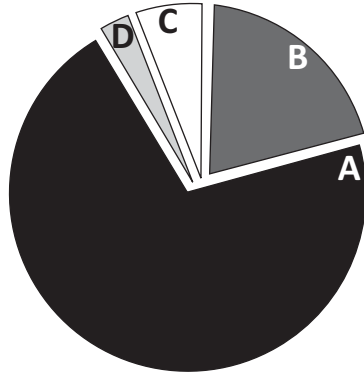


# The History of the Bible

## TEXTUAL VARIANTS

### Textual Variant:

When a specific portion to two or more manuscripts disagree with each other, even in the smallest degree.



### Categories of New Testament Variants

- A. Spelling errors or nonsense readings
- B. Variants that don't affect translation
- C. Meaningful, but not viable
- D. Both meaningful and viable

Adapted from, "Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture"

## Accidental Variants

### Word Divisions

When a single word is incorrectly broken into two words, this is called **Fission**. When two words are incorrectly combined into one, it is called **Fusion**.

What does this sentence say?

**RANDYHASHISHANDOUT**

### Letter Confusion

Some letters look alike and are easily mistaken. One of the most controversial variants, 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:16, is likely the result of letter confusion.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:16 KJV

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God** was manifest in the flesh ..."

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:16 NASB

"By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: **He who** was revealed in the flesh ..."

ΘΣ = God

ΟΣ = "the one who" or "he who"

### Eye Skipping

A scribe glancing between manuscripts could easily miss a line if there was a repeated phrase:

**1 John 2:23** Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

The second line is italicized because, even though it wasn't in the translators' manuscript, they knew it existed in other Greek manuscripts as well as translations in other languages. It was dropped due to eye skipping. Here's how it looks in Greek:

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει  
ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει

### Letter Switching

In Mark 14:65, as Jesus is on trial before the Sanhedrin Council, most manuscripts read, "and the servants did **strike** him with the palms of their hands." Some manuscripts replace the word strike with "lay hold of."

What happened here is simple letter switching.

ἔβαλον – "strike"

ἔλαβον – "to lay hold of"

## Audio Errors (Homophony)

Audio errors would happen when multiple manuscript were being professionally produced at a scriptorium. As a master scribe read the original, the writing scribes could misunderstand what was read.

If you heard these sentences read by someone else, you might hear:

"I need some dough" or "I kneed some dough."

"No reading allowed!" or "No reading aloud!"

### Romans 5:1

"Therefore being justified by faith, **we have** peace with God ..."

ἔχομεν = EK-AH-MEN

### Romans 5:1 (variant)

"Therefore being justified by faith, **we will have** peace with God ..."

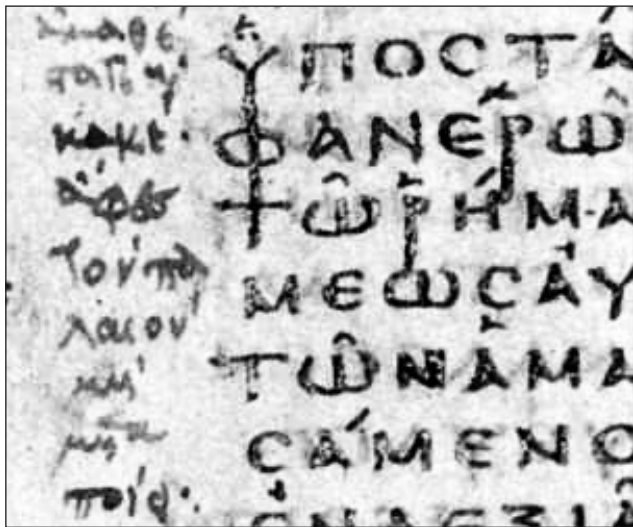
ἔχωμεν = EK-OH-MEN

## Haplography

Skipping a repeated letter or word.

## Dittography

Writing the same letter or word twice.



### A Frustrated Scribe

This image is from the Codex Vaticanus (copied about 300-325 AD). Several hundred years after it was originally copied, a scribe apparently noticed the text was changed and scrawled this in the margin. It reads, "Fool and knave! Can't you leave the old reading alone and not alter it!"

## Intentional Variants

### Conflation

This happened when a scribe had two (or more) manuscripts and combined variant readings.

#### Acts 20:28

"the church of God"

"the church of the Lord"

"church of the Lord and God"

#### 1 John 2:7

"Brothers, I'm not writing ..."

"Beloved, I'm not writing ..."

"Beloved brothers, I'm not writing ..."

## Clarifications

A scribe would sometimes make additions or changes to the text in order to aid understanding.

### Mark 1:2-3

**2** As it is written **in the prophets**, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

**3** The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Starting in the 5th Century, some manuscripts have, "As it is written **in Isaiah the prophet**," as a scribe attempted to add specificity. In this case, it proved unhelpful as verse 3 is a quote from Isaiah 40:3, but verse 2 is a quote from Malachi 3:1. This variant is reflected in several modern translations.

## Harmonization

Harmonization is most often an attempt to make the Gospels read alike in matching accounts.

### Matthew 17:5b

"... This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

### Mark 9:7b

"... This is my beloved Son: hear him."

### Mark 9:7b (variant)

"... This is my beloved Son: **in whom I am well pleased**; hear him."