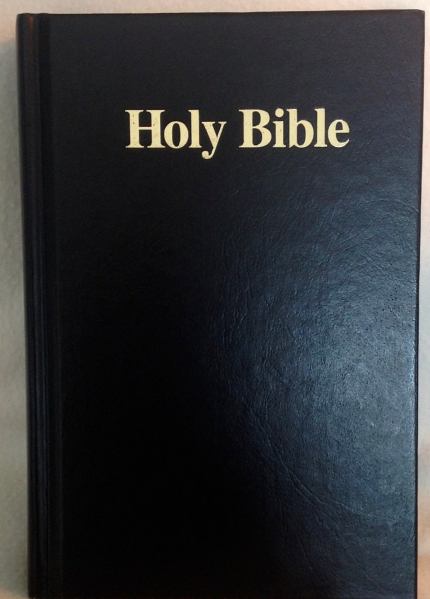


Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself

Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

HOW TO
SEARCH THE
SCRIPTURES

SUBJECT
Reliability



Page 1

How we got our Bible is well attested, and its reliability well established. Today we wish to take a brief look at this by considering 9 of the ways of testing Bible reliability.

1.EVIDENCE FOR THE TEXTURAL RELIABILITY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been the most important Old Testament textual find in the last 100 years, confirming the accuracy of the transmission of the text from its origin to our day.

1.) The scrolls (3rd century BC to 1st AD) confirm the reliability of the Masoretic Text, (6th to 10th century AD) thereby adding almost a thousand years to the antiquity of the Hebrew text.

2.) They reestablish the Septuagint as a textual authority.

Scanlin in 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and Modern Translations of the Old Testament' (1993) says:

"The textual evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in fact, confirms the general reliability and stability of the text of the Old Testament as we have it today."

re point 1. The Dead Sea Scrolls include the complete copy of the 66 chapters of the prophet Isaiah, plus substantial fragments of all the other books of the Old Testament, except Esther and Nehemiah.

The Masoretes were groups of Jewish scribe-scholars who worked between the 6th and 10th centuries AD, based primarily in early medieval Palestine. They introduced the vowel points to make the Hebrew text easier to read.

point 2. The Septuagint is a greek translation of the Old Testament made in the 3rd Century BC. and is the version mostly quoted from in the New Testament; which shows it was well established as authoritative by the time of Christ. It has been in continual use from about the 3rd century BC until today.

2. JESUS STRESSES THAT WE MUST BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT

John 5:45-47

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Luke 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Luke 24:25-27

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luke 24:44-45

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

3. JESUS DRAWS HIS TEACHING FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

10 % of the daily conversation of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament consisted of Old Testament words quoted literally. The Four Gospels record the words Christ spoke:

The Gospel of Mathew Contains 1181 verses.
603 verses are Jesus' words, that is 51%.
83 of these verses are Old Testament Quotations. This is 14%

The Gospel of Mark Contains 609 verses.
275 verses are words of Jesus, that is 45%.
34 of these verses are Old Testament Quotations. This is 12%

The Gospel of Luke Contains 1251 verses.
570 verses are Jesus' words, that is 45%.
42 of these verses are Old Testament Quotations. This is 7%

The Gospel of John Contains 879 verses.
417 verses are quotations of Jesus, that is 47%.
20 of these verses are Old Testament Quotations. This is 5%

Lets see in visual form what these facts look like.

REFERENCES AND QUOTATIONS BY CHRIST TO AND FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT			
OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT		
GENESIS	1:27 2:24 4:3-8 5:2 6:5; 7:24 6:9 14:19 17:1 17:10-14 18:14 19:23-26 28:12	MATT 19:4; MARK 10:6 MATT 19:5; MARK 10:7 MATT 23:35; LUKE 11:51 MATT 19:4; MARK 10:6 MATT 24:38; LUKE 17:26,27 MATT 26:52 MATT 11:25 MATT 5:48 JOHN 7:22 MATT 19:26; MARK 10:27 LUKE 17:29,32 JOHN 1:51	PSALMS 2:9 6:8 7:9 8:2 22:1 35:19 37:11 41:9 48:2 69:4 82:6 110:1 118:22,23,26
EXODUS	3:1-6 12:1-28 16:4 16:13-15 16:35 21:12-16 21:17 21:24 24:3-8 29:31-34	MATT 22:32; MARK 12:26; LUKE 20:37 MATT 26:18; MARK 14:13-15 JOHN 6:31-32 JOHN 6:31, 49, 58 JOHN 6:49 MATT 15:4; 5:21,27; 19:18; MARK 7:10; LUKE 18:20 MATT 15:4; MARK 7:10 MATT 5:38 MATT 26:28 MATT 12:4	REV2:27 MATT 7:23; 25:41; LUKE 13:27 REV2:23 MATT 21:16 MATT 27:46 ; MARK 15:34 JOHN 15:25 MATT 5:5 JOHN 13:18 MATT 5:35 JOHN 15:25 JOHN 10:34 MATT 22:44; MARK 12:36; LUKE 20:42 MATT 21:42; MARK 12:10; LUKE 13:35
LEVITICUS	2:13 12:13 14:2-32 18:5 19:2,12,13,18 20:9 22:32 24:5-9,20	MARK 9:48 JOHN 7:22,23 MATT 8:4; MARK 1:44; LUKE 5:14,17. LUKE 10:28 MATT 5:33,43,48; 22:39; MARK 10:19, 12:31. MATT 15:4 MATT 6:9; LUKE 11:2 MATT 12:4; LUKE 6:4; MARK 2:26	PROVERBS 20:20 25:6,7
NUMBERS	21:8,9 28:9,10 30:2 31:16	JOHN 3:14,15 MATT 12:5 MATT 5:33 REV 2:14	ISAIAH 6:9-10 9:14-15 13:9-10 22:22 29:13 36:5-6 39:8 42:7 53:12 54:13 56:7 61:1 66:1,24
DEUTERONOMY	5:16-20 6:4,5,13,16 8:3 10:12,20 17:6 19:15,21 24:1 23:21	MATT 5:21; 15:4; LUKE 18:20 MARK 7:10; 10:19 MATT 22:37; 4:7; LUKE 4:12; MARK 12:29,30 MATT 4:4; LUKE 4:4 MATT 4:10; 22:37; LUKE 4:8 MATT 18:16; JOHN 8:17 MATT 5:38; 18:16; JOHN 8:17 MATT 5:31 MATT 5:33	JEREMIAH 6:21 7:11 17:10 32:17
1 SAMUEL	21:1-6	MATT 12:3,4; MARK 2:26; LUKE 6:3,4.	EZEKIEL 12:2
1 KINGS	10:1-10 17:1-24 18:1,2	MATT 12:42; LUKE 11:31 LUKE 4:25,26. LUKE 4:25	DANIEL 7:13 9:27 11:31& 5 12:1,2
2 KINGS	5:1-14	LUKE 4:27	HOSEA 10:8
2 CHRONICLES	9:1-12 24:19,21 36:16	MATT 12:42; LUKE 11:31 MATT 23:25; LUKE 11:51 MATT 5:12	JOEL 2:10 3:15
			JONAH 1:17 3:1-10
			MICAH 6:6-8 7:6
			ZECHARIAH 13:7
			MALACHAI 3:1 4:5

We can see at a glance that Christ quoted directly from the majority of the Old Testament books. Of the books Christ fails to mention directly, most of them are referred to by the Apostles.

4. VAST AMOUNTS OF NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS ENSURE IT'S RELIABILITY

The earliest copies are closer in time to their originals, than any other ancient work, as the following list:

New Testament

1. Original text: 40-100 CE
2. Earliest copy: 125 CE
3. **Difference in years: 40-300** also OT+NT Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus & Latin Vulgate
4. Number of available **texts: 24,000**

Homer (Greek poet)

1. Original text: 700 BCE
2. Earliest copy: 900 CE
3. **Difference in years: 1,600 years**
4. Number of available **texts: 643**

Sophocles (Greek playwright)

1. Original text: 496-406 BCE
2. Earliest copy: 1000 CE
3. **Difference in years: 1,400 years**
4. Number of available **texts: 193**

Aristotle (Greek philosopher)

1. Original text: 384-322 BCE
2. Earliest copy: 1110 CE
3. **Difference in years: 1,400 years**
4. Number of available **texts: 49**

Caesar (Roman historian and emperor)

1. Original text: 58-50 BCE
2. Earliest copy: 900 CE
3. **Difference in years: 1,000**
4. Number of available **texts: 10**

The original writings that form the New Testament, date from about AD40 to AD100. The oldest copy dates from about AD125, which means it was copied within 40 years of the original. By the 4th century AD, there are many copies, some of which are complete copies of the Old and New Testaments, such as the Latin Vulgate produced by Jerome.

Those of a classical education may have read Homer and justifiably felt their copy to be a true expression of the original. But whereas the earliest copies of the New Testament extant range from 40 to 300 years after the original, the earliest copies available of Homer are 1,600 years later than the original i.e. the copies being used now are the results of 1,600 years of re-copying in contrast to 40 to 300 years for the New Testament. Also there are 24,000 ancient copies of the New Testament, by comparing of which, the accuracy of the copyists can be seen and established. (As opposed to 643 for Homer)

5. TEXTUAL CRITICS AFFIRM THE AUTHENTICITY OF OUR BIBLE

There is a wide consensus that the New Testament has been reliably transmitted as the following comments show:

“there are substantial indicators that an organised, structured, and reliable process of transmission was in place amongst early Christians.”

Michael J. Kruger, says in his book “Misquoting Jesus Review” (2006), p. 338

“...the textual critic of the New Testament is embarrassed by the wealth of material”

Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament*, (2005), p. 51

“This result is quite amazing, demonstrating a far greater agreement among the Greek texts of the New Testament during the past century than textual scholars would have expected.”

Aland and Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, (1995), p. 29

“Today we are certain of about 99% of the original wording”

Komoszewski *Reinventing Jesus*, (2011), p. 259

“any uncertainty over the wording of the New Testament does not have impact on major teachings of the New Testament”

Komoszewski *Reinventing Jesus*, (2011), p. 117

6. HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF AUTHENTICITY

“Titus Flavius Josephus 37 – c. 100, was a first-century Romano-Jewish scholar, historian and hagiographer, who was born in Jerusalem—then part of Roman Judea—to a father of priestly descent and a mother who claimed royal ancestry”

His most important works were *The Jewish War* (c. 75) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. 94). *The Jewish War* recounts the Jewish revolt against Roman occupation (66–70). *Antiquities of the Jews* recounts the history of the world from a Jewish perspective for an ostensibly Roman audience. These works provide valuable insight into first century Judaism and the background of Early Christianity.”

Wikipedia

“Josephus mentions all the books of the Old Testament as Canonical, except Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon, to which he does not allude, as none of them furnished any material for his work”

HELPS TO BIBLE STUDY Page 3

7. THE APOSTLES STRESS THE VALUE & RELIABILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

2 Timothy 3:15-17

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

2 Peter 1:19-21

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

8. BIBLE PROHECY SHOWS THE WORD OF GOD

This fact is illustrated all through the Bible, but as an example we refer to Acts 3:-

Acts 3:20-22

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet [Jesus] shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Acts 3:24-25

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.**

(Peter here quotes Genesis 22)

How did Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament know, centuries before, about the first coming of Christ (v22,24)?

How did they know he would ascend to the right hand of God, **“until the times of restitution of all things”**(v21)? which promise will be fulfilled when Christ returns.

Only God could know such forthcoming events, therefore the Prophets were inspired, that is the Old Testament as well as the New, is the word of God. Fulfilled prophecy proves the Bible true; it shows also that the Bible must have been accurately copied out for us down the ages.

9. CONSISTENCY OF DOCTRINE THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE

In Acts 3, Peter quoted the Promises to Abraham in Genesis 22, as follows:

Acts 3:25 And in **thy seed** shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
which is from:

Genesis 22:18 And in **thy seed** shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..

Who is Abraham's **“seed”** or descendent who brings blessing to people of any nationality?
Paul explains:

“Now to **Abraham** and **his seed** were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to **thy seed**, which **is Christ**.” Galatians 3:16

This is a brief example of the CONSISTENCY OF DOCTRINE THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE. Although written by many pen men from 1,500 BC to 100 AD this consistency shows they were all inspired by God. Also the consistent doctrine shows that copyists down the ages have done a good job and not corrupted the Bible message.

But, how can we share the promised blessings made to Abraham and Christ?" Paul further explains the letter to the Galatians as follows:-

Galatians 3:26-29

For ye are all the children of God **by faith** in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been **baptized** into Christ have put on Christ. There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are **all one in Christ** Jesus. And **if ye be Christ's**, then are ye **Abraham's seed**, and heirs according **to the promise.**" This is profound! Its why Abraham is referred to in 66 verses of the New Testament, and over 200 verses in then Old. He and the promises are central to **The Gospel** Message.

We see that both Paul and Peter draw their Gospel message from the Promises made to Abraham. Lets look a little closer at Peters's doctrine from that passage in Genesis 22: For **Context** we read the previous verse also:

Genesis 22:17,18 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will **multiply thy seed** as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and **thy seed** shall possess the gate of **his** enemies; 18 And **in thy seed** shall all the nations of the earth **be blessed**; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

In verse 17 we see, firstly, how "seed" is used in a plural/multitudinous sense, but then secondly, the "seed (that) shall possess the gate of **his** enemies" refers to a singular seed or descendent. This "seed" or descendent is referred to also in verse 18, and we saw how Paul explained this, saying: "Now **to Abraham** and **his seed** were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to **thy seed**, which **is Christ.**" Galatians 3:16

The promises to Abraham begin in Genesis 12, as follows:-

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:
And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
Genesis 12:1-3

We can see from the promises to Abraham (Genesis 22), that a descendant ("seed") of his, is to bring the blessings of God to people of any nationality. Additionally, that ultimately this "seed" will be a victorious leader, to "possess the gate of his enemies" and thus the ruler of the "great nation" (Genesis 12) that descends from Abraham. Who could this be? Lets look at that verse 3 again:

Genesis 12:3 "**in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**"

Paul explains:

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, **In thee shall all nations be blessed.**" Galatians 3:8

So Paul (as well as Peter) preached Gospel doctrine based on the promises to Abraham in the Old Testament. Lets consider Galatians 3 some more:

Galatians 3:6-7 Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness (Gen.15). Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”

Galatians 3:8-9 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gen.12). So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

The promised seed of Abraham who will fulfil these promises we have seen to be Jesus:-

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

Galatians 3:16

GENESIS PROMISES:

“unto a land that I will shew thee” Genesis 12:1

The promised land shown to Abraham was Canaan/Israel. It is promised to Abraham and his seed, Christ- and all those baptised into Christ- for ever.

“And I will make of thee a great nation” Genesis 12:2

The nation of natural Israel, of Abraham through his grandson Jacob/Israel. Their repentance and restoration is “the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets” (Acts 3:20-21)

“thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;” Genesis 22:17

Christ will be their great king who delivers the jews and restores Israel

“And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed..” Genesis 22:18

Of those blessed beleivers in Christ, Jesus said:

“.... ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God....And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 13:28-29

Christ: The promised seed who is to reign over the kingdom of Israel restored:-

“And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Luke 1:31-33

And so we have briefly tested the reliability of the scriptures by considering the following 9 methods:-

1. Evidence for the textual reliability
 2. Jesus Stresses that we must believe the Old Testament
 3. Jesus draws his teaching from the Old Testament
 4. Vast amount of New Testament Manuscripts ensure it's reliability
 5. Textual Critics affirm the authenticity of our Bible
 6. Historical evidence of authenticity
 7. Apostles stress the value and reliability of the Old Testament
 8. Bible prophecy shows it's the Word of God
 9. Consistency of doctrine throughout the Old and New Testaments
- Sequel 8th June: The Bible and History