

## What is the difference between the critical text and received text?

Most people have a preferred bible version. Some prefer a relatively new translation, others a paraphrase bible and others prefer a historically older translation. Most bible translations of the current modern era come from the “Critical Text” while the King James family of bibles comes from the “Received Text”.

### 1. What is the “critical text”?

The “Critical Text” is a collection of Greek New Testament texts that have been selected by scholars (primarily Brooke Foss Westcott & Fenton J. A. Hort) as being those documents that most accurately resemble the original manuscripts written by the Apostles. The selection of the preferred text to comprise the Critical Text was based upon a series of rules including: A) Less likely original if it shows a disposition to smooth away difficulties. B) Document is considered to be of greater quality rather than number of supporting documents. C) Best explains the existence of other readings. D) Makes the best sense (grammar, congruous with purpose of the sentence and larger context). E) Shorter reading over longer reading. The first gathering of the Critical Text occurred around 1881. Over time the manuscripts that comprised the Critical Text would change. The majority of the Critical Text comes from two documents “Codex Vatacanus” and “Codex Sinaiticus”.

### 2. What is the “received text”?

The “Received Text” is the collection of Greek New Testament texts that were used during the Reformation period as the base documents for the various vernacular translations. The primary gathering of the Received Text took place at about 1456. The primary printing took place in 1516 lead by Erasmus. It is the Received Text that was used in the translation of the King James, New King James, and Modern King James versions of the Bible. From a historical perspective, the Received Text is also the base for the Geneva Bible, Tyndale's New Testament, Youngs Literal Version, Darby Bible, Modern English Version among several others. The differences between the majority of ancient texts (Majority Text) and the Received Text is about 1000 textual differences. The difference between the Received Text and the Critical Text is about 3000 textual differences.

### 3. What are the most common textual differences?

Galatians **3:23** (spelling difference)                      Acts **19:4** (Christ Jesus vs Jesus)  
2 Corinthians **4:5** (word order change)

Many of the differences are insignificant, such as spelling, word order or a type of redundancy. These textual differences do not raise questions about authenticity nor about Christian Doctrine.

### 4. What are some of the more significant textual differences?

1 Timothy <b>3:16</b> (he or God?)	Matthew <b>5:44</b> (dealing with those against you)
Matthew <b>9:13</b> (called to what?)	Matthew <b>18:11</b> (Why did Jesus come?)
Luke <b>2:33</b> (Who and mother?)	Luke <b>4:4</b> (by bread and?)

Romans **16:24** (what ending?)

Romans 8:1

Sometimes a change in one or two letters can make a big difference in the understanding of doctrine. Sometimes the existence or missing text can make a difference in understanding. Some of these differences raise questions about authenticity and some directly deal with Christian Doctrines such as the deity of Christ.

5. As a result of these differences what should we do?

Acts **17:11**

Mark **14:56**

1 Timothy **1:4-5**

Titus **3:9**

Since the Bible is about Jesus, consider what the different biblical texts say about Jesus. Look into the agreement and disagreement between the texts (it is reported that the two primary Critical Text documents disagree with each other more than they disagree with the Received Text). For the most part, don't get caught up in the arguments about the various text forms since all they do is generate arguments and questions. Commit yourself to the Bible and believe and trust what is written. For the most part, the differences are not significant enough to cause a denial of Christ and His work. One interesting read is [http://www.the-gospel.org/stdy\\_hmntcs/kjv\\_vs\\_niv.php](http://www.the-gospel.org/stdy_hmntcs/kjv_vs_niv.php)