

the course of copying and occasionally the eye of a copyist may jump from one word of a phrase to a similar one, and thus omit something or perhaps copy it twice.

Does this mean that the Textus Receptus is a harmful text?

The additions in the Textus Receptus do not contain any idea that is not taught elsewhere in the New Testament in parts that agree with the earlier manuscripts. The differences consist mainly of repetition of ideas already contained elsewhere in the Scripture.

Then why bother to hunt for early manuscripts? Why not simply follow the Textus Receptus?

God inspired the manuscripts that came from the hands of the original writers. It is impossible to copy a book of any length without making some mistakes. In the case of the New Testament we have more evidence for determining the text of the original writers than for any other book from ancient times. While there is rarely anything harmful in the later manuscripts, it is desirable, if we truly wish to know God's Word, to base our text, as far as possible, on early manuscripts.

What is meant by the Byzantine text?

Shortly before A.D. 400 the Roman empire was divided into two parts, the western Roman empire and the eastern or Byzantine empire. Within a century after this division the western empire came to an end, and western Europe sank into a state of near barbarism. The Byzantine empire continued, though often in a greatly weakened state, until A.D. 1453.

For about a thousand years, the Greek language was completely unknown in western Europe, but remained the official language of the Byzantine empire. During this time both portions of the former Roman empire contained many monasteries in which the monks were required to do a certain amount of work each day. One way to fulfill this work requirement was to copy manuscripts. In the western monasteries Latin manuscripts, including the Latin Bible, were copied and recopied by the monks. In the Byzantine monasteries Greek manuscripts were copied, including copies of the Greek Bible. Some of these scribes were greatly interested in what they were copying, but to others the copying was merely an assigned task. In the course of copying,