## The Doctrine of Scripture (2)

The Canonicity, Transmission & Translation of the Bible

## Transmission of Scripture

#### Important Question:

How can we be certain that we have today is an accurate, reliable reproduction of what was originally written?

### Transmission of Scripture

#### **Textual Criticism**

"the study of the copies of any written work of which the original is unknown, with the purpose of ascertaining the original text"

(Greenlee, Introduction to New Testament Criticism; Rev. Ed.; 1995)

### Transmission of Scripture

#### NT Textual Criticism

- > Scope of textual variants
  - the percentage of variants in the NT is about 7%; 93% of the NT contains no variants!
  - 85% of these variants are consider insignificant spelling, word order, tense
  - between 1% and 2% of the NT contains substantial variants (e.g. Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11)

# Transmission of Scripture

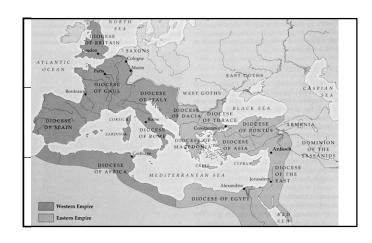
#### NT Textual Criticism

- Scope of textual variants
  - over 98% of our Greek NT is free of any substantial variants!
  - while we do not have the original manuscripts, we most certainly have the original text in the various manuscripts

# Transmission of Scripture

#### History of Transmission (NT)

- A. Early Period (before 325 A.D.)
  - introduction of most textual variants
  - not copied by professional scribes
  - no opportunity to establish an official edition
  - emergence of local "text-types"



### Transmission of Scripture

#### History of Transmission (NT)

- B. Standardized Text (4th 8th centuries)
  - important events: Edit of Milan (313); capital moved to Constantinople (330); Latin Vulgate (384)
  - emergence of a secondary text-type through the conflation of MMS (harmonization, smoothing)
  - the perpetuation of this "Byzantine" text-type in the Greek-speaking church



### Transmission of Scripture

#### History of Transmission (NT)

- C. The "Received Text" (1516-1633)
  - 1516 Erasmus published the first Greek NT; it was based on six Greek MMS (basis on the KJV)
  - 1550 Stephanus published four editions; used Erasmus and 15 MMS (verse numeration)
  - 1624-1678 Elzevir brothers published seven editions; used the phrase "the text now received by all" – "Textus Receptus" (TR)

# Transmission of Scripture

#### History of Transmission (NT)

- D. The Age of the Critical Text
  - Johann Griesbach (1775-1806) first scholar to abandoned the TR; divided MMS into text-types
  - Karl Lachmann (1831) first to publish a Greek NT based entirely on text-critical principles
  - Tischendorf discovered and published 21 uncial MMS (Sinaiticus-1859); eight editions of the Greek NT (1841-1872)

## Transmission of Scripture

#### History of Transmission (NT)

- D. The Age of the Critical Text
  - Westcott & Hort published their critical edition of the Greek NT in 1881 after 28 yrs. of work; included a volume detailing their textual principles

All modern English versions of the NT are based on subsequent versions of the Greek critical text