



[Christopher Shaw](#)

[March 22 at 4:03pm](#) · [Little Elm](#)

If you were preaching verse-by-verse through the Gospel of John, would you include John 7:53-8:11?

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[17Shane Peterson and 16 others](#)

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[Jordan Parks](#)



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[Michael Bush](#) Yes, I would include it.

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[Blake Johnson](#) Yes but I would mention of it not being in the earlier manuscripts.

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[Jacob Hammack](#) I find this position hard to accept myself. I wouldn't want to instill into my congregation any false notion that they can't trust the Bibles in their hands. Sheep are delicate and need lots of guidance. They're easily led astray. I would rather state my position on the text and preach based on thus position. That goes for any textual critical encounter.

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[John Ingram](#) The pastor at my former church did. The church only continued to grow afterward. I don't know of any trouble being caused by it. Here's the transcript if you want to see how it can be done well. <://92109d972930d0830937-532396e13776475c7f9304a3aa497940....>

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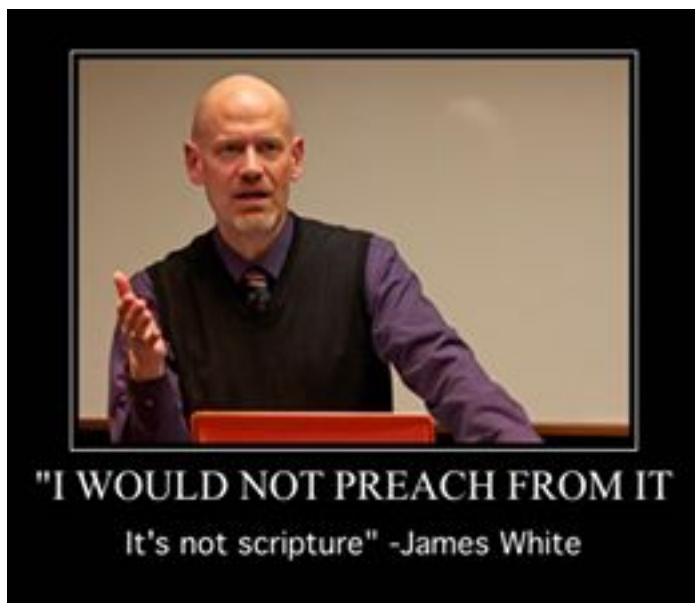


[Andrew Medford](#) No

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[Alexandre Sara Silvestre](#)



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[Alexandre Sara Silvestre](#)

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[Paul Barth](#) "Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the true faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if he who had said, Sin no more, had granted permission to sin."

- Augustine, De Adulterinis Conjugiis 2:6–7

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[Jordan Parks](#) Dang.

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[Paul Barth](#) But apparently modern liberal scholars know better than someone who lived contemporaneously with Codex Sinaiticus. Silly Augustine and his tin foil hat!

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[Christopher Shaw](#) Does this prove it's scripture, or that it's a story handed down through tradition?

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[Kendall Cruse](#) <https://i.imgur.com/fcwKHly.webm>

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[Christopher Shaw](#) ^^ I don't know what that's supposed to convey.

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[Paul Barth](#) It proves that Augustine thought it was Scripture and gives us a primary source witness as to why there are variants in the passage.

Only "the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts" (WCF 1:8) can prove to you that it is Scripture. And I think the testimony of the Church through the ages supports that it is.

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[Luis Leal](#)

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[Christopher Shaw](#) Like I've said in a previous post, I only know enough about this subject to be dangerous. wink emoticon So I'm just probing the subject to learn.

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[James R. White](#) [Paul Barth](#) I'm sorry, but this is a very poor use of patristic evidence in TC. Adopting your position here would require the adoption of the Western textual tradition, by and large, since Augustine was primarily limited to the Latin manuscripts for hi...[See More](#)

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[Colin Pearson](#) John 7:53-8:11
Pericope De Adultera

"Among the minuscule or cursive manuscripts it is in 28, 700, 892, 1009, 1010, 1071, 1079, 1195, 1216, 1344, 1365, 1546, 2148, and 2174. Most Greek manuscripts contain this passage."

It is found in the Bohairic Coptic Version, the Syriac Palestinian Version, and the Ethiopic Version, old Latin manuscripts and Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

Church Fathers who quoted this passage: Didascalia (3rd century), Ambrosiaster (4th century), Ambrose (Fourth century), the Apostolic Constitutions, Jerome (420 AD), and Augustine (430).

Augustine: "This proceeding, however, shocks the minds of some weak believers, or rather unbelievers and enemies of the Christian faith: inasmuch that, after (I suppose) of its giving their wives impunity of sinning, they struck out from their copies of the Gospel this that our Lord did in pardoning the woman taken in adultery: as if He granted leave of sinning, Who said, Go and sin no more!" De Conjug. Adult., II:6

— Thomas Holland, "Crowned with Glory"

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[Colin Pearson](#) Since the early church quoted it not only as scripture but as firm proof against impious men, even saying the some wicked men sought to remove it, I think we can trust that the ECF had access to early texts which are no longer extant. Otherwise we must conclude that they were all unlearned and foolish to include sources with only citations from Latin.

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[Paul Barth](#) Thanks for the response. I don't think I'd have to agree with everything Augustine said to believe his testimony here. Why would he lie about something like this?

How many extant manuscripts are prior to the 5th century? ...[See More](#)

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[Ben Chirag Ghale](#) Last paragraph brought my Heidelberg's to memory

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[James R. White](#) Ah, good...quoting the KJVO guys. Yes, it is the M reading. But I note that Holland, and Pearson, both ignore the fact that it is not found in the earliest manuscripts of John; and, in particular in this instance, ignore that it is found in *other locations* in numerous manuscripts. Specifically, in 225 it appears after John 7:36; in 1 and 1582 after John 21:25; in Family 13 it appears after Luke 21:38, and with other variants it appears after Luke 24:53 in 1333. The material provided by Holland is also inaccurate---a problem when relying on secondary KJVO sources. For example, Holland/Pearson lists the Bohairic as containing the text. Consultation of an actual critical text shows it is bopt, that is, the tradition is divided. Some do, some do not.

Which raises the issue TC scholars *should* be concerned about: what explains the text showing up in (count them) FIVE different locations in manuscripts? There simply is no other text even remotely like this in the entire NT manuscript tradition. The combination of this together with the earliest papyri omitting the text is amazingly strong data that the VAST majority of believing scholars find compelling.

But I am truly and deeply troubled by the influx of "ETism" amongst Reformed folks these days. It sounds so good---and is utterly indefensible outside the nice, safe walls of "Reformedom." You do NOT want to start making citations from ECFs the source of your textual theory. The result is obviously one far beyond what you might think. There are many places where ECFs quote something as Scripture that is utterly unrecognizable to us today. The theory propounded above would lead us to have to say that they had mythical earlier texts that we do not have today that contained these texts, which means we would have to start a new section of the canon for all those quotes for which we have zero manuscript evidence but which were "quoted by the early church" which we are told had "access to no longer existing manuscripts." Yeah, THERE is a solid methodology! No, of course it is not.

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[James R. White](#) [Paul Barth](#) I think I have my material for the start of Thursday's Dividing Line. smile emoticon Thanks. This is important, so I do not want to respond to it in a combox.

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[Christopher Shaw](#) I'm glad I could facilitate all of this. wink emoticon

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[Paul Barth](#) I don't know why the KJVO label was thrown out. That's unfair.

Why did Augustine think it was Scripture? Wouldn't he have had more and earlier manuscript evidence than we do?

Also, can you give examples of this? "There are many places where ECFs quote something as Scripture that is utterly unrecognizable to us today." Thanks.

Also, if it's unrecognizable today then we wouldn't consider it at all because the Holy Spirit isn't bearing witness to it "by and with the Word" through the instrument of the Church. But that is not the case with the passage we're discussing now.

I appreciate you taking the time to respond by the way!

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[Paul Barth](#) "But, before I proceed, I deem it necessary for you to censure the madness of certain ancient heretics, who impiously removed some certain and undoubted parts of scripture from the sacred canon. Such heretics, indeed, there were in great numbers, as we read in Irenaeus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, Augustine, and others. I shall not endeavour to go through them all, but will enumerate for you the principal."

– William Whitaker, Disputations on Holy Scripture, First Controversy, ch. 3, Concerning Those Heretics Who Were Guilty of Sacrilege Against the Sacred and Canonical Scriptures.

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[Kendall Cruse](#)



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[Seni Adeyemi](#) Yes.

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[Bryan Peters](#) Yes,

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[John Palmer](#) Yes

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[Dan Byrne](#) Yes, it's scripture.

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[Jordan Parks](#) I have no scholarly opinion but the way that passage has affected me over the years, there's just no way I'd say it isn't scripture

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[Rob Laughter](#) We chose not to. We told the church why.

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[James R. White](#) I have often used this as my example of why TC matters. My answer: no. There simply is no question in my mind that John did not write it. Not only is it absent from every Greek manuscript we have of John prior to D (which is NOT a reliable manuscript itself), but the fatal flaw in its inclusion is that in some manuscripts it is found in TWO different places in LUKE. When you have a pericope looking for a home and landing in multiple spots, well, it is NOT original. What we preach must be theopneustos, not just "traditional." Hence...no.

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[Jordan Parks](#) [James R. White](#) Dr. White, just a question - what do you think the motive of the person/people was in adding that passage? I think there might be an important lesson there, just not really sure what.

PS- genuinely and humbly thankful that you take the time to teach us in here. it is truly a huge encouragement for most of us

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[David Zachary Mason](#) [James R. White](#) If you're bored, there is a really fun post on the Comma Johanneum floating around. (aka frustrating beyond belief.)

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[Paul Barth](#) so that's how it's gonna be. alright. tongue emoticon

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [March 22 at 5:34pm](#)



[David Zachary Mason](#) Ah don't be like that. I need all the help I can get!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · [March 22 at 5:35pm](#)



[Paul Barth](#) oh i know you do wink emoticon

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[Paul Barth](#) jk bruh

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[Bryan Peters](#) Dr. White, could a new manuscript discovery change your mind?

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[James R. White](#) On the Pericope? I suppose, but such is highly unlikely in light of the story being found in multiple locations and even multiple books. In general, earlier papyri finds have not, in fact, introduced us to major new variants that we did not already know about from the uncials.

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[Bryan Peters](#) How do we determine the extent to which we must be ready to change our understanding of what constitutes Scripture based upon new manuscript evidences? Particularly if a chunk almost the size of 3 John is potentially up for grabs?

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[Scott Edburg](#) Nope

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[William Sandell](#) Dr. White, and what of Augustine saying that enemies of the true faith had removed it from manuscripts. Would not Augustine know what's going on regarding the text in the 4th century more than us?

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[Mitchell Elliott](#) An example that is always in the back of my mind that gives me pause when I consider cases of Church Fathers saying that such and such was extant and such and such was being expunged by heretics:

Irenaeus and Tertullian make a similar claim about people editing John 1:13, however, Clement of Alexandria (who lived in the same region at the same time as Tertullian) disagreed with them in his citation of the text.

Even more interesting is the fact that Tertullian says that those who believed in predestination corrupted the text (in order to better support their position), while Clement, who explicitly

propounded libertarian free will and predestination via foreseen faith in his works, accepted the text as we know it today (sadly, he did not accept its teaching).

"What, then, is the meaning of this passage, "Born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God?" I shall make more use of this passage after I have confuted those who have tampered with it. They maintain that it was written thus (in the plural) "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," as if designating those who were before mentioned as "believing in His name," in order to point out the existence of that mysterious seed of the elect and spiritual which they appropriate to themselves." -Tertullian (On the Flesh of Christ, Chapter XIX)

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[Anthony Castrataro](#) But is it a "biblical" lesson that's taught in those verses? I would say, "YES"! The lesson is that God extends grace before He gives us the Law.

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[Rob Laughter](#) No, for the same reason I wouldn't preach from my daughter's storybook bible. It's not God's word and should not be preached as if it were.

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[Paul Barth](#) here's a good analysis of the issues for anyone interested: <http://confessionalbibliology.com/.../jeff-riddle-john.../>

[Jeff Riddle & John Piper](#)

2 part series of Rev. Riddle's analysis and commentary on John Piper's claim that the Pericope de Adultera is not scripture and why John Piper is wrong Word Magazine # 31: Review: John Piper on the Pericope Adulterae: Part One Word Magazine No. 32: John Piper
confessionalbibliology.com

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[Robert Truelove](#) Dr. White, first of all...thanks for contributing to the discussion. It's good to have you here in the ole pub. smile emoticon

Two questions...

1. If the Scripture is self-authenticating as our confession teaches...

"...it is to be received because it is the Word of God" 1689 1.4

"...our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." 1689 1.5

How is it that the church, both East and West, could have been wrong about the authenticity of this complete gospel narrative for so long—that is, how can you consistently maintain a self-authenticating Bible and a blunder of this magnitude being received for so long?

2. Why should we go on the present reasoning of reasoned eclecticism to discard this text after all this time when it was critically addressed and received by the post-Nicene fathers and following (who certainly had access to many more ancient texts than we)? I mean, the question of the manuscript problems is not something new. It was addressed all the way back in the 4th century. I'm not saying it was accepted overnight (as is also true of complete canonical books), but it does appear to have been decisively received and maintained for centuries.

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[James R. White](#) "when it was critically addressed and received by the post-Nicene fathers" When did this happen, please?

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[Robert Truelove](#) This can be seen in the transmission of the text of Scripture through history. Which post-Nicene fathers do you NOT see accepting the Pericope? I could ask the same for the Byzantine textual tradition as a whole?

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[James R. White](#) Sorry, that's not an answer. "Critically addressed" was your term. Repeating a traditional text is not critically addressing it. All sorts of false traditional doctrines were transmitted uncritically by the post-Nicene "church." You do not find yourself bound by that transmission, and would say they were not critically addressed. But then we come to a traditional text and, well, you change your methodology. So my question again: when was it "critically addressed"? That is, when did a council, or even a major single scholar, with access to a meaningfully wide range of textual data, analyze the evidence for the Pericope Adulterae and pronounce it "canonical" or "original"?

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[Robert Truelove](#) It is clear from men like Augustine and Jerome that the church was aware of the early problem with the Pericope yet the transmissional history clearly demonstrates that the text was accepted. That is the point.

I've already seen you deprecate Augustine's understanding of the text in another thread, and it appears by your statement above that you believe that the ancient scriptoria were all laboring under tremendous ignorance of the true state of the text. If each scriptorium was indeed operating with such a blindness to the state of the text in other places, Cowell's process model as an explanation for the development of the development of the Byzantine text is even more specious.

Every time I've seen you address this subject you want to know what individual or what council pronounced such a judgement on the text? That question fundamentally miscomprehends the ET position. It has little to nothing to do with councils and critics, but usage and acceptance in the church. IF we could point to a council, that would be absolutely no help in the matter because then we would have the problem of placing the authority of the council over that of the Scripture.

Regarding the alleged inconsistency...Note, you are the one wanting to make the ET position say something it is not, and then tear it down (strawmanism). Appealing to the historical usage of the church of the text of Scripture as a sign of the Holy Spirit's approbation of the text is an altogether different proposition than appealing to the traditional dogma of the church as an approbation of the same. We had this little thing called the Reformation that highlighted the relevant issues. wink emoticon

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[James R. White](#) So, "critically addressed" does not mean it was actually addressed, let alone critically. It was just "used." OK! "The historical usage of the church of the text of Scripture as a sign of the Holy Spirit's approbation of the text." Is that being offered in defense of the Byzantine platform, or the Latin Vulgate, since the language, and argument, are identical?

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[Robert Truelove](#) [James R. White](#), Of course it was addressed...else it would never have dominated the manuscripts and have the transmissional history that it does. What you're doing is like standing at the base of a great mountain and looking at a waterfall upon its side and arguing over the existence of the spring from which it flows because we don't know exactly where it is.

Now it may not have been addressed the way in which you would have liked, but the transmissional history of the text demonstrates that a decisive decision was made on the matter.

Regarding the question about the Byzantine or Latin Vulgate...the Byzantine course. The argument would have been valid for the Latin Vulgate IF it was the original text. This is the reason our confession calls it, the Greek text, "authentic" against Rome's claim for the Vulgate.

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[Robert Truelove](#) By the way, just so people understand, we are talking about issues here related to doctrinal presuppositions behind the ET position. A Critical defense can also be made for the Traditional Text that is not dependent upon these presuppositions (though I have no trouble with owning them) and is another line of inquiry.

The critical line of inquiry would best explored with a public conversation between Dr. White and Dr. Robinson. For that reason I've focused on the doctrinal implications.

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[James R. White](#) "A decisive decision was made on the matter" though we have no evidence of anyone actually having the necessary information upon which to make such a decision, but we ASSUME this to be the case because it supports the presuppositional conclusion we hold regarding the particular text type that was popular around Byzantium/Constantinople especially after the rise of Islam and the enshrinement of the Latin Vulgate in the West impacted the text types present elsewhere in the world at that time. So, "critically addressed" does not actually mean "critically addressed" in any meaningful use of those words, and "decisive decision" actually means, well, pretty much the opposite, that is, if words have normal meanings. This truly is why I say this system cannot interact with the most dangerous attacks upon the NT text,

because if *I* can raise these rather serious objections, can you imagine what Ehrman and his legions can do?

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[Robert Truelove](#) So much that could be said be we'll focus for Facebook...but let me address your chief concern...and I totally get you on wanting to have a solid case against the Erhman's of the world.

Why debate Erhman while defending the very same text critical presuppositions that he uses? If I were arguing against an Erhman, I would NOT go into that debate with an ET presuppositional argument. That would be pointless, as it is only a position a believer is going to understand and appreciate. Rather, I'd go in with a Case for the Byzantine Priority (Dr. Maurice Robinson) and seek to prove how solid the transmissional history of the New Testament text is using something like Dr. Robinson's "reasoned transmissionalism".

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[Robert Truelove](#) Seriously...Dr. Robinson is a very smart guy and thoroughly knowledgable on the subject of textual criticism. He's spent a lot of time with my via email, phone and we were even able to meet late last year to chat in Atlanta.

I know he'd be willing to talk with you privately and you can bounce your most difficult critical questions specific to actual readings off of him and see how he answers. Why not just talk offline and see if you find it profitable?

Dr. [White](#), you'd be Chuck Norris if you went into a debate with an Erhman turning his entire text critical paradigm on its head with a solid case for Byzantine Priority approach. I get Erhman wants a PERFECT!!! text in every sense to say it is God's word, but to the hearer, it's just outrageous in light of how amazingly preserved the Byzantine Platform presents the state of the text throughout its transmissional history.

The muslims are also baffled with how to handle the Byzantine Priority argument (that's another great subject to bounce off Robinson).

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[James R. White](#) Robert, why do you assume I am not just as much in touch with Dr. Robinson as you? You do realize, of course, he has not the first bit of sympathy for an "ecclesiastical text" argument, right?

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[Robert Truelove](#) [James R. White](#), Well, Dr. Robinson is a personal friend and he's told me the communication between the two of you is infrequent.

Regarding my understanding of his sympathies for an ecclesiastical text argument...sure I get that. That's the very reason I submitted his approach as the direction I'd recommend in an Erhman debate (verses ET).

That said, you are correct that "ETism" and Byzantine Priority are different arguments, but I find them to be compatible with one another and Dr. Robinson doesn't disagree though he isn't an ET proponent.

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[James R. White](#) But he would surely reject Paul Barth's conflation of the testimony of the Spirit to the authority of Scripture with the idea that the Spirit testifies to a *particular text type* or to *particular textual variant readings,* yes?

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[Robert Truelove](#) Well here...I'll ask him and post his response...

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[James R. White](#) Heh. I don't need to ask him. I have his own words on it. smile emoticon

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[James R. White](#) < blink >

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[Robert Truelove](#) My last couple comments were confused as I was getting ready for church. Regarding "Paul Barth" (I read that wrong before—ug, multitasking), I'm not sure what you are referencing.

Okay, getting back to this...Jerome did address the PA critically, and acknowledge it was present in "many MSS both Greek and Latin" — if that is not critically addressing the issue, what is? That said, what I am saying is bigger than that. I'm pointing to transmissional history.

Regardless...

I find it interesting that you would pick out the words "critically addressed" and go around the world on what is actually a very simple concept—that the church DID settle the matter of the authenticity of the Pericope Adulterae in antiquity and thought it settled for over a millennia.

What you've done is argued a red herring and avoided the questions themselves.

If you were only going to answer only one of my questions, I'm particularly interested in hearing your answer to the first one. Repeated below...

1. If the Scripture is self-authenticating as our confession teaches...

"...it is to be received because it is the Word of God" 1689 1.4

"...our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." 1689 1.5

How is it that the church, both East and West, could have been wrong about the authenticity of this complete gospel narrative for so long—that is, how can you consistently maintain a self-authenticating Bible and a blunder of this magnitude being received for so long?

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[Jesse Sellers](#) The main reason I look at it as extra-Biblical is the reference to Jesus kneeling down and writing in the sand. That smacks of Gnosticism to me, much like the ending of Mark's Gospel.

I have heard some preachers preach the pericope and say something to the effect that, while it was probably not part of the original Scriptures, it was probably an event that actually happened. I would probably not include it in my preaching.

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[Craig Jackson](#) We went through 7:52 last week and will pick up in 8:12 this week.

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[Isaac Lamb](#) Yes

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[William Sandell](#) Here is a good video detailing the issues with the passage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1Qfhh5wqgs>



[Modern Textual Criticism: The Pericope de Adultera](#)
youtube.com

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[Zach Dotson](#) Yes I would

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[James Shirley](#) "scrolls through comments looking for James White posts"

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[James Shirley](#) No, I wouldn't. [Christopher Shaw](#) you should add a poll to this question. Great question!

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[Andrew Barnes](#) Yes and did. It is the hinge of the first half of the book of John.

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