertain to us); let not the heretics flatter themselves that herein lies a confirmation of his weakness, that he needed the help of an angel.⁸⁷

In his polemical work *Against the Pelagians* (ca. AD 415), Jerome expresses a similar sentiment about the ambiguous manuscript evidence. Whereas Hilary notes the absence of support for Luke 22:43-44 in some biblical manuscripts, Jerome notes the opposite:

In some copies, Greek as well as Latin, the following words are found written by Luke: “There appeared to him an angel from heaven strengthening him” (referring, undoubtedly, to the Lord, Savior). “And falling into an agony, he prayed more

86. In addition to Justin, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus, there might be one other Christian writer of relatively early date (pre-fourth century) who also makes reference to the story of Jesus’s suffering in Gethsemane. A fragmentary commentary on Luke 22:42-43 attributed to Dionysius of Alexandria (d. ca. AD 264) discusses Luke 22:43-44 as it currently appears. Despite the metaphorical interpretation of Jesus’s sweating blood, it would be very significant if the author was indeed Dionysius of Alexandria, since it would securely establish third-century evidence of these verses in Luke. On this commentary, see Charles L. Feltoe, *The Letters and Other Remains of Dionysius of Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 229-31. For Dionysius’s exegesis of these verses, see pp. 241-45.

87. Hilary, *On the Trinity* 10.41.1. My translation is based on the Latin text from *Patrologia Latina* 10:375.

earnestly. And his sweat became as drops of blood running down to the ground.”⁸⁸

The assumption that verses 43-44 were not originally part of Luke’s gospel but are a later accretion raises a question about why these verses were added. Yet no satisfactory answer (at least in my opinion) has been forthcoming. While Metzger thinks the verses are not original to Luke, he can only suggest that they were probably “added from an early source, oral or written, of extra-canonical traditions concerning the life and passion of Jesus.”⁸⁹

On the other hand, with the assumption that the verses were original but then omitted, there is at least one plausible reason to explain their removal. Possible textual issues such as *homoioiteleuton* or *homoioarcton* aside, I think these verses may have been deliberately removed because some Christian scribe(s) or copyist(s) felt they were potentially embarrassing in depicting what could be construed as a “weak” Jesus on the eve of his death. In his detailed work *The Death of the Messiah*, Raymond Brown argues this point, adding that a weak Jesus ostensibly contradicted Greco-Roman expectations of courage and bravery before death.⁹⁰ Interestingly, all ancient anti-Christian writers from the first four centuries whose works are still extant criticized Jesus’s actions portrayed in Luke 22:42-45 because he appeared fearful of dying and did not show equanimity or true philosophical courage in the face of death.⁹¹

88. Jerome, *Against the Pelagians* 2.16. My translation is based on the Latin text from *Patrologia Latina* 23:578.

89. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 151.

90. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:183-85. Brown writes, “While clearly the evidence available does not settle the issue of whether Luke wrote 22:43-44, in my judgment the overall import of the types of evidence or reasoning discussed above favors Lucan authorship; and henceforth I shall write as if Luke were the author” (p. 185).

91. In Greco-Roman society, Socrates was often held up as the ideal model for the ways persons ought to act and speak in the face of imminent death since he manifested (at least according to Plato’s *Apology*) virtue, equanimity, and courage when he was condemned by the Athenian boule. On Greco-Roman ideals for death, see Jan Willen van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 9-41.

The emperor Julian “the apostate” (ca. AD 331–363), in his work *Against the Galileans* (ca. AD 362), severely reproaches Jesus because of his alleged weaknesses in Gethsemane as detailed in Luke 22:42–45:

Furthermore, Jesus prays in such language as would be used by a pitiful wretch who cannot bear misfortune with serenity, and though he is a god is reassured by an angel (Luke 22:43). And who told you, Luke, the story of the angel, if indeed this ever happened? For those who were there when he prayed could not see the angel, for they were asleep. Therefore when Jesus came from his prayer he found them fallen asleep from their grief. He said: “Why do you sleep? Arise and pray,” and so forth. And then, “and while he was yet speaking, behold a multitude and Judas went before them” (Luke 22:46–47). That is why John did not write about the angel, for neither did he see it.⁹²

From this brief extract it is clear that in Julian’s estimation Jesus lacked the proper courage before death, and so Julian argues that Jesus could not possibly have been “a god” as the “Galileans” (i.e., Christians) declared.⁹³

Almost a century earlier the neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry (ca. AD 234–305), in his work *Against the Christians* (ca. AD 270), similarly criticized Jesus’s actions and words in Gethsemane:

When [Jesus] himself agonizes in anticipation of his death, he prays that his suffering might be eliminated (Luke 22:42; Matthew 26:39); and he says to his companions: “Wait, pray, so that temptation may not overcome you” (Luke 22:40, 46; Matthew 26:41). Surely these sayings are not worthy of a son of God, nor even a wise man who despises death.⁹⁴

92. Translation adapted from *Julian III*, trans. Wilmer C. Wright, Loeb Classical Library 157 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 431 (frag. 4); compare R. Joseph Hoffmann, ed. and trans., *Julian’s “Against the Galileans”* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 144 (frag. 7).

93. Since Julian mentions the angel, he is clearly aware of Luke 22:43 in the manuscript tradition he was using. On this point see T. Baarda, “Luke 22:42–47a, the Emperor Julian as a Witness to the Text of Luke,” *Novum Testamentum* 30/4 (1988): 289–96.

94. Translation adapted slightly from R. Joseph Hoffmann, ed. and trans., *Porphyry’s “Against the Christians”*: *The Literary Remains* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994), 40.

Finally, Celsus (ca. second century AD) composed an extended treatise against Christianity entitled *True Doctrine* (ca. AD 178),⁹⁵ in which he too criticized Jesus's actions and words in Gethsemane: "Why then does he [Jesus] utter loud laments and wailings, and pray that he may avoid the fear of death, saying something like this, 'O Father, if this cup could pass by me'?" (Luke 22:42; Matthew 26:39).⁹⁶ Celsus continues his criticism of Jesus in Gethsemane with an accusation against Christians generally that bears significantly on the status of Luke 22:43-44:

After this he [Celsus] says that some believers, as though from a drinking bout, go so far as to oppose themselves and alter the original text of the gospel three or four or several times over, and they change its character to enable them to deny difficulties in face of criticism.⁹⁷

The implication here is that Celsus was aware that the Gethsemane account was being deleted or altered in the Gospels because certain Christians felt it was potentially embarrassing. This could explain why the account in Luke 22:43-44 has such a disparate history in the manuscript record.

It has recently been argued that this account of Gethsemane may have been dropped by certain Christian groups, such as the Marcionites in their copy of the Gospel of Luke, because it portrayed a side of Jesus that was not only too weak but also too subordinate to the Father (the Demiurge to Marcionites).⁹⁸ Similarly, since Arians will later argue from Luke 22:42-44 that Jesus was not God but was a man with all the attendant human frailties, it may be that some Christians simply preferred to expunge these verses that were already somewhat dubious and were being used by heretics to ad-

95. On the dating of Celsus's treatise, see H. U. Rosenbaum, "Zur Datierung von Celsus' ΑΛΗΘΗΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ," *Vigilae christianae* 26 (1972):102-11; Jeffrey Hargis, *Against the Christians: The Rise of Early Anti-Christian Polemic* (New York: Lang, 1999), 20-24.

96. Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.24, in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 88.

97. Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.27, in Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 90.

98. Claire Clivaz, "The Angel and the Sweat Like 'Drops of Blood' (Lk 22:43-44): ʔ⁶⁹ and ʔ¹³," *Harvard Theological Review* 98/4 (2005): 429-32.

vance their theological arguments.⁹⁹ Interestingly, as noted by Hilary of Poitiers above, whatever the true nature of Luke 22:43-44, “let not the heretics flatter themselves that herein lies a confirmation of his [Jesus’s] weakness, that he needed the help of an angel.”

While I am persuaded that a compelling, albeit circumstantial, case can be made that Luke 22:43-44 was original but later deliberately omitted because it invited criticism, not all scholars embrace this view. In particular, Bart Ehrman and Mark Plunkett, in a full-length article devoted to Luke 22:43-44, argue that these verses were not original to Luke but were later interpolations.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, while they doubt the authenticity of these verses, they conclude that it is not a straightforward matter: “No one argument yields a definitive solution. Rather, the cumulative force of a group of arguments must be assessed, and even then the critic is left with a probability-judgment.”¹⁰¹

14. Luke 23:17 KJV

For of necessity he must release one
unto them at the feast.

ἀνάγκην δὲ εἶχεν ἀπολθεῖν αὐτοῖς
κατὰ ἑορτὴν ἓνα.

In the larger context of this verse, Pilate condemns Jesus to crucifixion, in lieu of Barabbas, because of the cries of the “chief priests” and “rulers of the people” (Luke 23:13-25). Within this narrative unit, verse 17 is a parenthetical aside that explains to the reader the Passover tradition of releasing a prisoner to the people. In most modern translations of the NT, this verse is omitted (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) since it does not appear in Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Alexandrinus (A), or \mathfrak{P}^{75} . The verse is attested in Codex Sinaiticus (\aleph) and Codex Freerianus (W).¹⁰² In Codex Bezae (D) it is transposed and placed after Luke 23:19.

99. Arius *apud* Epiphanius, *Refutation of All Heresies* 16.19.4.

100. Bart D. Ehrman and Mark A. Plunkett, “The Angel and the Agony: The Textual Problem of Luke 22:43-44,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983): 401-16.

101. Ehrman and Plunkett, “Angel and the Agony,” 416.

102. Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) is defective in this part of the manuscript, so it is not possible to determine whether or not it contained this verse.

While this verse could have accidentally dropped out as a result of *homoioarcton*—since verse 18 begins with ἀνέκραξαν (“they cried out”) and verse 17 begins with the visually similar ἀνάγκην (“necessity”)—this explanation cannot adequately explain its widespread omission in so many early manuscripts. A more likely explanation is that this verse was added as a scribal interpolation to help explain the crowd’s request that Pilate release Barabbas in place of Jesus (v. 18) and that it was adapted from similar verses elsewhere: “Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would” (Matthew 27:15); “Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired” (Mark 15:6). Furthermore, the smooth transition from Luke 23:16 to 23:18 would seem to suggest that verse 17 was a later addition.

15. John 5:4 KJV

For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχρῆν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιῆς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι.

This verse forms part of the descriptive background to the account of Jesus healing a man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-18). The man is reported to have been infirm some thirty-eight years before Jesus commanded him to take up his bed and walk (v. 8). This command provoked a controversy with “the Jews,” who accused Jesus of sanctioning work (bed carrying) on the Sabbath day (vv. 16-18). As a preamble to this story, John describes the pool of Bethesda and reports how crowds congregated around it “waiting for the moving of the water” (v. 3). Verse 4 functions as an ostensible explanation for the “troubling” of the water and its alleged therapeutic powers by claiming that it was the work of an angel.

In most modern NT translations, this verse is omitted (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it is absent from the ancient manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ), Codex

Vaticanus (B), Codex Freerianus (W), Codex Bezae (D), \mathfrak{P}^{75} , and \mathfrak{P}^{66} .¹⁰³ In Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), the passage was not originally included but was later inserted by a corrector. Additionally, in a number of later manuscripts this verse is marked by either asterisks or obeli to signify its questionable nature.¹⁰⁴ By the ninth century this verse had appeared in most Greek manuscripts.

Greek patristic texts offer very little evidence for John 5:4 until the later part of the fourth century.¹⁰⁵ But, for example, Tatian (ca. AD 120–180) may have been aware of this verse, for it is included in some much later Latin and Arabic copies of his *Diatessaron*.¹⁰⁶ The first secure reference to the account of the angel at Bethesda is in Tertullian's (ca. AD 160–225) treatise entitled *Concerning Baptism* (ca. AD 205). He refers to the account (without explicitly mentioning the Gospel of John) in the context of comparing Christian baptism with non-Christian rituals of cleansing and how in the Christian case the Holy Spirit, via an angel, might actually sanctify the waters of baptism: "If it is thought strange that an angel should do things to waters, there has already occurred a precedent of that which was to be. An angel used to do things when he moved the Pool of Bethesda [Bethesda]." ¹⁰⁷

While confirming that certain Christians knew of the story of the angel at Bethesda by the third century, the evidence from Tertullian on its own cannot prove that John 5:4 is authentic. In fact,

103. Except for Codex Freerianus (W) and Codex Bezae (D), these manuscripts omit verse 4 along with John 5:3b ("waiting for the moving of the water"). \mathfrak{P}^{66} is a papyrus codex that contains large sections of the Gospel of John (1:1–6:11; 6:35–14:26, 29–30; 15:2–26; 16:2–4, 6–7; 16:10–20:20, 22–23; 20:25–21:9, 12, 17) and dates to either the end of the second century or beginning of the third century. On this codex, see Comfort and Barrett, *Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, 376–468.

104. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 179.

105. For the later patristic evidence for this verse, see Gordon D. Fee, "On the Inauthenticity of John 5:3b–4," *Evangelical Quarterly* 54/4 (1982): 214–15.

106. On Tatian's use of John 5:4, see *Diatessaron* 22.12 (ANF 9:77).

107. Tertullian, *On Baptism* 5.5 (ANF 3:671). Translation from Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Homily on Baptism* (London: SPCK 1964), 15.

the manuscript support against it is overwhelming.¹⁰⁸ On internal grounds, the few defenders of the authenticity of this verse point out that it is needed (along with 3b) to make sense of verse 7:¹⁰⁹ “The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.” While verse 4 does help clarify verse 7, it is not absolutely necessary. Furthermore, it runs against the text-critical principle of *lectio difficilior potior* (“more difficult reading is better”). Put simply, a more difficult, perhaps ambiguous, reading is more likely to be older than another reading that is expanded and clearer, since a scribe or copyist would likely be more inclined to add a verse for clarification than to remove a verse in an otherwise straightforward narrative.¹¹⁰ In John 5 it is more likely that verse 4 was added (to help clarify v. 7) than omitted. Furthermore, verse 4 contains certain words and linguistic constructions that are otherwise foreign to the Gospel of John and suggest a different hand than the writer of this gospel.¹¹¹ In light of all the evidence, it seems very likely that this verse is not authentic but is a later interpolation.¹¹²

108. It needs to be kept in mind that Tertullian does not actually cite John and that his phrasing is by no means a quotation or citation but more appropriately an allusion: *piscinam Bethsaidam angelus interveniens commovebat*. All the same, since John 5 is the only chapter in the Gospels that mentions the pool of Bethesda, Tertullian almost certainly had this gospel in mind when he made the reference.

109. Zane C. Hodges, “The Angel at Bethesda—John 5:4,” *Bibliotheca sacra* 136 (1979): 25–39.

110. All the same, some restraint needs to be exercised before invoking this text-critical principle. If a passage makes no sense, one should not uncritically suppose that it must be older than another rendering that makes more sense, for one should always assume that the author of any text is seeking from the start to be understood.

111. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 179; Fee, “On the Inauthenticity of John 5:3b–4,” 210–13.

112. Of interest is Bruce R. McConkie’s comment on this verse: “No doubt the pool of Bethesda was a mineral spring whose waters had some curative virtue. But any notion that an angel came down and troubled the waters, so that the first person thereafter entering them would be healed, was pure superstition. Healing miracles are not wrought in any such manner. If we had the account as John originally wrote it, it would probably contain an explanation that the part supposedly played by an angel was merely a superstitious legend comparable to some that have since been devised by some churches of Christendom.” Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Volume 1: The Gospels* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 188.

16. John 7:53-8:11 KJV

⁵³And every man went unto his own house. ¹Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. ⁷So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

⁵³καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ, ¹Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν ἐλαιῶν. ²ὄρθρου δὲ πάλιν παρεγένετο εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς. ³ἄγουσιν δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι πρὸς αὐτόν γυναῖκα ἐν μοιχείᾳ κατειλημμένην, καὶ στήσαντες αὐτὴν ἐν μέσῳ ⁴λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Διδάσκαλε, αὕτη ἡ γυνὴ κατειλήφθη ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ μοιχευομένη. ⁵ἐν δὲ τῷ νόμῳ ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς ἐνετείλατο τὰς τοιαύτας λιθοβολεῖσθαι· σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις; ⁶τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγον πειράζοντες αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔχῃσι κατηγορεῖν αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κάτω κύψας τῷ δακτύλῳ ἔγραφεν εἰς τὴν γῆν, μὴ προσποιούμενος. ⁷ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνεκύψας εἶπε αὐτοῖς, ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν, πρῶτος τὸν λίθον ἐπ' αὐτῇ βαλέτω. ⁸καὶ πάλιν κάτω κύψας ἔγραφεν εἰς τὴν γῆν. ⁹οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες, καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς συνειδήσεως ἐλεγχόμενοι, ἐξήρχοντο εἰς καθ' εἰς ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἕως τῶν ἐσχάτων, καὶ κατελείφθη μόνος ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐν μέσῳ ἐστῶσα. ¹⁰ἀνακύψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ μηδένα θεασάμενος πλὴν τῆς γυναικός, εἶπεν αὐτῇ, γύναι, ποῦ εἰσιν ἐκεῖνοι οἱ κατήγοροί σου; οὐδεὶς σε κατέκρινεν; ¹¹ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, Οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω, πορεύου καὶ μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε.

In this story¹¹³ the scribes and Pharisees bring before Jesus a woman allegedly caught in the act of adultery and question him about the appropriate punishment, which according to the law of Moses was stoning (Deuteronomy 22:21-24). Jesus eventually responds, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her” (John 8:7). At this the accusers gradually depart, “being convicted by their own conscience” (v. 9), and leave Jesus alone with the woman. The pericope comes to a close with Jesus exhorting the woman to “go, and sin no more” (v. 11). This is the only story of this type preserved in any of the Gospels.

In most modern translations, these verses are either written in italics or placed in brackets and are usually accompanied by an explanatory note about their tenuous character. John 7:53-8:11 does not appear in any of the most important ancient manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Codex Freerianus (W), Ⲣ⁶⁶, or Ⲣ⁷⁵. Although Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Alexandrinus (A) are damaged in this section of John’s gospel, measurement of the missing sections suggests insufficient room for the passage in question. A number of later manuscripts mark this passage with asterisks or obeli to signal its questionable nature.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, in some manuscripts the passage is placed after John 7:36 or 7:44, at the end of the gospel (i.e., after John 21:25), or after Luke 21:38, all of which suggests that this story was a later interpolation.¹¹⁵ In its present location, the story is first attested in Codex Bezae (D).¹¹⁶ Given the nature of the manuscript and papyrological

113. The literature on the authenticity/inauthenticity of this story in the Gospel of John is fairly extensive. For a cursory bibliography, see Daniel B. Wallace, “Reconsidering ‘The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered,’” *New Testament Studies* 39 (1993): 290 n. 2. For an LDS treatment, see Thomas Wayment, “The Woman Taken in Adultery and the History of the New Testament Canon,” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration through the Triumphal Entry*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 372-97.

114. Gary M. Burge, “A Specific Problem in the New Testament Text and Canon: The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27/2 (1984): 142.

115. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 188.

116. This is the only manuscript dating to before the eighth century that contains this story.

evidence, it seems almost certain that this pericope was not originally part of John's gospel.

While it is possible that a verse or two might unintentionally be lost, it is less likely that a copyist or scribe could accidentally omit twelve whole verses. Furthermore, it is also unlikely that these verses were inadvertently dropped by a number of different copyists and scribes working independently of each other at different times and in different places. Though some have speculated that perhaps the story was intentionally omitted from John's gospel because it could portray Jesus as too lenient on adultery, this theory does not adequately take account of all the evidence. Unlike Luke 22:43-44, where a circumstantial case can be made for deliberate omission, there is no evidence that John 7:53-8:11 was expunged due to "moral prudence," as Augustine would later argue.¹¹⁷ If this were the case, at least one early manuscript ought to contain the story (as is the case with manuscript 0171 [PSI II 124] and Luke 22:43-44), yet not a single early manuscript before Codex Bezae (D) contains the story.

In patristic literature this story in its current form is unknown until the later part of the fourth century. Origen, in his *Commentary on John*, skips directly from John 7:52 to 8:12, so evidently none of the third-century copies of John known to Origen contained this story. Similarly, Tertullian and Cyprian (d. AD 258) show no awareness of this story, even though they both issued ecclesiastical instructions concerning adultery.¹¹⁸ In the Greek East, the first church father to unambiguously mention the story is Euthymius Zigabenus (early twelfth century), who notes that it clearly was inserted into John's gospel.¹¹⁹ In the Latin West, the story is first mentioned at the end of the fourth century by Ambrose and then Jerome. Interestingly, Jerome remarks that the story was well attested: "In the Gospel according to John there is found in many Greek as well as

117. Augustine, *On Adulterous Marriages* 2.6-7. Compare Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 189.

118. Tertullian, *On Modesty* (ca. AD 220); Cyprian, *Letter* 55.20 (ca. AD 250).

119. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 674. Euthymius states that "accurate copies" either omit the story or mark it with obeli.

Latin copies the story of the adulteress who was accused before the Lord.”¹²⁰

While the story seems to have been unknown to patristic writers until the end of the fourth century, it is possible that a version was known much earlier. In his *Ecclesiastical History* (ca. AD 320), Eusebius quotes a story known to him through the writings of Papias of Hierapolis (ca. AD 60-130), an early bishop of Hierapolis in western Asia Minor. “The same person [Papias] uses proofs from the First Epistle of John, and from the Epistle of Peter in like manner. *And he also gives another story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord*, which is found in the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*.”¹²¹ While this reference is brief and the description incomplete, Papias apparently knew of a story that circulated among early Christians and that shared at least some parallels with the story of the woman taken in adultery.¹²² Eusebius’s comment about the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* containing the story is difficult to assess since this gospel is no longer extant.¹²³ Additionally, since it is not clear that Eusebius was aware of the story of the woman taken in adultery in John 7:53-8:11, it is difficult to know how he was interpreting the statement from Papias. Was there another story in circulation about a different woman being accused of sins before Jesus?

120. Jerome, *Against the Pelagians* 2.17. My translation is based on Latin text from *Patrologia Latina* 23:579.

121. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.17 (NPNF 1:173), emphasis added (sometimes cited as Papias Frag. 3.17). Translation is my own. See Michael W. Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 740-41.

122. While the tenth-century world chronicler Agapius of Hierapolis reports that Papias was in fact referring to the story of the woman taken in adultery that is found in John, this is probably his own inference and, because of its late date, should not necessarily be taken at face value. See Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 760-61.

123. The so-called *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (the title is not original) is believed to have been an early second-century gospel produced in Alexandria and used principally by Jewish Christians. It is known primarily from scattered references by later Christian authors. See Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books That Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15-16.

Another relatively early source that possibly references this story is the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, or *Teachings of the Apostles*. While this source purports to have been written by the apostles at the time of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), modern scholarship has shown that it was actually composed sometime in the third century.¹²⁴ In the section of this treatise where bishops are instructed to mercifully receive penitent sinners, an illustrative story is given, one that suggests that the author(s) of the treatise was aware of a story similar to what is found in John 7:53-8:11:

And when the elders had set another woman which had sinned before Him [Jesus], and had left the sentence to Him, and were gone out, our Lord, the Searcher of the hearts, inquiring of her whether the elders had condemned her, and being answered No, He said unto her: "Go thy way therefore, for neither do I condemn thee." This Jesus, O ye bishops, our Saviour, our King, and our God, ought to be set before you as your pattern.¹²⁵

While the example cited in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* shares definite parallels with John 7:53-8:11, there are also clear differences. Jesus's response to the woman in the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, "Go thy way therefore, for neither do I condemn thee," is remarkably similar to what is found in John 8:11, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." On the other hand, the Johannine version implies that the woman was actually guilty of adultery, whereas the example cited in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* supposes that that woman was actually innocent of whatever charges were being leveled against her (it is not clear that it was necessarily adultery). Furthermore, the Johannine version refers to the "scribes and Pharisees," while the *Didascalia Apostolorum* mentions "the Elders"; in the former the

124. See *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Didascalia Apostolorum," 479. Though this text was originally written in Greek, it is extant only in Syriac.

125. *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 2.24 (ANF 7:408). Because the *Didascalia Apostolorum* is embodied in the first six books of the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions*, I have selected this work for reference.

accusers leave as a result of a guilty conscience, whereas in the latter they leave voluntarily so that Jesus can judge independently.

Finally, in his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Didymus the Blind (ca. AD 318–98), the famous biblical exegete from Alexandria, relates a story that is very similar to what is found in John 7:53–8:11.

We find, therefore, in certain gospels [the following story]. A woman, it says, was condemned by the Jews for a sin and was being sent to be stoned in the place where that was customary to happen. The saviour, it says, when he saw her and observed that they were ready to stone her, said to those who were about to cast stones, “He who has not sinned, let him take a stone and cast it.” If anyone is conscious in himself not to have sinned, let him take up a stone and smite her. And no one dared. Since they knew in themselves and perceived that they themselves were guilty in some things, they did not dare to strike her.¹²⁶

The story, as related by Didymus, shares definite parallels with the account in John 7:53–8:11, most notably “He who has not sinned, let him take a stone and cast it” (compare John 8:7). However, there are also some important differences. For example, Didymus does not identify the charge as adultery, nor should it be automatically assumed, since other crimes also merited stoning according to the law of Moses.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the story is framed differently from how it appears in John. In John the scribes and Pharisees seek to entrap Jesus and therefore bring the woman to him and solicit his opinion on the condemnation, whereas in Didymus’s account the Jews never seek out Jesus’s judgment—rather, Jesus shows the initiative and intervenes on the woman’s behalf. Though it might be tempting to suppose that Didymus must have had the Gospel of John in mind when he said the story could be found “in certain gos-

126. Didymus, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, 223.6b–13a. Translation from Bart D. Ehrman, “Jesus and the Adulteress,” *New Testament Studies* 34/1 (1988): 25.

127. Namely, breaking the Sabbath (Numbers 15:33–36), idolatry (Deuteronomy 17:2–5), and rebellious children (Deuteronomy 21:19–21).

pels,” the clear differences between the accounts make that facile assumption problematic. Furthermore, Didymus might have been referring not to John’s gospel but to the similar story that Eusebius attributes to the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*.

In any event, the patristic evidence demonstrates that at least by the second century certain Christians were aware of a story about a condemned woman who appeared before Jesus and whose punishment was subsequently nullified or mitigated as a result of the encounter. Yet the similar story in John cannot be deemed original to that gospel. The ancient manuscript evidence speaks against it, and the story contains literary features that suggest non-Johannine authorship.¹²⁸ Different earlier versions of this story suggest that its current form in John is not the original version. Perhaps, then, the story evolved into its present form and was added to John in the fourth or fifth century because its core had an ancient pedigree and its appeal to mercy over punishment was attractive.

17. Acts 8:37 KJV

And Philip said, If thou believest
with all thine heart, thou mayest.
And he answered and said, I believe
that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

εἶπε δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος, εἰ πιστεύεις
ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, ἔξεστιν.
ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπε, πιστεύω τὸν υἱὸν
τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν.

In this verse Philip, one of the seven chosen by the apostles to help with the ministry (Acts 6:5), travels to Gaza and converts a eunuch from Ethiopia whom he meets along the way (Acts 8:26-40). After Phillip briefly preaches about Jesus (v. 35), the eunuch requests baptism (v. 36). Philip replies that he can receive baptism as long as believes with all his heart (v. 37a), whereupon the eunuch professes belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (v. 37b) and is then baptized (v. 38).

Most modern NT translations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) omit this verse because it is missing from Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲡ), Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex

128. On this last point, see Wallace, “Reconsidering,” 290-96.

Alexandrinus (A), and ϩ⁴⁵.¹²⁹ Its earliest attestation in a codex is in the sixth century, in Codex Laudianus (E),¹³⁰ after which date it becomes more common until, by the ninth century, it appears with some frequency in various Greek miniscules. Given the strong manuscript evidence and lack of grounds for accidental omission, it seems probable that verse 37 was a later accretion to Acts. Supporting this view is the fact that the Ethiopian eunuch's declaration of belief in verse 37b is a confessional phrase that gained currency in the liturgy and catechetical confessions of the fifth and sixth centuries. As Metzger has argued, "Its insertion into the text seems to have been due to the feeling that Philip would not have baptized the Ethiopian without securing a confession of faith, which needed to be expressed in the narrative."¹³¹

Erasmus remarked (see below) that to his knowledge Acts 8:37 was not attested in any Greek manuscript he consulted, although he attributed this to scribal error. Interestingly, Irenaeus of Lyons, in his *Against Heresies* (ca. AD 180), mentions the Ethiopian eunuch's confession (otherwise known only from Acts 8:37) and quotes it (albeit in Latin) rather closely to how it appears in Acts 8:37b (Greek): "I believe Jesus to be the son of God."¹³²

Although some might suspect that this verse was removed because it could be used against the practice of infant baptism (confession of belief being something that infants are unable to do), there is no indication that this was the case. When the debate about infant baptism emerged in the fifth century, Acts 8:37 was never invoked as a proof text against the practice, nor do we find an allegation that adherents of the practice expunged this verse from their scriptures. Furthermore, there are textually secure passages in the NT that

129. Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Bezae (D) are damaged in this portion of Acts, so it is not known if they contained this verse.

130. Codex Laudianus (E), named after its former owner Archbishop William Laud, is a diglot manuscript assigned to the sixth century that contains both a Latin text (left column) and a Greek text (right column) of the book of Acts. On this codex, see Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 110.

131. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 315.

132. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.12.8 (ANF 1:433).

show confession to be an important prerequisite for baptism (Acts 16:29–33; 18:8). If Acts 8:37 was removed for doctrinal reasons, why were these other passages not expunged too?

Erasmus's notes on this verse: “And Philip said: ‘If you believe &c.’ [the rest of the verse] until the place ‘and he commanded the chariot to stand still [v. 37],’ I did not find in the Greek manuscripts, although I think that it has been omitted by the carelessness of copyists. For I found this [verse] is applied in certain Greek manuscripts, but in the margin.”

18. Acts 15:34 KJV

Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. ἔδοξε δὲ τῷ Σίλα ἐπιμείναι αὐτοῦ.

After the Jerusalem Council, where it was determined that Gentile followers need not be circumcised to become Christians, Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by Silas and Judas, went to Antioch to inform the Christian congregations in the city about the ruling. Acts 15:33 gives the impression that Silas and Judas returned to Jerusalem. However, in verses 40–41 we learn that Paul (in Antioch) chose Silas (seemingly in Jerusalem) as his new companion and headed toward Cilicia. Verse 34 clarifies the situation by stating that Silas did not actually return to Jerusalem but remained in Antioch, where Paul was.

Most modern editions of the NT omit this verse (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it does not appear in any of the most important ancient witnesses: Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Codex Alexandrinus (A), or \mathfrak{P}^{74} .¹³³ The verse does appear in Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and in Codex Bezae (D), but in Bezae it is expanded: “But it seemed good to Silas that they remain, and Judas journeyed alone.”

133. \mathfrak{P}^{74} is a seventh-century papyrus manuscript that contains large sections from Acts, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude. It is an important witness for Acts because it contains almost the entire book. On this manuscript, see Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 101.

Because a variety of ancient manuscripts lack this verse, it is highly unlikely that it was accidentally omitted due to scribal error. It seems far more likely that this verse was later added by a copyist to explain how Paul could have chosen Silas as his new companion so readily. Nevertheless, beyond adding clarity to the narrative, this verse has no theologically significant implications.

Erasmus's notes on this verse: “‘To remain there’ is to remain in the same place. In other respects, after these words, which is followed in our copies with ‘wherefore Judas alone went away to Jerusalem,’ I did not find among the Greek [manuscripts]. It seemed that Silas remained there to be found, except in one manuscript, in which it is placed in the margin. Truly it is possible for this to be seen as an error made by scribes.”

19. Acts 24:7 KJV

But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,

παρελθὼν δὲ Λυσίας ὁ χιλιάρχος μετὰ πολλῆς βίας ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν ἀπήγαγεν

The context here is Paul’s hearing before the Roman procurator (governor) Felix in Caesarea, when a lawyer named Tertius¹³⁴ accuses Paul of having profaned the temple (Acts 24:6) and relates how Lysias, a Roman tribune, had come and rescued Paul from the angry mob. Most modern NT translations omit verse 7 (along with v. 6b)—CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV—since it does not appear in any of the most important ancient manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Codex Alexandrinus (A), or Ⲣ⁷⁴.¹³⁵ The verse is first attested in the sixth-century Codex Laudianus (E).

In light of the overwhelming manuscript evidence, it seems rather certain that verse 7 was added to Acts 24. The most plausible explanation is that it was inserted into Tertius’s speech to clarify

134. The KJV uses the diminutive form *Tertullus*.

135. Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Bezae (D) are damaged in this portion of Acts, so it is impossible to determine whether they contained this verse.

that it was Lysias who forcibly removed Paul from the mob, an incident reported previously in Acts 21:33. However, some scholars see the verse as authentic and argue that a jump from verse 6b to verse 8 upsets clarity and completeness. Yet this is precisely the place where a copyist or scribe might be most inclined to insert extra material into the text in order to clarify an otherwise semiambiguous passage. In any case, about the only implication of the addition or omission of this verse is that it has some bearing on the interpretation of *παρ' οὗ* (“of whom”) at the start of verse 8. If the verse is omitted, this clearly refers to Paul; if retained, it refers to Lysias.

Erasmus's notes on this verse: “Whom we took and we wanted to judge him according to our law. And the tribune Lysias came in and with great force took him from our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you.’ In multiple Greek copies they lack all this. Except in one I found added, but of the smallest form, and it is in the space of the margin.”

20. Acts 28:29 KJV

And when he had said these words,
the Jews departed, and had great
reasoning among themselves.

καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος,
ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, πολλὴν
ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν

This verse forms part of the conclusion of Acts. Paul is in Rome awaiting his appearance before the emperor (Acts 28:16–31). In the meantime he called the leading Jews of the city together and declared the gospel unto them (vv. 17, 23). Paul’s message was met with mixed reactions (v. 24), whereupon he rebuked certain of them by quoting Isaiah 6:9–10 (Isaiah’s words of reproach to Israel) before they left. Verse 29 describes the reactions of certain Jews after they departed from Paul.

In most modern NT translations, this verse is omitted (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) because it does not appear in any ancient manuscript. It is not present in Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), Codex Alexandrinus (A),

Codex Laudianus (E), or \mathfrak{P}^{74} .¹³⁶ Even Erasmus remarks (see below) that he could not locate this verse in several Greek manuscripts. Given the overwhelming manuscript evidence against its authenticity, this verse appears to be a later interpolation to Acts. The best explanation is that it was inserted at some later point to smooth out the rather hasty transition from verse 28 to verse 30. In any event, this verse has no significant theological implications.

Erasmus's notes on this verse: "And when they had said these things, the Jews departed from him, having a great dispute among themselves.' I did not find the words in several old manuscripts."

21. Romans 16:24 KJV

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all. Amen.

ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. ἀμήν.

Part of the final instructions in Romans (16:17-24) before the concluding doxology (vv. 25-27), this verse is basically a repetition of verse 20b: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."¹³⁷ Most modern NT translations (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV) omit the verse because it is not attested in Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (\aleph), Codex Alexandrinus (A), Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C), \mathfrak{P}^{46} , or \mathfrak{P}^{61} . However, it is attested in Codex Bezae (D).

In light of the overwhelming manuscript evidence against its authenticity, combined with the fact that it essentially repeats verse 20b, the verse very likely is a later addition to Romans. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that it effectively closes the letter with a

136. While it appears that verse 29 is absent from \mathfrak{P}^{74} , that portion of the manuscript is damaged and riddled with lacunae, preventing any definitive conclusion. The same holds for Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) and Codex Bezae (D), which are also damaged in this section of Acts.

137. There is debate about whether or not the name-title *Christ* was originally a part of this verse since it is not attested in the earliest manuscripts: Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (\aleph), or \mathfrak{P}^{46} .

dominical declaration, one perhaps added in a later ecclesiastical context in which this letter was read as part of the liturgy.¹³⁸

22. 1 John 5:7b-8a KJV

⁷For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

⁷ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. ⁸καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῆ, τὸ Πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

These two verses are part of the book's concluding narrative section wherein the author testifies about the reality of Jesus Christ and his divine Sonship (1 John 5:6-20). As they currently stand in the KJV, these two verses assert the unity of the Godhead. In virtually every modern NT translation (CEV, ESV, NAB, NIV, NJB, NLT, NRSV, NWT, REB, RSV, TEV), verses 7b and 8a are omitted since they do not appear in a single ancient Greek manuscript.

In the oldest Greek manuscripts containing 1 John—Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ), Codex Vaticanus (B), and Codex Alexandrinus (A)—these two verses read as follows:¹³⁹ “^{7a}For there are three that bear record, ^{8b}the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” Similarly, not a single early church father writing in Greek is aware of 1 John 5:7b-8a. For example, the earliest Christian commentator on these verses, Clement of Alexandria, cites them as follows: “^{7a}For there are three that bear witness, ^{8b}the spirit, and the

138. Though the final doxology (vv. 25-27) occurs with minor variations in Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲙ), Codex Alexandrinus (A), and Codex Bezae (D), there has been some debate about whether Paul actually appended it to his original letter or whether it was added shortly thereafter when Paul's letters were collected and read in various early Christian communities. See Raymond F. Collins, “The Case of a Wandering Doxology: Rom 16,25-27,” in *New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Festschrift J. Delobel*, ed. A. Denaux (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2002), 293-303.

139. Codex Bezae (D) does not contain any of the Johannine epistles (1-3 John). Codex Ephraemi Syri Rescriptus (C) is damaged in this section of the codex, so it is not possible to determine how 1 John 5:7-8 read in it.

water, and the blood, and these three are one.”¹⁴⁰ The fact that no Greek writer of the ancient church is aware of 1 John 5:7b-8a is very telling, especially when one considers the theological controversies of the fourth century that centered on the nature of the Godhead (i.e., Arianism and Sabellianism) and were resolved by promulgating the doctrine of the Trinity. Certainly if 1 John 5:7b-8a were authentic, why did not a single church father writing in Greek cite these verses in defense of Trinitarian theology since they form the only explicit Trinitarian formula in the entire NT?

When one goes beyond the Greek NT and Greek patristic writers and examines other ancient copies of the NT, whether they be in Syriac, Coptic, or Ethiopic, the results are the same.¹⁴¹ No ancient copy of 1 John in any of these languages contains 5:7b-8a. Similarly, a survey of the Old Latin version of the NT, preserved fragmentarily by such Latin fathers as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, reveals that 1 John 5:7b-8a was not in the earliest Latin versions of the NT.¹⁴² Furthermore, it is evident that Jerome’s Vulgate did not contain these verses either.¹⁴³

Based on the overwhelming textual evidence, it is fairly obvious that 1 John 5:7b-8a, commonly referred to as the *Comma Johanneum* (Johannine Comma),¹⁴⁴ is not authentic but is a much later interpolation. Where did it come from? Its earliest attestation is in the *Liber Apologeticus*, a fourth-century homily by either Bishop Priscillian

140. This reference comes from the fragments of Clement preserved in Latin by the sixth-century Roman statesman and monastic founder Cassiodorus (ca. AD 485-580). See fragment 3 (*ANF* 2:576).

141. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 648.

142. Though some have tried to argue that Cyprian, in *The Unity of the Catholic Church* 6, refers to 1 John 5:7a-8b, this is not correct. See Maurice Bévenot, trans. and ed., *St. Cyprian: The Lapsed, The Unity of the Catholic Church* (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1957), 109, n. 53.

143. Specifically, Codex Fuldensis, one of the earliest and most important manuscripts of the Vulgate (copied about AD 541-46), does not contain these verses. Neither does Codex Amiatinus, the earliest nearly complete copy of the entire Latin Vulgate copied before AD 716.

144. This designation refers to how the interpolated material neatly forms a short clause within the narrative flow of the two verses.

of Avila (d. AD 385) or his successor, Bishop Instantius.¹⁴⁵ According to Metzger, it was between the fifth and sixth centuries when this interpolation was placed in select Latin versions of 1 John:

Apparently the gloss [1 John 5:7b-8a] arose when the original passage [1 John 5:7-8] was understood to symbolize the Trinity (through the mention of three witnesses: the Spirit, the water, and the blood), an interpretation that may have been written first as a marginal note that afterwards found its way into the text. In the fifth century the gloss was quoted by Latin Fathers in North Africa and Italy as part of the text of the Epistle, and from the sixth century onwards it is found more and more frequently in manuscripts of the Old Latin and of the Vulgate.¹⁴⁶

At some point between the eighth and ninth centuries, when this reading caught on and became somewhat widespread in Latin NT manuscripts of the time, it was apparently conscripted into select Greek manuscripts. At present, the earliest Greek manuscript that contains 1 John 5:7b-8a is a tenth-century manuscript in which these verses are added as part of an alternative reading.¹⁴⁷ Of the nearly 5,400 known Greek manuscripts of the NT, only 8 contain the Johannine Comma, and most of them are from the fifteenth or sixteenth century.¹⁴⁸

The story of how these verses made their way into the Greek NT produced by Erasmus, which subsequently paved the way for their inclusion in the KJV, is intriguing. In the first and second editions of Erasmus's Greek NT (1516, 1519), 1 John 5:7b-8a was not included because Erasmus knew of no Greek manuscript that had these verses. However, by omitting these verses, Erasmus—and

145. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 648.

146. Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 648.

147. Though this manuscript is dated to the tenth century, it is not certain whether the addition of 1 John 5:7b-8a was made immediately after the manuscript was written or a considerable time later.

148. For these manuscripts, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 647-48.

subsequently his version of the NT—began to come under increasing attack from various quarters of the church. The accusations ranged from negligence (Lat. *supinitas*), for not adequately or thoroughly checking all Greek manuscripts of the time, to heresy, because 1 John 5:7b-8a was thought to be a divine safeguard against Arianism.¹⁴⁹ One of the most vocal and persistent critics was Edward Lee, who would later serve as Archbishop of York (1531-1544). In 1520 Erasmus issued a detailed response directly to Lee, entitled *Responsio ad Annotationes Eduardi Lei*. In it Erasmus defended himself and his work and explained why 1 John 5:7b-8a was omitted from his first two editions of the Greek NT:

I shall merely say that I examined at various times more than seven manuscripts and did not find in any of them what we read in our texts. If I had come across one manuscript that had the reading found in our texts, I would have added the phrase missing in the others on the strength of that one. Since that did not happen I did the only thing possible and indicated what was lacking in the Greek texts.¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Erasmus's third edition of his Greek NT, published in 1522, inserted the questionable Johannine Comma, which remained in all future editions. The primary reason for its insertion was that, very conveniently, a Greek NT manuscript containing 1 John 5:7b-8a suddenly appeared and sometime between May 1520 and June 1521 was brought to the attention of Erasmus, who included the Johannine Comma in his third edition. However, it is evident that he had reservations about the authenticity and timely appearance of that manuscript. The manuscript, known today as Codex Montfortianus and by Erasmus as Codex Britannicus, dates to the early sixteenth century.¹⁵¹ It contains the entire NT written

149. H. J. De Jonge, "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 56/4 (1980): 382-86.

150. Erasmus, *Controversies with Edward Lee*, Collected Works of Erasmus 72, ed. Jane E. Philips, trans. Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 404.

151. It is designated by the number 61 and is currently housed at Trinity College in Dublin. See Aland and Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 129.

in miniscule script with one column per page. Scholars have long recognized that this manuscript was basically produced to induce Erasmus to include the Johannine Comma.¹⁵² As Metzger and Ehrman argue:

In an unguarded moment, Erasmus may have promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length, such a copy was found—or was made to order! As it now appears, the Greek manuscript had probably been written in Oxford about 1520 by a Franciscan friar named Froy (or Roy), who took the disputed words from the Latin Vulgate. Erasmus inserted the passage in his third edition (1522), but in a lengthy footnote that was included in his volume of annotations, he intimated his suspicion that the manuscript had been prepared expressly in order to confute him.¹⁵³

There is no substantial evidence that Erasmus felt constrained by any promise to include these verses if they could be found in a Greek manuscript. A more likely reason for their inclusion was that the protests moved him to defend his good name and ensure the continued success of his Greek NT.¹⁵⁴ As a result, these verses were later included in the KJV since they appeared in all versions of Erasmus's Greek NT after the second edition, even though they clearly were not original to 1 John. The correct reading for 1 John 5:7-8 should be: "For there are three that bear record, ⁸the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree in one."

Erasmus's notes on these verses: "There are three who give testimony in heaven.' In the Greek manuscript(s) I only found this concerning the testimony of the three: 'there are three testifying, the spirit and the water and the blood'; it is because there are three that

152. J. Rendel Harris, *The Origin of the Leicester Codex of the New Testament* (London: Clay, 1887), 46-53.

153. Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 146-47.

154. De Jonge, "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum," 385.

testify—the spirit, and the water, and the blood. The divine Jerome announced beforehand in his canonical letters that this passage was suspected to be a corruption from the Latin interpreters, and the testimony of ‘the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ was omitted by several. . . . To this Paolo Bombasio, a learned and blameless man, at my enquiry described this passage to me word for word from a very old codex from the Vatican library, in which it does not have the testimony ‘of the father, word, and spirit.’ If anyone is impressed by age, the book was very ancient; if by the authority of the Pope, this testimony was sought from his library. The edition by Aldina agrees with this reading.”¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

It should be readily apparent that, on the basis of the evidence from the ancient NT manuscripts, there are some passages that do not actually belong in the KJV NT. Of the twenty-two passages that appear in the KJV but are omitted or bracketed in most modern editions of the Bible (see table 1), there are good grounds for omitting nineteen of them (forty verses). Though this sounds like a significant number, when one considers that there are about 7,956 verses in the NT, the questionable verses make up only one-half of 1 percent of the entire NT (.005). While the KJV NT certainly has some textual problems owing to its Greek subtext, it must also be acknowledged that, statistically speaking, the Greek subtext nearly always agrees with the ancient textual evidence as it currently stands.¹⁵⁶

Even though the textual integrity of nineteen passages (forty verses) is to be doubted, whether they are omitted or not makes little or no difference doctrinally or theologically. For example, numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14 may be regarded as some kind of gospel harmonization. Because they have been directly conscripted

155. Erasmus’s notes on these verses are too long to cite in their entirety.

156. Even if every single invalid variant attested in the KJV NT were counted, not only those variants (treated in this examination) that affect an entire verse or passage but also those that affect parts of a verse or a few words, the ratio would probably not exceed 2% of the total NT text.

Table 1. Likely authenticity of New Testament verses included in the KJV but deleted in modern versions

		Likely authentic (original)	Likely added (unoriginal)	Definitely added (unoriginal)
1.	Matthew 12:47	✓		
2.	Matthew 17:21		✓	
3.	Matthew 18:11		✓	
4.	Matthew 21:44	✓		
5.	Matthew 23:14			✓
6.	Mark 7:16		✓	
7.	Mark 9:44		✓	
8.	Mark 9:46		✓	
9.	Mark 11:26		✓	
10.	Mark 15:28			✓
11.	Mark 16:9-20		✓	
12.	Luke 17:36			✓
13.	Luke 22:43-44	✓		
14.	Luke 23:17		✓	
15.	John 5:4		✓	
16.	John 7:53-8:11			✓
17.	Acts 8:37		✓	
18.	Acts 15:34			✓
19.	Acts 24:7		✓	
20.	Acts 28:29			✓
21.	Romans 16:24		✓	
22.	1 John 5:7b-8a			✓
Totals		3	12	7

from elsewhere in the Gospels, little is changed doctrinally by omitting these passages. For example, number 9 (Mark 11:26) has been taken directly from Matthew 6:15, which is a textually secure verse. But even though Mark 11:26 should be omitted, the same material remains in Matthew 6:15, so effectively nothing is lost. The same is

generally true for the other nine instances of harmonization. While numbers 17 and 21 are not gospel harmonizations, since the material they contain can be securely found elsewhere in the NT, their omission makes little difference doctrinally. Additionally, other verses, like numbers 19 and 20, have no real significance outside of clarifying the mundane details of a passage and therefore have no real theological significance.

On the other hand, a few of the questionable KJV passages do carry theological implications, and significant ones at that. The one with the greatest theological significance is number 22 (1 John 5:7b-8a). If this verse is admitted as authentic, it could be argued that there is at least one NT verse that contains overt Trinitarian theology. However, as this and numerous other studies before it have shown, the famous (perhaps infamous) Johannine Comma is clearly a much later interpolation that lacks any ancient textual support whatsoever. To a lesser extent, number 15 (John 5:4) is potentially theologically significant because if it is authentic, the principles upon which miracles are thought to be predicated (e.g., faithfulness and righteousness) would have to be expanded to include arbitrary chance. Further, if number 13 (Luke 22:43-44) is authentic, the verse has theological consequences for how one views Jesus's atoning sacrifice and the role Gethsemane played in that sacrifice.

Though in most text-critical cases the KJV NT appears to be inferior to many modern Bible editions, such deficiencies should not be overexaggerated or allowed to overshadow the strengths of the KJV. Such strengths include the beauty of its language and its consistently very close or literal translation of the Greek text—something some modern editions have moved too far away from by taking too much license in translation. Despite its largely minor text-critical shortcomings, the KJV is still a respectable edition of the NT that can still, even four hundred years after its publication, be used with much profit, especially if one is made aware of some of those deficiencies.

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