

Should John 6:4 Be Considered a Spurious Insertion into John's Gospel? A Response to Michael Rood's Fantastic Claim

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Recently, Michael Rood has rolled out his new teaching (*The Chronological Gospels Bible*) with this fantastic claim:

After forty years of labor, including three decades of restoring the Ancient Biblical Hebrew Calendar, together with the experiences that accompany years of living in Jerusalem and the Galilee, Michael Rood presents the inspired Gospel records in chronological order to advance you in your lifetime quest for truth.

This Bible pieces together the life and ministry of the Messiah in a way no one has ever seen before. It reveals depth, beauty and truth in the Word that could never be understood until it was put together to tell the story as it happened – complete and chronological.¹

Is it possible that Michael Rood has suddenly seen what centuries of Bible scholars have missed? If you're thinking that this is just too incredible to be true, then you're on the right track. Rood does not give us anything new. He simply repackages older controversies and the theories these controversies generated, and then presents them to his unsuspecting audience as though he has come up with something heretofore unknown.

The bottom-line is that Rood is morphing the "one-year" theory, expanding it to fit a "70 Week" duration of Yeshua's public ministry. To substantiate his "70 weeks" chronology of Yeshua's life on the earth, he appeals to the fact that there were early Church Fathers who held that the duration of Yeshua's ministry was about a year. Most of these early Church Fathers based their one year chronology upon Lk 4:19 where it quotes Isaiah 6:12, "... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." But one has to wonder how they interpreted the quote as giving the length of Yeshua's ministry.

The Gnostic Valentinus held the one-year view, but Irenaeus, his contemporary, disputed this, appealing to the gospel of John and the number of Passovers he mentions.² It is true that Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150–215)³ and Origen (ca. 185–254)⁴ adopted the one-year theory, as did others of the early Church Fathers. But one hardly could imagine that Rood now accepts the Church Fathers as authoritative!

Actually, his appeal to the Church Fathers is only to bolster his contention that the 3 1/2 year chronology of Yeshua's public ministry is "ridiculous, completely nonsensical." Of greater importance to his "70 Week" theory, however, is his attempt to discount the chronological notices in the Gospel of John and the three Passovers recorded there (2:13ff; 6:4; 11:55ff). For if John notes three Passovers in the ministry of Yeshua, then surely His public ministry would have lasted far more than 70 weeks. To overcome this obstacle and to make his neat "70 Week" theory seem plausible, Rood simply announces that John 6:4 should not be considered inspired Scripture, and he does so by stating what appears to be a "slam-dunk" argument: that John 6:4 is a fraudulent forgery added much later after John wrote his Gospel, proof of which is that it does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts.⁵

But this claim makes evident Rood's ineptitude in the area of textual criticism of the Apostolic Scriptures as well as his inability to read the critical apparatus in the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament he claims to use. Holding up a copy of the Nestle-Aland 27th Edition Greek New Testament, Rood announces that at John 6:4, the

1 Quoted from <http://michaelrood.tv/the-chronological-gospels-bible.html>, accessed on 1/7/2014.

2 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* ii.22.5–6.

3 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* i.21.146.

4 Origen, *De Principiis* iv.1.5.

5 As publicly taught by Michael Rood, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez-kwYLG3iA&app=desktop&safe=active>, accessed 1/7/2014.

apparatus indicates that the verse is entirely missing in the earliest Greek manuscripts of John. But the Nestle-Aland 27th Edition critical apparatus at John 6:4 has nothing close to what Rood states. In my edition, it has this:

<p>46 I</p> <p>6</p> <p>47 III</p> <p>48 I</p>	<p>Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀπῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης τῆς Γαλιλαίας τῆς Τιβεριάδος. 2 ἤκολούθει δὲ αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς, ὅτι ἔθεώρουν τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίει ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσθενούντων. 3 ἀνῆλθεν δὲ εἰς τὸ ὄρος Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐκάθητο μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ. 4 <u>Ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων</u></p>	<p>21 Mc 6,32-44 L 9,10b-17 cf Mt 15,32-39 Mc 8,1-10 · 21,1 Mt 15,30 · 2,11! 15 Mt 5,1! 2,13! 5,1!</p>
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Fig. 1 – NA-27, John 6:1–4 [verse 4 underlined with apparatus marks circled]

<p>¶ 6,1</p> <p>• 2</p> <p>D W f^{1.13} 565 pc lat sa^{ms} ac² ^ϛ ο I. κ² A L Θ Ψ f^{1.13} κ – Δ pc txt κ⁶⁶ κ[*] B D W ^ϛ 2 I U f¹ 565 pc 2 047 pc ἐκεῖ (– κ[*]) ἐκαθεζέτο κ⁶⁶ κ (^ϛ D) f¹³; Epiph</p> <p>• 5 ^ϛ κ⁶⁶ κ D Θ 892 pc ^τ τον A Θ f^{1.13} κ txt κ⁶⁶ κ B D L N W Δ Ψ 33. 579. 892 al ^ϛ -σωσιν κ^{75vid}</p> <p>• 7 ^ϛ -θη ουν αυ. κ⁶⁶ (κ²) -νετ αι ουν κ[*] -νετ αι αυτ. D ^ο κ⁷⁵ A B D Θ Ψ f^{1.13} 33 κ txt κ⁶⁶ κ L N W 892 pc ^ο I κ⁷⁵ B D it txt κ⁶⁶ κ A L W Θ Ψ f^{1.13} 33 κ c f vg sy^h</p> <p>• 9 ^τ ἐν A K Γ Δ Θ 700. 1424 κ lat sy^{s.p.h}</p>	<p>¶ 6,1 ^ϛ 1 2 κ^{66*} pc 3 4 N 0210 pc bo^{ms} τ. Γαλ. εις τα μερη τ. Τιβ. D Θ 892 pc b e j r^l</p> <p>• 2 ^ϛ και -θει A Θ Ψ κ q vg sy^h και -θησαν (et οχλοι -λλοι) 1424 pc f txt κ^{66.75vid} κ B D L N W f^{1.13} 33. 565. 579. 892. 1241 al it sa^{ms} bo^{pt}; Epiph ^ϛ -ρουντες (et om. οτι) W ^τ εωρων κ^{66*} κ f¹ κ txt κ^{66c.(75)} (A) B D L N (Θ) Ψ (f¹³) 33. 579. 892. 1241 al</p> <p>• 3 ^ϛ ουν D W f^{1.13} 565 pc lat sa^{ms} ac² ^ϛ ο I. κ² A L Θ Ψ f^{1.13} κ – Δ pc txt κ⁶⁶ κ[*] B D W ^ϛ 2 I U f¹ 565 pc 2 047 pc ἐκεῖ (– κ[*]) ἐκαθεζέτο κ⁶⁶ κ (^ϛ D) f¹³; Epiph</p> <p>• 4 [Ⓜ] vs 472 pc</p> <p>• 5 ^ϛ κ^{66*} κ D Θ 892 pc ^τ τον A Θ f^{1.13} κ txt κ⁶⁶ κ B D L N W Δ Ψ 33. 579. 892 al ^ϛ -σωσιν κ^{75vid}</p> <p>• 7 ^ϛ -θη ουν αυ. κ⁶⁶ (κ²) -νετ αι ουν κ[*] -νετ αι αυτ. D ^ο κ⁷⁵ A B D Θ Ψ f^{1.13} 33 κ txt κ⁶⁶ κ L N W 892 pc ^ο I κ⁷⁵ B D it txt κ⁶⁶ κ A L W Θ Ψ f^{1.13} 33 κ c f vg sy^h</p> <p>• 9 ^τ ἐν A K Γ Δ Θ 700. 1424 κ lat sy^{s.p.h}</p>
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Fig. 2 – NA-27 Critical Apparatus, John 6:1–9 [data for verse 4 underlined with [Ⓜ] circled]

The superscript box symbol ([Ⓜ]), which I’ve circled both in the text [Fig. 1] and the corresponding critical apparatus [Fig.2], indicates that the following text (up to the circled [Ⓜ] mark in Fig. 1) is omitted in the manuscript noted. In the critical apparatus (Fig. 2), the next entry on the line (“vs”) stands for “verse,” meaning that the whole verse is omitted. Next comes the number of the manuscript in which the verse is omitted (472), with “pc” following, which stands for Latin *pauci*, meaning “a few,” and indicating that there are a few other very minor manuscripts which lack the verse but none earlier than the one listed and significant enough to list.

It should be noted that in the final update of NA27, the apparatus has #1634 for the minuscule¹ that lacks the verse, and this is likewise what is found in the electronic editions of the NA27 (e.g., in Accordance Bible Software and Logos Bible Software). More than likely, the final update of NA27 reflects the editors’ opinion that minuscule 1634 was a better representation of the few, late manuscripts that lacked the verse.²

But regardless of which manuscript is noted, they are all very late and therefore lack any real weight in determining the authentic text of John 6. If the manuscript in question is #472, it is a 13th Century minuscule housed at Lambeth Palace, London, England. Manuscript #1634 is even later, being a 14th Century minuscule housed at the Great Lavra Monastery in Athos, Greece. So regardless of which manuscript is being referenced, it clearly does not represent the earliest Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John!

Moreover, any first year student in Beginning Greek would have been able to come to this conclusion by simply reading the data offered in the NA-27 text and apparatus. One can only conclude that Rood either did not consult the Nestle-Aland 27th Edition of the Greek New Testament or if he did, he was unable to read it. But having stated categorically that he was relying upon the Nestle-Aland text and apparatus, he declares:

1 “Minuscule” identifies Greek manuscripts written in lower case letters in contrast with capital letters (uncials) used in the earliest Greek manuscripts of the Apostolic Scriptures.
 2 It should be noted that in the latest edition of the Nestle-Aland text (NA28), the variant in Jn 6:4 is not even listed, indicating that the editors considered it irrelevant for ascertaining the original text of the verse.

[in] the early, before the 4th Century text of John, there was no John 6:4, that the words “and the Passover, the feast of the Jews” had not been forged into the text until after Eusebius invented the ridiculous, completely nonsensical 3 1/2 ministry [of Yeshua]³

Clearly Rood’s conclusion is a figment of his imagination and not anything substantiated by genuine, historical and manuscript evidence, including the NA27 critical apparatus as he states.

What is more, anyone looking at the Greek critical apparatus would have immediately known that if only a few, very late minuscules omit the verse, this means that its inclusion is supported by the thousands of other manuscripts, many which date from the early centuries. In other words, the critical apparatus gives overwhelming support for the authenticity of the verse rather than suggesting that it might not be original. If Rood had done even a minimal amount of investigation he would have seen quite clearly that there is absolutely no early Greek manuscripts that omit John 6:4 and that a few 13th or 14th Century minuscules are insignificant when viewed against the overwhelming witness of a large number of earlier manuscripts.

Indeed, all other Greek manuscripts which contain John 6 include verse 4! Even Westcott and Hort, who postulated the possibility that the words τὸ πάσχα, “the Passover,” might have been missing in the Greek texts used by some of the early Church Fathers, admit that this suggestion has no manuscript evidence whatsoever.⁴

Given the obvious and clear data regarding the early and universal attestation of John 6:4 in the manuscript evidence, and given that this forms the crucial fulcrum for Rood’s chronology of the Gospels, his “70 Week” thesis falls to the ground like a house of cards. How unfortunate that people, taken in by his fraudulent claims, are being led down a path paved with ignorance of the facts, both historical and biblical.

But perhaps even more egregious is the fact that once again, people like Michael Rood, who have put themselves forward as teachers within the Messianic Movement, are treating the inspired word of God as untrustworthy, and leading their eager-to-learn followers down a path of spiritual destruction. One would hope and pray that people would be wise enough to require solid evidence for what they are being taught rather than being persuaded by well-marketed glitter that has no substance. Moreover, we must take the Torah seriously when its inspired and eternal words command us not to respect or fear a false prophet or false teacher, something Michael Rood has proven himself to be.⁵

*When a prophet speaks in the name of Adonai,
if the thing does not come about or come true,
that is the thing which Adonai has not spoken.*

*The prophet has spoken it presumptuously;
you shall not be afraid of him.⁶*

Deuteronomy 18:22

3 As publicly taught by Michael Rood, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez-kwYlg3iA&app=desktop&safe=active>, accessed 1/7/2014.

4 Brooke F. Westcott; Fenton John A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Introduction, Appendix* (Macmillan, 1896), Appendix: pp. 77–81.

5 Among other predictions, in 1999 Rood taught that Yeshua would return that year, thus making him a false prophet and false teacher.

6 In the context, the phrase “you shall not be afraid of him” (לֹא תִגְדַּר מִמֶּנּוּ) means that one should not concern oneself with the teaching of a false prophet even if he declares that disaster is close at hand.