

The History & Development of Biblical Texts (5) GEN01

This module will introduce the student to the documents upon which our Old Testament and New Testament texts are based and will begin to explore factors relating to the integrity of these texts.

Module content

- Today's translations of the Bible are the result of hundreds of years of copying manuscripts and editing texts, this module introduces the student to the history and processes of textual transmission.
- Categories of sources will be defined and typical examples identified for both Old and New Testament texts.
- A number of significant manuscripts bearing witness to both Old and New Testament texts will be introduced, assessed and considered in light of their respective contribution.
- The main problems of textual transmission will be examined along with an introduction to the concept of textual variants and types of text.
- The basic principles of reconstruction will be introduced and a number of specific working examples explored.
- Some practical implications of these processes will be considered in light of application in mission.

Module outline

Unit 1 - Textual transmission - an introduction

Unit 2 - The text of the Hebrew Bible

Unit 3 - Greek manuscripts of the New Testament

Unit 4 - The Bible and early Christian mission

Unit 5 - Rediscovering the text

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module the student will:

- understand the process of textual transmission
- recognise the nature and significance of variants textual found in the Biblical texts
- be familiar with principle manuscripts and ancient versions of the Bible
- be able to rationally consider principle witnesses to a wide number of variants
- understand the difficulties and main principles of textual reconstruction

Preparation assignment

Before the first of the study weekends, read what you can find about writing tools and materials employed in 'Biblical times.' Take notes of what you read for your future reference.

The select bibliography (below) should give you an idea of some volumes for which to be looking out. Bruce is very dated, but certainly worth looking out for in second-hand

bookshops. Those marked with an asterisk* are good introductions - that by Geisler and Nix is thorough and would serve you well in other modules too.

Select bibliography

Aland, Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989).

Bruce, F. F., *The Books and the Parchments: Some Chapters on the Transmission of the Bible* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1963).

Geisler, Norman L., and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995).*

Kaiser, Walter C., *The Old Testament Documents: Are they reliable and relevant?* (Leicester: IVP, 2001).

Lightfoot, Neil, R., *How We Got the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2003).*

Metzger, Bruce M., *The Early Versions of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).

Metzger, Bruce M., *The Text of the New Testament: Their Origin, Transmission and Limitations* (Oxford: OUP, 1992).

VanderKam, James C., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994).

Würthwein, Ernst, *The Text of the Old Testament*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1978).

Learning, assignments and assessment weighting

Class sessions	18 hours	2 x study weekends	
Reading	6 hours	to be assigned	
Assignments	6 hours	class presentation (10 minutes)	20%
	20 hours	essay (2,000 words)	80%

Students who are enrolled on our module-point credit programme should attend both study weekends and complete all assignments as given.

Essay topics

You are to write a 2,000 word essay on **one** of the following topics:

- How does the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls affect our understanding of the Old Testament text?
- Of what use are textual footnotes in modern translations of the Bible and how we can we best explain their significance to those less familiar with the text?
- How did the various tools and writing materials employed in manuscript transmission affect the integrity of the Biblical text?

Due date to be decided during first study weekend.