

**Establishing the Case
For Miracles and the Bible
Sessions 15-17 (of 19)**



www.meeknessandtruth.org

12 Points in Establishing the Case for Christianity

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that the theistic God exists.
4. If God exists then miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God.
6. The New Testament is historically reliable.
7. The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
8. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
 - a. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
 - b. His sinless and miraculous life;
 - c. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection
9. Therefore, Jesus is God.
10. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
11. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God (and anything opposed to it is false).

Where Do We Take It From Here?

Proving God exists does not prove Jesus was from God!

Additionally we must show:

I. If God exists, then miracles are possible

* If God exists He can act!

Where Do We Take It From Here?

Proving God exists does not prove Jesus was from God!

Additionally we must show:

- I. If God exists, then miracles are possible
- II. N.T. documents are historically reliable
- III. N.T. claims of Jesus as God
- IV. Jesus proved to be God by an unprecedented convergence of miracles

Anthony Flew's Summary Of David Hume's Argument That Miracles Are Not Credible

- Miracles are by nature particular and unrepeatable.
- Natural events are by nature general and repeatable
- Now, in practice, the evidence for the general and repeatable is always greater than that for the particular and unrepeatable.
- Therefore, in practice the evidence against miracles will always be greater than the evidence for them.

In Hume's Own Words...

There must "be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle, nor can such a proof be destroyed or the miracle rendered credible but by an opposite proof which is superior."^[1]

^[1] David Hume *An inquiry concerning human understanding*. Ed. Charles W. Hendel. New York: Bobbs-Merrill. (1748) 1955 p. 122-123

General Response To Objection To Miracles

- Will it always be “wiser” to believe against miracles in practice?
- Does this not assume what one needs to prove to be true?
- Furthermore to define a miracle as overriding in some sense natural laws is this not imposing prior limits on possible divine action?

If God exists, then certainly miracles are possible. For there cannot be an act of God unless there is a God who can act. Conversely, if there is a God who can act, then there can be acts of God. So the only way to show miracles are impossible is to disprove the existence of God. Something that lies beyond the bounds of “Scientific inquiry.”

Specific Response To Objection To Miracles

It is not true that in practice, that the evidence for the general and repeatable is always greater than that for the particular and unrepeatable.

Examples from Science:

1. The Big Bang Theory is not based on regular events.
2. The origin of life on earth does not occur regularly.

Is the Bible Reliable?



Why don't you believe the Bible is as reliable as some of the ancient books written around the same time period from authors like Josephus or Tacitus, or Homer's Illiad?

Radical Disbelief

Thomas Paine said,

“There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man.”

Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*, p. 234

Moderate Disbelief

Bertrand Russell said,

“Historically it is quite doubtful whether Christ ever existed at all, and if he did we do not know anything about him.”

Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian*, p.16

Why Are We Not Arguing In a Circle?

- I. If God exists, then miracles are possible
- II. The N.T. documents are historically reliable
- III. In the NT Jesus claimed to be God
- IV. Jesus proved to be God by an unprecedented convergence of miracles
 - A. The miracle of fulfilled prophecy
 - B. The miracle of the Resurrection
- V. Therefore, Jesus was God in human flesh
- VI. What Jesus (who is God) teaches is true
- VII. Jesus taught the Bible is the Word of God
- VIII. Therefore the Bible is the Word of God

See *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* by Dr. Norman Geisler for more details, which can be ordered at: www.normgeisler.com

Is the Bible Reliable?

Possible Questions Behind the Question?

1. How do you know the Bible has been accurately translated from the original?
2. Couldn't they have accurately recorded a bunch of lies?
3. How do we know that the Bible is not just a myth that developed over time?

To Discover Whether the Bible is Reliable, You Need M.A.P.S.!

(M.A.P.S. was developed by Hank Hanegraaff)

- Manuscripts
- Archaeology
- Prophecy
- Statistical *Probability*

Establishing The Case For The Reliability Of The New Testament

1. Are the New Testament Documents a Reliable Record of the Things Jesus Said and Did?

Manuscript Evidence

Three Tests:

- **Bibliographical**
- **External evidence**
- Internal evidence

Bibliographical Test

It examines the textual transmission by which documents reach us.

1. The number of copies
2. The time interval between the original and the existing copies
3. The degree of accuracy of the copies

The Number of Copies

Author	Book	(X)	Copies
Caesar	Gallie Wars	1000 yrs	10
Plato		c. 1300 yrs	7
Tacitus	Annals	c. 1000 yrs	20
Pliny	Natural History	c. 750 yrs	7
Thucydides	History	c. 1300 yrs	8
Herodotus	History	c. 1350 yrs	8
Homer	Iliad	c. 400 yrs	643
New Testament		50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs	5,686

The Number of Copies

There are:

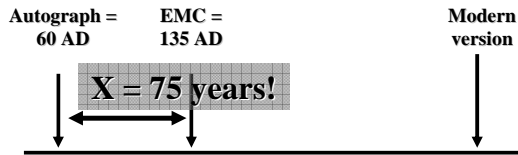
- 5,686 hand written Greek N.T. manuscripts
- 10,000 Latin Vulgate
- 9300 Old Latin, Slavic, Arabic, Anglo Saxon, etc. Other Languages –

A total of 24,970 [i] manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament exist today

[i] McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict* P. 34

The Amount of Time

Answer: the **SHORTER** the time difference (X) between the earliest manuscript copy (EMC) and the original copies (i.e. autographs) the less likely for the earliest manuscript copy to have undergone "additions" and therefore less scribal error.



Author	Written	Earliest Copy	(X)
Caesar	Gallic Wars 100 – 44 BC	c. 900 AD	1000 yrs
Plato	400 BC	c. 900 AD	c. 1300 yrs
Tacitus	Annals 100 AD	c. 1100 AD	c. 1000 yrs
Pliny	Natural History 61 – 133 AD	c. 850 AD	c. 750 yrs
Thucydides	History 460 – 400 BC	c. 900 BC	c. 1300 yrs
Herodotus	History 480 – 425 BC	c. 900 AD	c. 1350 yrs
Homer	Iliad 800 BC	c. 400 BC	c. 400 yrs
New Testament	50 – 100 AD	c. 114 fragments c. 200 books c. 250 most of NT c. 325 complete NT	25-50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs

The Time Interval

The N.T. has earlier manuscripts closer to original composition.



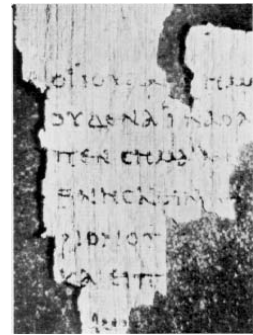
For example:

- John Ryland fragment (117-138 A.D.) - one generation
- Bodmer Papyrus (150-200 A.D.) - whole books
- Chester Beatty Papyri (250 A.D.) - most of the N.T.
- Codex Vaticanus (325-350 A.D.) - nearly all the Bible

John Rylands fragment

John 18:31-33 - A.D. 117-138 – One generation from original

- It was carbon-14 dated what some say is 110-150 A.D.
- It contains a few verses of the Gospel of John, John 18:31-33 and a second piece, John 18:37-38.
- Since it was found in Egypt, which is some distance from the traditional composition in Asia Minor, we can confirm that the gospel of John was written before the end of the first century.



The Bodmer Papyrus P66, 72, 75.

Contains whole books – About 150-200 A.D. pictured here John 1:1 – 14

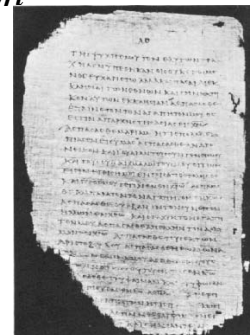
- P66 contains 104 leaves of John 1:1-6:11; 6:35b-14:26; and fragments of 40 other pages, John 14-21.
- P72 is the earliest known copy of Jude, 1 Pet. and 2 Pet.
- P75 contains most of Luke and John. Dated between 175-225 BC. It contains the earliest known copy of Luke. (See Gen Intro. P390)



Chester Beatty Papyri (P45, 46, & 47)

Contains most of the New Testament – A.D. 250

- P45 alone contains all 4 gospels and Acts.
- It is located in the Beatty Museum near Dublin.





Codex Sinaiticus, 340 AD

Contains half of the Old Testament books and all the N.T. except a few verses such as Mark 16:9-20 and Jn. 7:53-8:11.

Codex Vaticanus

Contains almost the entire Bible old and new - A.D. 325-350

It includes most of the LXX version of the Old Testament and most of the New Testament in Greek. Missing are I Tim. through Philemon, Heb. 9:14 to the end of the N.T. and the General Epistles.



Comparing Ancient Manuscripts

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Gap (yrs.)	No. of copies
Homer	Iliad	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,350	8
Thucydides	History	460-400 B.C.	800 A.D.	1,300	8
Plato		400 B.C.	800 A.D.	1,300	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,400	200
Caesar	Galic Wars	100-44 B.C.	800 A.D.	1,000	10
Livy	Hist. Rome	59 B.C.-17AD	4th cent.(partial)	400	1 partial
			10th Cent. (mostly)	1,000	19
Tacitus	Annals	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000	20
Pliny Secundus	Natural History	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750	7
New Testament		50-100 A.D.	130 A.D. fragment	50+	5,686
			200 (books)		100
			250 (most of N.T.)		150
			325 (Complete N.T.)		225

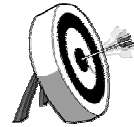
Taken from Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 38

Degree of Accuracy

Even with 25 thousand NT manuscripts, they are so close that we are virtually certain of 97% - 98% of the New Testament.

Almost ½ are 1 and 2 word variants for spelling, adding "the", etc.

None of these affect doctrine.
For details: www.Bible Query.org



Why does the percentage of variant (97.3%) differ from Metzger's 99.5%

"Bruce Metzger was a contributor to Aland et al's Greek Translation of the New Testament. This Greek translation, gives an estimate of the certainty of the translation. In the 4th edition p.3, the letters mean:

- A - "indicates that the text is certain"
- B - "indicates that the text is almost certain"
- C - "indicates that the Committee had difficulty in deciding which variant to place in the text."
- D - "which occurs only rarely, indicates that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision."

Note that the 3rd edition on p.xii-xiii, has slightly different meanings.

- A - "virtually certain"
- B - "some degree of doubt"
- C - "considerable degree of doubt"
- D - "very high degree of doubt"

The Difference Explained

"You arrive at close to the 97.3% figure by including all categories, and the 99.5% figure by only including the C and D categories. The 99.5% figure does not include, for example, many Greek textual variants that were the primary choices the Biblical scholars who translated the NKJV, including the longer ending of Mark, and the pericope of the adulteress in John.

Rather than try to say who is right, I simply want to report where trustworthy scholars are not certain or disagree. That is why the 97.3% number all variants except those with extremely obvious conclusions."

Steve Morrison, Apologetic Specialist, Meekness and Truth Ministries

Almost all agree - at least 95% accurate...

The well-known New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger estimated that the Mahabharata of Hinduism is copied with only about 90 percent accuracy and Homer's Iliad with about 95 percent.^[1] By comparison there is only 5% of the New Testament that most Biblical scholars disagree on whether liberal or conservative.^[2]

With the work of textual criticism it is fair to say that we can be certain of between 97% and 98% of the New Testament words. However, this does not give the full picture because almost one half of the errors consist of one and two word variants in spelling,

[1]See F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are they reliable* as cited by N. Geisler, *B.E.C.A.*, 533.

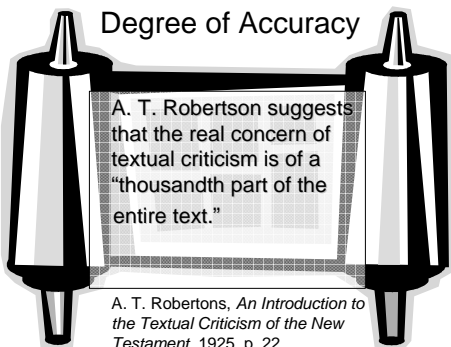
[2]Keith Elliot and Ian Moir in *Manuscripts and the Text of the New Testament: An Introduction for English Readers*. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1995), page 8 says "Most modern textual critics can agree on the bulk of the text (some 95 per cent of it, perhaps). It is the remaining 5 per cent or so where disputes occur and differing conclusions may be found."

Degree of Accuracy



"If Comparative trivialities such as changes of order, the insertion or omission of the the article with proper names, and the like are set aside, the words in our opinion still subject to doubt can hardly amount to more than a thousandth part of the New Testament."

B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Vol. 1, p.2



Understanding the Issue or Errors

"Of course with many manuscripts come variations, especially when numerous church fathers paraphrased or attempted to recall a verse from memory. **These variations fall into four categories.** The first category includes spelling and nonsense readings probably due to circumstances such as a tired scribe writing by candlelight. Seventy percent or more of all manuscript variations fall in this category. The second largest category includes synonyms but where the meaning is unchanged. For example, "Jesus Christ" appears in the text instead of "Christ Jesus." The third category includes variations in the text that affect meaning but are not found in manuscripts that carry much weight. The fourth category, and by far the smallest, includes variations that affect meaning and are found in decent manuscripts. This fourth category is at best only one percent and it does not impact any major Christian doctrine."

Mike Licona FIRST-PERSON: Is our Bible what originally was written?
<http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=23278>

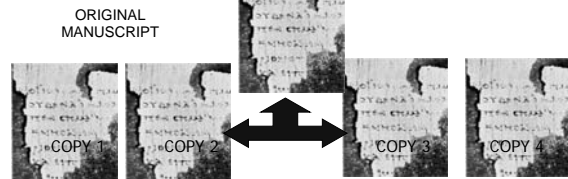
Understanding the Issue or Errors

"However, scholars are still usually able to weigh that manuscript against other manuscripts that may be better. Other guidelines are likewise employed in order to arrive at what probably was written in the original. In some cases confidence is not very high. But remember that these instances are rare and they do not change major Christian doctrines. In the end, even many of today's skeptical scholars would agree that the text of the New Testament we have today is at least 99 percent exact to what originally was written. Only one percent remains in question and no major Christian doctrine is affected. Therefore, today's Christian can have absolute confidence that the New Testament they read and revere can be relied on as much today as it was in the first century."

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Mike Licona FIRST-PERSON: Is our Bible what originally was written?
<http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=23278>

How do we know what the original said? (Rom. 3:26)



Copy 1: God is #ust and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 Copy 2: God is j#st and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 Copy 3: God is ju#t and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 Copy 4: God is jus# and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 Original: God is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 Note: The NT Documents have **far fewer** variations than this example.

And if you received this message, you would have no doubt!

"Y#U HAVE WON TEN MILLION DOLLARS"
 "YO# HAVE WON TEN MILLION DOLLARS"
 "YOU #AVE WON TEN MILLION DOLLARS"



Note:

1. Even with mistakes, 100% of the message comes through.
2. Even though there are different kinds of errors, we still can be sure of the overall message.
3. The Bible has many less errors in copies than this.

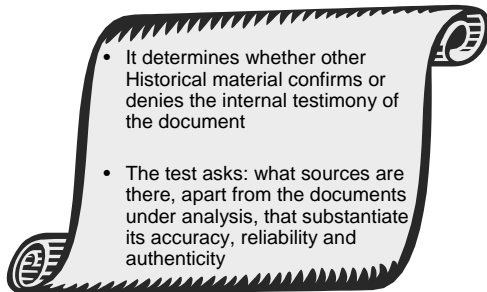
"The works of several ancient authors are preserved to us by the thinnest possible thread of transmission ...in contrast ...the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of his material."

Bruce Metzger

"To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no document of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament."

John Warwick Montgomery

External Evidence Test



Extra-Biblical Christian Sources

Quotations from early Church Fathers concerning the New Testament

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline	General	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex)	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

Taken from Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 43

External Evidence Test

"Indeed so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament."

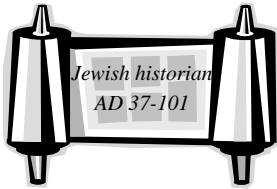
Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 86



Extra-Biblical Secular Sources

Writer	Date	Subject
✍️ Cornelius Tacitus	112	Death of Jesus at the hands of Pilate
✍️ Lucian	2 nd cent.	The new cult of Christianity
✍️ Flavius Josephus	66	Life/Death of Jesus
✍️ Suetonius	120	Christ-The reason for Jews expulsion from Rome
✍️ Pliny	112	Christians bound not to sin - Jesus
✍️ Thallus	52	Histories-Darkness at Christ's death (eclipse)
✍️ Philegon	1 st cent.	Darkness=Eclipse
✍️ Mara Bar-Serapion	73	Calamities brought by deaths. Socrates, Pythagorus, and Jesus

Flavius Josephus



Roman Source: Josephus

Josephus says,

"At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had *appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly He was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.*"

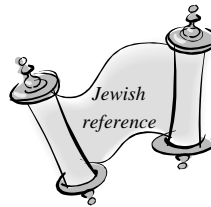
As cited in Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, p. 85 (Arabic text, 10th Cent.)

The Significance of Josephus

The significance of this passage by Josephus:

- Makes reference to Jesus' claim to be the Christ
- Speak of His miracles
- Points out that people perceived Jesus' teachings as the truth
- Indicates the historicity of Pilate and the event of the cross
- Records the claim by His disciples that Jesus was resurrected
- Documents that Jesus had many converts

The Talmud



Jewish Source: The Talmud

"On the eve of Passover Yeshua was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'he is going to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover."

The Talmud, Sanhedrin, 43a (cf. John 11:8, 16)

The Significance of the Talmud

The significance of Jewish writings about Jesus:

- Confirms the historicity of Jesus' life.
- Confirms His death by the method of crucifixion (The Jewish method of execution would have been stoning)
- Indicates that Jesus did do miraculous things but attributed his power to the devil (similar to Mark 3:22; Matt. 9:34; 12:24)
- Indicated that Jesus gathered many converts from the Jewish community

Story of Jesus from secular writers

"Jesus lived during the time of Tiberius Caesar. He lived a virtuous life. He was a wonder worker. He had a brother named James. He claimed to be the Messiah. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. An eclipse and an earthquake occurred when he died. He was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Passover. His disciples believed that he rose from the dead. His disciples were willing to die for their belief. Christianity spread rapidly as far as Rome. His disciples denied the Roman gods and worshiped Jesus as God."

Taken from Dr. Norman Geisler's PowerPoint lecture "Twelve Points that Prove Christianity is True" (Order the CD at www.normgeisler.com)

Accuracy Established

Conclusion from bibliographical and external evidence test

The interval then between the dates of the original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established."

Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, p. 288

So, the New Testament Documents
Have Been Reliably Copied!



2. How do we know that we don't have a bunch of accurately copied documents by a bunch of liars?



Manuscript Evidence

Three Tests:

- Bibliographical
- External evidence
- **Internal evidence**

Internal Evidence Test

- Determines whether the written record is credible or to what extent
- Attempts to gauge the authors ability to tell the **truth**



Criteria for Establishing Credibility

Internal Evidence Test

David Hume's criteria for testing the credibility of witnesses:

1. Do the witnesses contradict each other?
2. Are there a sufficient number of witnesses?
3. Were the witnesses truthful?
4. Were they non-prejudicial?



David Hume, *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 120

Internal Evidence Test 1

1. The witnesses did not contradict each other.

To be sure, there are minor discrepancies:

- One account (Matt. 28:5) mentions only one angel at the tomb.
- John says there were two angels at the tomb (John 20:12).
- Minor discrepancies in testimony can actually demonstrate the credibility of the witnesses.



What do we do with discrepancies?

Matthew (27:5): Judas "hanged himself."

Acts (1:18): "... falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out."

Resolution: "Sometime after hanging himself, his body was discovered, the rope cut, and the body fell on sharp rocks and burst open."

Dr. Norman Geisler

Internal Evidence Test 2

2. There was a sufficient number of witnesses.

- There are nine different people who wrote the N.T., all of whom were eye witnesses or contemporary to the events they recorded. Six of them are most important to establishing Jesus' claim of miracles (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and 1 Corinthians).
- All of these books bear witness to the miracle of the Resurrection.
- In 1 Cor. 15, Paul mentions there were 500 people who saw Jesus after the Resurrection.

Internal Evidence Test 3

3. The witnesses were truthful.

- Most of them even died for what they taught about Christ (2 Timothy 4:6-8; 2 Peter 1:14).

Internal Evidence Test 4

4. The witnesses were non-prejudicial?

- Jesus not only appeared to believers; He also appeared to unbelievers like James. (John 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:7)
- He appeared to the greatest unbeliever of the day—a Jewish Pharisee named Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 9:5)

Internal Evidence Test 4

(cont.)

- The witnesses to the resurrection had nothing to gain personally.
 - They were persecuted and threatened with death for their stand. (cf. Acts 4, 5, 8)
- The witnesses wrote things that didn't necessary reflect favorable on them or their cause.
 - Disciples arguing about positions of honor in heaven; who would have a seat at Jesus right hand (Mt. 20: 21)
 - Peter not eating with those who were uncircumcised (Gal. 2:11-12)
 - Women found the tomb empty first (Mt. 28:7-8; Mark 16:5-6; Luke 24:3; Jn. 20:1-2)
 - Jesus calling Peter Satan (Mt. 16:23)

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth
Taken from *"I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist, by N. Geisler & F. Turek pp. 275-297*

1. Left in embarrassing details about themselves.
 - Multiple times there was no understanding in what Jesus taught (Mark 9:23, Luke 18:34, John 12:16).
 - They are rebuked – Peter was called Satan by Jesus Himself (Mark 8:33), and Paul rebuked Peter for being incorrect on doctrinal issues (Galatians 2:11).
 - They were doubters – some even doubted after seeing the resurrected Christ (Mathew 28:17).
 - People that are trying to pass off a story would not diminish their character while building their case.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

2. Included embarrassing and difficult sayings about Jesus:
 - Considered *"out of His mind"* by His mother and brother (Mark 3:21).
 - Is called a *"drunkard"* (Mathew 11:19).
 - Is called *"demon possessed"* (Mark 3:22).
 - Is called a *"madman"* (John 10:20).

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

3. Left in demanding sayings of Jesus.
 - Matthew 5:28 *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
 - Matthew 5:48 *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
 - Matthew 5:44. 45 *You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

4. Carefully distinguished Jesus words from their own.
 - Points to the fact Jesus said what was recorded since the New Testament writers could have easily avoided difficult theological issues.
 - For example, Paul explicitly distinguished his own words from Jesus' words (1 Cor. 7:10-12)
 - They writers of the N.T. did not put into the mouth of Jesus answers to controversial issues like, circumcision, speaking in tongues, women in the church and etc..

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

5. Described multiple events about the resurrection that they would not have included if they were trying to pass off a lie.
 - Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus who was a member of the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish ruling counsel that had sentenced Jesus to die for blasphemy. If Joseph did not bury Jesus the story would have been easily exposed by the Jews that opposed Christianity.
 - The eyewitnesses to the empty tomb were women. Women were not considered reliable witnesses and their testimony of events carried no weight in a court of law. Including women as the first witnesses to the resurrected Christ would only have hurt their case if they were trying to pass off a lie.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

- Mathew recorded the Jews fabrication of the resurrection
 - *Matthew 28:11-15 While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.*
- The Jews would have easily known if this recording was the truth or a lie and the recording could have been easily contested. If Mathew had made up the empty tomb story why would he have given his readers such an easy way to expose a lie? The only possible explanation is that the tomb was empty and Jesus resurrected.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

6. Over 30 historically confirmed people were referenced.
- Several things were recorded of people that were in great power (Pilate, Caiaphas, Festus, Felix, and etc.)
- There is no way possible that the New Testament writers could have gotten away with writing blatant lies about Pilate, Caiaphas, Festus, Felix and the entire Herodian blood line.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

7. Included divergent details
 - Divergent details show that the New Testament writers did not get together and try to smooth out their testimonies.
 - Matthew 27:44 - Did both robbers insult Christ, or did only one do this?
 - **Problem:** Matthew says here, "the robbers who were crucified with Him also heaped insults on Him." However, according to Luke, only one insulted Him (Luke 23:39) while the other one believed in Him, asking, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

7. Included divergent details
 - **Solution:** This difficulty is easily resolved on the supposition that at first both insulted the Lord, but that later one repented. Perhaps, he was so impressed hearing Jesus forgive those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34) that he was convinced that Jesus was the Savior and asked to be part of His coming kingdom (v. 42).^[1]
- [1] Geisler, N. L., & T. A. Howe. When Critics Ask : A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1992. Page 362.*
- There are multiple complementary recordings.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

8. Appealed to verifiable facts, even facts on miracles.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:12 *The things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.*
 - Miracles were done among the people showing and proving eye witness accounts.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:6 *After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.*
 - People who were still alive at this time could have easily dismantled this if it were untrue.

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

9. Described miracles like other historical events, with simple unembellished accounts.

Example of embellishment - Apocryphal forgery known as the Gospel of Peter

Early in the morning, as the Sabbath dawned, there came a large crowd from Jerusalem and the surrounding areas to see the sealed tomb. But during the night before the Lord's day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch, there came a great sound in the sky, and they saw the heavens opened and two men descend shining with a great light, and they drew near to the tomb. The stone which had been set on the door rolled away by itself and moved to one side, and the tomb was opened and both of the young men went in.

Example of embellishment - Apocryphal forgery known as the Gospel of Peter

"Now when these soldiers saw that, they woke up the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping watch). While they were yet telling them the things which they had seen, they saw there men come out of the tomb, two of them sustaining the other one, and a cross following after them. The head of the two they saw had heads that reached up to heaven. And they heard a voice out of the heavens saying 'Have you preached unto them that sleep?' The answer that was heard from the cross was, 'Yes!'"

Ten reasons that the New Testament writers told the truth

10. Abandoned their long-held sacred beliefs and practices, adapted new ones, and did not deny their testimony under persecution or facing death.
 - Animal sacrifice was replaced by Christ the perfect sacrifice.
 - The Sabbath was replaced by Sunday worship.
 - Circumcision was replaced by baptism and communion.
 - After the disciples had witnessed the resurrected Christ they came out of their hiding and preached the gospel and most died martyr's death.

Did the Writers Use Primary Sources?

Luke 1:1-4 says,

"In as much as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write [it] out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught."

Did the Writers Use Primary Sources?

- 2 Pet. 1:16 says,

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we make known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty."

- I John 1:3 says,

"What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."

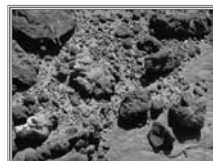
Did the Writers Use Primary Sources?

- John 19: 35 says,

"And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe."

Archaeology The Testimony of the Stones

1. **No archaeological evidence has ever refuted the Bible.**
2. **Thousands of archaeological finds support the Bible.**



- Sir William Ramsey in the late 19th set out to prove that the Bible was a fairy tale.
- After 30 years of in-depth archaeology in Asia Minor and the Middle East, he came to the exact opposite.
- The academic world was shocked! Expecting historical proof against the Bible, it was confronted with strong confirmation of the Bible's accuracy!
- Sir William Ramsey called Luke a historian of the first rank and converted to Christianity based on his findings.

"I began with a mind unfavorable to it (Acts), for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the tubingen theory had at one time quite convince me. It did not lie then in my line of life to investigate the subject minutely; but more recently I found myself often brought in contact with the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth."

Sir Wm. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*, p. 8

The Pool of Bethesda

In John 5:1-15 Jesus healed a man at the Pool of Bethesda

In John 5:1-15 Jesus heals a man at the Pool of Bethesda. Five porticoes were discovered Forty feet underground, archaeologists discovered pools matches John's description.

Youngblood, R. F., F. F. Bruce, R. K. Harrison, & Thomas Nelson

Publishers. Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1995.

The Pool of Siloam

In 9:7 John mentions another long disputed site, the Pool of Siloam. However, this pool was also discovered in 1897, upholding the accuracy of John.

Ossuary of Joseph Caiaphas: High Priest 18-36 A.D.

(Discovered 1990)



Archaeological Evidence

- **1993** - Egyptologists found inscriptions on a monolith that had "House of David" and "King of Israel" written on it.
- **Until 1993** there was no proof of the existence of King David or even of Israel as a nation prior to Solomon outside of the Bible.

**“Pontius Pilate Prefect of Judea”
26-37 A.D. (Discovered 1961)**



What Are The Dead Sea Scrolls and Why are They Important?

- In 1947 – A bedouin shepherd boy discovered scrolls in cave at Qumran (about eight miles south of Jericho)
- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls affirms the historical reliability of the Old Testament.
- They represent 1100 ancient manuscripts and more than 100,000 fragments
- They were written primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic, written by the Essenes.



The Dead Sea Scrolls

- The Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrated the meticulous care in recording the manuscripts for Jews.
- The Dead Sea scrolls attest to textual accuracy



The Significance of the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries?

The earliest manuscripts up until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the Cairo codex dated about A.D. 895 containing both the latter and former prophets.

The Dead Sea Scrolls date from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.

**Isaiah 53 in the Great Isaiah Scroll
(A Dead Sea Scroll from 100 B.C.)**



The Significance of the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries?

Massoretic Text of Isaiah

916 A.D.

Dead Sea Scrolls text of Isaiah

125 B.C

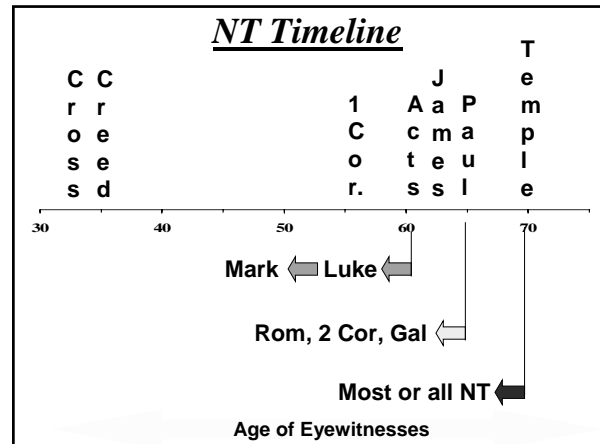
Isaiah 53 has 166 words

words in question=1

Total variation= < 5%

A Survey of Old Testament Introduction, p.19 Gleason Archer, Jr.

3. How do we know that the Bible is not just a myth that developed over time?



Conclusions of a Respected Archaeologist

Couldn't the stories about Jesus be a myth that was invented over a period of time?

"Rephrasing the question, I would answer that, in my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D. (very probably sometime between about 50 and 75 A.D.)"

Wm. F. Albright, *Toward a More Conservative View*, Christianity Today, Jan., 1963, p. 359

Liberal Dating

Couldn't the stories about Jesus be a myth that was invented over a period of time?

- I Corinthians Spring 55
- Mark 45-60 AD
- Matthew 40-60 AD
- Luke 57-60 AD
- Jude 61-62 AD
- Acts 57-62 AD
- John 40-65 AD

John A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*, p. 352

An Historian Weighs In

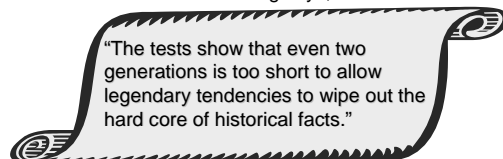
- Roman Historian, A.N. Sherwin-White says,

"For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted."

A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, p. 189

A Scholar's Observation

- Williams Lane Craig says,



William Lane Craig, *The Son Rises*, p. 101

**Establishing the Case
For Miracles and the Bible
Sessions 15-17 (of 19)**



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