

Vaticanus and Sinaiticus – Corrupt Bible Texts

Introduction:

1. We saw last week that two lines of Bible appeared
2. The corrupt line
 - a. Men changed the Bible to make it agree with their theology
 - b. Since every copy of the Bible was a hand-made copy, it was easy to change the Bible
 - c. Gnosticism influenced some “Christians”
 - a. Spiritualizing and allegorizing the Scriptures became common
 - b. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Clement, Origen
3. The pure line was maintained
 - a. Many Christians were not fooled by the imitation Bibles
 - b. Early Greeks, Syrians, British, French, Waldensians had pure Bibles
4. Today we look at two of the most notorious Bible texts

I. Sinaiticus

A. Its History

1. Constantine Tischendorf was traveling under the authority of Frederick Augustus, king of Saxony, looking for Bible manuscripts
 - a) *He searched all through Europe without success and went toward the Middle East*
 - b) *In 1844 he was visiting the Saint Catherine Monastery on Mount Sinai*
 - c) *He didn't see any Bible manuscripts and he was about to leave*
 - d) *There was a stack of papers near the stove that they used to light the stove each morning*
 - e) *Tischendorf looked at the papers and noted that they were from a very old copy of the Bible*
 - f) *He pulled 43 pages out of the garbage and these were given to him to study*
 - g) *The monks saw the interest of Tischendorf and would not give him any more pages*
 - h) *He went home with Nehemiah, Esther and part of 1Chron which he published when he returned home and named it in honor o King Frederick.*

2. Tischendorf went back to St. Catherine's Monastery to try to get more pages
 - a) *The monks there would not allow Tischendorf to even see any more pages let alone give them to him*
 - b) *King Frederick was frustrated and withdrew support from Tischendorf.*
3. Tischendorf convinced the Emperor of Russia to support him and so back he went to the monastery in 1859.
 - a) *This time a steward brought the rest of the text to Tischendorf's room and allowed him to look at it*
 - b) *He found most of the OT in Greek*
 - c) *He found the entire NT*
 - d) *He found that it contained the Epistle of Barnabas*
 - e) *It contained a large part of the Shepherd of Hermes*
4. Tischendorf was able to convince the leaders of the monastery to present the manuscript to the Emperor of Russia

B. Its Character

1. Sinaiticus is written on fine parchment (not papyrus)
2. Each page measured 13.5 inches by 14.75 inches
3. The writing on each page is arranged in four columns
4. The writing is uncial characters with no spaces, breathings, punctuation
5. Paul's epistles were before the book of Acts and Hebrews is between 2Thess and 1Timothy

C. Its Age

1. Bible scholars believe that this text is very old because:
 - a) *The beauty of the vellum*
 - b) *The shape of the letters*
 - c) *The absence of punctuation*
 - d) *The initial letters are not larger than the rest*
 - e) *The four column arrangement*
 - f) *The extremely simple titles of the books*
 - g) *The ink had faded by the 8th century and the manuscript had to be re-inked*
2. I agree that this text is very old, perhaps the oldest that we have.
3. This text became the biggest break-through in the field of textual criticism
4. Many believe that the oldest must be the best and there is almost a superstitious reverence for this text

D. Its Corruption

1. "At least 10 different revisers from the 5th century downwards have labored to remedy the scandalously corrupt condition of the text which even Tregelles described as 'very rough.'"
2. Sinaiticus differs from the pure texts in the following manner
 - a) *It omits 3455 words*
 - b) *It adds 839 words*
 - c) *It substitutes 1114 words*
 - d) *It transposes 2299 words*
 - e) *It modifies 1265 words*
 - f) *Total differences = 8972 words*

II. Vaticanus

A. Its History

1. This Bible text was found tucked away in the Vatican library
2. The first mention of this Bible was made in a letter from Sepulveda to Erasmus in 1534
3. We don't know how long the Vaticanus was there in the Vatican library, but it was there in 1455 when Pope Nicholas was there.
4. Bartolucci studies the text in 1669, but no one else was allowed to see the text for around 200 yrs
5. Tischendorf was allowed to see the text in 1842 and others in succeeding years saw the text for a short time
6. Tischendorf was allowed to see the text for three hours a day for ten days, but they watched him so he wouldn't copy any of the text
7. The text wasn't made public for many years

B. Its Character

1. It was written on very thin vellum in uncial letters that were smaller than the letters of Sinaiticus
2. The pages were smaller than those of Sinaiticus and the writing was arranged in three columns
3. The text had been retraced, except for some letters that were passed over as erroneous
4. The text lacks Revelation, the Pastoral Epistles and part of Hebrews

C. Its Age

1. Like Sinaiticus, the Vaticanus is a very old text
2. The uncials, no breathings, no spaces show the age

D. Its Corruption

1. Compared to pure texts, the Vaticanus
 - a) *Omits 2877 words*
 - b) *Adds 536 words*
 - c) *Substitutes 935 words*
 - d) *Transposes 2098 words*
 - e) *Modifies 1132 words*
 - f) *A total of 7578 changes*

III. The Influence of These Texts

A. Summary of the Errors of These Texts

1. They leave out the last 12 verses of the gospel of Mark
2. They omit Lu 22:43-44 – the Lord’s agony in the garden
3. They omit Lu 23:34 – Jesus’ prayer for His murderers
4. They omit the account of woman caught in adultery – Jn 7:58-8:11

B. Influence of These Texts

1. Since they are very old, these texts are given more weight
2. “Older is better”
3. If Vaticanus and Sinaiticus differ from 1000 texts, then they are given greater weight than those texts since they are older
4. Burgeon regarded the good state of preservation of B and Aleph in spite of their exceptional age as a proof, not of their goodness, but of their badness.

C. Why Do These Texts Exist?

1. If these texts are so good, then why weren’t they used up and worn out like all other early texts?
2. Why did these texts survive in such good shape?
3. The answer to these questions is that these texts were known to be corrupt and they were set aside as unreliable
4. On the shelf, they were not used up and worn out
5. Hundreds of years later, they were discovered and thought to be ancient treasures

Conclusion:

1. It is hard for me to believe that God would go to the trouble to inspire the writers of His Word, but then He would let that Word be lost for 1500 yrs until the 1800s.
2. He would then allow a German critic to pick up a true copy of the Word of God from the wastepaper basket on a Catholic monastery.
3. Using Vaticanus and Sinaiticus he restored the true Word of God