

Ample Reason to Question the Consensus

Note: During the past two years, a few Christians have made false assumptions about my criticism of the NU Greek text. These Christians assume that I have “KJV-only” leanings and that I hold up the TR Greek text as the final authority. If you are one of these people, please do not lump me in with that group. If you have been thinking this, you are completely mistaken. If you care to learn what I am saying to help my fellow Christians, watch [my videos](#) to learn what I am saying rather than assume that you know what I am saying. Thank you.

We should never accept as “gospel” the consensus of the “scholars.” There are plenty of examples from history that illustrate this. The “scholars” claim that man has evolved from apes. At one time, many so called scholars believed that the world was flat. There is now a consensus of “scholars” who claim that the notion of “man-made global warming” is a fact even though there is no empirical evidence to support it.

In our day, many so called scholars believe that N.T. Greek manuscripts discovered in North Africa are the most accurate representation of the original autographs. “Dr.” James White states, *“Most scholars today...would see the Alexandrian text-type¹ as representing an earlier, and hence more accurate form of text than the Byzantine text-type.”*² This assumption is the starting point for what is called “textual criticism” of the Greek New Testament. It is this assumption that I call into question because the actual evidence demands it.

Why do most so-called scholars jump to the conclusion that the Alexandrian manuscripts are the most accurate representation of the original autographs? The assumption is based on the fact that they are older manuscripts. The thinking goes, “Since they are older, they simply must be better.” This single ASSUMPTION seems to be all they need to turn their attention away from the observable fact that these manuscripts are riddled with disagreement between themselves. The NU (modern Greek NT) relies primarily on two of these Alexandrian manuscripts, Aleph and B. Yet, these two manuscripts disagree with each other over 3000 times! This is observable fact.³ The notion that they must be better because they are older is not based on observable fact. It is merely an ASSUMPTION that should be questioned in light of the observable evidence that these manuscripts are riddled with discrepancies.

To put it simply, there are two camps that each have a different beginning point in their approach to this subject. The consensus group mentioned above begins with the understanding that God has not preserved His Word in such a way that His absolute preservation can be observed. Because they begin with their ASSUMPTION that the Alexandrian manuscripts must be better, coupled with the fact that these manuscripts disagree between themselves thousands of times, they believe it is therefore up to the so called scholars to determine what the originals said using human reasoning.

A recent development within this movement is called “reasoned eclecticism.” **It seems to me**, that this movement may have developed out of frustration within the group because there are so many discrepancies between the Alexandrian manuscripts. So, this new movement, when they deem it necessary, veer from the NU (modern Greek NT) and look at testimony of other manuscripts and factor

¹ In reality, there is no such thing as the “Alexandrian text type.” In order for there to be a “text type” there must be a demonstrable relationship between multiple manuscripts. If it can be demonstrated that multiple manuscripts are obviously connected by a common observable pattern, that would make them a text type. But as it goes, no one has been able to observe such a pattern or connection between the Alexandrian manuscripts because they disagree with each other thousands of times. All the evidence suggests that they are mavericks (stand-alone) and therefore not related to a common parent.

² The King James Controversy, James White. Page 43.

³ Consult any exhaustive critical apparatus of the Greek NT to verify this for yourself.

[Back to the Free Articles and Media page.](#)

their findings into their reasoning. Below is a portion of the preface for the NIV Bible that shows how “reasoned eclecticism” was used in their translation process.

“The Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one.... Where existing texts differ, the translators made their choice of readings in accord with sound principles of textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where there is uncertainty about what constitutes the original text.”

While some in this reasoned eclecticism movement claim to believe that God preserved His Word, statements like the one above betray their claim. The footnotes in the NIV call attention to places where there is uncertainty about what constitutes the original text. Here they admit that there is uncertainty in places as to what constitutes the original text. So, they seem content to believe that if God did preserve the original wording, He has not seen fit to tell us what that original wording is. Apparently, God is content to leave the original wording a mystery. And if anyone in this movement is so bold as to claim he knows the original wording of the Greek NT based upon this method that depends on human reasoning, why should I have any confidence that he reasoned correctly? Sorry, I choose not to place my confidence in man’s ability to reason these things out! And I believe all Christians should not be so naïve as to assume that these so-called scholars have such abilities.

Before discussing the second group, let me make an analogy of the first group. The critical camp may be likened unto a group that boards a Boeing 747 in NYC that has a final destination of Paris, France. They board this jet knowing that it only has enough fuel to make it halfway across the Atlantic Ocean. Anyone with an ounce of common sense would know that such a flight is doomed from the start. It will land somewhere in the middle of the ocean. In this analogy, the Boeing 747 represents the Alexandrian manuscripts. These so-called scholars should have enough common sense to know that since these Alexandrian manuscripts disagree with each other thousands of times, they should not have any confidence they will reach their hoped-for destination (the original N.T. wording). Instead, they board a mission doomed to fail. Those within this group that practice “reasoned eclecticism” may be likened unto people who board the 747 carrying a canoe paddle just in case the plane crashes in the middle of the ocean. If they exercised common sense, they would know that the paddle is not going to help them reach their final destination since the mission is doomed before it begins.

There is another, smaller group that believes that God has preserved each and every word of the Greek NT. Because they really believe this, they have a completely different starting point in their mission. Instead of practicing textual criticism which involves the reasoning of men who are sinners, they simply compare all of the manuscripts to look for God’s fingerprints of preservation. To illustrate, using this process of collating manuscripts of II Thessalonians, it has been discovered that several of them agree perfectly with each other even though they were found in a variety of places. If God has been preserving His Word (and He has!), this is the clearest evidence of that providence. Why would I turn my attention away from this actual evidence of God’s superintendence and opt for a man-made approach that utilizes human reasoning? To me, this is a contrast between belief vs. unbelief. Those who truly believe God has been actively preserving His Word simply look for observable evidence of that preservation and accept it. Those who merely claim God has preserved His Word but don’t even look for that evidence betray their claim that God has preserved His Word. Instead, since God has only preserved His word “for the most part,” it is up to us humans to decide about all the verses that God has failed to preserve completely.

Note: IF the tone of this article seems harsh to you, click this link to read why.

Thomas Bear, January 1, 2020

Οὐαὶ μοί ἐστιν ἂν μὴ εὐαγγελίζωμαι (Προς Κορινθίους Α 9:16)