

# What's Missing from Codex Sinaiticus, the Oldest New Testament?

## Compare differences between the King James Version and Codex Sinaiticus

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Two hundred years after Constantine Tischendorf's birth, questions remain as to the conditions of his removal of Codex Sinaiticus from St. Catherine's Monastery. Dating to the mid-fourth century C.E., Codex Sinaiticus is the oldest complete manuscript of the New Testament. In his article "Hero or Thief? Constantine Tischendorf Turns Two Hundred" in the September/October 2015 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Stanley E. Porter [contends that Tischendorf should be considered a hero, not a thief.](#)



*A salvaged page of the Codex Sinaiticus from St. Catherine's Monastery recovered in 1975. Photo: Courtesy of St. Catherine's Monastery.*

The text of Codex Sinaiticus differs in numerous instances from that of the authorized version of the Bible in use during Tischendorf's time. For example, the resurrection narrative at the end of Mark (16:9–20) is absent from the Codex Sinaiticus. So is the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13). The woman caught in adultery from John 8 is omitted in Codex Sinaiticus. According to James Bentley, Tischendorf was not troubled by the omission of the resurrection in Mark because he believed that Matthew was written first and that Mark's gospel was an abridged version of Matthew's gospel. If this were true, the absence of resurrection in Mark would not be a problem because it appears in the older Matthean gospel. Modern scholarship generally holds that Mark is in fact the oldest of the Synoptic Gospels, which could cause theological concerns over the omitted resurrection.

One other omission in Codex Sinaiticus with theological implications is the reference to Jesus' ascension in Luke 24:51. Additionally, Mark 1:1 in the original hand omits reference to Jesus as the Son of God.

Below, see a visual comparison of these and other differences between the King James Version and Codex Sinaiticus.

### The Markan Resurrection (Mark 16: 1–14)

King James Version

Codex Sinaiticus

1 "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

1 "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

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.

9 Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)**

King James Version

Codex Sinaiticus

9 Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.	Father, Hallowed be thy name,
10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.	Thy kingdom come.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.	Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon earth.
12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.	Give us day by day our daily bread
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.	And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.

**The woman caught in adultery (John 8: 3–11)**

King James Version

Codex Sinaiticus

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, Completely absent.

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no

more.

### **Significant omitted verses**

King James Version

Codex Sinaiticus

Luke 24:51: “And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.” Leaving no them, he was parted from them, and carried up into ascension in the Gospels. heaven.”

Mark 1:1: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;” Omits “the Son of God.”

Luke 9:55–56: “But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.” Not present.

### **Alterations perhaps due to later theological beliefs**

King James Version

Codex Sinaiticus

Mark 1:41: “And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.” “Jesus, angry, stretched out his hand and touched him...”

Matthew 24:36: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.” “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.”

Jeffnotes:

Neither the original hand nor any corrector afterward in Codex Sinaiticus has the wording that Jesus was angry in Mark 1:41. The only Greek manuscript with that reading is the bilingual Codex Bezae (D/05) from the V century. That reading is also found in a few Old Latin mss of the Gospels. Codex Sinaiticus says that Jesus was moved with compassion in Mark 1:41. This is a famous variant in the mss, but Codex Sinaiticus attests compassion, not anger.

Also, Luke 9:55-56 are not completely absent in Codex Sinaiticus. The manuscript has what is now considered the beginning of v. 55 and ending of v. 56 (rem: versification was added in 1551): “But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.” Most textual critics think Jesus’ words (in between) found in medieval Byzantine mss was a late addition to the text.

Also, in Matthew 6:9, Codex Sinaiticus *does* have the phrase “who is in heaven” (which is omitted as presented above). In Mt 6:12, Codex Sinaiticus reads “forgive us our *\*debts\**” (not “sins”). Also, in Matthew 6:13, Codex Sinaiticus ends the Lord’s Prayer with the phrase “but deliver us from [the] evil [one]” (which is omitted above), but the doxology (“for thine is the kingdom...”) is absent.

Also, like most early mss, Codex Sinaiticus omits John 7:53-8:11, not just 8:3-11.

Hope this is helpful to prevent some misunderstandings. It is a very important manuscript.