

# The Reliability of the Bible



Session 5

“I choose to believe the Bible because it is a reliable collection of historical documents, written by eyewitnesses during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses, reporting supernatural events that took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claimed their writings are Divine and not of human origin.”

—Voddie Baucham



# Introduction



Christians uphold the Bible as the Word of God, **inspired** by the Holy Spirit while written by human authors.

The question is, what reasons do we have to **trust** what the Bible has to say about itself, or anything else?

# The Historical Reasons

The historical evidence for the Bible points to its unique **accuracy**.



# Development of the Bible



The Bible was written by more than **forty** authors, in **three** languages, on **three** continents, over the course of **sixteen** centuries.

Yet the literary quality, theological depth, and cultural impact of the Bible is unrivaled.

A writing project this monumental requires a **supernatural** superintendent.

# Eyewitnesses in the Bible



Throughout its history, the Bible was written by **eyewitness** during the lifetime of other eyewitnesses.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul discusses the resurrection of Jesus and points to the eyewitness testimony of hundreds who were alive to read his account.

As miraculous as many Biblical events are, they could have been easily refuted by eyewitnesses claiming the contrary.

# Archaeology and the Bible



Since the late 1800s, archaeology has yielded **thousands** of discoveries that pertain to the Biblical narrative, many of which have revealed information previously contained only in the Bible.

- Skeptics point to names and terms that were thought to be younger than the Bible suggests. However, many of these names and terms were discovered on tablets found in the Ebla Archive, dating 800 years before Moses.

# Archaeology and the Bible



Since the late 1800s, archaeology has yielded **thousands** of discoveries that pertain to the Biblical narrative, many of which have revealed information previously contained only in the Bible.

- For centuries skeptics pointed to the Hittite nation as a Biblical legend, demonstrating its unreliability. Then, in the late 19th century the Hittite capital of Carchemish was discovered.



# The Textual Reasons

The textual evidence for the Bible points to its undeniable **authenticity**.



# Old Testament Authenticity



Jewish **scribes** over the centuries were notorious for their meticulous care for the text of the Old Testament.

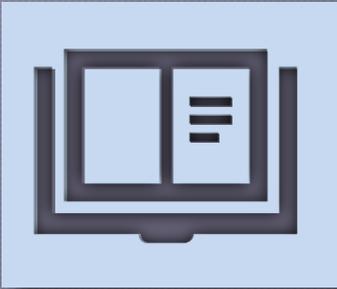
- The materials used were highly regulated, as well as the clothes the scribes wore while copying.
- Spacing was measured by a standard thread, and columns were measured by character count.
- If even a single letter was out of place or missing, the manuscript was burned.

# Old Testament Authenticity



The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate the reliability of Old Testament scribes, by proving textual **agreement** between manuscripts over the centuries.

Prior to the discovery, the oldest Old Testament extant manuscript dated to AD 1000; but the discovery of an entire manuscript of Isaiah dated to 100 BC bridged that gap.



Isaiah  
(700 BC)

Dead Sea  
Scrolls  
(100 BC)

Oldest  
Manuscript  
(AD 1000)

Jesus  
(BC/AD)

Present  
(AD 2022)



# New Testament Authenticity



The New Testament is in a league of its own in comparison to other ancient documents, considering the **number** of manuscripts and the **interval** between the original writing and the earliest manuscripts.



	Original	Earliest Copy	Interval	Number	Agreement
Julius Caesar	100-44 BC	AD 900	1,000 years	251	---
Homer	800 BC	400 BC	400 years	1,757	95%
New Testament	AD 40-100	AD 125	25 years	5,800	99.8%



ΕΤΟΙΜΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΤΑΝ  
ΕΠΙΤΡΟΦΟΝ  
ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΤΟΙΜΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΤΑΝ

ΟΙ ΕΤΟΙΜΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΤΑΝ  
ΕΠΙΤΡΟΦΟΝ  
ΑΝΤΙΣΤΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΤΟΙΜΑΝΤΕΣ  
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΤΑΝ

# New Testament Authenticity



If we consider the text of the New Testament as unreliable, then no ancient text can be considered **reliable**.

Even if we did not have the wealth of manuscripts, we could reconstruct the entire New Testament except for eleven verses, using the writings of the early church fathers.

# The Personal Reasons

The personal evidence for the Bible points to its unabated **authority**.



# The Personal Reasons



All the evidence in the world cannot change a person's heart, yet no other book has had such an individual and cultural impact across history.

The Bible is authoritative in its assertions about all **reality**, so we should not be surprised that it is effective in its assertions about **us**.

The countless lives that have been **transformed** by the Bible is a powerful witness to its reliability.

Next Week:

**The Reality of Jesus**

