

Reliable, Part 2

Manuscripts

Pastor Steve Berger October 18, 2015

Word of God is under attack

- We've all heard... "the Bible is filled with errors, contradictions, so many translations, etc."
- The goal of these sermons... over next few weeks, is to make Believers out of skeptics and Apologists out of Believers!

Our sermon Road Map: 1) Manuscripts; 2) Archaeology/history; 3) Prophecy; 4) statistics

- A serious struggle is there is so much information, facts, stats, quotes, they can't all be put in one sermon
- Here are a few books to begin with for an additional reading list:
 - *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel; *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* by Dr. Craig Blomberg; *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce; *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell; *The Text of the New Testament* by Bruce Metzler and Bart Ehrman

What the Bible claims about itself

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Q. Is there sufficient proof of that? Is there a preponderance of evidence to support that? Consistent enough in message, reliable enough in its manuscripts, is it accurate enough in its history, supernatural enough in its prophecies, is it statistically impossible for it NOT be the Word of God?

A. YES! We will give more than enough proof to the open and honest heart to answer those questions!

- **66 books — 39 in the Old Testament; 27 in the New Testament**
 - 40 authors — 3 languages, 3 continents, 1600 years
 - **one central theme** — The rule and reign of an eternal, loving, involved Father who would redeem His lost and rebellious creation by sending His own Son as a sacrificial Savior!

How we got our Bible

- **Old Testament**
 - had to be **authored by recognized prophet or leader of Israel**

- had to have **internal evidence of inspiration and authority**
- had to be **free from factual or doctrinal errors**... not free from grammatical errors

- **Dead Sea Scrolls**

- greatest archaeology discovery in 20th Century, in 1947
- contained entire book of Isaiah, thousands of fragments from all other Old Testament books, except for the book of Esther
- written around the time of Christ
- until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest surviving copy of any Old Testament writing were the Masoretic Text, dated around 916 AD
- difference in dates between oldest copy of text, 916 AD, and newly discovered Dead Sea Scroll Isaiah was 1,000 years
- provided pristine opportunity to judge the copying accuracy of the Old Testament documents, since it would be easily discernible which errors crept in over 1000 years
- the documents proved to be 95% textually identical. The 5 percent that was different were mainly misspellings of words and did not constitute any threat to the content, doctrine, or reliability of the text.
- this shows how unbelievably accurately it was transmitted!

You have reliable copies of the Old Testament in your hands!

- **Apocrypha**

- Jews rejected the authenticity (and it was about them)
- none was quoted in New Testament, content was mythological... it was rejected!

- **Lost Books?**

- not lost, just never recognized because they didn't pass the test of accuracy

- **New Testament — when was it written?**

- **Prior to 70 A.D.** when temple was destroyed – there was no mention of that important!
- **Prior to 62-64 A.D.** when Peter, Paul & James died – there was no mention!
- not lost, just never recognized because they don't pass the test of accuracy
- all but John and Revelation were written within 30 years of the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus
- all within the lifetime of potential hostile witnesses who could refute the facts if they wanted to

- **New Testament — testing for accuracy**

- **bibliographic test**- quantity of manuscripts and time span between events and manuscripts
 - New Testament documents are better preserved and more numerous than any other ancient writing
 - currently over 5,700 Greek manuscripts in existence
 - **Total collection** of manuscripts existing is **over 24,000** (Syriac, Latin, Coptic, and Aramaic)
- **eyewitnesses**- quantity of manuscripts and time span between events and manuscripts

- **Luke 1:1-4**
 - Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.
- **2 Peter 1:16**
 - For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.
- **1 John 1:1-4**
 - That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.
- **External test** — historical events, geography, cultural consistency. Flawless!

We have substantially superior criteria for affirming reliability of NT documents than any other ancient writings.

AUTHOR	WHEN WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME SPAN	NO. OF COPIES
HOMER (<i>Iliad</i>)	900 BC	400 BC	500 years	643
CAESAR (<i>The Gallic Wars</i>)	100-44 BC	900 AD	1,000 years	10
PLATO (<i>Tetralogies</i>)	427 - 347 BC	900 AD	1,200 years	7
ARISTOTLE	384 - 322 BC	1,100 AD	1,400 years	49
HERODOTUS (<i>History</i>)	480 - 425 BC	900 AD	1,300 years	8
EURIPEDES	480 - 406 BC	1,100 AD	1,500 years	9
NEW TESTAMENT	50 - 90 AD	130 AD	30 years	24,000

- Manuscripts allow them to be cross-checked for accuracy. New Testament manuscripts **completely agree on 99.5% of content**, .5% is spelling, grammar, etc. **NO DOCTRINAL CHANGES EXIST!**

- **Finally, all of the NT** (except for 11 verses) can be **reconstructed from quotes of early church writings.**

**Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament, has withstood thousands of years of transmission with remarkable accuracy and clarity.
We can trust it to be what it says it is, the word of God. It is reliable!**

“We have over 5,700 Greek manuscripts representing all, or part, of the New Testament. By examining these manuscripts, over 99 percent of the original text can be reconstructed beyond reasonable doubt.”¹ *Craig L. Blomberg, Ph.D, University of Aberdeen*

“The New Testament has not only survived in more manuscripts than any other book from antiquity, but it has survived in a purer form than any other great book — a form that is 99.5% pure.”² *Norman Geisler, William Nix, Scholars*

“In no other case is the interval of time between the composition of the book and the date of the earliest manuscripts so short as in that of the New Testament... the last foundation for any doubt that the scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed.”³ *Sir Frederic Kenyon, Director British Museum*

“I must say, that having for many years made the evidences of Christianity the subject of close study, the result has been a firm and increasing conviction of the authenticity and plenary [complete] inspiration of the Bible. It is indeed the Word of God.”⁴ *Simon Greenleaf, Founder of Harvard Law School*

“All I am in private life is a literary critic and historian, that's my job... and I'm prepared to say on that basis if anyone thinks the Gospels are either legends or novels, then that person is simply showing his incompetence as a literary critic.”⁵ *C. S. Lewis*

Who claims it is God's Word?

- God — Isaiah 66:2
- Moses — Deuteronomy 33:9
- David — Psalm 119:11
- prophets — Jeremiah 15:16
- disciples — Acts 4:29

Jesus' claims of God's Word...

- a. **He used titles for the Bible that showed its authenticity...**
 - “The Word of God” (Mark 7:13; John 10:35)
 - “Scripture” (Luke 4:21; John 5:39, 10:35)
 - “The Commandment of God” (Mark 7:8)

¹ Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, (InterVarsity Press, 2007), 20

² Norman L. Geisler, William E. Nix, *From God to Us*, (Chicago: Moody, 2012)

³ Andy Wrasman, *They Can't All Be True*, (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2014), 104

⁴ Barry Asmus, *The Best Is Yet to Come*, (Scottsdale, AZ: AmeriPress, 2001), 312

⁵ Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 311

- b. **He accepted the persons and events mentioned in the Old Testament as historical...**
 - Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4-5) “Have you not read”
 - Noah and the flood (Matthew 24:37-39) “Days of Noah”
 - Lot, Lot’s wife, and Sodom (Luke 17:18-32)
 - Jonah (Matthew 12:38-41) “As Jonah, 3 days, great fish”

- c. **He used scripture as conclusive evidence** in answering His critics:
 - John 10:35, quoting Psalm 82:6
 - Matthew 22:32, quoting Exodus 3:6, 15
 - Matthew 22:42-44, quoting Psalm 110:1

- c. He used the **authority of scripture to refute the temptations of Satan** in the wilderness (Matthew 4:4,7,10).

- d. He saw His **own words as scripture** and therefore **to be believed**
 - **John 12:47-50**
 - And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him— the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.

House of Prayer

Click on "House of Prayer" on www.gracechapel.net to fill out a prayer request.
We pray for requests for one month, and at our weekly prayer meetings.
Please come join our House of Prayer,
Tuesday, October 20th at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.