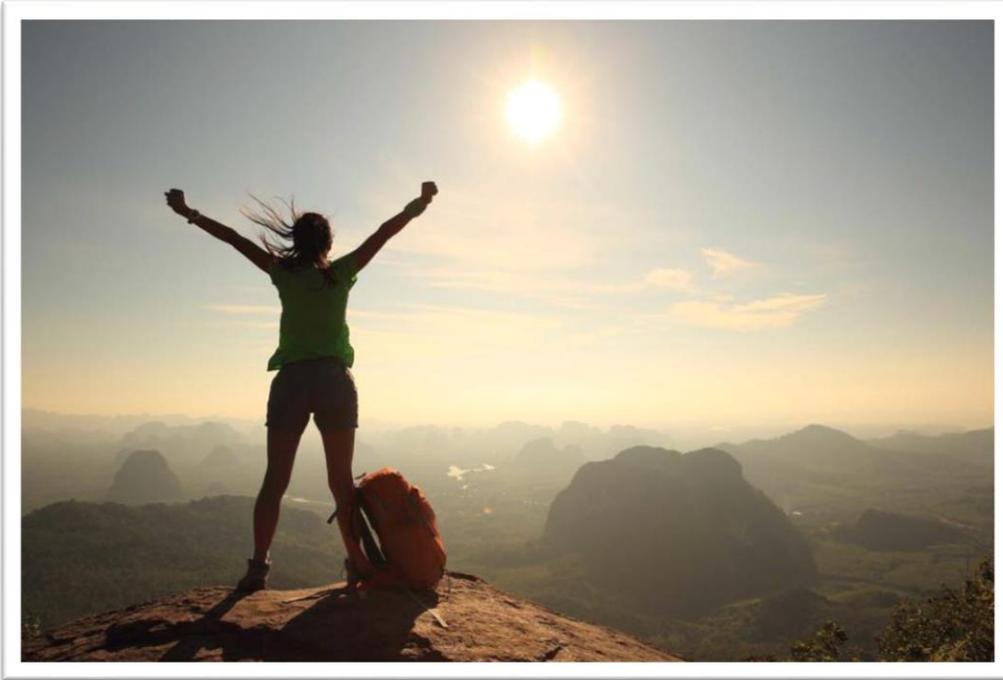


ARE THE GOSPELS RELIABLE?



The reliability of the Gospels is an important issue. Almost everything we know about Jesus Christ as a figure of history comes from the Gospels.

Yes, there are a few ancient references to Jesus outside the NT (Josephus, AD 94, a Jewish historian and Tacitus, AD 116, a Roman historian) but by FAR our greatest source for the historical Jesus comes from the New Testament itself.

I continue to have numerous Facebook conversations with atheists (often enjoyable) and almost without exception, they object to using the New Testament as a source of evidence.

They view the Bible as man-made, corrupt, oppressive, untrustworthy, too old to be believed, and so on.

Well, here are a few facts to keep in mind. The RELIABILITY of the New Testament is not in doubt, even among secular scholars.

In other words, we have immense confidence in the underlying Greek texts we use for our English translations.

The Greek texts we use for translation purposes are estimated to be within 99% of the EXACT words (even little words like “the” and “now” and “and”) originally written by the authors Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, almost 2000 years ago.

How are we sure of this level of accuracy? Because of the literary science known as “textual criticism.”

Scholars involved in textual criticism compare ancient manuscripts to other ancient manuscripts to obtain that which was originally written.

The original writings of the New Testament do not exist today. But here is the beauty of it – there are SO MANY ancient Greek manuscripts available for study and comparison that scholars have no doubt about the original writings.

By way of comparison, consider the writings of Plato. Everything we know about his writings derives from just six ancient Greek manuscripts. Just six. That is it. The New Testament? There are over 6,000 ancient Greek manuscripts available to compare.

The New Testament is by far the **MOST WIDELY ATTESTED WORK OF ANTIQUITY**. Nothing else even comes close.

Now granted, even though we know precisely what the original New Testament authors wrote, that in itself does not mean what they wrote is **TRUE**.

Ancient people wrote false and frivolous things the same way people do today.

So the reader has to make his or her own judgment about the truthfulness of what the NT authors wrote.

However, we have help. From earliest times (and we have their written records too) readers of the NT confirmed its truthfulness. You can read the writings of those who came after Jesus in the second and third generation. These writers either knew the original Apostles personally or had "living memory" of them.

They **ALL** attest to the truthfulness of the New Testament and in particular, the life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST CLAIM OF THE GOSPELS.

Did Jesus Christ, dead and buried, rise with an immortal body on the third day and appear visibly?

The Bible says more than 500 people at the same time saw Jesus raised from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:6). Is this true?

Did the resurrection really happen? Because if not, everything in the Gospels, everything in the New Testament, and for that matter, everything in Christianity crumbles and falls apart.

Without the resurrection, there would be no Christian Church, no New Testament, and hardly any record of Jesus at all.

The Gospels insist, from credible eyewitness accounts, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. By overcoming death, Jesus demonstrated that he is God in the flesh.

Consider the original disciples, terrified and in hiding after the crucifixion. Yet just days later, they were seen in public, boldly and without fear, claiming to have seen, talked with, touched, and even had a meal with Jesus Christ, risen from the dead.

Their antagonists could easily have silenced the Apostles' claims by providing the dead body of Jesus to the public.

But they could not do so.

The Apostles spent the rest of their lives asserting in the strongest terms, they had witnessed Jesus risen from the dead – even to the point of martyrdom for their claims.

Now I ask you, would they willingly and cheerfully go to their deaths **TO PRESERVE A LIE**?

People lie to get **OUT** of trouble, not to get into trouble. I believe that is worth thinking about.

If you have not done so, please read the New Testament for yourself. It is not a big book.

There are a lot of just **CRAZY** things on the internet about these matters. Read one of the Gospels – say, the Gospel of Luke, and make up your own mind. I believe you will be impressed.