jfmiller61@gmail.com
http://jfmiller.com/onlineclass/

Teaching Sound Doctrine
Bible Translations Pt.3

II. TEXT TYPES

A. There are features common among groups of manuscripts.

1. If one manuscript has a variation in it and it is used to make others, then they will have the same variation.

2. These groups have been narrowed to four groups called text types.

B. Alexandrian

1. Sometimes called the Neutral Text.

2. Represents about 10% of the total manuscripts.

3. Some of the earliest dated manuscripts fall into this classification (4th century uncials). These are dealing with essentially complete manuscripts

a. Vaticanus

b. Alexandrinus

c. Sinaiticus

4. In latter part of the 1800s (Brooke Foss or BF) Westcott and (Fenton John Anthony) Hort popularized the view that the oldest manuscripts were the most reliable text.

5. The English Revised Version (1881) and the American Standard Version (1901) are based on this text type. As are most all the "translations" today

C. Byzantine

1. Also called the Majority or Text or the Textus Receptus (meaning the received text).

2. It represents 90 to 95% of the manuscripts and some claim up to 99%.

3. These generally are of a later date than those in the Alexandrian.

4. These fall into the minuscule (small running hand type print) classification.

5. The King James and New King James are based on this text type (more specifically the Textus Receptus).

D. Caesarean and Western

1. Some have debated whether or not these are text types.

2. Some include the Caesarean in the Alexandrian.

3. Caesarean sprang from Egypt and contains a mixture of the Western and Alexandrian.

4. The Western is the least reliable and some contend that it is not uniform enough to be a text type.

E. Which is most reliable?

1. Westcott and Hort stated the oldest (those closest to the originals) must be the most reliable.

a. There would have been less time for mistakes to creep into the text.

b. Earlier manuscripts were copied by professional scribes who produced a better quality copy; later ones done by less capable scribes who produced poorer quality but had a wider distribution.

2. Others (those supporting the Majority Text) claim that we should simply count the number.

a. Whichever variation has the most number of supporting manuscripts is what we should use (the vast majority are the Textus Receptus).

b. Some claim that God providentially preserved the Byzantine text in that no other text type was known for over 1000 years of history (all other text types are

of recent archeological discoveries).

c. Quotations from early *Christian* writings were primarily from the Textus Receptus.

d. One writer (Joseph Philips) gave these arguments for the Majority Text:

(1) Statistical analysis

(2) Scribal habits, which go the exact opposite way the Westcott-Hort Theory says

(3) The extreme carelessness with which the "earliest" manuscripts were copied make them unsuitable to be the basis for the original text.

3. Caius of Rome

a. The late second century writer spoke of corrupt text.

b. "For either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and are thus infidels; or they think themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and what are they then but demoniacs? Nor can they deny that the crime is theirs, when the copies have been written with their own hand; nor did they receive such copies of the Scriptures from those by whom they were first instructed in the faith, and they cannot produce copies from which these were transcribed."