

QUESTIONS

I have received the following three, interrelated, questions from an inquiring mind that wants to know, all of them involving the potential accuracy of the manuscript tradition of the NT based on what we can deduce from the early papyri. My responses will follow.

- In your last debate with Dr. Wallace, he seemed to argue, in part, for the relative integrity of the early NT manuscript tradition. He referred to p75 as being representative of other early NT MSS in that, while obviously the product of non-professionals, it yielded variants that were easy to correct, in the nature of “onion instead of union”. Is this a fair characterization on his part of these early texts? What portion of these variants would indeed fall into the category of “easy to correct”?
- Citing Dr. Metzger, Dr. Wallace also claimed that Alexandria was one place where uncontrolled early scribal practices was not the norm. You countered with the letters of Clement of Alexandria as evidence against this conclusion. Could you please elaborate on this point & mention whether these letters are typical of the place and period?
- Another argument Dr. Wallace made was founded on the claim that earliest papyri discovered merely confirm the previous judgments of scholars as to what was the most likely original form of a text in that they don’t add any new variant readings. These judgments were based on later though more reliable NT manuscripts. He referred specifically to the work of Westcott & Hort on Codex Sinaiticus & Vaticanus whose conclusions were attested by the later discovery of p75. This dynamic, according to him, is also true of other early papyri. This leads Dr. Wallace to argue that if these early papyri simply confirm earlier judgments then we should expect even earlier papyri to do so likewise. Your thoughts on this argument would be appreciated.

RESPONSES

These are terrific questions, to which I can, I think, give some direct answers.

- P75 is indeed...**THE REST OF THIS POST IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. If you don't belong yet, you should join!!! It costs about \$2/month, and you have full access to my comments!**

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