



Sermon Series: Why I believe part 3

Sermon Title: Why I believe - the Bible

Date: January 16, 2022

We will look specifically at the 4 Gospels, the biographical accounts of our Lord – Jesus, the savior!

In John 21, the gospel writer refers to himself, **John 21:24–25**. The Gospel of John has the tone of someone who is recording events that changed his life. Luke’s gospel has the tone of a serious person offering the benefits of his investigative reporting; **WHY? Luke 1:4, Acts 1:1–3**

Big Idea: The Bible is completely trustworthy.

We conclude this as we examine three important considerations.

Consideration #1: The Gospels Are Eyewitness Accounts

An ever-increasing amount of scholarly work argues for the reliability of the Biblical accounts of Jesus’s life because of the early dating of the gospels. The Gospel of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written within 40 years of Jesus’ death and resurrection. And the gospel of John within just a few years after that.

Many of the Church Fathers (those who learned directly from the original 12 apostles) repeatedly quote from the New Testament. Bishop Papias quotes from 1 Peter, 1 John, and even the book of Revelation. Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John. In 110 AD, he wrote a letter to the Philippian church in which he quotes from all 4 gospels, the book of Acts, and 13 other NT books. As church leaders quoted from the gospels, they must have already been written down. Clement of Rome, whose writings date from 96 AD, refers to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and 8 NT epistles.

FACT: So extensive are all the quotes we have that if all other New Testament manuscripts were destroyed, early quotes alone would be sufficient *to reconstruct nearly the entire New Testament.*

Nearly all scholars now agree that the gospel accounts must have originally been formulated by disciples of Jesus and others who encountered Him,

witnessed the events, and remembered His teaching. That's why Luke writes, **Luke 1:1-3**

The gospels were simply written too early to be false. They are instead eyewitness accounts. For instance, the gospel of John ends with such a remarkable statement. **John 21:24-25**

Consideration #2: The Gospel Accounts are Well-Preserved through History

Consider first the sheer number of manuscripts. (Ancient Handwritten Copies) **Old Testament: Cairo Synagogue alone = 10,000+, New Testament: 5,800+ Greek, 10,000+ Latin, 9,300+**

Skeptics often claim that the transmission of scripture was like the child's Game "telephone," - But that's not the way the Scriptures came to us. One letter was copied laboriously, often dozens of times by the same copyist for distribution, with each being checked against the original. Before those copies fell apart or lost, they also would be hand-copied at the place where they'd been sent.

Your own Bible in the footnotes may say - "some manuscripts say:" ... Silvanus, a variant of Silas ... this does not make the Bible erroneous, it simply means there are minor differences - variants found in our early Christian manuscripts. **They have nothing to do with theology or ideology or the faith of Jesus.** Far and away, most variants are the result of simple goofs, slips of the pen, accidental omissions, inadvertent additions, and spelling errors. The more copies you have, and the closer in age to the original writing, the more accurate the reconstruction of the original writing becomes.

Consideration 3: The Real Issue

Do you believe the Bible? You may wholeheartedly say YES!! - it instructs my entire LIFE.

Like Bob King, it's my: **BIBLE - Basic, Instructions, Before, Leaving, Earth**

But if your answer is NO, I do not believe the Bible. Could it be that the true issue is that you don't want to live under the authority of the God of the Bible? Accept the accuracy of the Bible – call it for what it is – “I don't want to know/I don't want to change.” “I CAN'T HEAR YOU”

Isn't it reasonable for God to reveal himself? And isn't it likely, if he chose to reveal his love for you, that he would do so in a way that preserves an accurate written record? (**2 Timothy 3:14-17**)

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **What are three considerations you can say to someone who claims the Bible is not a credible historical document?**
- **Why are eyewitness accounts important for the trustworthiness of the Bible?**
- **Why is it so important that the Bible is trustworthy?**
- **The original manuscripts of the New Testaments no longer exist. How can we know that the New Testament we have today is the same as the original manuscripts?**
- **Some verses in the Bible have a footnote that says “not found in the earliest manuscripts.” (e.g. Mark 16:9-20) Do you view those verses as trustworthy? Why or why not?**