

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE? - 3

1. Yes, because the Bible has good manuscript evidence.

There are over 5,686 manuscripts for the New Testament. This is more than any other ancient documents like those of Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, and Homer.

2. Yes, because of God's providential protection of the Bible. For example,

At seventeen, Voltaire, the famous French opponent of the Bible stood in a crowded auditorium and said of Christ's first disciples, "It took twelve ignorant fishermen to build Christianity, but I will show you how one Frenchman can destroy it." He spent a lifetime trying to do just that. But what happened? Voltaire has passed into history and the Bible more popular than ever. Interestingly, only 50 years after Voltaire's death the Geneva Bible society used his printing press and his house to produce stacks of Bibles.¹

Another example is recorded by Eusebius, the ancient historian. He says,

It was the nineteenth year of Diocletian's reign [AD 303] and the month Dystrus, called March by the Romans, and the festival of the Savior's Passion was approaching, when an imperial decree was published everywhere, ordering the churches to be razed (destroyed) to the ground and the Scriptures destroyed by fire, and giving notice that those in places of honor would lose their places, and domestic staff, if they continued to profess Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty. Such was the first edict against us. Soon afterwards other decrees arrived in rapid succession, ordering that the presidents of the churches in every place should all be first committed to prison and then coerced by every possible means into offering sacrifice.² (Edict is the same as an imperial decree, an order sent out over an area.)

3. Yes, because we can be confident that the authors of the Bible are trustworthy.

Many of them were eyewitnesses. When they were not eyewitnesses, they had the opportunity to talk with eye witnesses and did careful investigation like Luke said he did in Luke 1: 1-4. See also 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17; 1 John 1: 1-4; 1 Thessalonians 2: 13; Hebrews 4: 12; Psalms 119: 89; 119: 160; Hebrews 2: 3, 4. **2 Peter 1: 16-18 says,**

We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

¹ From this site -- <http://www.spotlightministries.org.uk/trueBible.htm>.

² Eusebius, *History of the Church VIII.2* http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/hispania/diocletian.html

Luke 1: 1-4 records that,

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke could have been written anywhere from 59 to 80 A. D.)

John says in 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 at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

They shared the humiliating things, like Jesus rebuking Peter in **Mark 8: 33** or the request of James and John for places in the Kingdom in **Mark 10: 35-45**. Peter's denial was also a very humiliating thing to share – **Matthew 26: 69-75**. Mark records Jesus talking about how the disciple's hearts were hard (**Mark 8: 17-19**). **Mark 8: 33** records Jesus' rebuke of Peter when Peter said that it was not good for Jesus to go to the cross, *"But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.' "* The Bible tells us about Paul's rebuke of Peter in **Galatians 2: 11-16**,

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

They suffered persecution and gave their lives for the truth of what they wrote (Acts 4: 1-31; 5: 17-42). The Bible reports in **Acts 4: 18-20** about persecution against Peter and John,

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

They did not give glory to themselves. In other words, they were humble people. They had moral character which lends credibility to their trustworthiness. **Acts 3: 12** says,

When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

As we have seen, archaeological discoveries have shown the accuracy of what they wrote. The actual people, places and dates they mention are accurate.

The change in the apostles is amazing because they were expecting a political Messiah who would come in and violently run out the Romans. When Jesus died they did not know what to do. But then when Jesus rose from the dead and they were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they were filled with boldness and courage and began telling others the good news of Jesus – his death for sinners, his resurrection and how to receive him in faith, repentance and baptism. When the apostles were commanded to stop preaching in the name of Jesus they boldly said, "*We must obey God rather than men*" (Acts 5: 29). Peter denied Jesus before he saw him resurrected but then afterwards he stood up with boldness and preached to thousands of people about Jesus. Luke explains in **Acts 2: 14,**

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say."

In the end, all the apostles except John were killed because of their faith.

4. Yes, because Jesus trusted the Bible (Old Testament). He quoted it to the devil when he was in the desert and this shows he memorized it -- **Matthew 4: 1-11,**

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. (The quotes from the Old Testament are in Deuteronomy 8: 3; Psalm 91: 11-12; Deuteronomy 6: 16; 6: 13.) (See also 1 John 2: 15-17 where John describes the temptations we face.)

5. Yes, because the Bible has transforming power. Hebrews 4: 12, 13 says,

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing

in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Millions of lives have been transformed by the Word of God. Alcoholics have stopped drinking. Atheists have become believers. Wife abusers have stopped abusing their wives. People enslaved to their hate have forgiven others and become free. Jesus said that when we hold to his truth we will know the truth and the truth will set us free (John 8: 31, 32). People have stopped all kinds of addictive behavior because of the Spirit working through the Word of God. Through the Word of God and prayer God has given peace to people in the most difficult of circumstances. The people on the day of Pentecost were transformed from murders to forgiven children of God (Acts 2: 38).

Paul emphasized how the word of God can help change us in 2 Timothy 3: 16,

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Bible is the word of God and can be trusted. It shows us the way of truth, and the way of salvation and peace.

Remember this acrostic:

B = BOOK – of God

I = INSPIRED – word of God

B = BELIEVE – in God's word and Jesus

L = LORD – Accept Jesus as Lord

E = ETERNAL LIFE – if we believe in Jesus, repent, confess our sins, are baptized and remain in Jesus (John 3: 16; Acts 2: 38; Romans 10: 9-10; John 15: 1-8).