



# How We Got The Bible

**Can We Trust Our  
English Versions?  
(Part 2)**



# How We Got Our Bible - Origin

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■ How did we get our Bibles which are so available and useable today?

■ A long and fascinating story

■ The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek by about 40 different writers over a period of about 1600 years.

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- A long and fascinating story
- The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek by about 40 different writers over a period of about 1600 years.

**We do not possess ANY of the original autographs of either the Old or New Testaments**

# English Versions of the Bible

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- # How can we be confident that our English versions are trust-worthy, given that:
  - so much time has passed,
  - so many things have happened,
  - and given the difficulty of translating text from one language to another?

# **A Good Question!**

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# English Versions of the Bible

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- # **The most trustworthy modern English versions are those:**
    - **Translated by a large committee of scholars from various backgrounds**
    - **Produced with the intent of giving the world an accurate “word-for-word” translation of the best available Greek and Hebrew texts**
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# English Versions of the Bible

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**# Examples of these are the:**

- **King James Version (KJV)**
  - **New King James Version (NKJV)**
  - **American Standard Version (ASV)**
  - **New American Standard Version (NASV)**
  - **English Standard Version (ESV)**
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# English Versions of the Bible

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**# But even these English versions present the Bible student with differences.**

- **Variations in English texts because of**
    - **Many recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts and other documents**
    - **The relative importance given to these by the committees of scholars**
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# English Versions of the New Testament

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- # We will focus on the New Testament as we deal with the question of **variations in the text** of our English versions of the Bible.
  - # There are variations in text of our English versions of the New Testament because there are **variations in the extant Greek manuscripts and ancient versions of the New Testament.**
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# Preservation of Greek New Testament

## Three Great Witnesses

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### Manuscripts

**Rylands (AD 125)**

**Vatican (AD 325)**

**Sinaitic (AD 350)**

**Alexandrian (400's)**

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# Transmission of Ancient Documents

<u>Anc. Doc.</u>	<u># of manus.</u>	<u>Earliest Extant</u>
Livy's <u>Hist. Of Rome</u>	20	500 yrs after
Caesar's <u>Gallic Wars</u>	10	900 yrs after
Tacitus' <u>Annals</u>	2	800 yrs after
<u>New</u> <u>Testament</u>	5795+	40 yrs after

# Here's The Point

- 1. We can take these 5795+ manuscripts and compare them with each other to ensure what the original text was, even though we do not have the original autographs.**
- 2. There is not another text in all of history that is even in the same “light year” as the New Testament in terms of its textual support.**

# Here's The Point

**3. When God chose to preserve His Word He preserved it marvelously compared to anything else that has ever been written in the history of mankind.**

**1 Peter 1:24-25**

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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**5791+ Others!**

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### Manuscripts

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**Sinaitic** (AD 350)

**Alexandrian** (400's)

**5791+ Others!**

### Versions

**Old Syriac** (100's)

**Old Latin** (100's)

**Ethiopic/Coptic**

**Vulgate** (402)

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# Preservation of Greek New Testament

## Three Great Witnesses

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<u>Manuscripts</u>	<u>Versions</u>	<u>Ch. Fathers</u>
Rylands (AD 125)	Old Syriac (100's)	Syriac
Vatican (AD 325)	Old Latin (100's)	Greek
Sinaitic (AD 350)	Ethiopic/Coptic	Coptic
Alexandrian (400's)	Vulgate (402)	Latin
<b>5791+</b>	<b>Others!</b>	

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# Preservation of Greek New Testament

## Three Great Witnesses

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### # Early Christian Writers

“...so extensive are the citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they (the citations of the early Christian writers) would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.”

Bruce M. Metzger

*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. 1992

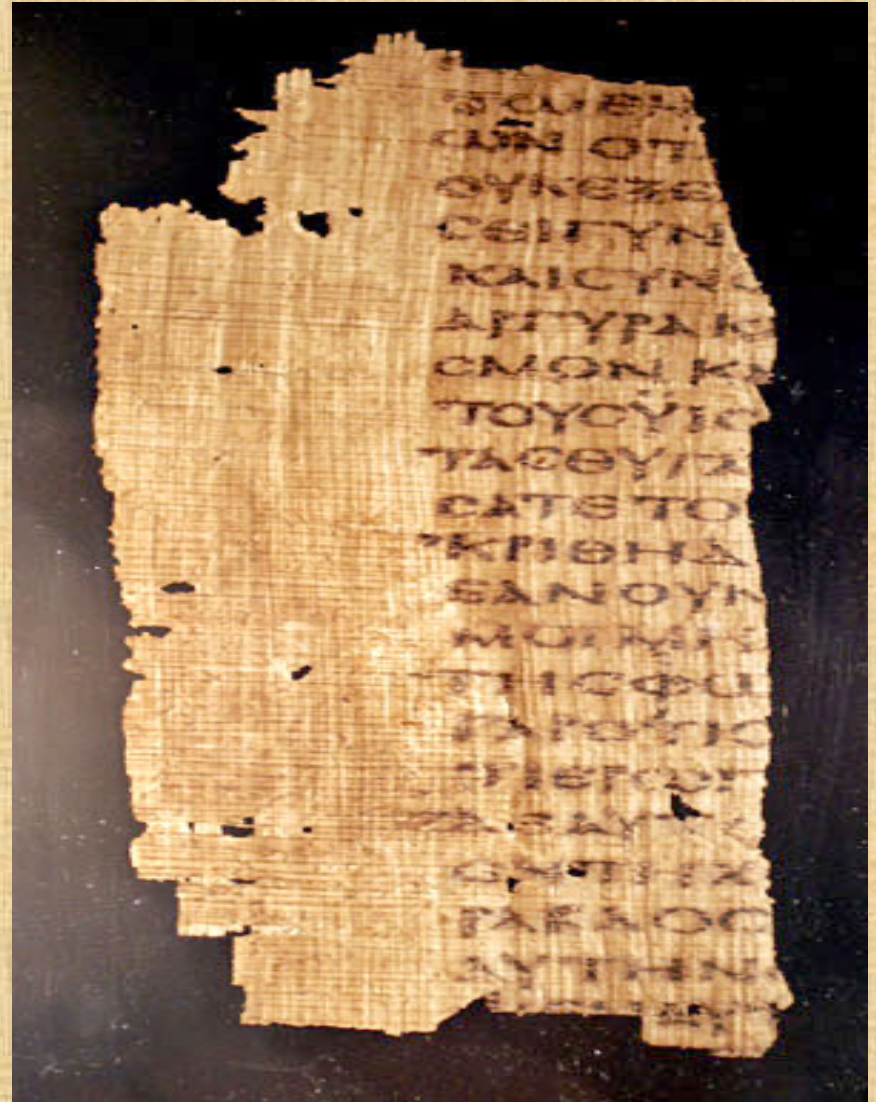
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# Two Major Types of Manuscripts

- **Uncials**

PAULASERVANTOFJES  
USCHRISTCALLEDTOB  
EANAPOSTLESETAPAR  
TFORTHEGOSPELOFG  
ODWHICHHEPROMIS  
ED



# Two Major Types of Manuscripts

- **Cursives or Miniscules**
  - Smaller letters and cursive like in appearance
  - Date from the ninth century (A.D. 800's)
  - Over 2800 extant



# The Most Important Bibles

- Oldest vellum manuscripts dating back to A.D. 300-450
- Almost complete copies of the New Testament and most of the Old Testament as well



Codex Alexandrinus



Codex Vaticanus



Codex Sinaiticus

ΠΡΟΙΣΤΗΡΙΑ ΤΑΧΕΥΣΤΑ  
ΝΙΣΑΝΑΟΙΝΤΕΟΝΥΝΤΙΣΙΡΑ  
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ΤΟΚΣΙΟΥΝΤΟΝΤΟΝ  
ΟΝΗΕΚΚΕΣΣΟΥ

# Codex Alexandrinus

5<sup>th</sup> Century  
(A.D. 400's)



ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΝ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΩΣ



ΤΗΣ  
 ΠΟΛΙΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΝΗΚΥ  
 ΠΟΝΑΣΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ Μ  
 ΓΑΝΟΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΗΚ  
 ΣΗΤΕ ΛΕΓΙΝΕΝ ΕΝ  
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 ΓΙΧΥΝΑ ΚΑΙ Ο ΟΣΕΚ  
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 ΤΩΝ ΕΡΑΙΤΕΚΝΑ  
 ΤΩ ΑΚΡΑΜΗΝ ΗΝ  
 ΑΣΤΙΑΣ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ  
 ΓΗΝ ΡΙΖΑΝ ΤΩΝ  
 ΑΡΩΝ ΚΕΙΤΑΙ ΗΝ  
 ΟΥΝ ΔΕΝ ΑΡΩΝ ΜΗ  
 ΠΟΙΟΥΝ ΚΑΡΤΗΟΝ  
 ΚΑΛΟΝ ΕΚΚΟΠΤΕ  
 ΓΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΙΣΤΙΥΡΚΑ  
 ΔΕΤΑΙ  
 ΑΣΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΓΑΡΥΜΑ  
 ΚΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΕΝ ΥΑ  
 ΤΙΣ ΕΙΣ ΜΕΤΑΝΟΙΑ  
 Ο ΛΕΟΠΙΣ ΔΜΟΥ  
 ΕΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΙΣ  
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 ΛΙΑΣ ΕΠΙ ΤΟΝ Ε  
 ΔΑΝΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ  
 ΤΩ ΔΑΝΗΝ ΤΟΥ ΚΑ  
 ΠΤΙΣΟΝ ΗΛΙΟΥ ΤΑ  
 ΤΟΥ ΟΛΕΘΕΚΩΧΥ  
 ΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ ΛΕΓΩ

ΕΓΩ ΧΡΙΑΝ ΕΧΩ  
 ΠΟΣΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΟΗ  
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 ΡΑΝΩΝ  
 ΠΕΡΙ ΠΑΤΩΝ ΑΣΙΑ  
 ΡΑΤΗΝ Ο ΑΛΛΑ ΣΑΝ  
 ΤΗΣ ΓΑΛΙΑΣ ΑΣΕ  
 ΛΕΝ ΑΥΟ ΑΛΕΑΦ  
 ΣΙΜΩΝ ΑΤΟΝ ΔΟΣ  
 ΜΕΝΟΝ ΠΕΤΡΟΝ  
 ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΓΡΕΑΝ ΤΟΗ  
 ΔΕ ΑΦΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ  
 ΚΑΛΛΟΝΤΑΣ ΑΜ  
 ΦΙΚΑΙ ΗΣΤΡΟΝ Ε  
 ΠΗΝΘΑ ΑΛΛΑ ΣΑΝ Η  
 ΣΑΝΤΑΡΑΛΕΣΙΣ ΚΑΙ  
 ΕΑΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΑΣΥ

# Codex Sinaiticus

## 4th Century

### (A.D. 300's)

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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- # **The Greek New Testament, divinely inspired in its original autographs, was transmitted to us through the hands of copyists**
    - **The manuscripts, ancient versions and the writings of the early Christians were all copied **by hand****
    - **In some cases copyists were looking at earlier copies as they made their copies**
-

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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**# The Greek New Testament, divinely inspired in its original autographs, was transmitted to us through the hands of copyists**

- **In other cases they were listening to the reading of earlier copies (Scriptoria)**
  - **Human copyists are susceptible to slips and faults either of the eye or the ear**
-



# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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**# The Greek New Testament, divinely inspired in its original autographs, was transmitted to us through the hands of copyists**

- Scribes were also sometimes susceptible to trying to improve a text by making it agree with other passages of Scripture.**
-

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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**# The Greek New Testament, divinely inspired in its original autographs, was transmitted to us through the hands of copyists**

- **From one point of view it could be said that there are over 200,000 errors in the Greek New Testament text!**
  - **How then can we trust even our modern Greek text?**
-

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

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**# This large number of “errors” is gained by counting all the variations in all the manuscripts**

- **For example: The same slight variation might occur in 400 manuscripts**
  - **That would count as 400 “errors”**
  - **This method of counting is misleading!!**
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

**No Variations**

**86% of  
New  
Testament**

**(218 of 253 Pages)**



# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament



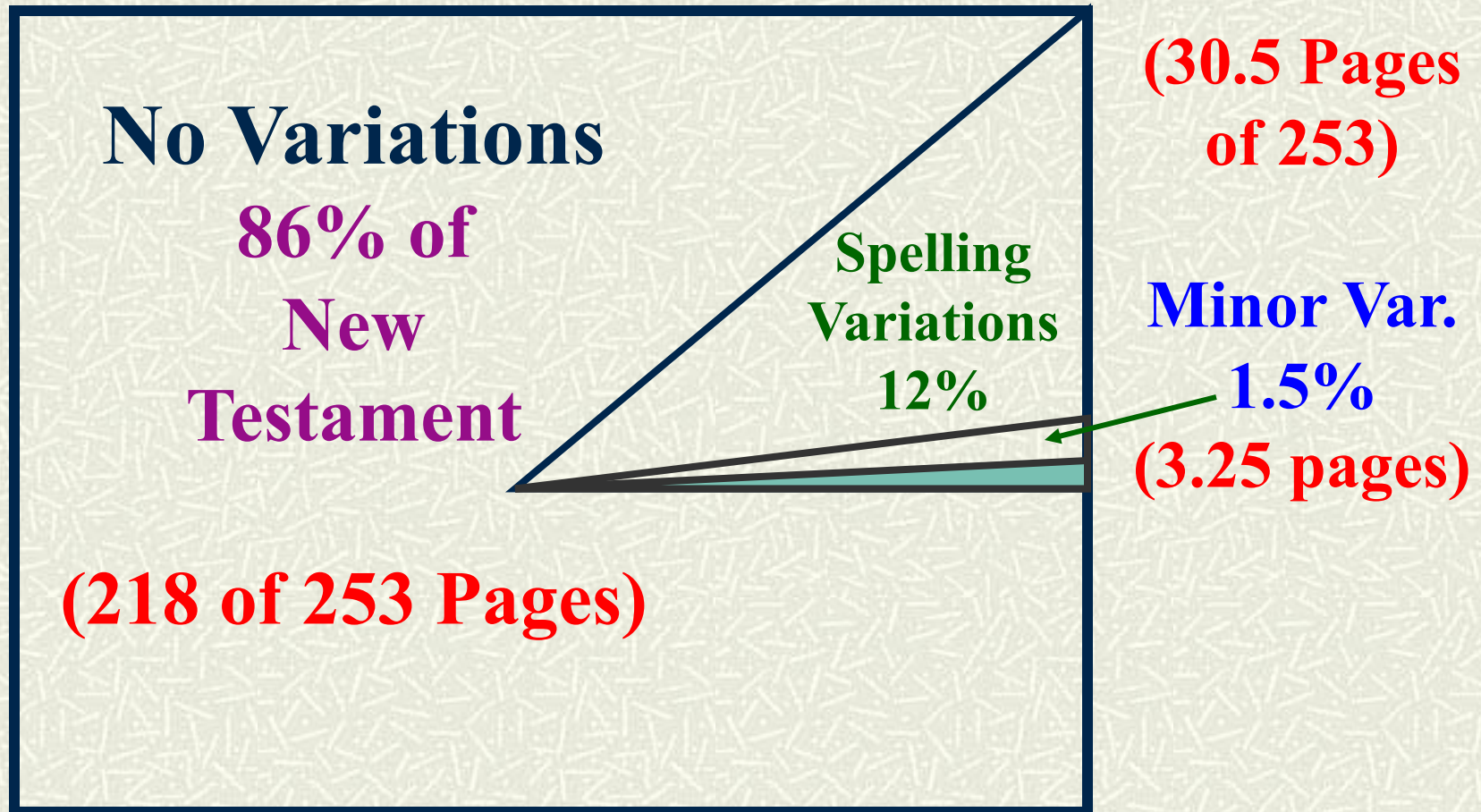
# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Spelling variations

- Often words in Greek copies are spelled differently over a period of years. For example:
    - “ei” interchanged for “i”
    - “ai” interchanged for “e”
    - “Bethzatha” for “Bethesda”
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament



# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Minor variations

### ■ The example of **Matthew 1:18**

■ “the birth of Jesus Christ”

■ “the birth of Christ Jesus”

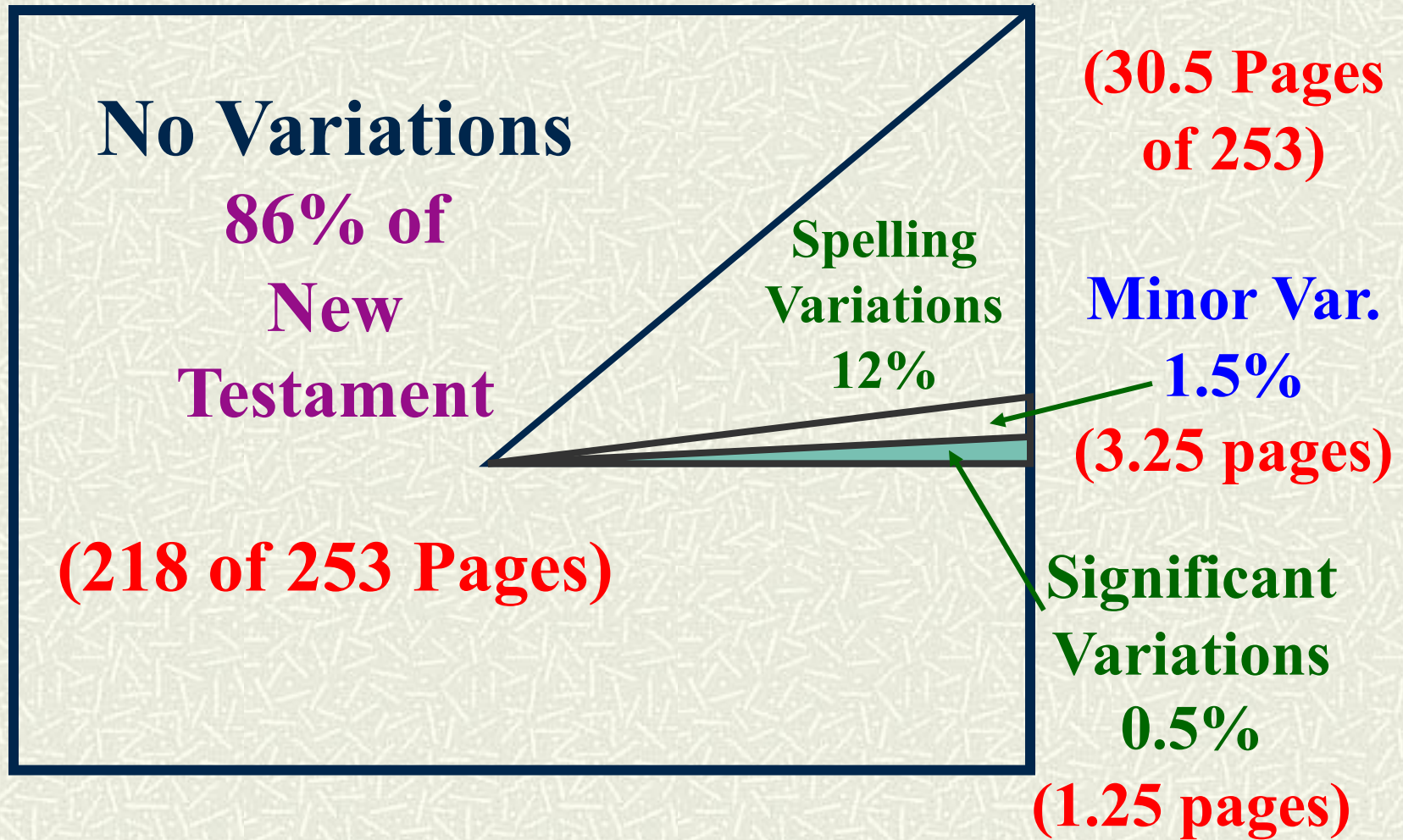
■ “the birth of Jesus”

■ “the birth of Christ”

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# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament



# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

- The example of **Acts 8:37**

# English Versions of the Bible

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## # Acts 8:37

- **KJV** - “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- **NKJV** - “\*Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

\*8:37 NU, M omit v. 37, It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

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# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

### ■ The example of **Acts 8:37**

#### ■ Support for this verse

- One 6<sup>th</sup> Century Uncial
  - Some good Miniscules
  - The Old Latin Version
-

# English Versions of the Bible

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## # Acts 8:37

- **KJV** - “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- **NKJV** - “\*Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’”

\*8:37 NU, M omit v. 37, It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

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# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

### ■ The example of Acts 8:37

- NU – The Greek text in the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the third edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (U).
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

### ■ The example of Acts 8:37

- M – Majority Text holds that the best Greek text is based on the consensus of the majority of existing Greek manuscripts, even though many are late, and none is earlier than the fifth century.
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

- The example of **Acts 8:37**

- Opposition to this verse

- Practically all the other manuscripts and versions
  - No Greek manuscript earlier than the sixth century knows this reading
-



# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## # Significant variations

- **The example of 1 John 5:7-8**
    - **Support for these verses as in KJV**
      - **Erasmus' 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Greek New Testament (Tyndale used this Edition)**
      - **Only two manuscripts, one from the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, and one from the 16<sup>th</sup> century**
      - **Two other manuscripts have this rendition of the verses written in the margin.**
      - **Late Latin versions**
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

- **The example of 1 John 5:7-8**
    - **Opposition to these verses as in KJV**
      - **Practically all the other manuscripts and versions**
      - **No Greek manuscript earlier than the 14<sup>th</sup> century knows this reading**
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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## #Significant variations

- **The example of Mark 16:9-20**
  - **Opposition to these verses**
    - **The Vatican and Sinaitic Manuscripts do not have these closing verses**
    - **Earliest known copies of the Old Syriac and Latin Vulgate**
    - **A large number of Armenian manuscripts**
-

# Variations in Manuscripts of the New Testament

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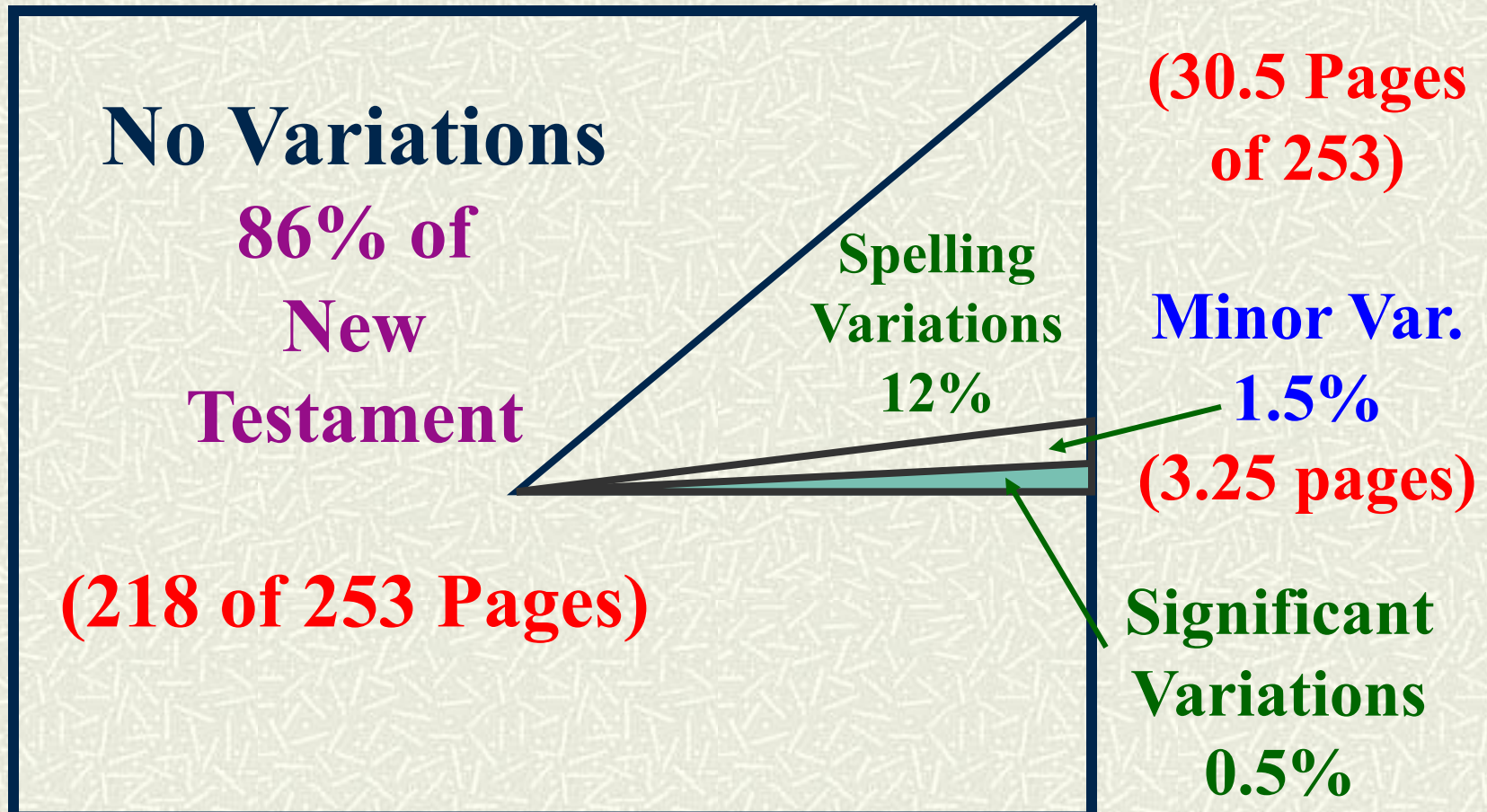
## #Significant variations

- The example of **Mark 16:9-20**

- Support for these verses

- Almost all other manuscript evidence
  - Statement from Irenaeus which shows the existence of this passage in the second century
-

# Variations In Manuscripts of the New Testament



**NO DOCTRINAL ISSUE AFFECTED!**

# Preservation of Greek New Testament

## Three Great Witnesses

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<u>Manuscripts</u>	<u>Versions</u>	<u>Ch. Fathers</u>
Rylands (AD 125)	Old Syriac (100's)	Syriac
Vatican (AD 325)	Old Latin (100's)	Greek
Sinaitic (AD 350)	Ethiopic/Coptic	Coptic
Alexandrian (400's)	Vulgate (402)	Latin
<b>5791+</b> Others!		

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“The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the *authenticity* and the *general integrity* of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archeology*  
1940

# English Versions of the Bible

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# We can have **great confidence** in the Greek text of the New Testament (and Hebrew text of the Old Testament) that provide the basis for our English versions of the Bible.

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# English Versions of the Bible

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# We can also have **great confidence** in our **English versions** which were

- Translated by large committees of scholars who were committed to giving the world
  - Accurate “word-for-word” translations of the best available Greek and Hebrew texts.
-

# English Versions of the Bible

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**“...The word of the  
Lord endures  
forever.”**

**1 Peter 1:25**

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