



## What Is Authentic Scripture?

Dr. Paul M. Elliott, ASF president

Transcript of a video available on our website

---

**Authentic Scripture perfectly embodies the attributes of God who gave it. He would neither give us, nor preserve for us, a revelation that is in any respect uncertain – and therefore untrustworthy. We can have complete confidence in the Authentic Word of God.**

**W**hat is Authentic Scripture? Why would we even use such a term in connection with the Bible? If you look up the word in a dictionary, you will find several things that have a great deal to do with the nature and character of the Bible.

The word *authentic* means “genuine, real, not false or counterfeit”.

*Authentic* means that a copy of a written document is true to the original based on verifiable facts – even if the original was long ago destroyed.

That is true of the Bible. For this video I’m focusing on the New Testament, but we can also say similar things about the Old Testament.

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek, which means “Common Greek”. Koine Greek was the universal language for business and commerce throughout the Roman Empire in the first century, just as English serves that purpose for world commerce and the Internet in our time.

But today many scholars – even teachers in evangelical Bible colleges and seminaries – deny that we have the authentic original wording of the New Testament.

One leading scholar has said this: “We do not have now – in our critical Greek texts or any translations – exactly what the authors of the New Testament wrote. Even if we did, we would not know it. There are many, many places in which the text of the New Testament is uncertain.” <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, Foreword to *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019). In that passage, Wallace continues, “The new generation



## What Is Authentic Scripture?

Dr. Paul Elliott

This same scholar has said that “absolute certainty” about what the New Testament says is “pernicious” – harmful, damaging, destructive. He declares, “We can’t have absolute certainty that what we have in our hands today is in every respect the Word of God.”<sup>2</sup> This scholar, and many other evangelicals, deny the very *possibility* of Authentic Scripture.

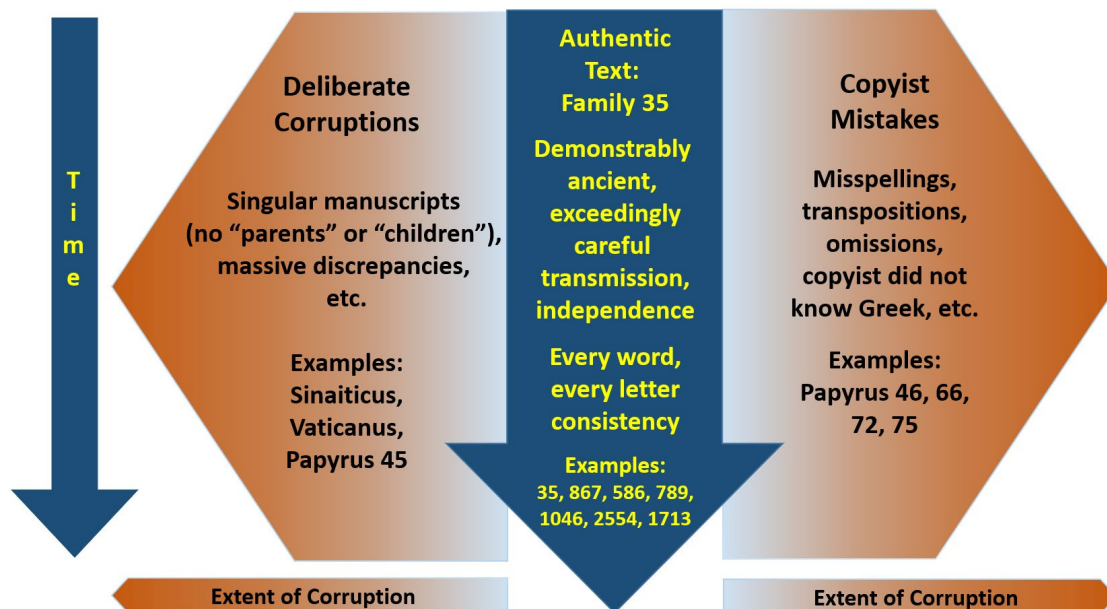
### Authentic Scripture: Not Only Possible – We Have It

But these men are wrong. We do have the authentic original text of the New Testament. Remember one of the definitions of “authentic” – a copy of a written document is true to the original based on verifiable facts. There are thousands of handwritten manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. Many of them are filled with errors – sometimes deliberate adulterations, but more often careless mistakes or omissions.

But one set of New Testament Greek manuscripts stands out from all the rest. It is called Family 35. Family 35 is the mainstream of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. The Family 35 manuscripts are from all over the areas where Paul, Peter, and the other apostles did their missionary work in the first century.

The Family 35 manuscripts are incredibly consistent, word-for-word, letter-for-letter, over the centuries. Most of the complete Family 35 manuscripts available to us today date

### The Identity of the New Testament Text



of evangelical scholars is far more comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty than previous generations. They know the difference between core beliefs and those that are more peripheral. They recognize that even if we embrace the concept of absolute truth, absolute *certainty* about it is a different matter” (italics in the original).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, “Is What We Have Now What They Wrote Then?” – a 2023 chapel presentation at Dallas Theological Seminary, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5AKPiBZcis>, accessed 3 June, 2025.



## What Is Authentic Scripture?

Dr. Paul Elliott

from the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries. But we find distinctively Family 35 wording in fragmentary manuscripts that date back as far as at least the third century. Family 35 is the perfect Word through the running centuries, and the perfect core from which all subsequent corrupted manuscripts diverged.

### A Book True to the Character of Its Author

But let's go back to the dictionary again. *Authentic* also means that a written document is true to the personality and character of its author. How does that apply to the Bible?

Second Peter chapter one declares to us that holy men of God wrote the words of Authentic Scripture as they were moved – more literally, as they were driven – by God the Holy Spirit.

Second Timothy chapter 3 declares that “all Scripture is God-breathed.” Authentic Scripture is, literally, the very breathed-out words of Almighty God, communicated through human writers.

Since God is the Author of all Scripture, then Authentic Scripture will be true to God's nature. The written Word of God will have the same character as God who gave it:

- Authentic Scripture is *inerrant*, because God, the Author, is inerrant. God does not and cannot lie. And the God who cannot lie has repeatedly promised to preserve the Scriptures. Jesus declares in Matthew chapter 5 verse 18 that He will preserve His Word to the extent that not "one jot or one tittle" – not one letter or even the smallest part of one letter of His Word – will be lost. Every word, every letter, will be preserved for eternity.
- Authentic Scripture is also *undefiled*, because God, the Author, is holy – absolutely undefiled.
- Authentic Scripture is also *infallible*, because God, the Author, is infallible – absolutely perfect in His every thought, word, and action.
- Authentic Scripture is therefore *absolutely reliable* – not only in matters of doctrine and other spiritual matters, but also when the Bible speaks of matters of history, science, and geography. This is because God, the Author, and God alone, is absolutely reliable. He cannot, and would not, give us or preserve for us a record that is in any way untrustworthy. We can believe every word of it.



## What Is Authentic Scripture?

Dr. Paul Elliott

- Authentic Scripture *contains no contradictions*, because God, the Author, is not double-minded. As we read in 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 13, God “remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”
- And because Authentic Scripture is the only book from this one true God – *the only supernatural Book* – the Bible is therefore *uniquely authoritative* – not only for the individual Christian, and not only for the church as a body of believers, but for all humanity.

Let’s go to the dictionary once again. We find that the English word *authentic* is derived from the Greek word *authentikos* which means “original, genuine, and therefore of primary importance.” That word derives from another Greek word, the noun *authéntēs* which means, “a person who acts on his own authority, as lord or master”.

Authentic Scripture is God revealing truth to mankind on the basis of His own supreme authority, and no other. Authentic Scripture is the Word and Work of Almighty God acting as Lord and Master of all things and all humanity.

### “Worthy of All Acceptance”

Let’s go to the dictionary one last time. *Authentic* also means that a written document is therefore worthy of acceptance because it is genuine, real, not false or counterfeit.

For all the reasons I have just stated, Authentic Scripture is worthy of acceptance. Twice in his second letter to his protégé Timothy, the Apostle Paul says that the declarations of Authentic Scripture are “worthy of full, complete acceptance.”

And so the vital question, for each of us, is this: Do you believe that Authentic Scripture exists? Do you believe that because it is *Authentic* Scripture it is therefore the Word of God? And do you therefore believe that the Divine Author of Authentic Scripture has the right to lordship over your life? That is the ultimate issue – and that is why understanding and believing the fact of the existence of Authentic Scripture is so vitally important.

Copyright © 2025 The Authentic Scripture Foundation, an operating unit of TeachingTheWord Ministries. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this document in its entirety only, including this copyright statement. For questions regarding usage permission, please contact us via our website, [www.2timothy316.org](http://www.2timothy316.org).