

1. The detailed closeness of the Isaiah scroll (125 B.C.) to the Masoretic text (900 A.D.) is significant.
2. Here is an example:
  - Of the 166 words in Isaiah 53 - there are only 17 letters in question.
  - Ten of these letters are simply a matter of spelling - which does not affect the sense.
  - 4 more letters are minor stylistic changes - such as conjunctions.
  - The 3 remaining letters comprise the word "light" - which is added in verse 11 - and does not affect the meaning.
3. The analysis of Hebrew scholars; the Isaiah copies of the Qumran community have proven to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95% of the text.
4. The 5% of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling. It is amazing that through a period of a thousand years - the text underwent so little alteration.
5. The major conclusion was that there was no significant difference between the Isaiah scroll at Qumran and the Masoretic Hebrew text dated 1,000 years later.
6. This confirmed the reliability of our present Hebrew text.
7. So - with the copyists' errors and variations - the most ancient of all the books of the world has virtually no variations at all.
8. Now, however, it is no longer possible to reject the substantial historicity of the Bible, at least as far back as the time of Abraham, because of the remarkable discoveries of archaeology.  
(Dr. Henry M. Morris- Founder of the Institute of Creation Research)
9. Since the O.T. text is related in important ways to the N.T., its reliability supports the Christian faith. This is true not only in establishing the dates when prophecies were made concerning the Messiah - but also in supporting the accuracy and importance of the O.T. that Jesus and the N.T. writers affirmed.
10. So what is the Septuagint (LXX or the 70 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Century B.C.)?
11. The Jews had abandoned their native Hebrew tongue for Aramaic in the Near East - and also abandoned the Aramaic in favor of Greek in such Hellenistic centers as Alexandria, Egypt.
12. Because the Jews were scattered from their homeland - there was a need for the Scriptures in the common language of that day.
13. The name "Septuagint" was given to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures during the reign of King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt.
14. There is more than one version of the Septuagint - just like there is more than one version of the Masoretic text.

15. From the many different biblical manuscripts in the caves surrounding Qumran, it was discovered that there was not just one type of Hebrew Bible in circulation from the 3rd century BC to the 1st century A.
16. This is a basic fact that we have to deal with – there is not just one Hebrew Bible, nor is there just one Greek Bible. There were several of each, all circulating at the same time, and they competed with one another among various Jewish sects.
17. The Proto-Masoretic text was just one of these *recensions* of the Hebrew Bible, and the Hebrew text that became the basis for the Greek Septuagint was another.
18. In fact, it becomes apparent that the very notion of an “original” text does not exist, because it is impossible to point to any particular point in the development of a book and say that it is “original.”
19. Emanuel Tov summarizes the contents of the Dead Sea Scrolls biblical manuscripts with the following percentage breakdown:

- Qumran-specific texts – 20%
- Proto-Masoretic texts – 35% (“proto” - earliest/first/preceding)
- Proto-Samaritan texts – 5%
- Proto-Septuagint texts – 5%
- Non-Aligned texts – 35%

20. This breakdown notes texts that specifically show some variation toward one or another recension. If there is no distinction, a text falls into the non-aligned category. As you can see, among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Proto-Masoretic text was by far the most popular aligned text, accounting for some 35% of manuscripts. Proto-Septuagint texts account for only 5%. It’s apparent from this picture that, at least in Palestine, the Proto-Masoretic text was gaining superiority, even among sectarian groups, and eventually it won out over the others within the post-70 AD Jewish community.
21. The Bible should be placed on a shelf all by itself - because it is unique. That’s it.
22. Webster defines “unique”: 1. one and only; single; sole. 2. Different from all others; having no like or equal.
23. One scholar wrote after spending 42 years studying Eastern books - he compared them with the Bible and said: “Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; but place your own Holy Bible on the right side-all by itself, all alone-and with a wide gap between them. For...there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever...a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science of religious thought.
24. No born again believer - confident in the providential working of God and the canonicity of His Word - should be disturbed about the dependability of the Bible we now possess.