

The Reliability of the Bible – Part I

Introduction

MAPS = Manuscripts, Archeology, Prophecy, Science

I The Manuscript Evidence

- A. The number of manuscripts
 1. The ancient **classic** works
 - a. Homer's Iliad: Only 643 copies
 - b. Aristotle: Only **49** copies
 - c. Plato: Only 7 copies
 2. OT copies: **2,000** Hebrew manuscripts of the OT
 3. NT copies: **24,000** Greek manuscripts of the NT
 - a. Only **400** meaningful variant readings
 1. Mostly spelling, word order, and tense errors
 2. Only **50** variant readings have any significance
 3. **None** effect any fundamental doctrines of faith
 - b. There are 86,000 quotations from church fathers
 1. All but **11** verses from the NT are quoted
 - c. There are several thousand Lectionaries
- B. The **care** given in copying those manuscripts
 1. The Talmudists (A.D. 100-500)
 2. The Massorettes (A.D. 500-900)
- C. The **time** between original manuscripts and existing copies
 1. The Old Testament
 - a. Pre-1947: The earliest copy was dated at 900 A.D.
 - b. Dead Sea Scrolls: Discovered in **1947** in Qumran
 1. 40,000 documents
 2. Dated at 150 B.C.
 3. Virtually **identical** to pre-existing manuscripts
 2. The New Testament
 - a. The earliest partial copy is **70** years from original
 - b. The earliest complete copy is 250 years from original

II The Archeological Evidence

- A. The existence of a worldwide **flood**
- B. The existence of the Hittites

- C. The existence of **writing** in the days of Moses
- D. The existence of King Belshazzar
- E. The existence of 26 OT foreign kings
- F. The existence of **Jericho**
- G. The existence of Pontius Pilate
- H. The accuracy of the Book of **Acts**

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take some time this week to consider the following:

1. Has anyone ever challenged you to defend the authority and reliability of the Bible? How did you respond?
2. After hearing this teaching on Manuscript Evidence and Archeological Evidence, are you more confident in the reliability of the Bible? Why or why not?
3. Below is an illustration of 99% of the variant readings from the NT manuscripts. Suppose we have five manuscript copies of an original document that no longer exists. Each copy is different. Our goal is to compare the manuscript copies and ascertain what the original must have said.
Manuscript #1: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world.
Manuscript #2: Christ Jesus is the Savior of the whole world.
Manuscript #3: Jesus Christ s the Savior of the whole world.
Manuscript #4: Jesus Christ is th Savior of the whle world.
Manuscript #5: Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole wrld.
Could you, by comparing the manuscript copies, ascertain what the original document said with a high degree of certainty that you are correct?
4. Read Matthew 7:24-27. Since you are holding in your hand – not a rough facsimile or even a close approximation – but the very Word of God, what difference will it make in your life this week? How will you live differently as a result of what you have learned today?

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

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