New Testament Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings 7th edition Ehrman Test Bank

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Exam Questions

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Chapter 1

Essays

1. Compare and contrast the views of God, Jesus, and salvation held by two of the following groups: adoptionists, Marcionites, Gnostics.

2. Describe the process of the canonization of the New Testament. When might it have begun? When did it end? What factors were involved in choosing its books?

3. In what ways did the proto-orthodox Christians agree with adoptionists, Marcionites, and Gnostics?

4. RESOLVED: Early Christianity was essentially unified in belief. Pick a side of this resolution and argue for it using as many specific examples from the text as possible. Keep in mind that the most persuasive arguments anticipate (and answer) counterarguments.

5. A variety of Christian groups, some of which were subsequently labeled "heretical," used the books of the New Testament. How did the process of canonization limit possible interpretations of these books and make them acceptable to orthodox Christians?

True/False

*1. Revelation is an example of a Christian apocalypse.
T F

2. The book of Acts is attributed to Paul.
T F

3. The Nag Hammadi library features writings from the Marcionites.
T F

*4. The earliest surviving Christian literature is written in Hebrew.

T F

*5. According to some Gnostics, the Old Testament God was evil.
T F

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Multiple Choice

*1. Which early Christian group believed in two Gods: the just God of the Old Testament and the merciful God of Jesus?
a) Gnostics
b) Proto-orthodox Christians
c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
d) Marcionites

*2. What does the term "heresy" mean?
a) Evil
b) To choose
c) To reject
d) To agree with

3. What is the name of a collection of second-century proto-orthodox writings?
a) Nag Hammadi Library
b) New Testament
c) Pentateuch
d) Apostolic Fathers

*4. The term "canon" means:
a) Orthodox
b) Heretical
c) Authoritative
d) Ruler

5. How many books are there in the New Testament?
a) Twenty-five
b) Twenty-six
c) Twenty-seven
d) Twenty-eight

6. What Christian group lived in Palestine and taught that Christians should keep the Law?
a) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
b) Gnostics
c) Marcionites
d) Proto-orthodox

7. According to the Jewish-Christian adoptionists, Jesus was:
a) God
b) Moses
c) A man
d) A phantasm

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8. According to Marcion, the Jewish Law:
    a) Was good
    b) Did not bring salvation
    c) Continued to be binding after Jesus' death
    d) Didn't exist

*9. What does the term "gnosis" mean?
    a) Knowledge
    b) Salvation
    c) Savior
    d) Choice

*10. Which of the following groups thought it was blasphemy to call Jesus God?
    a) Marcionites
    b) Gnostics
    c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
    d) Proto-orthodox Christians

11. Gnostics believed which of the following brought salvation?
    a) Jesus' death
    b) Jesus' resurrection
    c) Knowledge
    d) Martyrdom

12. Jewish Christians thought which of the following was a heretic?
    a) Jesus
    b) Paul
    c) Matthew
    d) Peter

13. The Marcionites particularly liked which of the following apostles?
    a) Paul
    b) Peter
    c) James
    d) Mary

14. The Marcionites used a form of which Gospel?
    a) *Thomas*
    b) John
    c) Mark
    d) Luke

15. The Jewish-Christian adoptionists used a version of which of the following books?
    a) Romans
    b) Acts

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c) Revelation
d) Matthew

*16. The Marcionites believed Jesus came to save people from
a) Sin
b) The Jewish God
c) Rome
d) Paul

17. Which of the following thought Jesus' body was a phantasm?
a) The Apostolic Fathers
b) Marcionites
c) Jewish-Christian adoptionists
d) Nehemiah

18. Which of the following is not a designation for the Jewish canon?
a) Old Testament
b) Judaism
c) Hebrew Bible
d) Jewish Scriptures

19. Second-century Jewish Christians taught that every Jewish law had to be observed *except*:
a) Circumcision
b) Kosher food laws
c) Observing the Sabbath
d) Animal sacrifice

20. Jewish-Christian adoptionists believed that Jesus was "adopted" by God at his:
a) Birth
b) Death
c) Trial
d) Baptism

21. Some Gnostics believed that which of the following happened at Jesus' baptism?
a) He was adopted.
b) He illustrated that baptism brought salvation.
c) The divine Christ entered Jesus' body.
d) Nothing

*22. The Nag Hammadi Library was written in what language?
a) Coptic
b) Hebrew
c) Aramaic
d) Greek

23. The word "gospel" means:

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a) Life
b) Good news
c) Divine writing
d) Salvation

*24. The word “epistle” means:
a) Biography
b) Letter
c) Conversation
d) Right choice

25. How many books in the New Testament claim to be written by Paul?
a) Thirteen
b) Ten
c) Eight
d) Five

*26. At the end of what century did Christians begin to call Jesus’ words Scripture?
a) The first century B.C.E.
b) The first century C.E.
c) The second century C.E.
d) The fifth century C.E.

27. Who established the first canon?
a) Marcion
b) Gnostics
c) Proto-orthodox Christians
d) Paul

28. Which of the following was not a criterion for canonicity?
a) Antiquity
b) Apostolicity
c) Orthodoxy
d) Historical accuracy

*29. In what year did Athanasius name the current twenty-seven books of the New Testament as authoritative?
a) 150 C.E.
b) 288 C.E.
c) 367 C.E.
d) 432 C.E.

30. This second-century figure established a canon consisting of some of Paul’s letters along with an edited version of the Gospel of Luke.
a) Athanasius
b) Valentinus

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c) Clement of Alexandria
d) Marcion

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Chapter 2

Essays

1. Some manuscripts of Luke report that when Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple when he was twelve, Mary said, "Your father and I have been searching for you," while others read, "We have been searching for you." Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?

2. Many scholars do not believe we can ever be certain that we possess the exact words of the New Testament authors. What arguments might they give to substantiate this claim?

3. Write a letter to a family member and explain to him or her the criteria used to determine the original text of the New Testament. How do these criteria help in this determination? What shortcomings do they have?

4. How are the books of our modern Bibles related to the original manuscripts? Explain how a book of the Bible was transmitted after the original document was written and what scholars and translators of the Bible have to consider when preparing a modern version.

5. Some manuscripts of Mark report that when a leper asked Jesus for healing, "Jesus became angry," while others read, "Jesus was filled with compassion." Which of these do you think represents the more original passage? Why?

True/False

1. Verse divisions didn't exist in the Bible until the 1500s.
T F

*2. There are more differences between the manuscripts of the New Testament than there are words in the New Testament.
T F

*3. We do not have the original copy of any New Testament book.
T F

4. Most of the differences between New Testament manuscripts were the result of intentional changes by scribes.
T F

*5. Earlier scribes who copied the New Testament were more precise than later ones.
T F

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Multiple Choice

1. Our earliest reasonably complete copy of the Gospel of John dates to around:
    a) 50 C.E.
    b) 90 C.E.
    c) 200 C.E.
    d) 300 C.E.

2. We currently possess about how many fragments and copies of New Testament texts?
    a) Sixty thousand
    b) One hundred
    c) Six hundred
    d) Six thousand

*3. Which of the following represents an intentional scribal error?
    a) Changing the text to fit doctrine
    b) Misspelling words
    c) Repeating words, verses, or pages
    d) Skipping words, verses, or pages

4. Our earliest surviving New Testament manuscript, P^{52}, is
    a) A reliable witness of the original text of Paul's letters
    b) Datable to the 1st century C.E.
    c) The size of a credit card
    d) Evidence of adoptionist Christian theology

5. Which of the following is *not* a criterion used by scholars to determine the original text of the New Testament?
    a) Geographical spread
    b) Age of manuscripts
    c) Difficulty of reading
    d) Orthodox reading

6. Which of the following is *least* helpful in establishing the original text of the New Testament?
    a) Geographical spread
    b) Number of manuscripts
    c) Age of manuscripts
    d) Difficulty of reading

7. The story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery (John 7:59–8:11) is:
    a) An original part of the Gospel of John
    b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of John by the author of John
    c) Not an original part of any Gospel
    d) A pagan parable

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8. In the story from Mark of the women who find Jesus' tomb empty and are instructed by a young man (or angel) to go tell Peter and the other disciples (Mark 16), the last twelve verses were:

a) Added to the Gospel of Mark by a scribe
b) An original part of the Gospel of Mathew that was later inserted into the Gospel of Mark by the author of Mark
c) An original part of the Gospel of Mark
d) A pagan parable

*9. In the story of Jesus in the last minutes before his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43–44), the account of his "sweating blood" while contemplating his imminent suffering is most likely:

a) An original part of the Gospel of Luke
b) An original part of the Gospel of Mark that was later inserted into the Gospel of Luke by the author of Luke
c) Not an original part of any Gospel
d) An insertion from a letter of Paul.

*10. What is the style of writing called that leaves out punctuation, capitalization, paragraph divisions, sentence divisions, and spaces between words?

a) *Scriptio ad absurdum*
b) *Scriptio continua*
c) *Grammatica elimination*
d) *Grammatica ad absurdum*

11. Give a Biblical example of parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton.

a) "I do not ask that you keep them from the," an omission of the next line that ended in the same six words, then a continuation of the text with "evil one"
b) "lastnightatthedinnertableisawabundanceonthetable"
c) "Let this cup before me," with an insertion ("pass") between "cup" and "me"
d) The addition of the last twelve verses of Mark

12. When did scribes begin to make chapter-like divisions in books of the New Testament?

a) The first century
b) The nineteenth century
c) The seventeenth century
d) The fourth century

13. Who was the University of Paris lecturer who introduced the major divisions into the Latin Bible in the thirteenth century?

a) Robert Stephanus
b) Thucydides
c) Steven Langton
d) Valentinus

*14. Who created the verse divisions that we have today?

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a) Robert Stephanus
b) Thucydides
c) Steven Langton
d) Valentinus

*15. What is the earliest surviving manuscript of the New Testament to date?
a) The entirety of Revelation
b) A fragment of the Gospel of Mark
c) The last five chapters of 1 Peter
d) A fragment of the Gospel of John

16. Which of the following is a criterion for establishing the original text of a writing?
a) Establishing whether it was written by a proto-orthodox Christian or a heretic
b) The age of the manuscripts
c) Determining whether the original text was a forgery.
d) Conformity with orthodox doctrines.

17. Criteria for establishing the original text of a writing do *not* include:
a) Conformity with the norms of the culture in which it was written
b) The distribution of the manuscripts
c) The difficulty of the reading
d) Conformity with the author's own language, style, and theology

*18. New Testament manuscripts do *not*:
a) Contain many mistakes
b) Have many centuries separating the events written about and the events themselves
c) Have any inaccuracies
d) Contain exact word-for-word copies of the texts that were originally produced by ancient Christian authors

*19. By what means have early Christian truth claims been handed down from one generation to the next?
a) Orally
b) Written texts
c) Lifestyles
d) All of the above

*20. How many original copies of books of the New Testament do we have?
a) Three fragments
b) One entire book and one fragment of another
c) None
d) All of them

*21. Most copies of New Testament manuscripts come from what time period?
a) The Middle Ages
b) The Age of Enlightenment

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c) The Golden Age
d) The Bronze Age

22. Which event is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?
a) Mary's song
b) Jesus' ascension
c) Peter's denial of Jesus
d) Judas' kiss

23. Which saying of Jesus is found in some copies of the Gospel of Luke but not in others?
a) "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
b) "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."
c) "You will be called Peter."
d) "I had to be in my Father's house."

24. Which doctrine is not explicitly found in the earliest manuscripts of the Bible but was inserted into it by some later scribes?
a) Salvation by works
b) Jesus' divinity
c) The virgin birth
d) The Trinity

*25. What is the name of the academic discipline devoted to the study of ancient manuscripts to determine the most likely earliest readings?
a) Historical criticism
b) Redaction criticism
c) Literary criticism
d) Textual criticism

26. What is the approximate date of our earliest complete copy of the Gospel of Luke?
a) 125 C.E.
b) 175 C.E.
c) 250 C.E.
d) 350 C.E.

27. Which of the following represents the most common difference among Biblical manuscripts?
a) Doctrinal changes
b) Harmonizations
c) Differences in spelling
d) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton

28. Which of the following might account for an accidental omission in a manuscript?
a) Gnostic Christian doctrine
b) Parablepsis occasioned by homoeoteleuton
c) Amanuensis
d) *Lectio dificilior*

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29. Which of the following indicates a reading is most likely earlier than other options?
    a) It is a more difficult reading.
    b) It occurs in the most manuscripts.
    c) It is found in more recent manuscripts.
    d) It is doctrinally orthodox.

30. The earliest copyists of the New Testament were:
    a) Trained scribes
    b) Monks
    c) Priests
    d) Untrained but literate

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Exam Answers

New Testament Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings 7th edition Ehrman Test Bank

Chapter 1

Essays

1. Adoptionists were strict monotheists who believed that the Jewish God created the earth and gave humans the Law. According to these Christians, Jesus was a righteous man who was adopted by God at his baptism. At that time, Jesus was empowered to perform miracles and to preach God's word. Salvation came from Jesus' death as a willing atoning sacrifice.

   Marcionites were ditheists: they believed that the Old Testament God (the God of the Jews) was just, and that the New Testament God (the God of Jesus) was forgiving. Jesus was sent from the forgiving God to save people from the Jewish God. Jesus was not affiliated with the Creator-God, and therefore he could not have a flesh-and-bone body. Marcionites, then, adhered to a docetic Christology.

   Gnostics were polytheists. For this group of Christians, the Creator-God—the God of the Jews—was evil; he created the world in order to imprison the divine spark. Gnostics believed that knowledge (gnosis) set this divine element free and returned it to the heavenly realm. In Gnostic Christianity, Jesus was the teacher who brought this saving knowledge from the true God.

2. The New Testament books were written between 50 and 120 C.E. By the end of the first century, Christians were calling Jesus' and Paul's words Scripture. Throughout the second, third, and even fourth centuries, Christians debated which books should be included in the canon. There were three primary criteria for inclusion: the books had to be ancient, they had to be written by an apostle, and they had to be accepted among proto-orthodox congregations as reflecting orthodox belief. It was not until 367 C.E. that the twenty-seven books of the modern Christian canon were listed as authoritative Scripture.

3. The proto-orthodox believed (like the Jewish Christians) that Jesus was fully human *and* (like Marcionites and Gnostics) that he was fully divine (like Marcionites and Gnostics). They believed that Jesus taught salvation, but they disagreed with Gnostics that Jesus' teachings were secret and accessible to only a select group of people. In sum, the proto-orthodox believed that Jesus was one being, not two, both human and divine. They believed that Jesus taught his disciples the truth and these followers, in turn, recorded Jesus' teachings and passed them on to others. According to these Christians, a straightforward reading of Scripture reveals the truth necessary for salvation.

4. Students should discuss the varieties of Christianities presented in this chapter: Jewish Christians, Marcionites, and Gnostics. There are certainly similarities within these groups (regarding, e.g., the importance of Jesus and the production of texts), but there are also striking differences concerning the nature of Jesus, God, and salvation.

5. Although "heretical" groups used texts that were eventually placed in the canon (among them are Matthew, John, and Paul's letters), once a group of texts is canonized, those books are no longer read as freestanding texts with their own individual emphases and

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Christologies/theologies. Rather, when these books are placed into one book, the New Testament, they are intended to be read together and to shed light on one another. The reader of the New Testament, then, is supposed to read, for example, the Gospel of John in light of the Gospel of Matthew. The juxtaposition of texts containing different views bars a reader from moving too far in one doctrinal direction.

True/False

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. F
5. T

Multiple Choice

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. D
5. C
6. A
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. C
11. C
12. B
13. A
14. D
15. D
16. B
17. B
18. B
19. D
20. D
21. C
22. A
23. B
24. B
25. A
26. B
27. A
28. D
29. C
30. D

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Chapter 2

Essays

1. The second reading ("We have been searching for you") may reflect a proto-orthodox scribe's concern that a reader might misinterpret "your father" as an affirmation of Joseph as Jesus' father, and thus a denial of Jesus' divinity.

2. The students' discussion might include (*a*) the lack of autographs, (*b*) the age of the earliest manuscripts, (*c*) the nature of ancient textual transmission, and (*d*) types of scribal errors.

3. Students should discuss the six criteria for establishing the original text.
   a. *The Number of Witnesses*. This criterion looks at how many extant manuscripts have the same reading. This criterion used alone can be misleading because a number of manuscripts may stem from one later source while a reading that occurs fewer times may represent an earlier reading.
   b. *The Age of the Witnesses*. This criterion suggests that the oldest manuscripts are more reliable because they have been, as a rule, subjected to fewer changes.
   c. *The Quality of the Witnesses*. A manuscript that contains a number of errors is less reliable than a manuscript that contains few errors.
   d. *The Geographical Spread of the Witnesses*. A reading that occurs in only one area may be a regional reading; a reading that is found throughout the empire is probably closer to the original.
   e. *The Difficulty of the Reading*. Scribes are more likely to have smoothed out a reading than to have made it more difficult.
   f. *Conformity with the Author's Own Language, Style, and Theology*. A reading that does not fit with an author's overall theology is likely to reflect a scribal change.

4. Students should observe that modern Bibles are translations of much later copies of Biblical manuscripts. After an original manuscript was penned by the author or his scribe, the book was copied and recopied by hand over many years, with scribes making numerous unintentional and intentional changes to the wording at each level of transmission. Modern scholars apply the criteria of textual criticism to attempt to reconstruct the earliest possible readings, from which modern translations are made.

5. The second reading ("Jesus was filled with compassion") may reflect a proto-orthodox scribe's concern about portraying Jesus as "angry," implying that Jesus was hot-tempered and lacking compassion, while it is unlikely a scribe would change "compassion" to "anger."

True/False

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. F

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5. F

Multiple Choice

1. C	9. C	17. A	25. D
2. D	10. B	18. D	26. D
3. A	11. A	19. D	27. C
4. C	12. D	20. C	28. B
5. D	13. C	21. A	29. A
6. B	14. A	22. B	30. D
7. C	15. D	23. A	
8. A	16. B	24. D	

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