

[A Tale of Two Constantines: Rethinking Codex Sinaiticus, Part 1](#)

Background & the Shepard of Hermas

Transcript

Pastor Bryan Ross

[Grace Life Bible Church](#), Grand Rapids, MI

June 4, 2017

If you would, find Mark 16. I don't even know what to call this because on Facebook I just titled it "Something Strange about Codex Sinaiticus", and for now that's basically what I'm calling it, but look at Mark 16.

In my bible, if you look at verse 8, *"And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid."*

And then I have a notation on the beginning of verse 9 (Roman Numeral #1 in the Scofield Reference Bible, and that takes me down to a footnote [which says]: "The passage from verse 9 to the end is not found in the two most ancient manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, and others have it with partial omissions in variation, but it is quoted by Euraneus Hoplitae in the second or third century.

The reason I had you go there first is because the footnote and the removal of the passage from verse 9 to verse 20 in some modern versions – most modern versions will not remove it altogether. They will offset it somehow with a line or some sort of offsetting that will indicate then with a footnote that they don't believe that the passage should be there; and one of the reasons they don't believe the passage should be there is because the two so-called oldest and best manuscripts don't have from verse 9 to verse 20 in them.

I have called up here on the screen [2:06], this is <http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/> . I'll say a little more about that in a minute, but I do want to show you what I'm talking about here; I'm going to Mark 16 and I want to show you on the screen what I'm talking about. This is a digitized image of Mark 16. Actually, go to Luke 1. I want you to see visually why that footnote says that.

This is the end of Mark 16 [pointing to screen], verse 8, this is Codex Sinaiticus. Here's the beginning of Luke. You see this blank spot right here? This blank spot is where you would have enough space for verse 9 – 20. So that footnote in the Scofield Reference Bible was saying that verse 9 – 20 shouldn't be in there in part because they're not in that manuscript; never mind the fact that they're in virtually every other manuscript that we have, and that the church fathers quote them as early as the 2nd or 3rd century. So based on the authority in part of this particular Codex some are saying these verses shouldn't even be there.

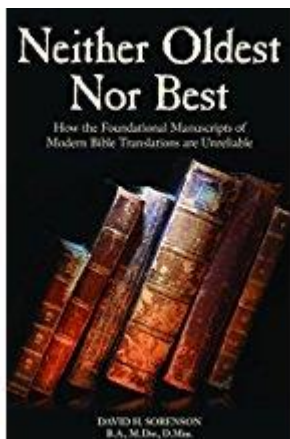
Let me show you another thing. Come over to Matthew 5. These are just some very basic things and my notes are not like they normally are; I just have handwritten stuff to myself to remind myself to talk about certain things.

Look at Matthew 5:22. In the KJB it says, “*but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause...*”. Modern versions leave out the phrase *without a cause*. The reasons they leave that phrase out is because it is not found in Codex Sinaiticus. So on the basis of one lone witness, even Codex Vaticanis has the phrase in Greek (*without a cause*) in it; so they are leaving that phrase out of the modern versions of the English Bible based upon the witness of Codex Sinaiticus.

They’re making wholesale changes to the text in some cases based upon the witness of only one codex – Codex Sinaiticus.

What I want to do today is talk to you more informally and have an informal discussion about the age and the antiquity of Codex Sinaiticus. My point in starting with talking about Mark 16 and Matthew 5 is just to give you the understanding that what we’re going to talk about has a direct impact on what you have in front of you in English. So this is not just some obscure Greek thing that doesn’t impact or have a relationship with anything in the English bible; so there are decisions that are being made to leave stuff out or exclude certain portions or parts of verses based upon one codex alone.

The first thing I want to do is talk to you a little about my personal history with this. Today is June 4 [2017]. Becky went in for her surgery on April 3, so basically two months ago she went in for surgery, that’s when I had Spring Break. Just before Spring Break I saw an advertisement for a book on the Internet called *Neither Oldest nor Best* by Dr. David Sorenson.



I’m thinking that looks interesting; it just came out in 2017, I mean this thing was hot of the press and I really had no idea necessarily what the book was about but I know that we’d been studying things about the KJB and this seemed like a relevant thing to read and it was relatively short and I thought I could read it during the timeframe that Becky was recuperating.

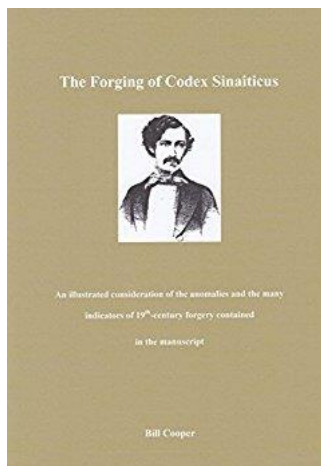
I ordered one and it came the Sunday before she went in for surgery, so when we went to the hospital that day I took this book with me and I started reading it while I was waiting for her in surgery and recovery. I finished it in two days and when I first started reading it I could not believe – because I really didn’t know what was in it – I knew it was going to say they were neither oldest nor best but I didn’t really think too much about what might be in it. But as I started to read it I was blown away because what he was saying was that Codex Sinaiticus was a 19th Century creation, that it wasn’t old, that it was written by a guy named Constantine Simonides in 1840 and that it had been sort of foisted upon the academic world and that the entire Codex was a fraud.

I went to Bible College and I learned all about textual criticism, critical theory and so forth, and I also learned from Brother Jordan the pro KJB theories, etc., but I had never encountered the idea that the Codex itself was not an ancient Codex and that it was a modern creation. So at first when I'm reading this I'm like, "Yeah, right."

I'm very skeptical and by the time I was done with it by the second day I was sitting there scratching my head thinking, "Ok, I think there might be something to this", so as soon as I finished it I got on the phone and I called Dave Reid and I said, "Dave, you need to order this book and you need to read it and you need to pick it apart from the point of view of a lawyer. I want you to cross examine it and I want you to pick it apart from the point of view of a lawyer."

So Dave got a copy of the book and within a week he had read it, so we had both read it and we began discussing what was in it. The next thing we did was we starting pilfering the footnotes and the bibliography of this book and we found our way to some other things too.

The second thing is a Kindle book – it's only available in Kindle [now also in paperback], and it's called *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus* by a guy named William Cooper.



So we read that next and starting discussing it. Then we found our way to, this was written in 1983, *Codex Sinaiticus and the Constantine Simonides Affair*.



By J. K. Elliott

The point is, as you start down this trail you start realizing that this is not just some crackpot King James Only scheme that has been invented within the last two years, but the authenticity and antiquity of Codex was something that was actually debated for a period of three to four years in the British Journals in the 1860's.

I have printouts from one theological journal from Britain from 1859 to 1864 announcing the discovery of Codex Sinaiticus by Tischendorf in 1859, and then in 1862, 63 and 64 a robust discussion in the British newspapers and theological journals of whether or not the Codex was in fact actually ancient.

It was wholly unknown to me before April 1, but it is not something that is just made up and of recent origin as far as a discussion point by people that support the KJB; this was an actual debate of things going on.

So in addition to reading these three books I have assembled in two months all this information and data that you see up here on the podium [10:41], plus a whole bunch more in an online drop box folder that Dave Reid and I are sharing. So the amount of information and relevant data that's out there on this has been completely astounding to me that we've been able to make the kind of headway that we've been able to make in the timeframe that we've made it.

I have to also give credit not only to the three books that I just mentioned, and by the way, the book here by Elliott, *Codex Sinaiticus and the Constantine Simonides Affair*, this one is very anti-Simonides – that he was lying, he was a forger, that he wasn't telling the truth, and it is not favorable toward Simonides and the idea that it was created in 1840.

But in addition to that there is a video that was put out in 2013 [was actually in 2012] by a guy named Chris Pinto, and this video is on YouTube, it's about 3 hours long, it's called *Tares among the Wheat*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aiHcghIdjM&list=PLRtGho9zZ7AurO7WA6VrpZ_KMJ7jkmQlw&index=2

He kind of is the one through this video [who] got a discussion going about this. Subsequent to the video Chris Pinto debated James White. So I've watched Chris Pinto's video, I've listened to the debate between James White and Chris Pinto about this topic, I've read Chris Pinto's follow-up, I've listened to James White's follow-up, and I've also listened to Dr. Daniel Wallace's video on Codex Sinaiticus; and in addition to that, as a result of Chris Pinto's video *Tares Among the Wheat* in 2013 [2012], David W. Daniels from Chick Publications has done a series of 36 vlogs on the Chick Publications YouTube page talking about something strange about Codex Sinaiticus:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVjOhDJ5HKO&list=PLdD7_B3zweu2WfDTeyQuCJqzcO9eYQ-BQ

And in addition to that there's a researcher named Steven Avery who has a group page on Facebook and he also has a discussion forum where these matters are being discussed. So I say all that to say that this is like a real thing that is being discussed right now, this is not just some goofy thing.

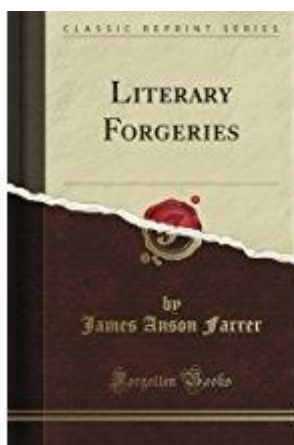
One of the reasons why I think that this has become an issue again is because in 2009 the British Library decided to digitize the entire Codex, so they took high resolution digital photographs of Codex Sinaiticus

and they published them online. Now what this did frankly is it allowed people, scholars and so forth, who had never actually seen the Codex, to actually look at it themselves. Up to this point most people were using facsimile reprints – they had never actually seen the actual Codex itself.

So this happens in 2009 and in 2013 [2012] Chris Pinto releases his video *Tares among the Wheat* and this whole thing starts percolating a discussion and research has penetrated pretty deep into this particular topic.

The idea that Codex Sinaiticus is not a 4th Century ancient codex – again, it's not some crackpot King James Only theory – this is something that was debated heavily, and as I've already shown you, this [1-inch stack of papers] is just from one journal, this is *The Journal of Sacred Literature in the Biblical Record*. There was a newspaper called *The Guardian*. There was another thing called *The Literary Churchmen*. There was at least one other paper/periodical that was debating back and forth whether or not Tischendorf was telling the truth or whether or not Constantine Simonides was telling the truth and I'll say more about those guys in a minute.

So there was the robust public debate in the British press, and then a different scholar in 1907 wrote a book called [*Literary Forgeries*](#) – James A. Farrer:



He's got an entire Chapter in this book about Constantine Simonides and the Codex Sinaiticus and he concludes the following: "The question therefore pending regarding how old the Codex is, pending the acquisition of further evidence, must remain among the interesting but unsolved mysteries of literature."

So even a guy like James Farrer after evaluating all the data from the 1860's, all he could say is that it's undecided barring the discovery of further information. So I'm sharing that with you to let you know that the stuff I'm going to go over here is not necessarily new information as far as its availability. I think it is new in the sense that a new discussion and a debate has arisen, and I think largely due to the digitizing of the Codex and putting it online where people could now actually see it.

Q: What is a codex?

A: A codex is basically a [ancient] word to refer to a book, which means it's not a scroll and it's not just loose piece of papyrus; it's a collection of quires that are put together under covers like a modern book would be – so it's an early form of a book. So, if you look at this page [from Codex on projector] you can

see here there is a crease where the previous leaf was; that's because a codex is made up of a whole bunch of different quires.

If you look up here [17:06] you can see that you can list the quire, that's a set of pages that are stitched together, and then the folio – the individual leaves within that particular quire. So, the codex is a collection of leaves which make quires which make the whole codex, so it's a form of a book.

Q: How was it originally dated?

A: They date it based upon what is called paleography, basically the study of ancient handwriting.

So Tischendorf finds it and he says that based upon the style of the handwriting and different features, this has to be a 4th Century codex. I should add that it has never been tested scientifically. They had a test scheduled where they were going to have the Codex tested forensically to try to determine the age of the parchment and the ink and all that sort of business and the test was cancelled. They never went through with the test. The British Museum had it all lined up and then they never go through with the test.

What I'm more interested in doing here is dealing with facts and not speculation. The reason I say that is I think that some of these books are far too speculative. They want to see Jesuit conspiracies and all this sort of thing hiding under every rock and so what they've done is they've sort of clouded up the facts of the case and made it easy for people like James White to kind of concentrate on the conspiratorial aspect and say this is crazy, look at this conspiracy theory, blah, blah, blah, and never really deal with the facts of the case.

So as I've thought about this and as Dave Reid and I have discussed it, what we have decided is more important is to focus on the facts and then worry about how you might explain the facts after we've laid out the facts. Does that make sense? Because otherwise you get all bogged down in all this stuff that you can't prove. It's better to start with what you can prove and therefore try to figure out how to explain what you can prove then to come up with some sort of theory out of the gate and lose everybody from the outset.

Q: The age of it is only a minor portion of whether we consider it....

A: That's a great point. I meant to say that and I forgot. It doesn't matter to me how old it is because I already rejected it as a witness, based upon the principles that we established in this class, based upon the principles of availability and the fact that it's in use, or the fact that it wasn't in use, and the idea of the multiplicity of copies – those three principles that we established – it doesn't matter to me whether it's a 4th Century codex or whether it's a 19th Century codex, I reject the readings in it based upon a scriptural evaluation of the Codex itself.

That being said, if it is in fact not what they said it was this would be catastrophic to the critical theory. I've already rejected the critical theory based upon scriptural principles before I ever read any of this stuff so I don't need it to be a certain age to know that I would never accept it as the preserved text.

Let's talk about a couple of facts. First of all it's a codex; that means it's a book. These are facts about Codex Sinaiticus – it includes some of the OT; it has a complete NT. In addition it includes NT

apocrypha books – it includes the epistle of Barnabas and the Shepard of Hermas. The entire Codex is not known to have existed until 1844.

I'm going to try to draw some stuff out here in the form of a crude timeline. In 1844 Constantine Von Tischendorf goes to St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai and he reports to find what he calls a rubbish bin in the middle of the library of the Monastery that the monks are setting aside to burn stuff as kindling for the fire that they're burning to warm the Monastery. He finds what he thinks is an ancient codex and he asks the monks if he can take it and they say no. I'm making a very complicated story as simple as I can.

He leaves with 43 leaves [43 folia = 86 pages] of the Codex in 1844 and he takes them to Leipzig, Germany [because] the Germans have financed this trip so he's got to bring something back to the dudes who are financing the trip, so he brings them back and these 43 leaves become known as CFA (Codex Frederico-Augustanus); he names it after the guy who had financed the trip who is basically the leader of Germany at that particular time. So he discovers 43 leaves the first time in 1844.

He goes back again in 1853 and gets nothing, and then he goes back a third time in 1859 when he finds the remaining 315 leaves of the Codex and he takes them back and he takes them back with him to ultimately St. Petersburg, Russia.

This [43 leaves found in 1844] becomes known as CFA. This [315 leaves found in 1859] ultimately becomes known as Codex Sinaiticus. So he comes three times: he goes once in 1844 and gets the first 43 leaves; he goes the second time in 1853 and gets nothing; and he goes a third time in 1859 and discovers the rest of it and he basically (excuse me but) he lies to the monks and takes the thing back with him to St. Petersburg, Russia because the third time he goes he's going under the auspices of the Russian Czar and so he takes it back to St. Petersburg.

In the 1930's the British Museum purchased from the Soviet Union that was cash-strapped in the 1930's, the British Museum purchases the St. Petersburg portion and that's how it ends up in the British Museum.

I'll show you from the website that this process is a combination effort between the British Museum and the University of Leipzig. I'll go back to the home page [Codex Sinaiticus] and I'll show you what I'm talking about because it's important. See this right here – Partner Institutions: The British Library, The National Library of Russia, St. Catherine's Monastery and Leipzig University.

All the digitized images that you find at the website are the combined effort of all of these institutions. The reason for that is because part of it to this day is still in Leipzig, Germany (the first 43 leaves); the majority of it was in St. Petersburg before they sold it to the British in the 1930's.

So this is the standard story of Tischendorf, so nobody knows about the Codex at all until 1844; it is undiscovered, it's sitting in St. Catherine's Monastery since who knows how long until Tischendorf rediscovers it and then comes back in over 15-16 years later and gets the rest of it and then he publishes in the early 1860's (I think it's 1862) he's going to publish a facsimile of what's in the library in St. Petersburg. That's why The National Library of Russia is on here because he takes it to St. Petersburg first.

Q: Did he find it in [a stack to be burned]?

A: That's what he claims.

Q: So they decided not to burn it?

A: What he claims is that once the monks, that his asking about it raises their suspicion that it might be valuable. So they thought it was a worthless piece of trash according to Tischendorf, and they've got it in this collection bin waiting to burn it until he shows up, realizes it's this old ancient codex, asks about it, this arises the suspicions of the monks and then the monks don't really want him to take anything but he basically takes 43 leaves back to Leipzig, Germany. So now he knows it's there. So he comes in 1853, he doesn't find it and he comes in 1859 where he recovers the majority of the Codex.

Q: So he stole it, in other words.

A: I would say he stole it, and I will say this – even Dr. Daniel Wallace at Dallas Theological Seminary, as well as a host of other people at the time in the 1860's when this is being debated, thought he was lying about how he obtained it, so for me to say Tischendorf was not telling the truth is not a new idea either. There were many people even at the time that thought he was not telling the truth about how he obtained the Codex.

Where this gets interesting is in 1862 another Constantine named Constantine Simonides writes *The Guardian* newspaper in August, 1862 and says that what Tischendorf has discovered and what he is fixing to publish is not an ancient 4th Century codex, but that he, his uncle Benedict and a couple other monks created it in 1840 in Mt. Athos, Greece as an intended gift for the Czar of Russia who was the patronage of the Monastery Panteleimon on Mt. Athos, Greece. He writes to the British paper in August, 1862 and says, "What Tischendorf found is not old, I created it in 1840 in Mt. Athos, Greece with my uncle Benedict and a couple other people as an intended gift to the Czar of Russia in the hopes that the Czar of Russia would give to the Monastery a printing press."

So from 1862 for three years from 1862 to 1864 this becomes argued and debated in the British press, and that's what this is right here – this stack of stuff I showed you from the 1860's. So Simonides is claiming that it's not ancient.

I want to talk to you about some facts. I already told you two of the distinguishing features of this Codex are that they contain the epistle of Barnabas and the Shepard of Hermas in Greek. They are bound to the Codex; they are part of the Codex.

Go to See the Manuscript [on the website for Codex Sinaiticus] under Listed, and you can see that listed are Barnabas and Shepard of Hermas. Two of the distinguishing features of the Codex, bound hard to the Codex – what that means is included in it are a Greek copy of Barnabas and a Greek copy of the Shepard of Hermas. That's important.

I'm going to click on Hermas because I'm going to talk about that first. So this is the beginning of the Shepard of Hermas, this is the last thing that's found in the Codex so let me give you some facts about Hermas.

1. Shepard of Hermas is bound to the Codex, that means it was a part of what Tischendorf found in 1859.

2. That means it is of the same age and provenance. Provenance is a fancy word to say “place of origin or earliest known history.”

So that means that, like it or not for good or for bad, these two things are attached to that Codex. So they're bound to the Codex and they're of the same age and provenance as the rest of it. They are written on the same vellum and they are also written in the same ink, and they are also written in Modern Greek, i.e. medieval to 19th Century Greek. So some of the Greek words, and I'll go over this in a minute, contained in Hermas are not known to have existed in ancient Greek but they do exist in Modern Greek.

I wanted to say up here that this is an uncial codex which means that it is all capital letters, and I also wanted to say that it is written on vellum, which are animal skins not papyrus or something like that.

1855, now this is where it gets interesting, 1855-56 Simonides shows up in Leipzig, Germany with a Greek copy of Hermas. Has Tischendorf found it yet? No. So Simonides, the guy who later on [in the 1860s] is going to claim to have written Codex Sinaiticus in 1840, shows up in Leipzig, Germany in 1855 with a copy of Hermas in Greek. Before Simonides shows up no one had ever seen a Greek copy of Hermas before this point. What is known to have existed, it's known to have originated in Greek but the only copies that survived history were Latin copies of the Shepard of Hermas in various ages and conditions.

So they know that it was originally written in Greek, but no known Greek manuscript of the Shepard of Hermas had survived. In 1855-56 Simonides shows up in Leipzig, Germany with a copy of the Shepard of Hermas in Greek.

So what I'm basically going to say to you is that the smoking guns of the age of the Codex end up to be these apocryphal books right here. Let me explain further what I mean by that. As soon as Simonides shows up two German professors, Anger and Dindorf, set about producing a printed edition of the Shepard of Hermas in Greek along with a scholarly apparatus provided by Simonides. So they start the project of putting this thing in writing, this Greek copy of the Shepard of Hermas. He shows up in 1855 and it's actually published in 1856.

Our buddy Tischendorf starts observing it and he declares it to be a fake, not a copy of the original Greek, but a back translation from 14th Century Latin. So in 1856 Tischendorf says that the thing is a fake and a back translation from Latin. Tischendorf would have known what he was talking about on this point because his first claim to fame was he made a back translation of Jerome's Vulgate. He has already done this where he's taken a Latin thing and translated it back into Greek, so he would know, he would be able to identify “Latinisms” which would be instances where the Greek word was clearly a translation of a Latin word and Tischendorf would be able to recognize this because way back before he discovers anything he makes a translation of the Latin Vulgate from Latin into Greek. So he does basically the exact opposite of what Erasmus did in the 1500's, but that's a different topic. So he would have been able to spot these Latinisms pretty easily.

You understand the ultimate problem for Tischendorf. Because in 1856 he calls Simonides' copy of Hermas a fake, but in 1859 he discovers Codex Sinaiticus and what's in the Codex? A Greek Hermas. So in 1859 Tischendorf, when he finds Codex Sinaiticus it contains a Greek copy of Hermas that was practically identical with the one produced by Simonides in 1856. Now you see the problem here. He

wants the world to believe that what he's found is ancient. In what he found is a Greek copy of Hermas. The Greek copy of Hermas that's in Codex Sinaiticus is an almost identical match to the one Simonides published in 1856 which Tischendorf has already said is a fake. Uh-oh.

1864, the scholar James Donaldson writes a book called *A Critical History of Christian Literature and Doctrine*. In this book he's got an entire section where he is talking about the connection between the Greek Hermas found in Codex Sinaiticus and the one that Tischendorf has already pronounced to be a fake in 1856.

He says that the Hermas attached to Codex Sinaiticus is substantially the same as the Athos edition published by Simonides in 1856. So here's a scholar saying that they're virtually the same, and remember when he showed up in Germany no one had ever seen this before in Greek. Now it just so happens that that Greek matches nearly identically with the Greek that Tischendorf finds in 1859 and he later says that he wrote the Codex.

So Donaldson: The later origin of the Greek Hermas found in Codex Sinaiticus is betrayed by the following:

1. Words unknown to classical Greek but common in later Greek.
2. There are grammar issues that would indicate it is a Modern Greek grammar not an ancient Greek Grammar. (Donaldson talks about all of this in his book.)
3. It's not the Greek of the first five centuries of the Christian era.
4. Latinisms – the words that were translated from Latin.

So this is what Donaldson says at the bottom of page 310: "All these examples have been taken from the Sinaitic Greek but the arguments become 10-fold stronger if the Sinaitic Greek is to stand or fall with the Athos Greek and this must be for they are substantially the same."

He said that the Greek copy of Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus is substantially the same as the Greek copy of Hermas that was already published by Constantine Simonides in 1856. He says that whatever the arguments are for Codex Sinaiticus, that it is of recent origin or modern origin are magnified 10-fold when you compare them to the Greek of Hermas. That's what Donaldson's saying. And by the way, who's already said that it's a fake? Tischendorf.

So Donaldson is almost immediately attacked for saying the same things about the Hermas found in Codex Sinaiticus that Tischendorf said about Simonides' Hermas.

I don't have time to read all this to you but here it is – *The Saturday Review Politics, Literature, Science and Art*. This is from 1875 where they do a character assassination job on Donaldson for pointing out that the Greek is the same. So let me back up – Donaldson writes this one in 1864; in 1874 he updates it with new information including the epistle of Barnabas. The following year there's a character assassination in the British press on Donaldson for daring to question whether or not, for daring to point out the fact that there's a linkage in the Greek in Hermas between Simonides edition and the Codex Sinaiticus.

Why are they so mad about this in 1875? Because the Revision committee is already meeting and has already adopted Codex Sinaiticus as the most ancient complete bible in the history of the world, and is placing an extreme weight and authority on what it has to say, and here comes a guy saying, “Wait a minute, it’s not...”

So Donaldson’s pieces – the two right here [holding up papers], the one from 1864 and the expanded one from 1874 – they come at the time when the committee for the Revised Version has already begun meeting and working on the project and swapping out the Textus Receptus with this new critical text that’s being developed by Westcott and Hort.

Regarding the hit job on Donaldson,

1. No competent linguist or scholar ever challenged Donaldson’s analysis.
2. Instead he is personally attacked, most notably in *The Saturday Review*.

Donaldson’s review of the Codex Sinaiticus, of the Greek of Hermas, leads to the conclusion that the Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus was also a modern production along with the one produced by Simonides in 1856. So Donaldson is saying there is a linkage between these that you cannot avoid because of the grammar, because of the modern Greek words that are in there that aren’t found in ancient Greek, and also because of the Latinisms. Donaldson’s review leads to the conclusion that Hermas in Codex Sinaiticus was also a modern production along with Simonides’.

Now this is almost too much. Tischendorf is forced to back-peddle. He’s already said this is a fake, but now the same thing that’s here is in this [pointing to board 46:46]. If this is a fake and a modern creation but the exact same thing virtually is in this [Simonides’ Hermas] then what does it say about this [Codex Sinaiticus]? That this would also be a modern creation. So Tischendorf is now going to be forced to back-peddle on what he said about the Athos edition that Simonides published in 1856.

Tischendorf is forced to back-peddle in order to try to save his enterprise. He was forced to admit that Simonides’ Hermas of 1856 was in fact ancient, possibly even the original, after he’s already said it’s a fake; because he knows if he doesn’t do that what does that mean about this [Codex Sinaiticus]? That’s also a fake. So he totally reverses his course; he says that the edition of Simonides’ Hermas in 1856 was in fact ancient, possibly even the original, and he does this despite the modern characteristics and Latinisms that he himself had already identified. He already made the case for why it wasn’t ancient, and [was] a modern creation and now he’s reversing his whole opinion on that because he knows if he doesn’t this [Codex Sinaiticus] is going to be in trouble at least in pawning it off as an ancient codex.

He argues that Simonides’ Hermas had to be re-dated given the obvious antiquity of Codex Sinaiticus. So he says, “Well, we can see that this [Codex Sinaiticus] is clearly ancient but it matches this [Simonides’ Hermas], so therefore this must be ancient and I was wrong.” So Tischendorf argues that Simonides’ Hermas had to be re-dated given the obvious antiquity of the Codex. If it was found in Sinaiticus it couldn’t be modern and the entire academic world closed ranks around Tischendorf – Hort, Westcott, Tregelles – all those guys, they all closed ranks around Tischendorf and they never bring up the fact that he’s making these points.

Tischendorf's retraction was printed in Latin; now why would he do that? He printed it in Latin if he really didn't want anybody to read it. It's printed in Latin in an obscure German journal and so it's extremely difficult for anybody in the English-speaking world even to obtain much less read.

Now here's the ironic thing: Tischendorf had been correct on every point in criticizing Simonides. Donaldson demonstrates that in those two works I just showed you. Tischendorf had been correct on every point in critiquing Simonides's Hermas but he was forced to deny everything he had said in order to argue that the Greek of both Hermas' was in fact the original work.

Does everybody see why this is a slam-dunk deal for why this is odd? The very guy who finds it and says it's an ancient 4th Century codex had already in great detail demonstrated that Simonides' was not the original, that it was a modern creation, now discovers bound hard to Codex Sinaiticus is the exact same Greek of Hermas that he already declared to be a fake. So he retracts his position in Latin in an obscure German journal that virtually nobody could read. He'd been correct in every single thing that he had said about this but now he switches his argument and says this [Simonides' Hermas] has to be legitimate, this has to be ancient, because we all know this [Codex Sinaiticus] is ancient. It gets even better when we get to Barnabas.

I want to point out something. I've not said anything about who's doing what why and when. I'm just showing you what the facts of the case are. So the facts of the case seem to point that whoever had access to that Greek [points to board 52:10] already had access to it back here, and the guy that publishes the stand-alone copy is the guy who in 1862 says he wrote this [Codex Sinaiticus] all the way back there [1840].

Q: So why did Tischendorf back-track?

A: He's forced to back-track because if his critique of the Greek Hermas from 1856 is allowed to stand and he says it's a modern creation then the exact same arguments that were used to prove this [was] a modern creation from 1856 would have demonstrated this [Codex Sinaiticus] was also a modern creation, because the same readings that were found in this one [1856] were also found in this one [Codex Sinaiticus]. So Tischendorf has to back-track or else the exact same argumentation he used to call into question Simonides' edition from 1856 is going to overthrow this [Codex Sinaiticus] as also a modern creation.

Q: So where was the money?

A: When Tischendorf comes back with this thing, think about the adulation this guy gets for being the discoverer of the most ancient complete bible in the history of the world. He has commendations hailed upon him six ways from Sunday by the states of Europe for finding this thing and he becomes, not just Constantine Tischendorf, but he becomes Constantine Von Tischendorf, which is a German signification of royalty. So he has a lot at stake in this personally.

Do you ever watch these ghost hunter shows or the Big Foot show? You get a bunch of dudes, they go out in the middle of the night looking for Big Foot in the dark and every noise they hear has to be Big Foot, can't be anything else.

The one thing I didn't tell you is that the year before he finds anything at St. Catherine's Monastery in 1844, in 1843 he is called to the Vatican and is allowed to examine Codex Vaticanus under the supervision of Cardinal Mai; and then he goes on this world-wide adventure treasure hunt looking for ancient manuscripts. He finds something here that he thinks is significant, he takes 43 pages of it; he clearly comes back again a second time looking for it and he comes back a third time in 1859 trying to find it where he gets the rest of it. So the plot thickens on all this stuff. But it is an historical fact that he met with Cardinal Mai in 1843.

Who is this Simonides guy? Well, I have right here from 2014 a University of Vienna, an entire weekend conference on the escapades of Constantine Simonides – an entire weekend symposium at the University of Vienna from 2014 looking into the history and details of Constantine Simonides. This guy, in the Greek world, is something of a hero, almost a national hero because he also fought the Ottoman Turks as they were advancing on Greece, so he's really almost like an Indiana Jones type guy. That's kind of what he's like if I could compare it to something, and he's off doing all this stuff with ancient manuscripts, and I know I've only given you a little bit of the story, but what I want to do is focus on facts. Get the facts out and then talk about how we interpret these facts.