

WHICH BIBLE VERSION IS BEST?

Definitions

Translation

The transformation of the written text from the source language (Hebrew or Greek) to the receptor language.

&/vs.

Transliteration

A word for word equivalent

WHICH BIBLE VERSION IS BEST? Definitions

Formal Equivalent

As close to word for word while maintaining readability in the receptive language, but not “wooden” or stiff

Functional Equivalent

A less formal translation intended to convey the meaning of the text, not a word for word literal translation. A focus on function, not form, intended to eliminate the historical/cultural difference and impact the modern audience the same way as the original

Paraphrase

The author’s understanding of the original meaning of the text used in the current language that does not necessarily reflect the original

WHICH BIBLE VERSION IS BEST?

Formal

- (New) King James Version
- New American Standards Bible (NASB)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- (New) Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Functional

- New International Version (NIV)
- New English Translation (NET)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- Good News Bible

Paraphrase

- The Message

LET'S TAKE A LOOK: ROMANS 12:1

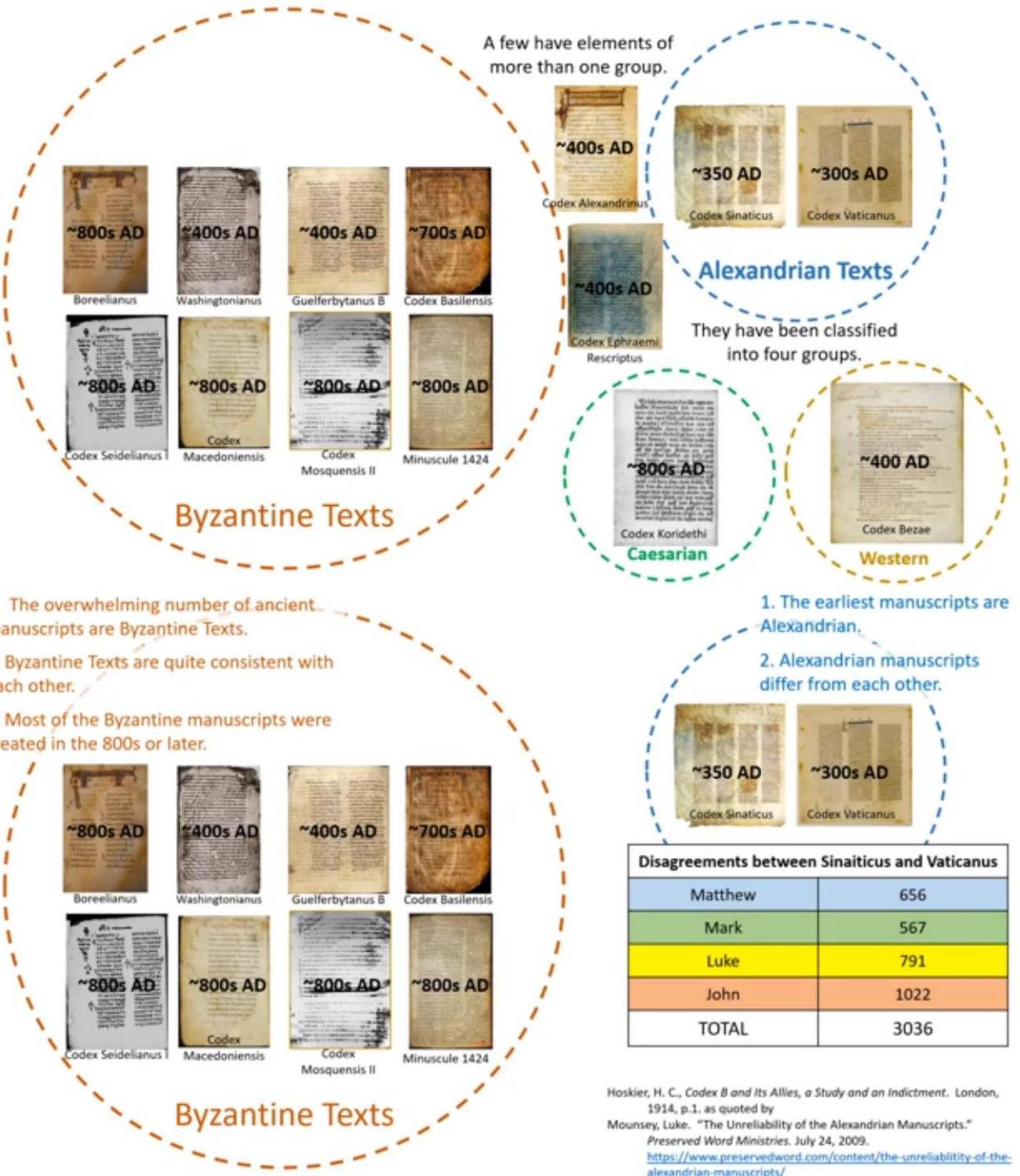
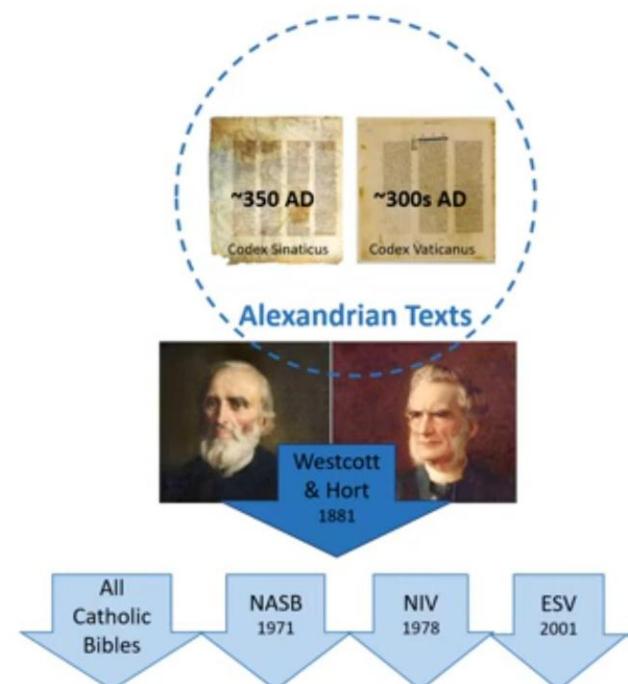
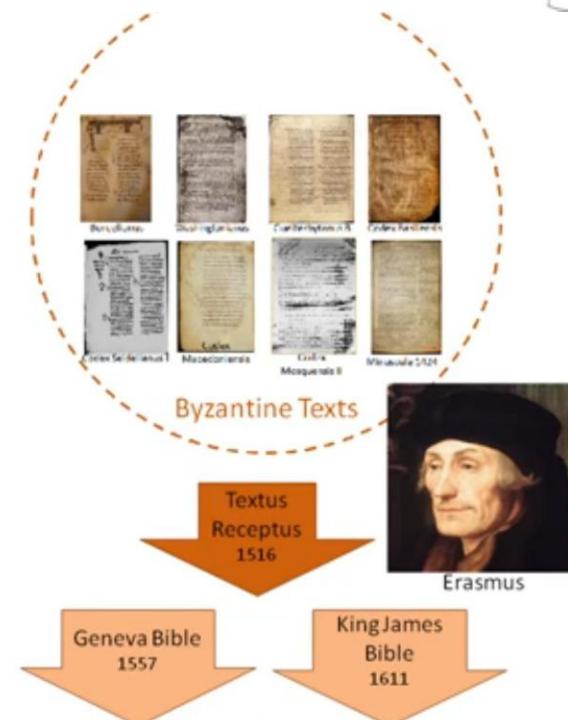
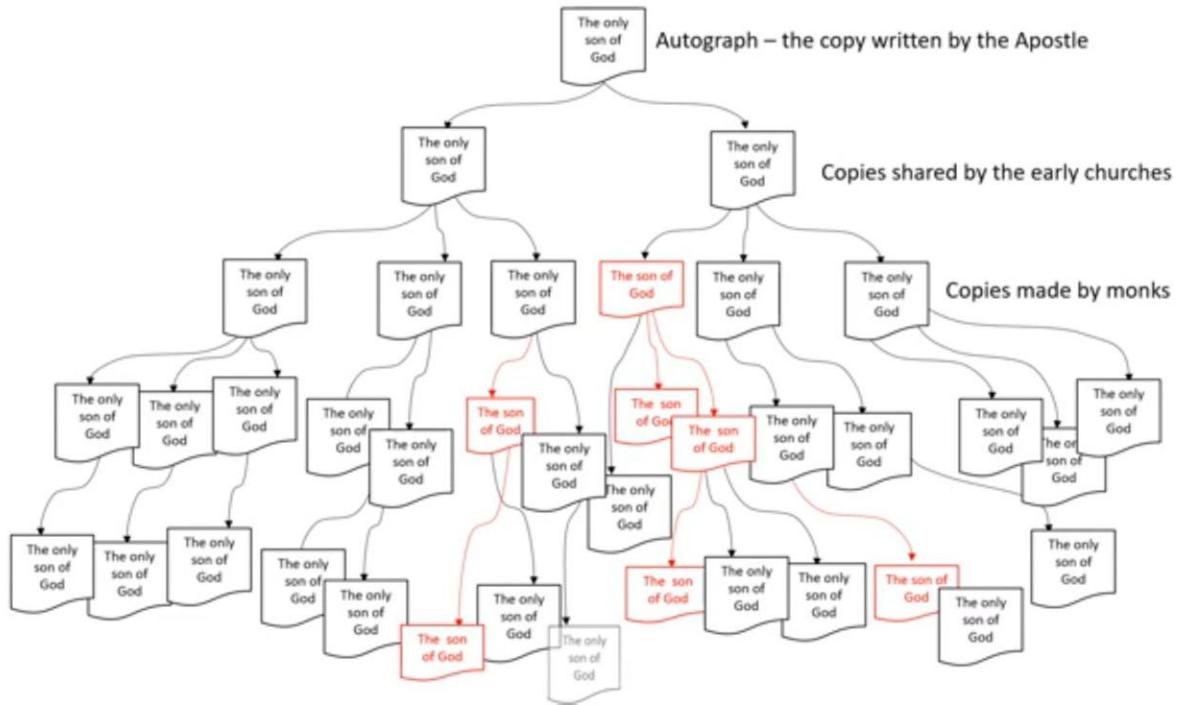
KJV - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

NLT - And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him

MSG - So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

CRITICAL VS. TRADITIONAL TEXT

- ❖ Modern critical text vs. traditional text (aka., “received text” or *textus receptus*)
- ❖ Most/All newer Bible translation are based on modern critical text
 - ❖ Removes ~130 verses from KJV
 - ❖ Omitted/deleted ~8,000 words
 - ❖ Proponents claim some KJV verses removed were NOT found in any of the manuscripts
- ❖ Critical text from Codex Sinaiticus (Mt. Sinai) and Codex Vaticanus (330-350 AD) from Alexandria Egypt – formed Wescott & Hort manuscripts which is basis for all new translations (formal and functional)
- ❖ Claim text is based on the “oldest” and “best” manuscripts from thousands of manuscripts



CRITICAL VS. TRADITIONAL TEXT

- *Codex Vaticanus omits words or whole clauses 1,491 times in the Gospel accounts alone and is “disfigured throughout with repetitions.” Codex Sinaiticus “abounds with errors of the eye and pen ... On many occasions ten, twenty, thirty, forty words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less times than one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament.” (William Pickering)*

MARK 16: 9-20 (CT- CASTS DOUBT)

- **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**
- 9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.
- **Jesus Appears to Two Disciples**
- 12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.
- **The Great Commission**
- 14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
- **The Ascension**
- 19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

MARK 16: 9-20 (CT- CASTS DOUBT)

ESV [Mark 16: 9-20]

Footnotes:

a 9 Some manuscripts end the book with 16:8; others include verses 9 - 20 immediately after verse 8. [HOWEVER, 1,600 manuscripts do include the text.]

At least one manuscript inserts additional material after verse 14; some manuscripts include after verse 8 the following: *But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.*

These manuscripts then continue with verses 9 – 20

NKJV [Mark 16: 9-20]

Mark 16:9 Vv. 9–20 are bracketed in NU as not in the original text. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other mss. of Mark contain them.

MARK 1:2 (CT- CASTS DOUBT)

KJV [Mark 1:2]

- 1** The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;
- 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.

MARK 1:2 (CT- CASTS DOUBT)

ESV [Mark 1:2]

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^a
2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,^b “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,
3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness:‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’”

^b 2 Some manuscripts *in the prophets*

Saying came from Malachi 3:1 NOT Isaiah

- ESV footnote states: “**Mark 1:2** Some manuscripts *in the prophets*.” This is an understatement.
- In fact, **96.7% of the manuscripts** (a total of about 1,740) read “**in the prophets**” while **3.1% (a total of about 56)** read “**in Isaiah the prophet**.”

MATT: 27:9 (CT- CASTS DOUBT)

KJV

Matt: 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

Saying came from **Zechariah 11:13** NOT Jeremiah

Why?

- Used Jeremiah to represent the “Prophet scrolls,” as the first book of the prophets
- Maybe original used abbreviations → **Iπιου** (Jeremiah) for **Ζπιου** (Zechariah)

TRADITIONAL VS. CRITICAL

INTRO BYZANTINE & ALEXANDRIAN TEXTS

Support Traditional:

- Proof that the Textus Receptus & Traditional Text preceeds the Critical Text (Westcott & Hort)!
- The Differences Between The Byzantine And The Alexandrian Text Type Bible
- What about the MISSING VERSES in the BYZANTINE TEXT
- Matthew Everhard: From Critical text to Majority Text interview

Support Critical Text:

- Critical Text vs. Textus Receptus: Some Preliminary Conclusions

TOTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (ALL TEXTUAL WITNESSES)

Category	Estimated Count	Description
GR Greek Manuscripts	~5,800+	The core and original language manuscripts. Includes papyri, uncials, minuscules, and lectionaries.
LN Latin Manuscripts	~10,000+	Includes Old Latin (pre-Vulgate) and Vulgate (Jerome's 4th-century translation).
SY Syriac Manuscripts	~350+	Includes Peshitta, Old Syriac (e.g. Curetonian, Sinaitic), and Harclean versions.
CO Coptic Manuscripts	~300+	In Sahidic, Bohairic, Akhmimic dialects. Important for early Egyptian church use.
AM Armenian Manuscripts	~2,500+	Translation from Greek, dated from the 5th century onward.
GE Georgian Manuscripts	~100+	From about the 5th century onward.
ET Ethiopic, Gothic, Old Church Slavonic, Arabic, etc.	~500+ total (combined)	Smaller traditions, but still historically significant.

 **Over 25,000 handwritten manuscripts of the New Testament across all languages**
– with the **Greek manuscripts** (~5,800) being the most authoritative for textual criticism.

Why This Matters:

- The New Testament has **far more manuscript support** than any other work of ancient literature.
- The **manuscript evidence spans from the 2nd century to the Middle Ages**, across multiple regions and languages.
- This allows scholars to **reconstruct the original text with high confidence**, using comparison across **thousands of witnesses**.

HOW MANY MANUSCRIPTS COMPRIZE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT (CT)?

Number of Manuscripts

Manuscript Type	Approximate Count	Notes
▣ Greek Manuscripts	~5,800+	These include papyri, uncials, minuscules, and lectionaries. The Critical Text is based primarily on the earliest and most reliable among them.
▣ Papyri	~140+	These are the earliest manuscripts (2nd–4th centuries). Especially important are β^52 , β^66 , β^75 , etc.
▣ Uncials (Majuscules)	~320+	Written in uppercase Greek letters. Key codices: Sinaiticus (א), Vaticanus (B), Alexandrinus (A), Ephraemi Rescriptus (C).
▣ Minuscules	~2,900+	Later manuscripts written in lowercase script (9th–15th centuries). Less weight in the CT unless earlier support is lacking.
▣ Lectionaries	~2,400+	Books arranged for church readings. Useful for confirming the popularity of readings in later periods.

How Many Manuscripts Were Actually Used?

While ~5,800 manuscripts exist, not all are directly used in forming the Critical Text. Editors focus on:

- The earliest manuscripts (especially 2nd–4th century).
- Those that show signs of textual accuracy or originality (Alexandrian text-type in particular).
- Textual coherence, antiquity, and geographic distribution.

The Nestle-Aland 28th edition apparatus, for instance, references a few hundred carefully chosen witnesses, not the entire 5,800+.

BREAKDOWN OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MANUSCRIPTS THAT FORM THE FOUNDATION OF THE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT (ESPECIALLY THE NESTLE-ALAND 28TH EDITION AND UBS5).

THESE ARE PRIMARILY EARLY AND HIGH-QUALITY GREEK MANUSCRIPTS, MOSTLY OF THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXT-TYPE, WHICH IS WIDELY CONSIDERED THE MOST RELIABLE BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICS.

A Codex Vaticanus (B / 03)

- **Date:** Early 4th century (c. AD 325–350)
- **Contents:** Almost the entire Bible (OT + NT, though missing most of Hebrews and Revelation)
- **Location:** Vatican Library, Rome
- **Significance:** Considered one of the most reliable witnesses to the Alexandrian text. The base text for many CT readings.

B Codex Sinaiticus (א / 01)

- **Date:** Mid 4th century (c. AD 330–360)
- **Contents:** Complete NT and most of the OT; also contains non-canonical books (Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas)
- **Location:** British Library, London (with parts in Russia and Germany)
- **Significance:** Along with Vaticanus, forms the backbone of the modern Critical Text. Very early and complete.

C Codex Alexandrinus (A / 02)

- **Date:** Early 5th century (c. AD 400–440)
- **Contents:** Complete Bible except for small gaps; full NT
- **Location:** British Library, London
- **Significance:** Important Alexandrian-type text, though it mixes with Byzantine in some NT books. Strong influence in the Gospels.

D Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (C / 04)

- **Date:** 5th century (c. AD 450)
- **Contents:** A palimpsest (erased and overwritten), contains parts of nearly every NT book
- **Location:** National Library of France, Paris
- **Significance:** Valuable secondary witness, used in combination with A and B for textual decisions.

E Codex Bezae (D / 05)

- **Date:** 5th century (c. AD 400–500)
- **Contents:** Gospels and Acts, in both Greek and Latin
- **Location:** Cambridge University Library
- **Significance:** Represents the Western text-type; often disagrees with Alexandrian manuscripts. Not as relied upon for the CT but provides contrast and evidence of textual variation.

■ Key Early Papyri (Very Influential)

● How They're Used:

- Editors of the Critical Text (e.g., the Nestle-Aland Committee) assign **weight** to manuscripts based on:
 - **Age** (older is generally better)
 - **Text-type** (Alexandrian preferred)
 - **Consistency**
 - **Geographic spread**
 - **Agreement with other early witnesses**

DOES THE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT INCLUDE THE MAJORITY BYZANTINE TEXT-TYPE?

✗ SHORT ANSWER: NO, THE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE MAJORITY TEXT AS ITS BASE — THOUGH IT SOMETIMES AGREES WITH IT.

📘 1. Modern Critical Text (e.g., Nestle-Aland 28 / UBS5):

- Based primarily on early Alexandrian manuscripts, such as:
 - Codex Vaticanus (B)
 - Codex Sinaiticus (א)
 - Papyrus Ρ^75, Ρ^66, etc.
- Represents a "minority" reading, but often from manuscripts dated to the 2nd–4th centuries.
- Favors older, geographically diverse, and internally consistent readings.
- Used in most modern translations: NIV, ESV, NASB, CSB, NRSV, etc.

📘 2. Majority Text (Byzantine Text-type):

- Reflects the majority of later Greek manuscripts (about 85–90% of all NT mss).
- Dates from the 9th to 15th centuries.
- Emphasizes traditional readings found in the Greek Orthodox Church and the KJV tradition.
- Used in translations like the NKJV, MEV, and in the Textus Receptus (which is close but not identical).

💡 Why Doesn't the Critical Text Use the Majority Text?

Textual scholars prioritize earlier evidence and try to reconstruct the original text, not just the most commonly copied one. The Byzantine/Majority Text reflects a stable tradition of the medieval church, but often includes later expansions, harmonizations, or explanatory additions not found in earlier manuscripts.

Critical Text proponents place priority on age over quantity stating the reality that “It’s Not About the Number, It’s About the Quality and Age”

	Textus Receptus (TR)	Critical Text (CT: NA28, UBS5)
Manuscripts Used	~6 to 12 late Greek manuscripts (in Erasmus' time)	~200–300 key early manuscripts, plus readings supported by over 5,800 total manuscripts
Date of MSS Used	Mostly 12th–15th century	Primarily 2nd–4th century manuscripts (plus some later)
Based on?	Erasmus' 1516 Greek NT, with later edits (Stephanus, Beza, Elzevir)	Nestle-Aland/UBS editions, evaluating the entire manuscript tradition
Total MSS Available Today	~5,800 Greek mss (used for comparison now, not in Erasmus' day)	Same ~5,800 Greek mss — but focuses on earliest and most reliable
Goal	Preserve the traditional text known to the Reformation-era church	Reconstruct the original NT text using earliest evidence

📌 Important Clarification:

- The Textus Receptus was based on a very small number (~7) of manuscripts (mostly 12th–15th century Greek minuscules). Erasmus only had about 7 Greek manuscripts, and none contained the complete New Testament.
- The claim that TR represents "5,000 manuscripts" is not accurate — that's how many we have now, and most of those were discovered after the TR was compiled.
- The Critical Text, though it leans heavily on 200–300 key early manuscripts, is edited in light of all available manuscripts, including the 5,800+ Greek ones, plus thousands of versions and church father citations.

THE KJV IS BASED ON THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS (TR), NOT DIRECTLY ON THE MAJORITY TEXT, ALTHOUGH THE TR *OFTEN REFLECTS* BYZANTINE READINGS THAT ARE ALSO FOUND IN THE MAJORITY TEXT.

1. Textus Receptus (TR) – KJV's Direct Base

- The KJV translators (1604–1611) primarily used the Textus Receptus, especially the editions of:
 - Stephanus (1550)
 - Beza (1598)
- The TR is not identical to the Majority Text. It was based on a small number of late Byzantine manuscripts (as few as 7 in Erasmus' case), and contains some unique readings not found in the Majority.
- Some parts of the TR (and therefore KJV) even differ from the majority of Greek manuscripts, due to:
 - Erasmus' limited sources
 - Back-translation from the Latin Vulgate in some verses (e.g., Acts 9:6, 1 John 5:7)

2. Majority Text (Byzantine Text-Type) – Later Reconstruction

- The Majority Text (as published today) is a modern critical edition that tries to represent the readings found in the majority of Greek manuscripts (mostly Byzantine).
- Scholars like Hodges & Farstad and Robinson & Pierpont compiled it in the 20th century — long after the KJV was completed.
- It often agrees with the TR and the KJV, but not always.

困惑 So Why the Confusion?

Many assume the KJV is based on the "Majority Text" because:

- It often matches Byzantine readings
- The TR manuscripts were mostly Byzantine in character
- KJV defenders often appeal to the "traditional" or "majority" Greek text

But again: KJV = TR, and TR ≠ Majority Text, even though they overlap a lot.

Summary:

- KJV is based on the Textus Receptus, not directly the Majority Text.
- The TR is *influenced* by Byzantine (majority) readings, but is not a complete reflection of them.
- The Majority Text is a separate modern edition that reflects the most common readings across thousands of manuscripts.