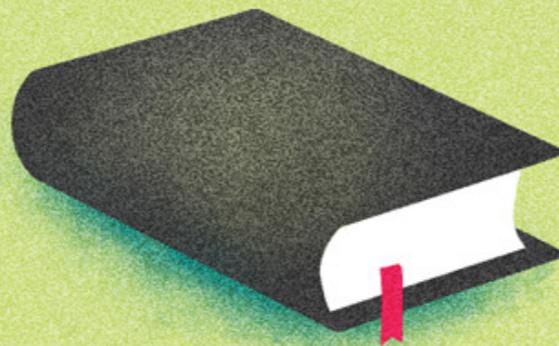


CANON OF SCRIPTURE



“Is it Reasonable to Believe in God?”
Lecture #7 - Tuesday 7:00p

➤ Foundational Principles and Terms

● The Canon of Scripture

↳ From the Gr. for “reed”, eventually came to mean “standard”

↳ The collection of inspired books.

● Autograph

↳ “A book, document, etc, handwritten by its author; original manuscript (WED).”

**THE CANON
OF SCRIPTURE**



Autographs

- To our knowledge, we possess no autographs.
- Over the course of thousands of years, originals lost or destroyed.
- Poses no significant issue for believers.

The Canon

- It is a canon of Scripture.
- What is Scripture? 2 Tim. 3
- Writings are inspired by and originate with God
- Canonicity is determined by Him, not by man.
- Man's role is to recognize the canon, not select it.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE



CONFRONTING REALITIES

⇒ **Scripture's claim of inspiration by God is important:**

● **Consider the notable attributes of God:**

↳ **Omniscience; Omnipotence; Omnipresence; Holiness; Righteousness**

● **Any document that proceeds forth from such a God will be:**

↳ **Historically Accurate**

↳ **Scientifically Accurate**

↳ **Whole from a Literary Perspective**

↳ **Logically Consistent**

**THE CANON
OF SCRIPTURE**



Can We Have Confidence in Today's Biblical Text?



QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS MUST ANSWER

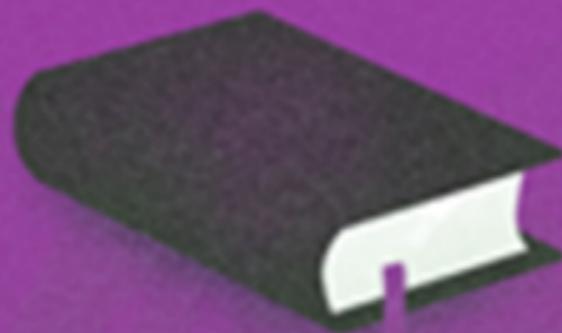
“How can you be sure that what you’re reading is an accurate representation of what God inspired those men to write centuries ago?”

- Lacking the autographs is not a significant problem; it can actually be an unexpected blessing.**
- The Bible is the most well-documented work of history.**



DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

	New Testament	Homer's <u>Iliad</u>	Plato's <u>Tetraologies</u>
When Written?	AD40 - 100	900BC	427-347BC
Earliest Extant MSS?	AD125 (25-85 years)	400BC (500 years)	AD900 (1,247-1,327 years)
Number of MSS Copies?	24,000+	643	7

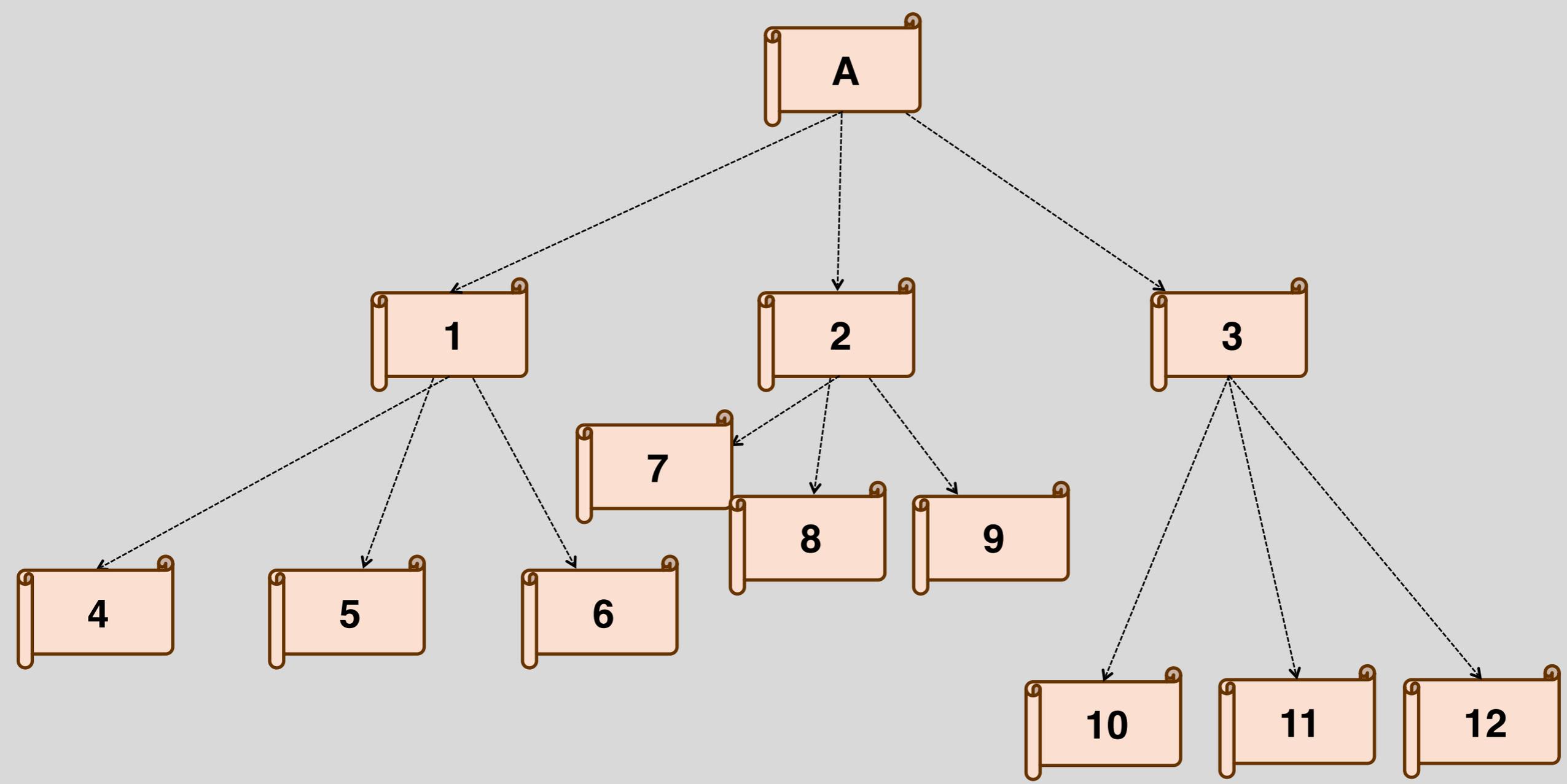


QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS MUST ANSWER

“How can you be sure that what you’re reading is an accurate representation of what God inspired those men to write centuries ago?”

- Lacking the autographs is not a significant problem; it can actually be an unexpected blessing.**
- The Bible is the most well-documented work of history.**
- Archeology is instilling greater confidence in the Scriptures.**





Why is a lack of autographs not a problem? The massive transmission of the text!

Transmission of the Text



Galatians

Philippians 1.1, 13

Galatians 1.2

Colossians 1.2; 4.10, 16

The New Testament World
in the Time of the Roman Empire

0 Miles 300

Chester Beatty Papyri (P45,46,47)

(University of Michigan, and other locations)

Fragment of Galatians 1-6 (P46)

AD180-200

Egyptian Discovery

Galatians 1.1-6.10 housed at
University of Michigan



Chester Beatty Papyri (P45,46,47)

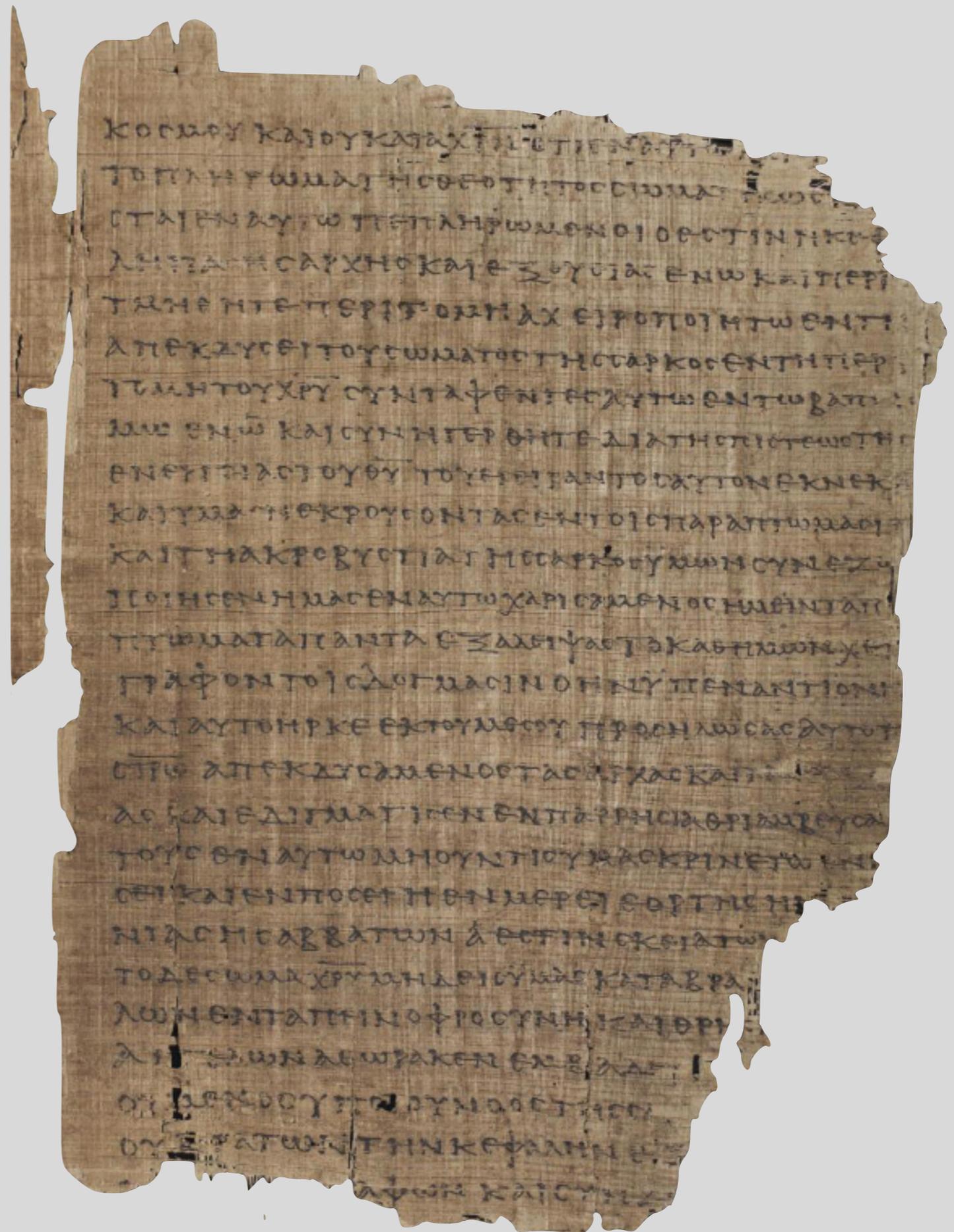
(University of Michigan, and other locations)

Fragment of Colossians 2 (P46)

AD180-200

Egyptian Discovery

Housed at Dublin's Chester Beatty
Library



ΚΟΣΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΚ ΑΝΧΕΤΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΕΝ ΤΑΙΣ
ΤΟ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΙ ΗΟΥΣΟΥ ΤΙΤΟΣ ΣΩΜΑΤΙ ΚΑΙ
ΣΤΑΙ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΠΕΠΛΗΡΩΜΕΝΟΙ ΟΕΣΤΙΝ ΗΚΑ-
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ΑΠΕΚΔΥΣΕΙ ΤΟΥ ΣΩΜΑΤΟΣ ΗΣ ΣΑΡΚΟΣ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΠΕΡ-
ΥΤΑΝ ΤΟΥ ΧΡΥΣΟΥΝΤΑ ΦΕΝΤΕΣ ΧΥΤΩ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΒΑΠ-
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ΔΟ ΚΑΙ ΕΔΙΤΜΑΤΙ ΗΕΝ ΕΝ ΠΑΡΡΗΟΙΑ ΘΡΙΑΜΕΥΟΝ

Chester Beatty Papyri

(P45,46,47)

(University of Michigan, and other locations)

Fragment of
John 10-11 (P45)

AD 200-300

Perhaps from a Coptic graveyard near
Atfih, Egypt

Portions from all gospel accounts and
Acts



John Rylands Papyrus (P52)

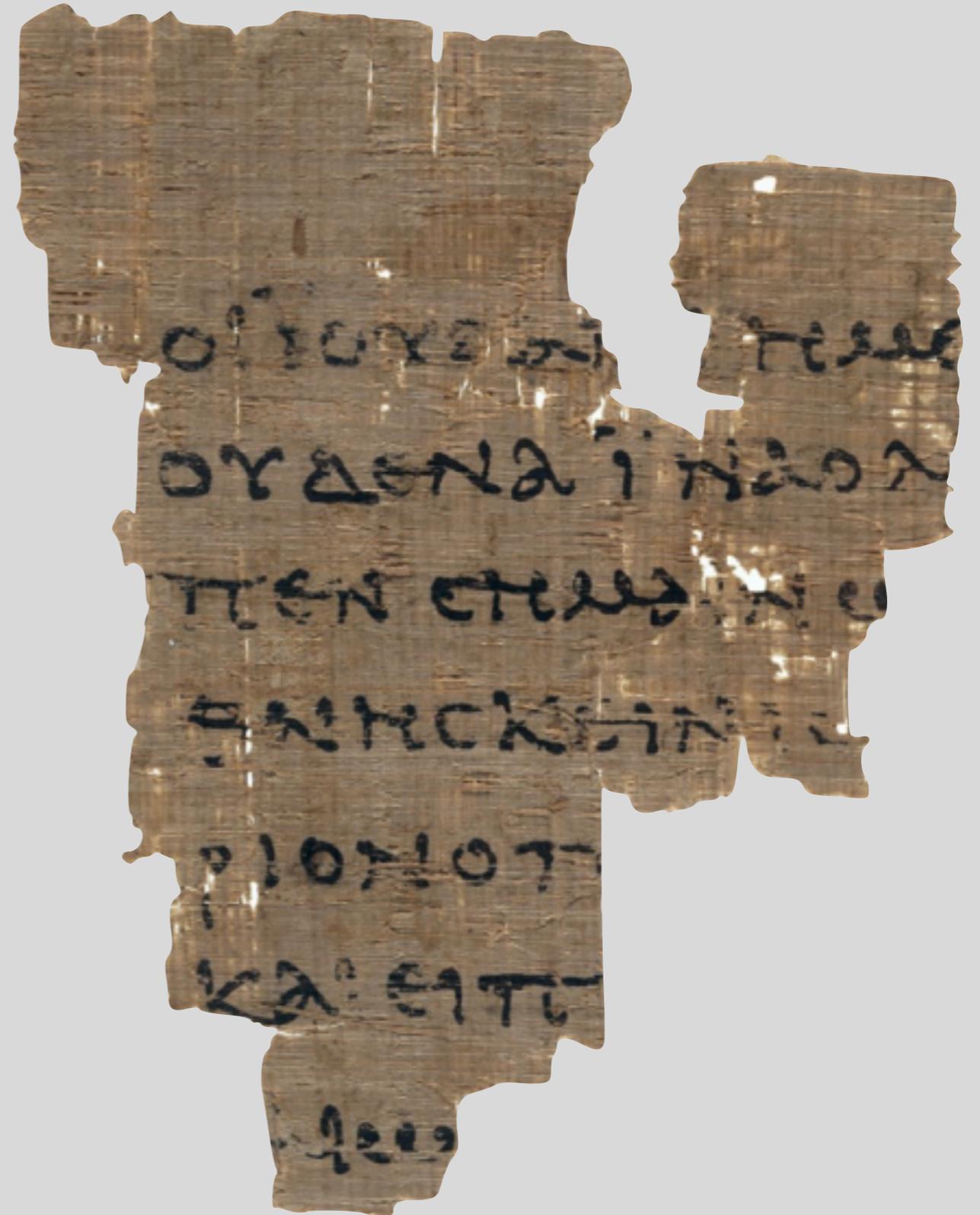
(University of Manchester Library)

Fragment of
John 18:31-33

Early AD 100s

Cairo Geniza

“earliest known fragment of the NT”



Fragment of a papyrus scroll with Greek text. The text is written in a cursive hand and is partially obscured by a large tear. The visible characters include:

...ΤΟ Π...
...ΑΝ...
...ΤΗ...
...Α...
...ΤΟ...
...Α...

Fragment of a papyrus scroll with Greek text. The text is written in a cursive hand and is partially obscured by a large tear. The visible characters include:

...Ο...
...ΟΥ...
...ΤΕΝ...
...Α...
...Π...
...Α...

“But what about the 200,000+ errors that scholars keep talking about?”

- **Some scholars list up to 400,000 “errors”.**
- **Bart Ehrman is noted to have said that there are more errors than words in the Bible.**
- **Apologist and scholar Daniel B. Wallace corrects Ehrman’s comment upward – by a factor of 4.**
- **“Error” is a bit misleading...**



➤ **These variances are not always what scholars make them seem:**

- **Jeremiah 39.1 in KJV vs. more modern translations**
- **Simple spelling variations are counted as “textual variances”.**
- **Each instance of a textual variance in any manuscript counts towards the total of 200,000+ variances.**

➤ **The reality of the textual variances:**

- **“Only 400 or so... variants materially affect the sense [of the reading], and of these perhaps 50 are of real significance. But no essential teaching of the New Testament is greatly affect by them.”**



“But what about those 200,000+ textual variances scholars keep talking about?”

“From one point of view it may be said that there are 200,000 scribal errors in the manuscripts, but it is wholly misleading and untrue to say that there are 200,000 errors in the text of the New Testament. This large number is gained by counting all the variations in all of the manuscripts (about 4,500). This means that if, for example, one word is misspelled in 4,000 different manuscripts, it amounts to 4,000 ‘errors’.”

Neil Lightfoot How We Got the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), pp53-54.



“But what about those 200,000+ textual variances scholars keep talking about?”

➤ Examples of significant textual variances:

- Mistakes in MSS were not uncommon.

- ↳ Greek was written in a style called uncial in and around NT times.

- ↳ Uncial style saw letters written at the same height and in all caps with no punctuation or spacing between words.

- ↳ Scribal fatigue easily explains many of these variances.

- Test yourself:

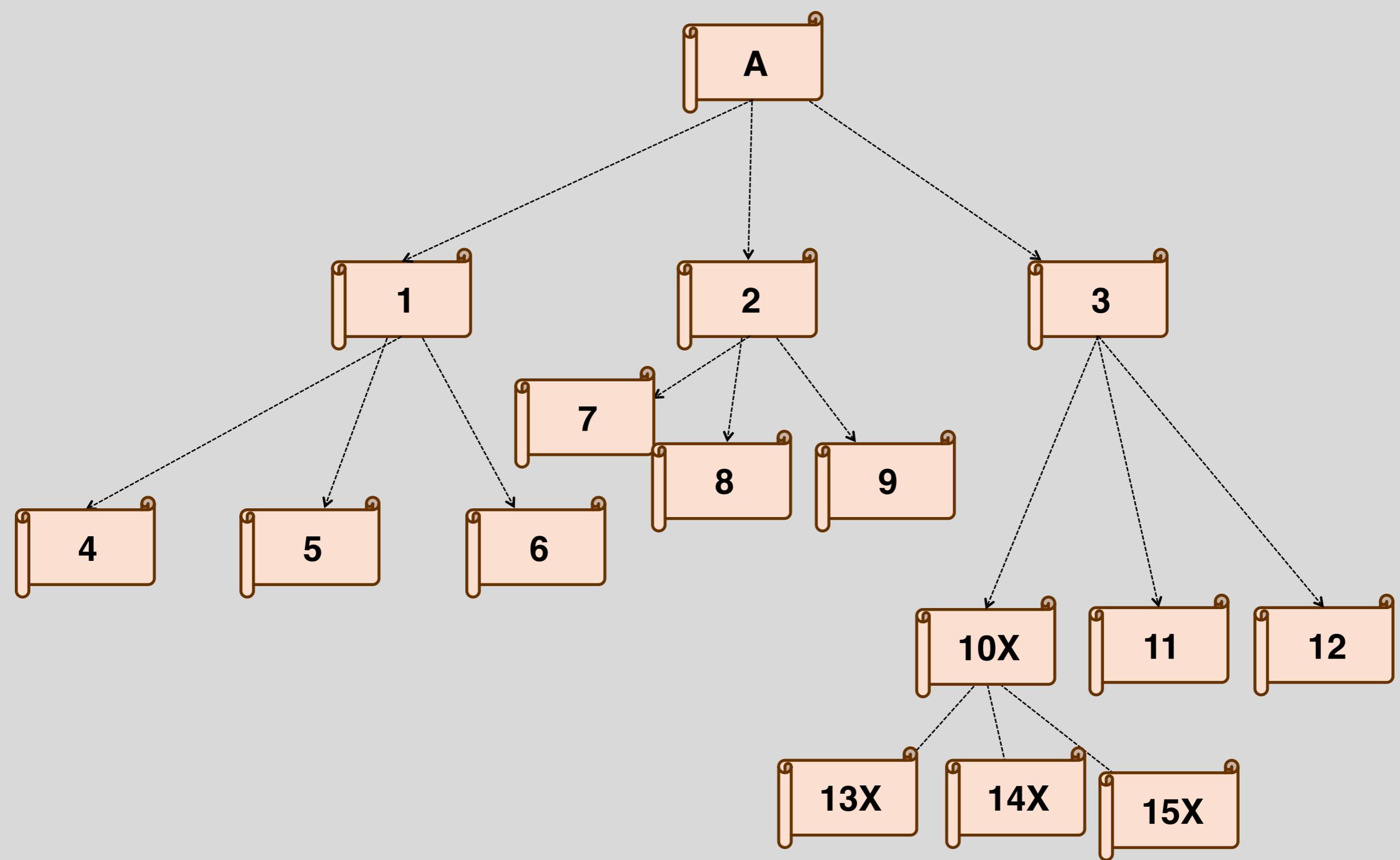
- ↳ LETSEATGRANDPA

- ↳ HEISNOWHERE

- ↳ HAVEYOUEVERSEENABUNDANCEONATABLE



“But what about those 200,000+ textual variances scholars keep talking about?”



**Transmission of the Text:
Can We Spot Mistakes?**

➤ Can you resolve the following textual variances based upon the error of different scribes?

⇒ MS 1 - ἐδάκ#υσενὸ'Ιησοῦς

⇒ MS 2 - ἐδάκρυσε#ὸ'Ιησοῦς

⇒ MS 3 - ἐδάκρυσενὸ'Ι#σοῦς

⇒ How did the autograph read?

⇒ ἐδάκρυσενὸ'Ιησοῦς → “Wept Jesus” – John 11.35

These variances account for 95-99% of the 200,000+ variances.



“But what about those 200,000+ textual variances scholars keep talking about?”

➤ **What compromises the remaining 1-5% of textual variances?**

- **Majorly disputed texts of the New Testament.**

- **Only four seriously challenged NT texts:**

 - ↳ **John 7.53-8.11; 1 John 5.7; Mark 16.9-20; Acts 8.37.**

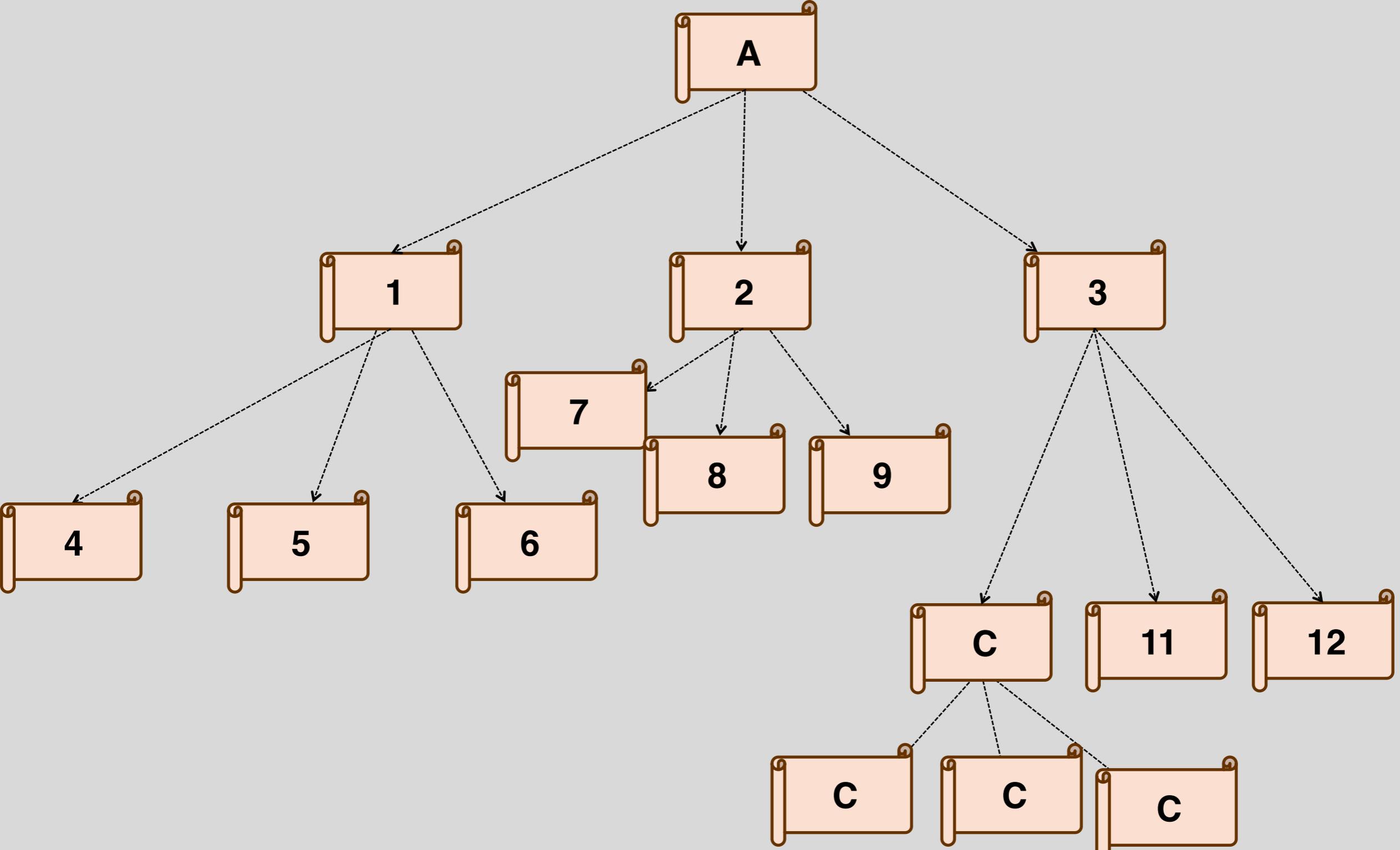
- **Even if we threw out these passages, no NT doctrine changes.**

➤ **Thus, the textual variances are not only easily explained, but also easily resolved.**

➤ **Don't let large numbers with no context fool you!**



“But what about those 200,000+ textual variances scholars keep talking about?”



**Transmission of the Text:
Catholic Conspiracy Claims**

QUESTIONS CHRISTIANS MUST ANSWER

“But what about those missing books of the Bible?”

- **The canon of Scripture is created by God, recognized by man.**
- **By AD202, every NT book (except 3 John) had been cited.**
- **By AD373, all NT books had been recognized as inspired.**
- **No evidence of a Catholic conspiracy to hinder the canon.**
- **There are reasons for certain books being excluded.**



EXCLUDED BOOKS – 1 CLEMENT

- The author never claims to be inspired.
- The story of the phoenix is presented as being a real phenomenon.

“There is a bird, which is named the phoenix. This, being the only one of its kind, liveth for five hundred years; and when it hath now reached the time of its dissolution that it should die, it maketh for itself a coffin... and so it dieth. But, as the flesh rotteth, a certain worm is engendered, which is nurtured from the moisture of the dead creature and putteth forth wings. Then, when it is grown lusty, it taketh up that coffin where are the bones of its parent, and carrying them journeyeth from the country of Arabia even unto Egypt, to the place called the City of the Sun; and in the daytime in the sight of all, flying to the altar of the Sun, it layeth them thereupon; and this done, it setteth forth to return. So the priests examine the registers of the times, and they find that it hath come when the five hundredth year is completed.”



EXCLUDED BOOKS – SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

➤ The teachings of the book contradict non-controverted Scriptures.

- “What then, Sir,” say I, “shall the husband [innocent – TS] do, if the wife continue in this case [fornication – TS]?” “Let him divorce her,” saith he, “and let the husband abide alone: but if after divorcing his wife he shall marry another, he likewise committeth adultery.” (Mandate 4, 29.6 – contradicts Jesus in Matthew 19.4ff)
- “... as concerning His elect; that if, now that this day has been set as a limit, sin shall hereafter be committed, they shall not find salvation; for repentance for the righteous hath an end; the days of repentance are accomplished for all the saints; whereas for the Gentiles there is repentance until the last day.” (Vision 2, 6.5 – contradicts 1 John 1)



Legitimate Questions Our Skeptical Friends Must Confront



3 QUESTIONS SKEPTICS MUST CONFRONT

How can the many instances of scientific foreknowledge be sufficiently explained, taking into account the prevailing scientific knowledge of those ancient communities?

3 QUESTIONS SKEPTICS MUST CONFRONT

How can the many instances of world history being foretold in great detail be explained naturally?

3 QUESTIONS SKEPTICS MUST CONFRONT

What evidence exists that groups of individuals, Catholic or otherwise, banded together to thwart humanity's recognition of the canon of Scripture?

➤ **The integrity of Scripture is an all-or-nothing proposition:**

- **Either God has spoken, or He has not.**
- **Either God has inspired His word, or He has not.**
- **Either God has produced works consistent with His nature, or He has not.**
- **Either God has created a canon of Scripture for us, or He has not.**

➤ **The entire discussion of Scripture's integrity centers around one person – God the Father.**

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE



APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

“All Scripture is inspired by God...”

2 Timothy 3.16

