

WHY THE BIBLE CAN BE TRUSTED.



One of the common objections I hear from skeptics about the Bible runs along these lines: “Since we have no originals and since the Bible has been hand-copied for most of its existence, many, many errors have crept-in and make the Bible unreliable.”

It is true we have no originals. It is also true that the first printed (not hand-copied) Bible came out relatively recently in 1455 by Gutenberg. It is NOT the case though that errors have crept-in. How do we know this? Because of the literary science of textual criticism.

Until 1947, the oldest Hebrew text Old Testament scholars could use for translation work was from roughly 1000 AD, known as the Masoretic Text (Hebrew scribes known as Masoretes produced it). But was it accurate?

There was no way to know – until 1947 when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Dated from 300-200 BC, these scrolls had portions of every Old Testament book except Esther. Scholars compared the two and found that the Masoretic Text, copied 1300 years later, was almost **WORD FOR WORD** with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

When you come to the New Testament, the story gets even better. There are approximately 6000 ancient Greek manuscripts to compare side-by-side with each other to obtain the original (contrast this to just seven manuscripts for Plato or Socrates).

Even secular scholars agree that the reliability of the New Testament is about 99% of what the original authors wrote.

Granted, just because the Bible is ancient, and we now have very accurate Greek and Hebrew texts to translate from, that does not make the Bible **TRUE**. Ancient peoples could write silly and false things just as people do now.

So how can we view the Bible as trustworthy in terms of not only what was actually written, but in terms of the **TRUTHFULNESS** of what it says?

One thing not well understood, is that we also have access to writings of 2nd and 3rd generation of Christians **AFTER** the Apostles. Those writers had seen or heard the original Apostles themselves or had parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents who had interacted with them.

If the NT writings were false, they would have protested **ON RECORD**. Instead though, we read in their writings complete acceptance of the truthfulness of what was written.

What satisfies me the most, personally, is the fact that JESUS HIMSELF BELIEVED THE BIBLE TO BE THE VERY WORD OF GOD.

In fact, Jesus said that the Bible spoke about him!

To his scholarly enemies, Jesus said:

“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. THESE ARE THE VERY SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME, yet you refuse to come to me to have life” (John 5:39-40).

I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I happily take his word on everything. I fully admit, if he is wrong, then I am wrong. But there is NO ONE, past or present, whose word I would trust more than Jesus Christ.

Can you think of anyone more trustworthy?

Some say Jesus himself is a myth. Well, it is hard for me to know what to say about that. There is more historical evidence for Jesus than say, Plato and Socrates.

And yes, there are ancient references to Jesus OUTSIDE of the Bible. Tacitus (116 AD), a Roman historian wrote about Jesus, as well as Josephus (AD 94), a Jewish historian. You can easily find their statements by doing an internet search.

We also have, in terms of trustworthiness, the Bible's stunning affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible strongly asserts, from credible eyewitness accounts, that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. In overcoming death, Jesus demonstrated he is God in the flesh.

If the resurrection is a lie, nothing else the Bible claims really matters.

Consider those 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 proclaiming in the strongest terms, through suffering and persecution, that they had PERSONALLY witnessed Jesus risen from the dead – and they maintained their claim to the point of martyrdom.

Now I ask you, would they have willingly and cheerfully gone 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. And here's my point: you can trust the Bible.