MSJ 21/1 (Spring 2010) 55-79

A TEST CASE FOR CONJECTURAL EMENDATION: 2 PETER 3:10d

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Bart Ehrman has raised a question as to whether some portions of the original NT have been lost while through the years the text has been copied. The process of trying to restore words that may have been lost is called conjectural emendation. Among scholars, three views about the need for conjectural emendation have arisen: the optimistic view which contends that no words have been lost, the mixed perspective which says that perhaps a few but not many words have been lost, and the pessimistic view that many words have been lost. Since conjectural emendation is so subjective, an effort to reach a firm conclusion is fruitless, but it is helpful to observe that no text exists for which the need for emendation is universally acknowledged. A more helpful approach is to select 2 Pet 3:10d for examination because many scholars have suggested the need for emendation of this text. The textual problem in that verse centers in the reading of the last word εὑρεθήσεται. *This word finds good support in the external witnesses, but is quite problematic in regard to how it fits its context. Numerous conjectures regarding how to replace the word have emerged, some of them quite insufficient and some of them more plausible. The best explanation which comes from Bauckham accepts the correctness of the reading* εὑρεθήσεται *and assigns it the meaning of "discovered." Thus the need for conjectural emendation in 2 Pet 3:10d is erased.*

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The topic of textual criticism, usually reserved for a small group of scholars and their students, came to the public's attention through the surprising success of

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Bart Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus*.[1] The first four chapters present a popular introduction to textual criticism, and according to Daniel Wallace, "a very good one at that."[2] The last three chapters popularize one of Ehrman's earlier works,[3] in which he argued that ancient scribes intentionally altered the words of Scripture. He suggests that the original text of the New Testament may have been lost in some places.[4] What good are the doctrines of inerrancy and inspiration if the original text is unavailable today? According to Ehrman, since God failed to preserve the words of Scripture (in the way Ehrman thinks He should have), God never inspired those words in the first place.[5]

Ehrman's conclusion does not follow from the evidence he presents, but Ehrman does raise an interesting question. Over the centuries, have some of the original words of the NT been lost through the process of copying? Is there a particular passage for which scribal corruptions (intentional or not) have rendered every extant manuscript incorrect? If so, modern scholars would be forced to restore the original text by making an educated guess, a process known as "conjectural emendation."

The Need for Conjectural Emendation

Scholarly opinion regarding the need for conjectural emendation in textual criticism of the NT can be divided into three camps. Some scholars are very optimistic about the textual tradition and deny the need for conjectural emendation. Other scholars are more pessimistic and claim that emendation should be one of the regular tools of the textual critic. The third camp, which might be called "mixed" for lack of a better term, falls between the other two. Great variety exists in this camp, but these scholars tend to be generally optimistic while admitting the need for conjectural emendation in some cases. The "mixed" scholars accept emendation in theory, but tend to deny it in practice.

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[1] Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005). This book reached number five on the *New York Times* best seller list (nonfiction) in April 2006.

[2] Daniel B. Wallace, "The Gospel according to Bart: A Review of Bart D. Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*," Summer 2006, http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=4000 (accessed 14 Aug. 2008).

[3] Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[4] Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* 211.

[5] Ibid., 11, 211.

Optimistic Perspective

Among the major scholars of textual criticism, only Kurt and Barbara Aland present a completely optimistic view. They claim that tenacity is one impressive characteristic of the transmission of the text of the NT. They note, "Once a reading occurs it will persist with obstinacy."[6] If errors prove to be so tenacious, then certainly original readings must endure as well. Perhaps this is one reason they write, "Textual difficulties should not be solved by conjecture."[7] A second reason that conjectural emendation in the NT is unnecessary is the tremendous amount of external evidence (as compared with any other ancient writings). Noting the overwhelming number of manuscripts, lectionaries, early versions, and patristic quotations currently extant, they conclude, "We can be certain that among these there is still a group of witnesses which preserves the original form of the text, despite the pervasive authority of ecclesiastical tradition and the prestige of the later text."[8] It is interesting that the Alands hold to such a position without any reference to the preservation of the text by divine providence. Instead, they seem to have been convinced by years of study of the documentary evidence itself.[9]

Mixed Perspective

Most textual critics do not share the Alands' optimism. B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort are generally optimistic. After Hort discusses primitive errors (i.e., errors for which the original is unattested in the extant textual tradition) and conjectural emendation for several pages,[10] he concludes, "The place of Conjectural Emendation in the textual criticism of the New Testament is however so inconsiderable that we should have hesitated to say even thus much about it."[11] However, he takes up the issue again later in the book.[12] He notes the argument of some that it is

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[6]Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theology and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed., trans. Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 291.

[7]Ibid., 280.

[8]Ibid., 292.

[9]However, one may wonder if the Alands' optimism is based, at least in part, on holding a high view (perhaps too high) of the resources available at the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster (which are impressive, indeed).

[10]B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek with Notes on Selected Readings* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1988) 66-72.

[11]Ibid., 72.

[12]Ibid., 276-84.

inconceivable that any true words of Scripture have been lost. Hort responds,

> In reply it is a sufficient *argumentum ad hominem* to point to the existence of various readings, forming part of various texts accepted for long ages, and the frequent difficulty of deciding between them, even though we say nothing of difficulties of interpretation: on any view many important churches for long ages have had only an approximately pure New Testament, so that we have no right to treat it as antecedently incredible that only an approximately pure New Testament should be attainable now, or even in all future time.[13]

A second argument offered against emendation is the numerous incorrect conjectures proposed in the past. Hort argues that just because someone made a wrong emendation, this does not imply that no emendation was necessary.[14] On the other hand, Hort acknowledges the overwhelming evidence for the text of the NT. Thus he adds, "The external evidence is therefore such that on the one hand perfect purity is not *a priori* improbable, and a singularly high degree of purity is highly probable; and yet the conditions are not such—it is difficult to see how they could ever be such—as to exclude the possibility of textual errors."[15] Therefore, Westcott and Hort were of the opinion that conjectural emendation may be necessary, but only rarely.[16]

In their well-known work, Bruce Metzger and Bart Ehrman also discuss conjectural emendation. They suggest caution:

> A typical emendation involves the removal of an anomaly. It must not be overlooked, however, that though some anomalies are the result of corruption in the transmission of the text, others may have been either intended or tolerated by the author himself. Before resorting to conjectural emendation, therefore, the critic must be so thoroughly acquainted with the style and thought of the author that a certain anomaly must be judged to be foreign to the author's intention.[17]

They add that too many scholars resort to conjectural emendation prematurely: "Corruptions in the Greek and Latin classics (including the New Testament) have

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[13]Ibid., 276-77.

[14]Ibid., 277.

[15]Ibid., 279.

[16]Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman note that Westcott and Hort marked about 60 passages where they suspected a primitive error (*The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005] 229; they provide a full list [ibid., n. 54]). A. T. Robertson says 65 passages were marked by Westcott and Hort as primitive errors (*An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* [Nashville: Broadman, 1925] 238-39); his list disagrees with that of Metzger and Ehrman in eight verses. By way of comparison, the editions of Tregelles, Tischendorf, and Weiss each have one conjectural emendation, although not in the same place (Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament* 230).

[17]Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament* 227.

frequently been assumed without adequate reason—as though, indeed, for the mere sake of showing off one's cleverness in proposing an alternative reading."[18] Nevertheless, they believe that emendation does have a role to play: "One must admit the theoretical legitimacy of applying to the New Testament a process that has so often been found essential in the restoration of the right text in classical authors." However, they also note that because of the nature of the external evidence "the necessity of resorting to emendation is reduced to the smallest dimensions."[19]

French textual critic Leon Vaganay observes, "Conjectural emendation is not uncommon in the field of classical philology." Since there are a small number of texts available, at times the text is so incomprehensible that it has to be restored by conjecture.[20] He admits that emendation of the NT has been abused. He notes, "As early as 1772, W. Bowyer, in his *Conjectures on the New Testament collected from various authors*, gives a great many tenuous and even puerile corrections. . . . And yet this does not mean that conjectural emendation must be ruled out in establishing the text of the New Testament."[21] He believes that modern scholars are better equipped to deal with the text than ancient scribes: "It is worth remembering that some particular manuscript variant that is widely attested may well be nothing more than a conjectural emendation made by an inexpert reviser, and consequently carries less weight than the hypothesis of a modern philologist."[22] Thus, Vaganay does not rule out the need for conjectural emendation, although he believes that it should be used only with "wisdom and restraint." He also makes an interesting suggestion: "It would be sensible to confine conjectural emendations, even the best of them, to the critical apparatus of the editions of the Greek New Testament, until such time as new discoveries provide evidence for them."[23] It is evident that emendation is an uncertain exercise.

A. T. Robertson, the great Greek grammarian, also believes that conjectural

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[18]Ibid., 228.

[19]Ibid., 230. Based on Ehrman's own writings (cited above), it seems that he is more pessimistic than Metzger. In the fourth edition of *Text of the New Testament*, it is suggested that the amanuensis who recorded Paul's dictation could have made a mistake (ibid., 273). In that case, the autograph itself would require emendation! One might surmise that this suggestion reflects the influence of Ehrman. The chapter in which this appears was not present in the third edition written by Metzger alone (Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: It's Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992]).

[20]Leon Vaganay, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, 2nd ed., rev. and updated by Christian-Bernard Amphoux, trans. Jenny Heimerdinger, English ed. amplified and updated by Christian-Bernard Amphoux and Jenny Heimerdinger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 84.

[21]Ibid., 85.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., 85-86.

emendation may be necessary: "We possess no Greek ms. and no early version that are free from errors of some kind. It cannot be assumed therefore that no errors were made by copyists during the hundred or two hundred years intervening between the autographs and our earliest documentary evidence."[24] Robertson would acknowledge far fewer primitive errors than Westcott and Hort; nevertheless, "in some cases it is highly probable that all the mss. known to us have been led astray."[25] However, Robertson suggests caution: "Conjectural emendation is not to be employed until all the methods of textual criticism have been exhausted and unless clear occasion for its use can be shown in each instance. . . . No conjecture can be considered that does not satisfy the demands of both transcriptional and intrinsic evidence."[26] Moreover, "Speculation is inevitable where so much is at stake as in the New Testament. But certainly sobriety of judgment is constantly needed."[27]

Benjamin Warfield (upon whom Robertson depends) presents a similar viewpoint. He also thinks that Westcott's and Hort's list of proposed primitive errors is much too long, and he insists that conjectural emendation should be used only as a last resort, after all the other tools of textual criticism have been exhausted. He adds, "The only test of a successful conjecture is that it shall approve itself as inevitable."[28] By this criterion, it seems likely that no conjectural emendation will ever be approved. If the history of emendation is any guide, there will always be nearly as many emendations as there are textual critics. If scholars cannot agree on the emendation, then clearly none has proven to be "inevitable." Nevertheless, Warfield discusses two areas where conjectural emendation may be necessary: (1) in the case of a disputed reading, where the evidence for the variants is too conflicted to be harmonized, and (2) in the case where there are no variant readings, but for which internal evidence indicates the presence of corruption.[29] This theoretical position is more extreme than Warfield's practical position. Emending the text when no variants exist is even more dangerous than emending the text when variants do exist. Every word becomes subject to the whims of scholars bent on producing a NT text that satisfies their own desires. Warfield cautions that two extremes must be avoided: (1) finding errors everywhere, even when good sense can be made of the text, and (2) denying the presence of any corruptions, no matter how great the

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[24]Robertson, *Introduction to Textual Criticism* 237-38.

[25]Ibid., 239.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., 241.

[28]Benjamin B. Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 5th ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896) 209.

[29]Ibid., 206-7.

evidence.[30] This may be fine in theory, but in practice no passages have evidence so overwhelming that the need for emendation is universally accepted.

Frederic Kenyon, a well-known scholar of the text from a century ago, claims that textual criticism has two methods: "the comparison of documentary evidence, and conjecture." He notes that conjecture will be less frequent when the documentary evidence is more substantial. Conversely, when documentary evidence is lacking, conjecture will have to take a larger role. However, he admits, "In the case of the New Testament the documentary evidence is so full that conjecture is almost excluded."[31] Some have said that there is no place for conjectural emendation in the textual criticism of the NT, since there is so much documentary evidence. However, the prevailing view sees the majority of manuscripts as representing a late recension (i.e., the Byzantine text) with little textual value.[32] Kenyon observes, "The number of authorities which remain is thus comparatively small, and they differ considerably among themselves; and hence critics of this school are prepared to admit that, here and there, the original readings may have been wholly lost."[33] He continues, "It is universally agreed, however, that the sphere of conjecture in the case of the New Testament is infinitesimal; and it may further be added that for practical purposes it must be treated as non-existent." Kenyon also notes a practical reason for this: "No authority could be attached to words which rested only upon conjecture; and a critic who should devote himself to editing the Scriptures on conjectural lines would be merely wasting his time."[34]

David Black examines a number of proposed emendations of the text of Matthew's Gospel. He concludes, "Of the seventeen proposed emendations examined here, only one was judged to be viable, and even this conjecture cannot be raised to the level of certitude. The other suggestions represent genuine but purely speculative efforts to deal with the problems in these texts."[35] Black does not reject emendation *a priori*, but he thinks that emendation should not "be exercised in a vacuum, leaving out many plausible interpretations which deal with the Greek MS tradition in its extant form." He believes, "Rather than resorting to conjecture, it is more scientific, not to say more humble, to admit that in some instances we may not understand enough about the transmitted text to be able to grasp exactly what it says." Too many scholars

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[30] Ibid., 208.

[31] Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1912) 7.

[32] Ibid., 16.

[33] Ibid., 17.

[34] Ibid.

[35] David Alan Black, "Conjectural Emendations in the Gospel of Matthew," *Novum Testamentum* 31/1 (January 1989):14.

seem to assume that if they have difficulty understanding the text, then the text is wrong, and of course they know how to correct it.[36] The evidence that suggests a corruption to some scholars may simply demonstrate that those scholars have misunderstood the text as it stands. There is always a danger that the modern critic could "correct" an original reading, assuming that he understands what should have been written better than the original author of inspired Scripture.

Pessimistic Perspective

Michael W. Holmes supports the need for conjectural emendation not only in theory but also in practice. He asserts that external evidence may not lead back to the autographs, so intrinsic probability is needed, including textual emendation if necessary.[37] Holmes observes that even those textual critics who admit the theoretical need for emendation rarely, if ever, resort to it in practice. He asserts, "This failure amounts to a squandering of our resources, a neglect of evidence entrusted to us by the accidents of history that could, if properly used, enable us to penetrate beyond the limits of the extant tradition." He admits that there is less need for emendation of the NT than other ancient documents, "but we must not confuse *less* need with *no* need."[38] Holmes provides the example of Lightfoot's work on *1 Clement*. For his first edition, he had only one manuscript (Codex Alexandrinus). He detected several errors and suggested emendations. Between the first and second edition, new evidence came to light which supported several of Lightfoot's conjectures.[39] On the other hand, Holmes admits that there were also places where the "original" reading (as preserved in the newly discovered manuscripts) could not have been reasonably conjectured.[40] This should raise questions about emendation in general. If the external evidence does not lead to the autograph, there is no guarantee that it leads anywhere close enough to make an accurate conjecture. Indeed, emendation is subjective and lacks adequate controls. Every word is potentially subject to emendation, and there is no guarantee that any proposed emendation is correct, or that any reasonable emendation could possibly be correct given the state of external evidence available.

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[36]Ibid.

[37]Michael W. Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism in New Testament Textual Criticism," in *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the* Status Quaestionis, eds. Bart D. Ehrman and Michael W. Holmes, 336-60 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 347-48.

[38]Ibid., 348.

[39]Ibid., 349. Holmes cites J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Part I: S. Clement of Rome*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1869; 2nd ed., 1890).

[40]Holmes, "Reasoned Eclecticism" 349 n. 63.

John Strugnell offers the least optimistic view of the text.[41] Of those who claim that emendation is never necessary he asks, "Is there any *special* condition affecting the history of the NT's transmission which *guarantees* that no conjectural emendation is necessary or possible?" His answer is clearly, "No." Of those who admit that emendation may be necessary, but only rarely, he asks, "Is there any *special* condition affecting its attestation or transmission that renders emendation, in practice, *infinitely rarer* than in the other texts of classical antiquity?"[42] It is evident that he offers the same answer to this question. He observes that the attestation of the NT "is to be contrasted, we are told, with that of the classics (where the legitimacy of emendation is universally granted) by the variety, comparative excellence, and antiquity of the witnesses to the text."[43] He denies these three arguments, asking, "Is the case of the NT any different from that of one of the better-preserved classical texts?"[44] Strugnell does not think so. He admits that employing conjectural emendation always comes with the inevitable danger of correcting the original author. However, he thinks the author himself may have been mistaken. The critic may be able to fix "any irrationalities of the author, or accidents in his autograph, that the author would himself have corrected had his attention been drawn to them."[45] He suggests that the assumption that the original reading is preserved somewhere in the tradition implies "a manner of transmission of the NT text that is both inconsistent with what we know historically of early Christianity and distinct from the manner of transmission of all other books." For this assumption to be correct, there must have been supernatural help in the transmission of the text, "a theologoumenon whose necessity escapes me."[46] Strugnell argues that "even if one maintains strongly the verbal inspiration of Scripture, this need not entail the impropriety of textual criticism or even conjecture, unless one declares one particular form of text or MS to be inspired—and again we ask 'what form, and what are the criteria for choosing it?'"[47]

G. D. Kilpatrick offers a response to Strugnell.[48] He agrees with Strugnell that one should not believe that "some special Providence" has ensured that at any

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[41] John Strugnell, "A Plea for Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament: With a Coda on 1 Cor 4:6.," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36/4 (October 1974):543-58. The title of his article makes his position clear.

[42] Ibid., 545 (emphasis in the original).

[43] Ibid., 548.

[44] Ibid. He offers the works of Virgil as an example.

[45] Ibid., 550.

[46] Ibid., 551.

[47] Ibid., 554 n. 25.

[48] Kilpatrick may belong under the "mixed" category (although he would be closer to the pessimistic side), but he will be included here since his essay responds to Strugnell.

particular point the original text has survived somewhere in the textual tradition. He writes, "If such were the case, we might wonder why this Providence has not exerted itself a little further to ensure that at each point of variation the original reading would be manifest and immediately demonstrable."[49] Kilpatrick argues as follows: Suppose one accepts that an original reading has survived in only one extant witness. Then how does he know that another original reading was not contained only in a portion of that same witness that is no longer extant? For example, among Greek manuscripts $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ alone has πλεῖον at John 4:41, which Kilpatrick suggests is original (although it is not adopted by UBS[4]). If so, then how does one know whether another original reading was preserved only in another part of $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$, which has now been lost?[50] Kilpatrick concludes, "We cannot assert that the original form of the text has for certain survived at every point somewhere or other among our witnesses." Thus, he admits the theoretical necessity of emendation. However, he also adds, "If we want to go beyond this and argue that in fact there are passages where the original form of the text has been lost, then we must produce convincing examples where this has happened."[51] Theory is not enough; clear examples must be found. Moreover, Kilpatrick states, "We must admit that even if we are agreed that the text of a passage is corrupt it does not follow that we are agreed about the emendation."[52] This raises some doubt about the supposition that the text is corrupt.

Kilpatrick believes, "Probably the majority of deliberate changes in the early years of the transmission of the NT were linguistic."[53] Ancient copyists tended to correct the text if it seemed to be in error. In other words, "they were altering the text by conjecture, but probably regarded themselves as restoring what authors had written."[54] Therefore, many errors in the text arose through ancient conjectural emendation, and Kilpatrick's solution to the problem is more conjectural emendation! If none of the ancient emendations are correct, then why should one trust Kilpatrick to make the correct emendation centuries later, especially since many of the alleged emendations were made by copyists from cultural and linguistic backgrounds much closer to the original authors' than Kilpatrick's?

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[49] G. D. Kilpatrick, "Conjectural Emendation in the New Testament," in *The Principles and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays of G. D. Kilpatrick*, ed. J. K. Elliott, 98-109, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 96 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990) 99.

[50] Ibid., 99.

[51] Ibid., 100.

[52] Ibid., 101.

[53] Ibid., 106.

[54] Ibid., 107.

Kilpatrick admits the uncertain nature of this exercise: "Time and time again we find indications that our conjectures are themselves unsatisfactory. We may put the difficulty this way. If the conjectures were transmitted text instead of being a conjecture, we could have seen reason for calling this transmitted text into question."[55] Furthermore, since he believes that most deliberate changes were linguistic, he expects "that a large proportion of our conjectures in the NT would be linguistic." However, this does not turn out to be the case. "Linguistic conjectures are few and far between. The majority of conjectures deal with marginal matters which constitute only a small proportion of variant readings. These considerations imply that the direction of much conjectural emendation is misdirected, an implication that strengthens our doubts about much conjectural emendation as practised."[56] He concludes, "Basically I think conjecture in the NT a dubious enterprise."[57] Kilpatrick thinks that conjectural emendation should not be rejected *a priori*, but he sees it as merely one way (among many) of dealing with textual problems.[58]

Conclusion

It is evident that experienced textual critics disagree about the state of the evidence. Some are very optimistic about the tenacity of the textual tradition and are certain that the vast amount of textual evidence is sufficient for establishing the original. Others cannot rule out the presence of primitive errors, which would require conjectural emendation. One would like to assume that the Holy Spirit preserved His Word, but the existence of variants in the first place should make one cautious about assuming what God "must have done." In fact, many Christians throughout history never had access to a text of the NT apart from one which is now known to have been corrupt. Be that as it may, there is a difference between the theoretical usefulness of emendation and actually finding a passage where emendation is necessary. In practice, emendation is a very subjective enterprise. There is no text for which the need for emendation is universally acknowledged, and even if there were, it is highly unlikely that scholars would agree on the correct emendation.

This article is not intended to solve the theoretical question; instead, the focus of this article is the text of 2 Pet 3:10d, which many scholars believe requires conjectural emendation. Despite the claims of many scholars, the best attested reading of this verse does make sense in context, and thus conjectural emendation should not be pursued in this case.

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[55]Ibid., 107-8.

[56]Ibid., 108.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid., 109.

External Evidence for the Text of 2 Peter 3:10d

It is clear that ancient scribes had difficulty understanding the text of 2 Pet 3:10d, and so they resorted to a number of conjectural emendations which have been preserved in the textual tradition. In the UBS[4], the clause reads καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὑρεθήσεται. The extant variants replace the underlined portion:[59]

Text	English Translation	Major Witnesses
εὑρεθήσεται	will be found	ℵ B K P 424^{c} 117 1739^{txt} 1852 syr$^{ph,h_{mg}}$ arm Origen
κατακαήσεται	will be burned up	A 048 049 056 0142 33 614 *Byz Lect* syr^{h} cop^{bo} eth
ἀφανισθήσεται	will disappear	C
οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται	will *not* be found	Sahidic and one MS of Harclean Syriac
εὑρεθήσεται λυό-μενα	will be found *dissolved*	𝔓^{72}
omit the whole clause		Ψ vg Pelagius

The external evidence clearly favors the reading εὑρεθήσεται. Metzger writes, "The oldest reading, and the one which best explains the origin of the others that have been preserved, is εὑρεθήσεται."[60] Hort claims, "External evidence is here strongly favorable to εὑρεθήσεται. . . . Internal evidence of transcription is absolutely certain on the same side, for εὑρεθήσεται fully accounts for all four other readings . . . while no other reading will account for the rest."[61] The problem with this clear choice is making sense of it in the context. Omanson observes, "It is hard to make any sense of this reading, so it is not surprising that copyists and translators of ancient

[59]Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 636; Roger L. Omanson, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's* Textual Commentary *for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006) 500-501.

[60]Metzger, *Textual Commentary* 636.

[61]Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, 280.

versions introduced a variety of changes."[62]

This difficulty is reflected in modern English translations. Some try to make sense of εὑρεθήσεται: "will be disclosed" (NRSV; HCSB), "will be laid bare" (NIV; NET Bible), "will be exposed" (ESV; NCV), "will be found to deserve judgment" (NLT), or "will be brought to judgment" (REB). Some translate κατακαήσεται (NASU; RSV; NKJV),[63] while one translates ἀφανισθήσεται (TEV).

J. B. Mayor notes that οὐχ εὑρίσκομαι denotes "disappearance" in Ps 37:36 (LXX); Job 20:8 (LXX); Dan 11:19 (Θ); Rev 18:21.[64] Indeed, Charles Bigg concludes that οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται is probably correct.[65] Tord Fornberg is sympathetic with this view. He believes that the reading εὑρεθήσεται is so difficult that is must be rejected despite good manuscript support. Thus, he suggests that οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται makes better sense (cf. Rev 16:20; 18:21), although he admits, "The great weakness of the reading is of course the lack of Greek manuscript support."[66] However, he thinks the reading of $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ (εὑρεθήσεται λυόμενα) communicates the same idea. Fornberg concludes, "It appears impossible to decide which reading is original. Since the introduction to v11 seems to assume that v10 refers to destruction or nonexistence, the wording of $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ and the Sahidic translation must carry a significance akin to that intended."[67] Richard Bauckham agrees that οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται "gives excellent sense," but he insists, "It should properly be considered as an emendation rather than a variant reading. Its two occurrences (in ancient versions, not in Greek MSS) have no chance of preserving the original reading, but they might be correct *emendations* of the text."[68] He adds, "As an emendation, the addition of οὐχ is the simplest proposed, and yields such an excellent sense that it must be considered the best solution unless

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[62]Omanson, *Textual Guide*, 500.

[63]One commentator notes, "κατακαήσεται ('will be burned up') has found little support among the commentators (von Soden), but more support than it deserves among the English translations (AV, RV, RSV, JB). It cannot be original because it would then be impossible to explain the other readings" (Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary 50 [Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983] 317).

[64]J. B. Mayor, "Notes on the Text of the Second Epistle of Peter," *The Expositor*, 6th series, 10 (1904):292. Mayor has "Dan ii. 19," but he intends "Dan xi. 19." The correct reference appears in idem, *The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter: Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Comments* (New York: Macmillan, 1907; reprint, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978) cc.

[65]Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, 2nd ed., International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902) 213.

[66]Tord Fornberg, *An Early Church in a Pluralistic Society: A Study of 2 Peter*, trans. Jean Gray, Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series 9 (Lund, Sweden: GWK Gleerup, 1977) 76.

[67]Ibid., 76-77.

[68]Bauckham, *2 Peter* 317 (emphasis in the original).

the reading εὑρεθήσεται can be given a satisfactory interpretation."[69]

Some suggest that the same effect as οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται could be obtained without the negative by punctuating as a question: "Will the earth and the works in it be found?" J. N. D. Kelly adopts this interpretation. He writes, "In the Bible 'find' or 'be found' frequently approximates to 'be' or 'exist,' and when used in the negative or cast in the form of a question can convey the sense of non-existence."[70] However, he admits that there are problems with this understanding, "notably the abrupt switch to an interrogation."[71] Mayor comments, "I do not think we can give this force to the simple question."[72] Similarly, Metzger believes this solution "fails to commend itself."[73]

Likewise, the reading of $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ has found few proponents, despite offering the earliest known copy of 2 Peter.[74] It seems to have added the participle based on λυθήσεται earlier in verse 10 or λυόμενων in verse 11, but this overloads the context with three occurrences of the same verb.[75]

Conjectural Emendations of the Text of 2 Peter 3:10d

Hort is certain that the best attested reading is εὑρεθήσεται. However, "it is hardly less certain by intrinsic probability that εὑρεθήσεται cannot be right: in other words, it is the most original of recorded readings, the parent of the rest, and yet itself corrupt."[76] Similarly, G. van den Heever insists that εὑρεθήσεται is a corruption: "If εὑρεθήσεται did make sense, the major part of the tradition would not have found it

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[69] Ibid.

[70] J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) 365.

[71] Ibid., 366.

[72] Mayor, "Notes on the Text," 292; idem, *Second Epistle of St. Peter* cc. Mayor asserts that punctuating as a question "is extremely harsh: it should at least have had a ποῦ prefixed, as in 1 Pet. 4^{18}" (ibid., 160).

[73] Metzger, *Textual Commentary* 636. Fornberg adds, "The suggestion that it is a rhetorical question is far-fetched" (*Early Church in a Pluralistic Society* 75), and Bauckham concludes, "This is forced" (*2 Peter* 318).

[74] Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament* 58. They suggest this papyrus dates to the third century.

[75] Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 636; G. van den Heever, "In Purifying Fire: World View and 2 Peter 3:10," *Neotestamentica* 27 (1993):108. Bauckham adds that the reading of $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$ "seems not to have commended itself to any scholar. In spite of our author's tendency to repeat words, the clumsy repetition of λύεσθαι three times in vv 10-11 is unlikely" (*2 Peter* 317).

[76] Westcott and Hort, *Introduction* 280.

necessary to change the text into something more intelligible."[77] Metzger also thinks εὑρεθήσεται "seems to be devoid of meaning in the context."[78]

Modern scholars are not satisfied with the ancient emendations, so they make conjectures of their own. Metzger and Omanson provide a thorough list of the various suggestions,[79] reproduced on the next page. Bauckham concludes, "Some of these proposed emendations are more plausible than others, but we should not resort to emendation unless εὑρεθήσεται proves incapable of a satisfactory sense."[80] This seems to be the best way to deal with any such textual issue.

[77]Van den Heever, "In Purifying Fire" 116.

[78]Metzger, *Textual Commentary* 636.

[79]Ibid., 636-37; Omanson, *Textual Guide* 501. Mayor adds, and rejects, ἃ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὑρεθήσεται. ("Notes on the Text" 292; idem, *Second Epistle of St. Peter* cc). Bauckham also cites εὕσεται, "will be singed," and γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἀγρὰ εὑρεθήσεται, "the earth and all that is in it will be found as chaos" (*2 Peter* 317-18).

[80]Bauckham, *2 Peter* 318.

Emendation	English Translation	Emender
after ἔργα the word ἀγρά has fallen out	the earth and the things in it will be found *useless*	Bradshaw
replace εὑρεθήσεται with ῥυήσεται or ῥεύσεται	the earth and the things in it will *flow*	Hort[**]
replace εὑρεθήσεται with συρρυήσεται	the earth and the things in it will *flow together*	Naber
replace εὑρεθήσεται with ἐκπυρωθήσεται	the earth and the things in it will be *burnt to ashes*	Olivier[***]
replace εὑρεθήσεται with ἀρθήσεται	the earth and the things in it will be *taken away*	J. B. Mayor[****]
replace εὑρεθήσεται with κριθήσεται	the earth and the things in it will be *judged*	Eberhard Nestle
replace εὑρεθήσεται with ἰαθήσεται (or ἐξιαθήσεται)	the earth and the things in it will be *healed* (*thoroughly*)	Chase[*****]
replace εὑρεθήσεται with πυρωθήσεται	the earth and the things in it will be *burned*	Vansittart[******]

[**] See also Hort, *Notes on Select Readings*, 103. Mayor says, "The required sense would be given by καταρυήσεται or διαρυήσεται, but not, I think, by the simpler ῥυήσεται. . . . Dr. Chase thinks that διαρυήσεται receives some support from Enoch i. 6, and also that it is nearer to εὑρεθήσεται than καταρυήσεται" (*Second Epistle of St. Peter* cc).

[***] G. Milligan also draws attention to this emendation of Olivier, who suggested that ΕΚΠΥΡΩΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ was mistakenly written as ΕΥΡΩΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ with ΚΠ written above the line as a correction. Later this became ΕΥΡΕΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ , when the letters above the line were omitted and E was substituted for Ω ("2 Peter iii. 10," *Expository Times* 32/7 [April 1921]:331).

[****] See also Mayor, "Notes on the Text" 292; idem, *Second Epistle of St. Peter* 160.

[*****] Mayor writes, "[Chase] suggests, however, that possibly ἰαθήσεται or ἐξιαθήσεται may be the true reading, in accordance with the words addressed to Gabriel in Enoch x. 7, ἴασον τὴν γῆν ἣν ἠφάνισαν οἱ ἐγρήγοροι, and in anticipation of καινὴν γῆν in ver. 13 below (the three clauses in *vv*. 12b, 13, answering to the three clauses in *v.* 10); but he allows that 'ver. 11 seems to require some verb implying destruction at the end of ver. 10'" ("Notes on the Text" 292; idem, *Second Epistle of St. Peter* cc).

[******] Mayor observes, "Dr. Abbott suggests πυρωθήσεται, as in v. 12, or πυρευθήσεται, as in Plat. *Legg.* 843 E" (*Second Epistle of St. Peter* 160 n. 4). According to Mayor, Vansittart proposed that the variants may be explained by supposing the archetype had become illegible in places. For example, after the first and fourth letters had disappeared, a scribe conjectured [ε]υρ[ε]θήσεται (ibid., cc).

The Interpretation of 2 Peter 3:10d

None of the conjectural emendations listed above has found widespread support. In spite of the claim that the best reading (εὑρεθήσεται) makes no sense, a number of scholars have sought to demonstrate that an acceptable interpretation can be made without emending the text. Some of the suggested interpretations of εὑρεθήσεται will not commend themselves, but others will provide sufficient evidence to reject the need for conjectural emendation.

Insufficient Explanations

Rawson Lumby suggested that 2 Pet 3:10 should be interpreted in light of Eccles 12:14: "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil" (NASU). No matter how much something tries to stay hidden on the Day of the Lord, it still "will be found."[81] Larry Overstreet finds two problems with this suggestion. First, there is no clear connection between the Day of the Lord and Eccles 12:14. "Second, the judgment in Eccles 12:14 applies only to every work 'of man' (see v. 13), while the reference in 2 Pet 3:10 refers to the earth in addition to all the works therein."[82]

Joseph Leach appeals to Rev 20:11-15 and refers the "will be found" of 2 Pet 3:10 only to the works, which will be discovered at the great white throne judgment.[83] Overstreet agrees that there is a connection between this verse and the great white throne judgment. However, Leach is mistaken when he limits "will be found" to the works in the earth. Leach makes a second mistake "in referring the works here in Peter to Revelation 20:12-13 and the works of man, for in Revelation 20:11 the earth and the heaven 'fled away' from the great white throne. If the earth has already fled away and no place is found for it (v. 11), how could it and the works therein be referred to in verses 12-13?"[84]

Overstreet suggests that 2 Pet 3:10d should be punctuated as a question. As was seen above, this approach is rejected by most commentators. However, Overstreet argues that a solemn, thought-provoking question would fit the solemn context. He writes, "This was a question to which Peter did not expect a simple yes or no answer, but a question designed to cause his readers to stop and ponder on this

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[81] J. Rawson Lumby, *An Exposition of the Bible*, 6 vols. (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton, 1910) 6:750, cited by R. Larry Overstreet, "A Study of 2 Peter 3:10-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137/548 (October 1980):356.

[82] Overstreet, "2 Peter 3:10-13" 356.

[83] Joseph V. Leach, "The Biblical Theology of Peter" (research paper, San Francisco Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964) 25, cited by Overstreet, "2 Peter 3:10-13" 356.

[84] Overstreet, "2 Peter 3:10-13" 356.

cataclysmic event which was to come. It was a question which would prepare them for the following statement concerning their own life of godliness."[85]

Frederick Danker notes, "Most commentators . . . insist that a word is required which characterizes the destruction of the earth and of the achievements wrought in it. All the variants and conjectures, with the exception of Eberhard Nestle's κριθήσεται, point in the same direction, emphasis being placed on the *mode* of judgment."[86] However, Danker examines the context and concludes, "In the concluding phrase of vs. 10 we anticipate not a verb which describes the *mode* of judgment, but one which expresses the fact of a *judicial process*."[87] He notes that Psalm of Solomon 17:10 (Rahlf's, 17:8) reads: κατὰ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα αὐτῶν ἀποδώσεις αὐτοῖς, ὁ θεός, εὑρεθῆναι αὐτοῖς κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. He states, "The *parallelismus membrorum* leaves no doubt that the word εὑρεθῆναι is here understood in the sense of judicial inquiry culminating in a penal pronouncement. This is precisely the meaning that makes the Petrine passage intelligible."[88] However, the parallel is not exact, so Danker emends 2 Pet 3:10 in light of Psalm of Solomon.

> In place of
> ΚΑΙ ΓΗ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΡΓΑ ΕΥΡΕΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ,
> ΚΑΙ ΓΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΑ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΗ ΕΡΓΑ ΕΥΡΕΘΗΣΕΤΑΙ is to be read.[89]

The change from κατα τα to και τα is a simple scribal error. Danker observes, "Indeed, this precise phenomenon appears in the textual tradition of vs. 13! Alexandrinus, which is among the manuscripts that read εὑρεθήσεται [sic] in vs. 10, here reads καί in place of κατά."[90] However, this is still not quite parallel to Psalm of Solomon 17, which has an impersonal construction with the dative. On the other hand, once the allegedly original κατά is restored, then it is a simple matter to replace γη with γῃ. Later scribes failed to understand, and interpreted ΓΗ as nominative rather than dative. Thus, the original text was: καὶ γῃ κατὰ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα εὑρεθήσεται. Danker concludes, "The text as restored requires no philological straining, 'And it shall be found to the earth according to the works in it,' i.e. 'The earth shall be *judged* according to the deeds done in it.'"[91] Danker's solution is

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[85]Ibid., 358.

[86]Frederick W. Danker, "II Peter 3:10 and Psalm of Solomon 17:10," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 53 (1962):83 (emphasis in the original).

[87]Ibid., 84 (emphasis in the original).

[88]Ibid., 85.

[89]Ibid., 85-86.

[90]Ibid., 86.

[91]Ibid. (emphasis in the original).

interesting, but replacing emendations of εὑρεθήσεται with conjectural emendations of other parts of the clause does not make such a solution acceptable.

Al Wolters accepts the reading εὑρεθήσεται, but he rejects the idea that the context envisions the coming judgment as cosmic annihilation. Instead, he sees the judgment "as a smelting process from which the world will emerge purified." In light of this, he suggests that εὑρεθήσεται "is a metallurgical term appropriate to smelting and refining."[92] According to Wolters, in the Day of the Lord the cosmic elements will not "burn up"; instead, they will melt. Wolters suggests that Peter had Mal 3:2-4 in mind:

> But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years (NASU).

Malachi pictures the Lord as a refiner purifying metals in the melting pot. In 2 Peter, the image is extended from the Levites to the entire cosmos.[93]

Wolters notes that the passive of εὑρίσκω occurs again in verse 14 in the context of the Christian's character. He writes, "The argument here explicitly connects the ethical blamelessness for which Christians are exhorted to strive to the newness of the future world of righteousness which will emerge from the crucible. The expression 'to be found,' like the phrase 'without spot or blemish,' apparently refers to the *eschatological survival* in the third world of righteousness begun in the second."[94] Wolters believes that the passive of εὑρίσκω can have the connotation "to have survived, to have stood the test, to have proved genuine." He finds support for this in the use of the passive of εὑρίσκω in 1 Pet 1:7, where surviving a purifying fire is mentioned: "So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found [εὑρεθῇ] to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (NASU). Here the verb is used without a predicate, as in 2 Pet 3:10. Wolters believes that all three uses of the passive of εὑρίσκω (1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 3:10, 14) refer to "the eschatological result of a purification process."[95] He finds further support in *Epistle of Barnabas* 21:6 and *2*

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[92] Al Wolters, "Worldview and Textual Criticism in 2 Peter 3:10," *Westminster Theological Journal* 49/2 (Fall 1987):408.

[93] Ibid., 409.

[94] Ibid., 410 (emphasis in the original).

[95] Ibid.

Clement 16:3.[96] Wolters suggests that the verb εὑρίσκω has a technical sense in the context of metallurgy. "Its meaning would then be something like 'emerge purified (from the crucible),' with the connotation of having stood the test, of being tried and true."[97]

However, van den Heever is not convinced. He argues that the alleged parallels (1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 3:14; *Barnabas* 21:6) do not have absolute uses of εὑρίσκω, as in 2 Pet 3:10. He claims, "In those contexts the use of εὑρίσκω is perfectly natural, being good idiomatic Greek. That would make 2 Pt 3:10 the only occurrence of the word where it carries the pregnant meaning of 'found/was shown to be' (in a metalworking sense)."[98] Thomas Schreiner also rejects Wolters' interpretation. He thinks that Wolters provides a good explanation of the meaning of "earth," but Wolters' view does not seem to fit with the term "works." Moreover, the Malachi passage does not refer to purification of the cosmos but of human beings. Schreiner also believes Wolters' understanding of 2 Pet 3:14 is inadequate.[99]

Better Explanations

William Wilson asks, "Is not εὑρεθήσεται alone really after all not only the best attested but also the most suitable, and in fact the original reading?"[100] He offers two arguments in defense of this reading. (1) The passage is understandable as it stands: "the earth and its works (i.e. men and their deeds) are laid bare before God. This is quite naturally stated from the Divine point of view in the word 'discovered.'" (2) The context confirms this. Verses 11-13 return to the destruction of things (cf. v. 10a), then in verse 14 Peter urges his readers to watch and to "be found" in peace, spotless and blameless. One should compare Rev 6:15-16 (cf. Isa 2:19; Hos 10:8), which describe the wicked trying to hide from God; the worst thing for them is to be found.[101]

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[96] Ibid., 411.

[97] Ibid., 412.

[98] Van den Heever, "In Purifying Fire" 109.

[99] Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003) 387.

[100] William E. Wilson, "Εὑρεθήσεται in 2 Pet. iii. 10," *Expository Times* 32/1 (October 1920):44.

[101] Ibid. Albert Bonus accepts Wilson's approach, and he finds some support in Jer 10:18, Ezek 28:15, and *2 Clem* 2:16. He concludes, "Thus εὑρεθήσεται is made to mean φανερωθήσεται" (Albert Bonus, "2 Peter iii. 10," *Expository Times* 32/6 [March 1921]:281). With a similar approach, Hellmut Lenhard accepts εὑρεθήσεται , and he considers the use of the niphal of מצא in the OT. He also suggests "be found" means something like "become manifest." He offers Jer 50:20 as the clearest parallel to 2 Pet 3:10 ("In those days . . . search will be made . . . for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found" [NASU]). He concludes: (1) the absolute use of εὑρίσκομαι is supported by the OT; (2) not only persons

Jerome Neyrey's approach is similar. He translates 2 Pet 3:10d, "The earth and all its works will be found out."[102] He writes, "In light of forensic procedure, 'being found' is a plausible and contextually appropriate term. Evidently it implies that something will be revealed, uncovered, and brought to light, which might be goodness to be rewarded or evil to be requited."[103] He notes several biblical examples of "finding" (Acts 5:39; 13:28; 23:9; 24:20; 24:5; 1 Cor 4:2; Gal 2:17; Phil 3:9; 1 Pet 1:17; 15:15; 2 Pet 3:14),[104] and he concludes, "In the context of judgment, rewards, and punishments, then, 'being found' suggests forensic investigation of the heart, a quality regularly credited to God."[105]

A potential problem with these approaches is that they seem to require that "the earth and the works in it" refer to people and their deeds. Douglas Moo notes that the context supports a reference to the judgment of the physical earth and things on it, such as buildings. "'Heavens' and 'earth' refer to the physical universe throughout this passage (see also vv. 5 and 7). And the continuation of Peter's thought in verse 11 also suggests that physical dissolution has been his point in verse 10."[106] Kelly agrees: "By the earth is meant, of course, our planet and not, as some advocate, its inhabitants; while the works which fill it are not human actions (inaptly described as 'the works in it,' and in any case they follow their authors to eternity—Rev. xiv. 13), but all the products of nature and, above all, of human culture, civilization, art and technology."[107] Fornberg adds, "If the author had had the sinful deeds of men in mind, the unity of the verse would be broken, since it otherwise describes God's creation."[108] He insists, "Nor is the possibility of giving the verb a juridical meaning ('to reveal' or 'to discover') plausible. This meaning of the verb εὑρίσκεσθαι is first documented in Byzantine times, and can hardly be

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and things, but also acts can "be found"; (3) it is particularly true in the eschaton that certain acts are "found," that is "become manifest" (Hellmut Lenhard, "Noch einmal zu 2 Petr 3 10d," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 69 [1978]:136).

[102] Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude*, Anchor Bible 37C (New York: Doubleday, 1993) 236.

[103] Ibid., 243.

[104] Ibid., 243-44.

[105] Ibid., 244.

[106] Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter and Jude*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 191. Mayor agrees: "ἔργα is to be understood here of all that man has wrought on the surface of the globe" (*Second Epistle of St. Peter* 160).

[107] Kelly, *Epistles of Peter* 364-65.

[108] Fornberg, *Early Church in a Pluralistic Society* 75.

expected when the earth and God's creations thereon is the subject."[109]

Richard Bauckham's Explanation

Richard Bauckham provides an extensive discussion of the textual issue.[110] He defends the reading εὑρεθήσεται as the most difficult reading and as that reading which best explains the origin of the others.[111] However, unlike so many other commentators, he does not think that this reading is so difficult as to be impossible. He notes the attempt of some scholars, who accept the reading εὑρεθήσεται, to give it the sense of "will be made manifest before God and his judgment." However, "The attempt to find a comparable usage of מצא ('to find') in the OT and εὑρίσκειν ('to find') in the LXX is not wholly successful. These verbs are certainly common in contexts concerned with moral and judicial scrutiny, but are not used in quite the same way as 2 Pet 3:10 uses εὑρεθήσεται."[112] He observes three relevant categories, none of which fit the usage found here: (1) sin or righteousness is found (e.g., 1 Sam 25:28; 26:18; etc.); (2) someone is found righteous (e.g., Sir 44:17, 20; Dan 5:27 Q); (3) a criminal is found, that is, discovered or caught (e.g., Exod 22:8; Deut 22:22, 28; etc.).[113] Despite the lack of exact parallels, Bauckham thinks that OT usage could have influenced the choice of words in 2 Peter: "At least it could provide the word with generally judicial overtones, and when full weight is given to the passive form as a 'divine' passive, meaning 'will be discovered *by God*,' a plausible sense is obtained."[114] Bauckham suggests that "εὑρεθήσεται is being used synonymously with φανήσεται ('will appear'), φανερωθήσεται ('will be made manifest') or φανερὰ γενήσεται ('will become manifest'), as used in similar contexts (Mark 4:22; Luke 18:17; John 3:21; 1 Cor 3:13; 14:25; Eph 5:13; *2 Clem* 16:3), but with the added connotation that it is God, the Judge, who will 'discover' the earth and its works."[115]

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[109] Ibid., 75-76. Similarly, Kelly rejects interpreting εὑρεθήσεται as "will be laid bare" in the sense of "discovered and exposed to divine judgment." The problem is that "here, apart from the great difficulty of giving 'will be found' the sense proposed, the idea which looms in the foreground is rather the annihilation of the earth and all it contains; this is demanded both by the preceding two verses and by the opening words of verse 11" (*Epistles of Peter* 365).

[110] Bauckham, *2 Peter* 316-21.

[111] Ibid., 303 n. c.

[112] Ibid., 318.

[113] Ibid., 318-19.

[114] Ibid., 319, emphasis in original. Similarly, Moo says of εὑρεθήσεται, "The word can have the connotation 'be manifest,' and the passive form of the verb probably has the nuance here of 'be manifest before God.' That is, the earth and 'all its works' will be manifest, disclosed in their fullness to God, at the time of judgment" (*2 Peter* 191).

[115] Bauckham, *2 Peter* 319.

Bauckham claims that the context supports his interpretation: "The section 3:5-10 is by no means concerned solely with the Parousia as cosmic dissolution, but is primarily concerned with the Parousia as judgment of the wicked. The destruction of the universe is of interest to the author only as the means of judgment of men and women."[116] Moreover, verses 11-14 "focus very explicitly on the moral dimension of eschatology."[117] In fact, there may be a deliberate contrast between εὑρεθήσεται in verse 10 and εὑρεθῆναι in verse 14.

Bauckham notes two major objections to this interpretation. First, "the context demands a reference to the annihilation of the earth." As has already been noted, the focus of this passage is the judgment of the wicked; thus, Bauckham believes a reference to the judgment of the wicked is a more appropriate climax to verse 10. However, it is argued that the opening words of verse 11 ("Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way"; NASU) imply a reference to dissolution at the end of verse 10.[118] Bauckham believes the author has a good reason for referring back to the destruction of the heavens in verse 11 instead of back to the judgment of humanity (v. 10d):

> In vv 11-14 the author wishes to base his exhortation to his readers not only on the threat of judgment, but more broadly on the eschatological expectation of a new world of righteousness (v 13). Since the present world, the scene of human wickedness, is to disappear and be replaced by a new world, the home of righteousness, his readers should be the kind of people who will be able to live in that new world. Then when they face the judgment of God they will be found to be fit, not to perish with the old world, but to enter the new (v 14).[119]

Bauckham also cites a parallel passage found in *2 Clem* 16:3, "which proves that a description of the eschatological conflagration which climaxes in the exposure of human deeds to judgment need not be thought surprising in 2 Pet 3:10."[120]

The second objection is that following "heavens," "earth" must be a reference to the physical earth and "the works on it" must refer to the contents of the earth, not to the deeds of humans. Bauckham responds, "It is true that in this context γῆ cannot be given the sense simply of 'humanity,' but it can easily mean the physical earth *as the scene of human history*, the earth as the dwelling-place of humanity."

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 320.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid., 324.

[120] Ibid., 321. The text reads, "The day of judgment is now coming like a burning oven, and some of the heavens will melt, and all the earth [will be] like lead melting in fire, and then the secret and open works of men will appear [φανήσεται]" (ibid., 320).

Since the author is thinking of the cosmic conflagration as a means of judgment, this usage of γῆ is natural.[121]

David Wenham believes Bauckham "argues persuasively that the reference is to divine judgment of human actions at the end of time—they will be 'discovered' by God."[122] Wenham admits that it is difficult to find parallels to this use of the verb εὑρίσκω. He suggests that the possible source is the eschatological teaching of Jesus:

> Jesus' eschatological parables refer on several occasions to the returning lord 'finding' his servants (Mt 24. 46/Lk 12. 43, Mk 13. 36, Lk 12. 37, 38). It is not specifically said that the master 'finds the works' of his servants, but this is certainly the meaning of the parables in question, since they refer to the master as leaving his servants with tasks to do. (The word ἔργον used in 2 Peter 3. 10 is actually found in Mk 13. 34 and in verbal form in Mt 25. 16, Lk 19. 16).[123]

Wenham finds several other echoes of Jesus' teaching in 2 Peter 3, such as the day of the Lord coming like a thief (an echo of Jesus' parable of the thief) and the heavens and elements being dissolved and burned up (an echo of Matt 24:29 and parallels).[124] Wenham suggests that "εὑρίσκεσθαι is almost a technical term for being 'discovered' at the parousia."[125]

Conclusion

In his recent work on 2 Peter (published in 2003), Schreiner surveys all the data, and in the end he agrees with Bauckham. Schreiner writes,

> The phrase refers, then, to the consequence of the burning of the heavens and the earth in the first part of v. 10. The earth and the works performed in it will be laid bare before God, and so the NIV translation ["will be laid bare"] effectively communicates the notion of divine judgment in the divine passive verb "will be found." We should observe that in v. 7 the same pattern exists. The heavens and earth will be burned, and judgment will come upon the ungodly.[126]

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[121] Ibid. (emphasis in the original)

[122] David Wenham, "Being 'Found' on the Last Day: New Light on 2 Peter 3. 10 and 2 Corinthians 5. 3," *New Testament Studies* 33/3 (July 1987):477.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid. One might also compare 2 Peter 3 with Rev 3:2-3, in which the image of a thief is used in the context of works being "found."

[125] Ibid., 479 n. 3; cf. Phil 3:9; 1 Pet 1:7; 2 Pet 3:14.

[126] Schreiner, *2 Peter* 386.

Schreiner concludes, "It seems that this is the most satisfying way to explicate this remarkably difficult phrase."[127]

Whether Bauckham's defense of the reading εὑρεθήσεται will stand the test of time and further scholarly scrutiny remains to be seen. There is always the possibility that further textual evidence could change the scholarly evaluation of the known variants. Nevertheless, it is clear that sense can be made of this difficult reading. Conjectural emendation would be both unnecessary and dangerous in this situation. Whether conjectural emendation is theoretically necessary or not, emendation is not helpful for establishing the text of 2 Pet 3:10.

Despite the pessimism of some scholars (such as Ehrman expresses in *Misquoting Jesus*), the text of the NT has been preserved remarkably well. Although no extant manuscript is free from error, the combined weight of evidence provides the highest level of confidence that God's Word is available in an accurate form today. Any Christian can trust the modern critical Greek text and the translations which adhere to it. They effectively communicate the essence of God's inspired, inerrant, and authoritative revelation to his church.

[127] Ibid., 387.