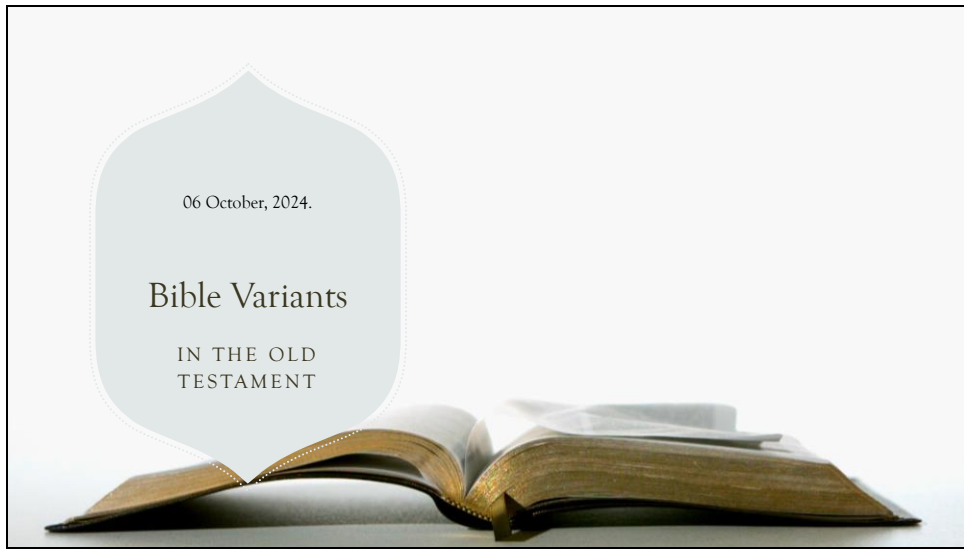
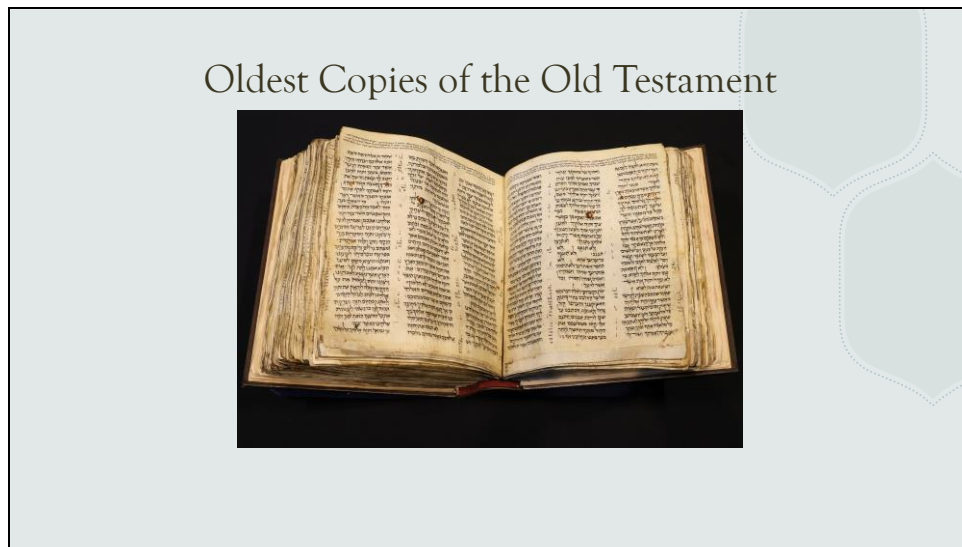


Slide 1

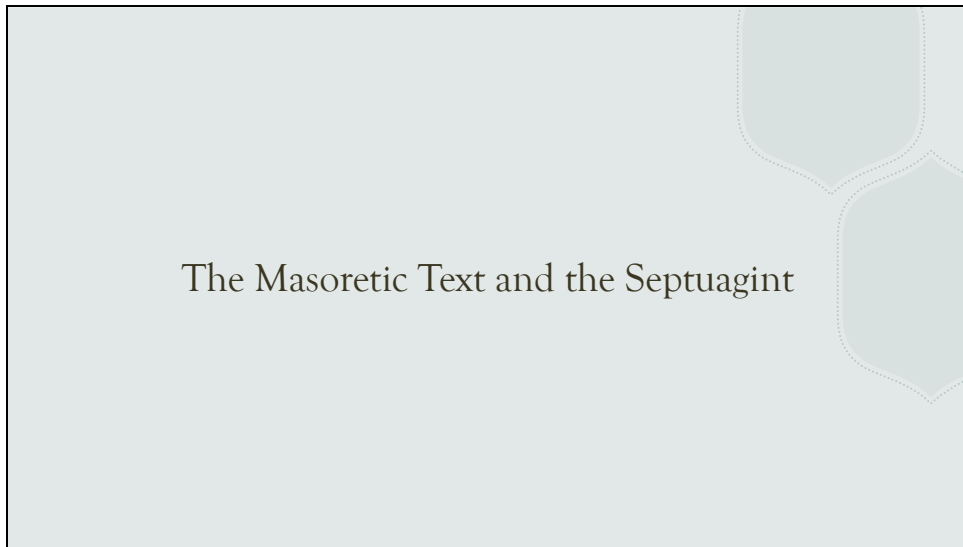


Slide 2



- We do not have as ancient or as many copies of the old testament as of the new. But we do have several versions of the old testament. Textual criticism is therefore much more complicated for the old testament than for the new testament.
- What language was the old testament written in? Hebrew (and Aramaic).
- What language are the oldest complete copies of the Bible written in? Greek.
 - The oldest complete copies of the old testament are translations, not in the original language.
- How old is the oldest complete copy of the Hebrew bible? Lenningrad codex. 11th century. 1000 years after Christ!
 - There are some significant differences between the Greek and Hebrew versions.

Slide 3



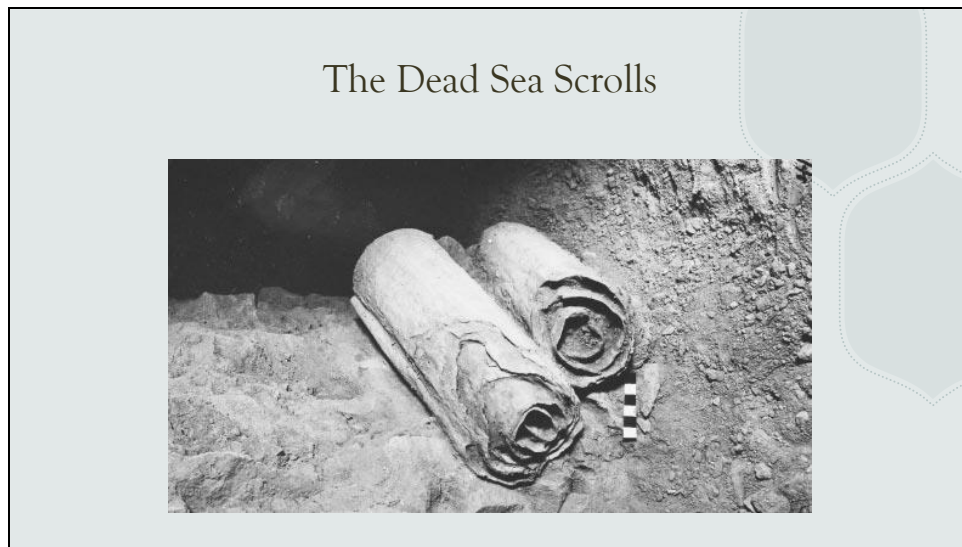
- The main Greek version of the old testament is called the Septuagint.
 - Septuagint means "70", because it was created by about 70 Jewish scribes
 - What is "70" in roman numerals? LXX (This is what you might see in the footnotes of a modern bible)
 - Created in the 3rd/2nd century BC (supported by external testimony), but we only have fragments before 4th century AD.
 - Often quoted from in the new testament.
- The main Hebrew version of the old testament is called the Masoretic text, which was developed by the 10th century.
 - You might hear people say that the bible "reached its final form" at this time, or was in "constant flux" before this.
 - This is a bit misleading. The "development" of the Masoretic text does not mean that the content of the bible was changing. It means that the way it was written was being developed. The Masoretes introduced markings and notes to help people read the text.
- The Greek old testament was taken over by the church, while the Hebrew old testament was copied by Jewish communities. So we have a conundrum. The Septuagint is much older, but the Masoretic text is in the original language. Which is the "better copy"?
- In the western world, the philosophy of "original language is the best" has led to the Masoretic text prevailing. But in the eastern church, the Greek Septuagint has been accepted as the God-inspired version.

Slide 4



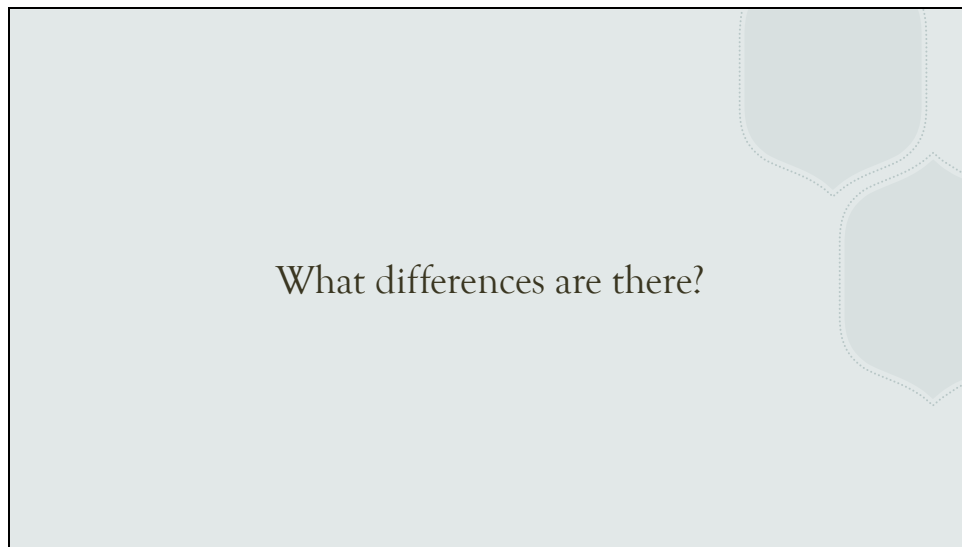
- Remember that the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- The Samaritans are descendants of Northern Israelites who stayed in the land after exile and mixed with new settlers.
- They modified their religion to centre around Gerizim (the North) instead of Jerusalem (the South).
- While The Samaritan Pentateuch is useful for comparing textual variants, it has been modified to fit the new religion of the Samaritans. It tries to make mount Gerizim God's chosen place of worship
- This is actually really helpful background information to the story of the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4

Slide 5



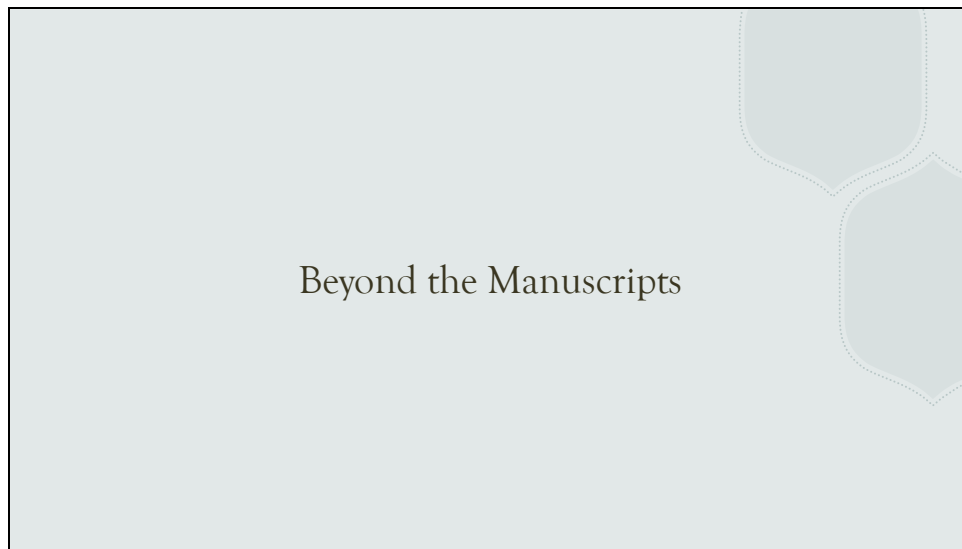
- One of the most extraordinary manuscript discoveries ever.
 - In 1946, some shepherds near Qumran accidentally discovered a cave with a jar containing old manuscripts.
 - These manuscripts are written in Hebrew and are dated between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD
 - Among these there are fragments of almost every book of the old testament.
 - There is a complete copy of the book of Isaiah, which matches very closely the Masoretic text. This is 1000 years older than the previously known Hebrew old testament.
- Very significant, but it doesn't solve the conundrum.
 - The fragments contain some Hebrew passages that correspond more closely to the Septuagint and some passages which correspond more closely to the Masoretic text.
 - The dead sea scrolls shows us that both versions of the old testament were faithfully preserved from before the time of Christ.
 - But it does not help us decide which version is the "best".

Slide 6



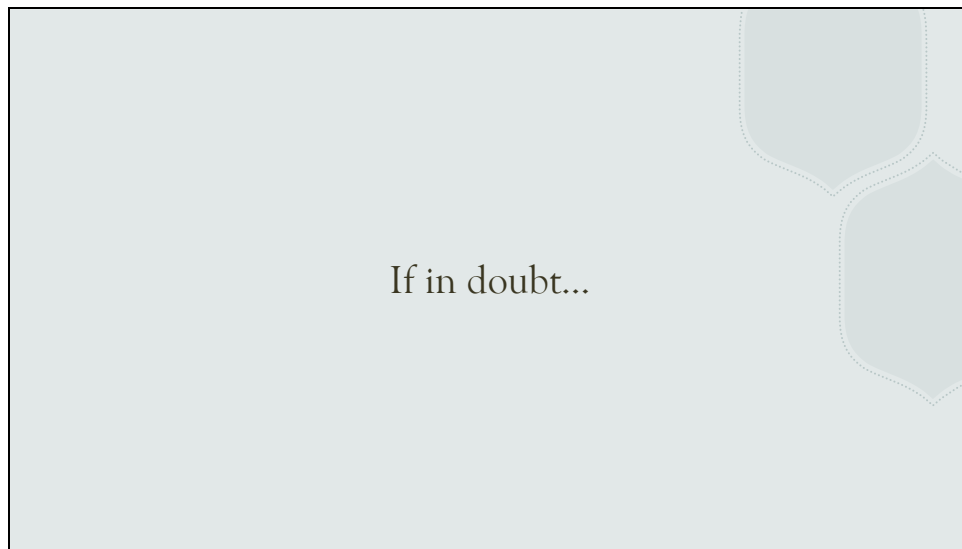
- The Septuagint contains up to 14 additional books, such as the books of Maccabees etc.
- The Septuagint contains additional passages, primarily in the books of Daniel and Esther.
- The Septuagint has a version of Jeremiah with the same content, but in a different arrangement.
- These differences will be discussed later when we talk about the "canon of scripture"
- While we might focus on the differences, once again, like the new testament, the overwhelming majority of the content and text agrees across these and other ancient versions.
- Modern bible footnotes will indicate important places where differences make the original text uncertain.

Slide 7



- We do not have manuscripts of the new testament before about 200 AD (apart from possibly a few fragments) or of the old testament before about 100 B.C. The history of the text before this point is a controversial subject which causes a lot of disagreements.
- Source/form criticism.
 - It is important to be aware that many claims which are made about the how the bible was "formed" or "edited" are subjective and are not based on physical manuscript evidence. Instead, they are based on the analysis of the text of scripture itself. This is an interesting subject that has proved helpful in bible study. We will consider this a little more later.
- Emendations of the Scribes.
 - There is an ancient Jewish tradition that tells us of perhaps 18 places (or some very small number) where the scribes of the old testament felt uncomfortable with the wording of scripture and altered it to be more reverent or polite, e.g. Genesis 18:22, may have been changed from "the LORD stood before Abraham" to "Abraham stood before the LORD"
 - If this is the case, it seems to have been done only very sparingly and the changes seem to be trivial.

Slide 8



- If you ever feel troubled by the existence of multiple versions of the old testament, then why not read the Septuagint (online for free!) and ask yourself "What difference would this make to what I believe?"
- When studying a passage in detail, Consult a modern bible with footnotes (online for free!) about important differences.
- Put the differences in perspective, remind yourself of the overwhelming agreement between manuscripts and versions.
- From a trust point of view, I believe it is better that we have many versions to compare and discuss, rather than one which we cannot verify.
- We will talk more about the "books of the bible" later and why the Septuagint has more.
- And remember to seek the Lord! If the Bible is the word of God, then we must rely on God to lead us into a fuller faith in it and understanding of it.