CRASH COURSE

TEXT&CANON

THE QUEST FOR THE ORIGINAL TEXT

You are doing some reading at Café Höpker for your Bible Study Project. Two people join you at the table and you engage in conversation. Upon learning that you are at Bodenseehof, one of them states that she thinks you can't really know what the Bible originally said. "The Bible you're using is based on copies that probably contained a lot of changes and errors. Until the invention of the printing press, every Bible was completely different. It's hopeless to imagine that we can know what it ever really said. Besides, probably a lot a different people edited it to fit the kind of doctrine they preferred for themselves. It's just power politics in priestly robes."

How do you respond?

THE “OLD” TESTAMENT

The Copying of the Old Testament

Four sources used to determine that the Old Testament that we now have is communicating the Author's original meaning

1. The Masoretic Text
2. Samaritan Pentateuch
3. Septuagint-LXX
4. Dead Sea Scrolls

Masoretic Text

The standardized form of the Hebrew text of the OT, done by the Masoretes, Jewish scribes who copied the OT text from 500-900 AD. They were not only extremely scrupulous in copying the text, but also added vowel points and limited commentary and notes in the margin (i.e. “Masorah”). There were actually several, independent systems which centered in Babylon, Tiberias, and Palestine, but the Babylonian received widest acceptance.

"When in the course of time, scrolls became worn and illegible through continual usage, they were carefully preserved by being placed in the ‘spare room’ of the synagogue, known as the ‘treasury’ or Genizah, and in due course, were buried in the earth with much ritual, Likewise, faulty manuscripts were kept from circulation by being placed in the Genizah. A copy with more than three scribal errors was, by regulation, to be confiscated.”

-The Old Testament Text and Versions; the Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of the Ancient Versions, page 29

Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan's are: "Descendants of the mixed Israelite/Assyrian population after Samaria fell to Assyria in 722 BCE; worship according to the 'Five Books' of Moses, offering sacrifices not at Jerusalem but on Mt. Gerizim; opposed Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem's city walls; hated by Jews in the New Testament times." (Zondervan Encyclopedia)

- Written in Palaeo-Hebrew, dating it to the Hasmonean Period (37 BCE)
- Textually similar to the Masoretic text in that the meaning was not changed

Septuagint-LXX

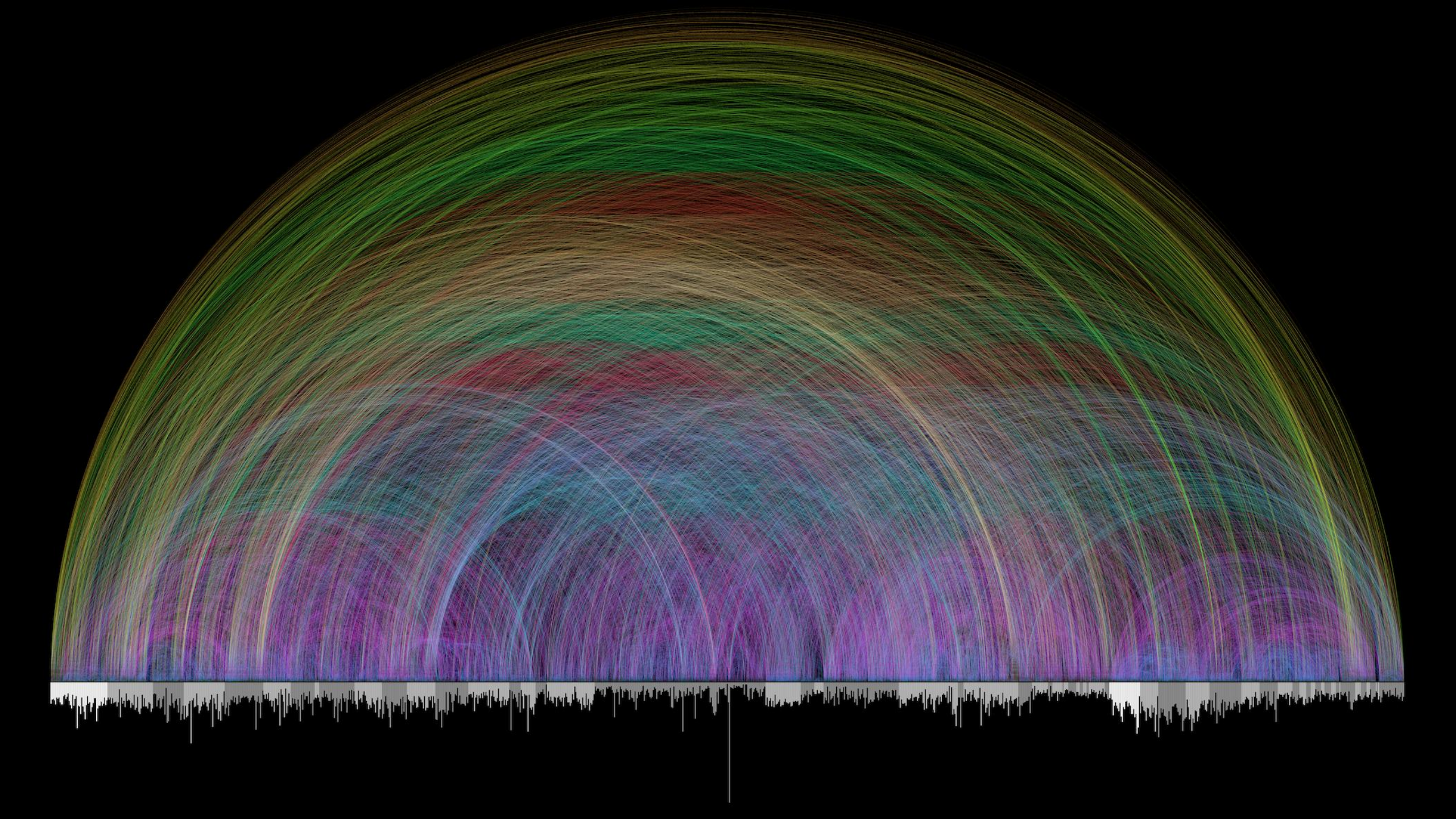
Septuagint (LXX) The Greek translation of the Torah, made in Alexandria, Egypt between 250-150 BC. It literally means “seventy,” due to legends that there were 70 translators involved. The earliest mss. of the *LXX*, dating from the 4th century, also included the Apocryphal books.

- Also used to as a source to compare to the Masoretic text when translated back into Hebrew
- It was acknowledged as Scripture by the New Testament writers

Dead Sea Scrolls

A large collection of scrolls found in caves near Qumran, on the Dead Sea. They contain at least portions of every OT book except Esther. Dating back as far as the 5th century BC, they were about 1,000 years older than the previously oldest manuscripts. The first of these scrolls were discovered by a Bedouin boy in 1947.

> “The History of the Old Testament text during the period 300 B.C. to A.D. 135 is pivotal to the entire history of the Hebrew Scriptures. One of the primary reasons for this importance is that there is now clear manuscript evidence for this time period. What was only inferential for the preceding phase of history of the transmission of the text is now direct.”
> *-Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction page 42*



The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Reason # 1

If anyone tried to change the text for political or theological reasons it would pointed out and corrected or rejected.

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Many different groups used the Hebrew Scriptures:

- Essenes
- Septuagint
- Masoretic Jews
- Babylon, Talmud, Tiberius
- Septuagint (LXX)
- Romanized Jew: Josephus
- Greek Jews
- Jabneh
- Aramaicized Jews
- Ecclesiasticus
- Origen
- New Testament
- Jerome

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Samaritan Pentateuch

Samaritans- Descendants of the mixed Israelite/Assyrian population after Samaria fell to Assyria in 722 BCE

The Samaritans edited the text to fit their own objectives. By the use of textual criticism and other devices, we can see that the Samaritan Pentateuch is an altered edition of the correct Old Testament.

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Samaritan Pentateuch

- Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses, the Torah)
- Some say it has upwards of 6000 differences from the Masoretic text.
- Gen 2:22 references Mt. Gerizim, which is the Samaritan place of worship.
- Gen 2:22 is an example of the Samaritan political situation coming out in the text.

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Reason #2

Different Groups with different political biases and objectives use the same text

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Masoretic text and Dead Sea Scrolls (Essenes) are incredibly similar despite different politics

- It is not clear who exactly the Essenes were but it is clear that the differ from the mainstream Jews.
- The degree of separation is unclear but it is evident

The Old Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

Reason #1- If anyone tried to change the text for political reasons it would pointed out and corrected or rejected

Reason #2- Different Groups with different political biases and objectives use the same text

ZUM MITNEHMEN

Jesus clearly accepted OT (quotes all the time!)
We have good evidence for Gospels accurately reporting Jesus' words

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Connection to Apostle
Theologically Sound
Accepted by Whole Church

The New Testament Would Not Have Been Altered

1. The Internal Argument:
   a) 1 Timothy 5:18 quotes Deut 25:4 and Luke 10:7 and calls them both scripture.
   b) 2 Peter 3:16 (calls Paul Scripture)
2. The first copiers were:
   a) The authors themselves
   b) The original recipients (usually churches)
3. The copyists were:
   a) Careful and accurate
   b) Not theologians; just copyists
4. Respect for text
5. Accountability from others

The New Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

1. Four separate text families
   Codex Vaticanus
   Codex Alexandrinus
   Codex Byzantine
   Codex Sinaiticus - 4th Century – earliest complete copy of NT – oldest substantial book to survive antiquity

No major doctrinal changes

"Families" have to do with grammatical, inconsequential errors.

The New Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

2. Heresy did occur in the early church!

BUT

It did not threaten the accuracy of the text, only the interpretation

"Marcion and others like him were not scribes, however; they were teachers. They did not advance their views by copying manuscripts incorrectly, even though they may have made changes in their own NTs. They depended on teaching and publicizing their doctrines. Scribes, on the other hand were not engaged in studying the text, but simply copying it" (Greenlee 71)

The New Testament Could Not Have Been Altered

3. When scribes go wild...

They might put in a "gloss" to explain a theological idea
e.g. Mark 1:1-- "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*"

*Some manuscripts do not have *the Son of God.*

The Copying of the New Testament

1. The NT manuscripts were not copied as copiously as those for the OT

- Differences among the text: different copying centers led to different text families.
- Difference are numerous, yet largely insignificant: they do not affect major doctrines.

2. Through textual criticism of witnesses we can reconstruct what originals said

- We no longer have the originals

The Copying of the New Testament

3. We have MANY witnesses

- Greek/Latin Texts = 5,686
    - *Papryi, Uncials, Minuscules
    - *Not only do we have texts, but we have old texts written close to time of originals

- Translations = 19,284+
    - *Translations of ancient texts were rare, good, literal translation were unheard of

The Copying of the New Testament

- Lectionaries = 2,396
    *Conservative in nature, used older manuscripts that are more credible than newer

- Commentaries/Early Church Fathers
    * Quotes were so frequent NT could be reproduced even without any other Greek or Latin texts.
    * Like lectionaries, used old manuscripts, very conservative

The Answer- Textual Criticism

Textual criticism can right all these wrongs.

By looking at the oldest, most reliable manuscripts, we can piece together a Bible that looks more and more like the original text.

Almost all scholars agree that the major theological/doctrinal issues in the NT contain little to no corruption now.

Conclusion

We can know with almost complete certainty that the text that we have now compiled through textual criticism is very similar to the original text.

The text has not doctrinally or thematically changed since its inception.

ZUM MITNEHMEN

Jesus clearly accepted OT
We have good evidence for Gospels accurately reporting Jesus' words
The church clearly accepted the witness all the NT Gospels and Letters

APOCRYPHA
&
PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)

Torah

Bereshith - Genesis
Shemot - Exodus
Vayikra - Leviticus
Bamidbar - Numbers
Devarim – Deuteronomy

Nevi'im

Y'hoshua - Joshua
Shophtim - Judges
Sh'muel - Samuel (I & II)
M'lakhim - Kings (I & II)
Y'shayahu - Isaiah
Yir'mi'yahu - Jeremiah
Y'khezqel - Ezekiel

The Twelve Prophets
Hoshea - Hosea
Yo'el - Joel
Amos - Amos
Ovadyah - Obadiah
Yonah - Jonah
Mikhah - Micah
Nakhum - Nahum
Havakuk - Habakkuk
Ts'phanyah - Zephaniah
Khagai - Haggai
Z'kharyah - Zechariah
Mal'akhi – Malachi

Ketuvim

The "Sifrei Emet," "Books of Truth"
Tehillim - Psalms
Mishlei - Proverbs
Iyov - Job

The "Five Megilot" or "Five Scrolls"
Shir Hashirim - Song of Songs
Rut - Ruth
Eikhah - Lamentations
Kohelet - Ecclesiastes
Esther - Esther

The rest of the "Writings"
Dani'el - Daniel
Ezra v'Nechemia - Ezra-Nehemiah
Divrei Hayamim - Chronicles (I & II)

Roman Catholic and Orthodox Canons

Pentateuch

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
Samuel
Kings
Chronicles
Ezra and Nehemiah
Tobit*
Judith*
Esther + Additions to Esther

Poetry & Wisdom

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Wisdom of Solomon*
Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of ben Sirach)*

Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Baruch, + The Letter of Jeremiah (Roman Catholic Only)
Ezekiel
Daniel, + Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah; Song of the Three Young Men; Susanna; Bel and the Dragon)*
Osee (Hosea)
Joel
Amos
Abidas (Obadiah)
Jonas (Jonah)
Micheas (Micah)
Nahum
Habucuc (Habakkuk)
Sophonias (Zephaniah)
Aggeus (Haggai)
Zacharias (Zechariah)
Malachias (Malachi)
1 Maccabees*
2 Maccabees* (Roman Catholic Only)

Protestant Canon

Pentateuch

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

History

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1-2 Samuel
1-2 Kings
1-2 Chronicles
Ezra and Nehemiah
Esther

Poetry & Wisdom

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Prophets

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
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