



How Do I Know the Bible is Reliable and Accurate?

After all those thousand of years of transmission, how do we know the Bibles we have even *resemble* the original manuscripts? And what if the *originals* were full of historical error? How can I trust the Bible?

1. The evidence of ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

HOW WE GOT THE NEW TESTAMENT

The originals (“autographs”) (50-90 AD)



Papyrus manuscripts (early copies-- 90 to 300 AD)



Uncial manuscripts (300-800 AD)
Written in large caps on thick material, often antelope skins. Also called “Codex”.



Miniscule manuscripts (800-1400 AD)
Written in cursive handwriting, many thousands of these exist.



Printed Bibles (1456-present)

So how do I know my Bible reflects the original text?

- The discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus (340 AD)
- The discovery of the Codex Ephraimi Rescriptus (345 AD)
- The discovery of the Codex Vaticanus (325 AD)
- The discovery of papyrus fragments (as early as 60 AD!)
...and further discoveries each year confirm my Bible’s accuracy!

HOW WE GOT THE OLD TESTAMENT

Temple scrolls
Ancient “official” copies ———→ Dead Sea Scrolls (300 BC- 40 AD)



Masoretic texts (900 AD- 1456 AD) *Copied from decaying scrolls by the Masoretes*



Printed Bibles (1456-present)

1. The evidence of ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS (continued)

Conclusions from manuscript evidence:

- The Bible has better manuscript evidence than _____ ancient book
- Only about _____ of the text is in doubt. _____ doctrinal teaching is affected.
- The remaining interval between the date of writing and the earliest

2. The evidence of ARCHAEOLOGY

Among the examples of amazing discoveries:

- › • Gilgamesh epic and Ur discoveries: *Support for earliest stories in Genesis*
- › • Egyptian papyri and hieroglyphics: *Show the Israelites existed in the time the Bible says they did, had names the Bible says they did, etc.*
- › • Hittite civilization: *Shows that the Hittites existed just as the Bible says they did, after centuries during which they were considered a mythological invention!*
- › • The BYT YHWH Ostrakon (dated about 800 BC) *refers Solomon’s temple. Earliest mention of temple so far-- written just 130 years after the temple was completed!*
- › • Obelisk of Shalmaneser: *Shows King Jehu bringing tribute as described in 2 Kings 3.*
- › • The Cyrus Cylinder: *Proves that the amazing decree of King Cyrus in Ezra 1 and 2 Chronicles 36 was historical!*
- › • Sennacherib relief: *Confirms story of conquest in 2 Kings 18:13-15*

› So what?

- › The Bible gives me _____ (Ps 119:105; 4:3, 5:18; 1Pet. 2:15)
- › The Bible gives me _____ (Psalm 119:9,11; Matt 4:1-10)

For Further Research

Paul Barnett, *Is The New Testament Reliable? A Look at the Historical Evidence*
 F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*
 Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*
 Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*
 Clifford A. Wilson, *Rocks, Relics, and Biblical Reliability*
 Also see: *Biblical Archaeology Review* journal
<http://www.bible-history.com>
<http://fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/judah.htm>

Daily Meditations

Take a few minutes every day to read Scripture, pray, and answer some thought-provoking questions pertaining to this week's topic.

This week's memory verse:

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Ps. 119:105

Monday

According to the following verses, what is Scripture good for?

Hebrews 4:12:

Acts 18:28:

Rom. 15:4:

2 Tim. 3:15:

If Scripture is so profitable, why then do you suppose more Christians don't know it well?

Thank God today for the priceless gift of the Bible! Ask Him to help you discipline yourself so you may know it better.

Tuesday

Read Psalm 119:105. According to this verse, the Bible gives me guidelines for life, as well as a goal to live for. Imagine: What would life be like without the belief that God has revealed His will for you in Scripture?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3 and 5:18, and 1 Peter 2:15. What is the revealed will of God for your life in these passages?

Why do we sometimes we live as if we don't believe God has revealed His will for us in Scripture?

Thank God for the grace and mercy we see in Scripture, as well as the clear principles for life. Ask God to help you live by His revealed purpose for your life!

Wednesday

The Bible gives me power: Power to resist temptation and live a Christ-like life! Read Psalm 119:9-11. What does this passage say is the key to resisting temptation?

Read Matt. 4:1-10. How does Jesus practice Psalm 119:9-11? What does this teach you about resisting sin?

Ask God to help you memorize Scripture so you can stand strong!

Thursday

The Bible gives me peace when I go through trials. Read Psalm 85:8; 119:114, 148.

How is God's word a refuge and shield when I meditate on its promises in times of trouble?

Have you ever had an experience when God's promises in Scripture helped you through a tough time? What happened? What specific promise helped?

Remember, it's pointless for all those comforting promises to be in the Bible if we don't know them!

Thank God today for His promises and comfort! Bring to him the things that are robbing you of peace, and claim His promises right now for those circumstances!

Friday

Read Psalm 119: 97-101. According to this verse, what benefits are there from meditating daily on God's word (as you are doing right now!)?

Read the following verses and answer: What is the fundamental mistake Jesus is pointing out here? Matt. 22:29; Mark 12:24; Matt. 21:42.

What do these verses tell you about the importance of knowing the Word?

Thank God again today for His word! Spend some extra time meditating on a passage today-- just thinking about it, praying about it --perhaps the Psalm 119 passage above.!

Saturday

Please look over the devotions and finish any you may have missed. Polish up the memory verse, and pray for us this weekend as we cover the topic "Why does a loving, all-powerful God allow suffering?"