

FROM JESUS TO US

I. The Gospels: From Jesus to Us

A. Historical Jesus

B. Early Traditions

1. Oral Traditions (30 AD to 2nd century)

The shared memories of Jesus, including L-Material, M-Material, Pronouncement stories, Miracles stories, Sayings, Stories about Jesus; Passion stories

2. Written Traditions (50-95 AD)

Q, Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, and possibly Thomas

C. Preservation of Manuscripts

1. Scrolls and Codices (Codex)

2. Papyrus and Parchment (Vellum)

3. Important Papyri

4. Important Codices

5. Ancient Translations

D. UBS (United Bible Society) Greek New Testament

The total number of Greek manuscripts now stands at 5,735:¹

- 116 Papyri (2nd to 8th cent)
- 310 Uncials (Majuscule MSS)
- 2877 Minuscule MSS
- 2432 Lectionaries

After looking at the various manuscripts, translators apply various principles of textual criticism to determine the original Greek. Here are a few rules for determining the best reading.

1. First, only one reading can be the original.
2. Second, we look at “external criteria”= the older manuscripts are high value, but also the type of text, which the manuscript embodies (Alexandrian, Western, etc), geographical distribution of the witnesses, etc.

¹ Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Fourth Edition, New York: Oxford, 2005) 50.

3. Third, we look at “internal criteria”:
 - The shortest reading is preferred
 - The more difficult reading is the more probable reading
 - Scribes had a tendency to add material, to smooth out bad Greek or inconsistencies, and to harmonize verses

Modern Translations