

Why You Should Trust The Bible

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So the year was 1998, and I'd been a Christian for just under three years at this point. I was in philosophy class and it was break time. So at break, you go eat your lunch. So I'm sitting there with a friend of mine who had just learned that I'd become a Christian recently. As we're eating our sandwiches, he says to me, "So Jon, how do you know the Bible's true?" I wonder what you would say to that question. What would be your answer?

See, I'm afraid the answer of many Christians that they would give, it could be given by people from other religions and that why they trust their books to be true. Well, I believe the Bible because I just believe it. Or the Bible speaks to me, it influences me, it makes me feel good. So that's why. Or I was raised to trust the Bible. So I don't know, I just trust it.

You see how a Mormon can say the same thing about the Book of Mormon. See how a Muslim can say the same thing about the Quran. Can you show someone that trusting the Bible is not a blind leap of faith, but it's actually a solid conclusion based on sound reasons for trusting it? Can you prove it to yourself in times of trial or pain? When that inner skeptic is screaming at you and going, "You really don't believe this stuff do you? This is this is nonsense." Could you answer that inner skeptic? Could you answer that skeptic at work or in your family? What would you say to them?

Well, if you can't, or if you are one of those skeptics, or if you'd like some help for just reasons why you should trust the Bible, that's what we're going to do here today. So my goal is two parts. One, I want to show you why you should trust the Bible. And second, I want to equip you to help somebody else understand why they should trust the Bible too. I've done that with this acrostic that I've created, called Jesus' CAMP. So if you're taking notes, here I'm giving you the kind of the intro to the answers already.

So here's five points **Jesus' CAMP**. It's an acrostic that I hope will help you remember why you should trust the Bible. Now, the big idea for why you should trust the Bible is this, the Bible is the Word of God. What that means is that, though human authors wrote each of the 66 books to the Bible, with their own vocabulary, their own style and backgrounds. The ultimate source of every word in the Bible is Yahweh, the one true and living God, only known correctly as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We just saw this, second Timothy 3:16 couldn't be any more clear when it says, "All Scripture is breathed out, exhaled, by God." So just like when we speak, we breathe out our words, the words that come out of our mouth. So the Bible is God speaking, breathing out scripture through human authors so that what we have is nothing less than His word. Well, now the question is, how do you know the Bible's God's word, right? You're the skeptic. You're like, "It's great. You can say that. Prove it. Show me. What's the proof for that? How do you know it came from God

as the source?" Well, that's the five points I'm going to give you now. Five reasons, five proofs, five easy ways to remember the answer to the question, why do you trust the Bible? And the first reason why is point #1) **Jesus' high view of the Bible. Jesus had a high view of the Bible.** And you can see this in two ways. First, you can see it in all of the things that Jesus assumes to be true, that the Old Testament teaches. "Well, like what?" You say. Well, Adam and Eve were real people, and so was their son Abel. Noah lived and there was a flood. Abraham lived. Sodom and Gomorrah were real cities that were destroyed by fire from heaven, just like it says in Genesis 19. Jesus taught that. Isaac and Jacob, real people. Lot and his wife, real people. And even that Lot's wife was judged. Moses lived as the giver of the law. Miraculous food, manna, came from heaven and fed the thousands of people that left Egypt. David lived, he was a real person. He wrote actual Psalms, which means Jesus affirms David was an author of scripture.

Solomon lived, had great wealth. Elijah and Elisha, Daniel and Isaiah, all lived. And go read Matthew chapter 12 later. Jesus affirms that Jonah was a real person, who spent three days in the belly of a big fish. And when he came out of that fish, he preached to Nineveh and the whole city repented. These are all things Jesus assumed to be true. So that's that's when you read what He said. These are things that you can see. He assumed all of that was accurate. But then you also see what Jesus believed about the Bible, and what he actually said about it. Like Matthew 4:4, take a look at this. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone," but notice, "but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." So what is Jesus' view of the Bible? Every word comes from God.

This is not the general inspiration of scripture. This is the verbal inspiration of scripture. Every word, according to Jesus, comes from God. Here's another one. Jesus is going back and forth with the religious leaders. Matthew chapter 22, he says to them, go down to the bottom, "As for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God?" And then he quotes Exodus 3:6. So according to Jesus, what you have in your Old Testament is God's speech. So these verses are pretty clear what Jesus believed about the Bible.

Now listen to some smart guys who summarize Jesus' high view of the Bible. Here's one. His name, Loraine Boettner, and he put it this way, "Wherever Christ and the apostles quote scripture, they think of it as the living voice of God." Not something you put on your shelf and put away and that's nice, from back in the day. No, it's living and active now. It is divinely authoritative, because it came from God as the source.

Or another author, Jon Wenham, put it this way, "Jesus held the Old Testament to be historically true, completely authoritative, and divinely inspired." Translation, to Jesus, what scripture said, God said.

So ultimately, why do I think the Bible is true? Why do I think you should trust it? Because Jesus said it was. He put it this way speaking to the Father, Jesus said, John 17:17, "Your word is truth." So someone says to you, "I'm a Christian, but I reject the idea that the Bible is true and can be trusted." They've kind of painted themselves into a corner. Why? Because either Jesus is right that the Bible is true, which would make them wrong. Or they're right about the Bible not

being true, which would make Jesus wrong. You can't have it both ways. Because Jesus said the Bible is true.

I don't know about you, I say this often, but I don't want to be on the other side of an argument with Jesus. That doesn't go well for anybody in the New Testament. And it's not going to go well for us now. The first line of evidence, this one that I give you, I think is the easiest to understand for followers of Jesus. It's the most powerful. I want my view of the Bible to match Jesus' view of the Bible. And his view of the Bible is that it is historically accurate, true in all it affirms, and has the authority of God himself, because it came from him as the ultimate source. And if that's His view, that should be my view too. So for me, all of the other points I'm going to give you, the other four, that's icing on the cake. This is the meat and potatoes. If Jesus said it and you are His follower, then that should settle it for you. You should trust the Bible. Now, probably some of you skeptics are like, "Wait a minute, what he said is in the Bible. So how can you trust that these are his words?" Answer, because the words that we have of Jesus came from people who actually heard those words with their own ears. That's why.

Well, let's keep going. What about this objection, "The Bible's not true, full of contradictions." **Second** reason you should trust the Bible is because of its *consistent message, consistent message*. One of the main ways that we test something is true or false is with consistency, right parents? Your kids tell you all kinds of stories and stuff, and you're constantly thinking, you're thinking, "Does that match reality?" Number one. And then you're thinking, "Is that consistent?"

Well, you said this earlier. Now you're saying that that's not consistent. What's really going on, right? That's the same thing here. We test all the, we're constantly thinking, "Wait, is that consistent with what I know before?" If I say all sentences over five words are false. That might take you a second. But you'll be like, "Wait a minute, all sentences over five words are false. That's seven words. So if that statement is true, it's false. Because it has seven. Huh?" Or if I said My brother is an only child. You would go, "That's not true." I mean, you wouldn't need to come home with me to meet my brother. You wouldn't need to do that. You would just automatically, "No, that doesn't make sense." Why? Because consistency is one of the main ways that we test whether something we are hearing is true.

Well the Bible is not one book. The Bible is 66 books written by some 40 authors, on three continents, over 15-1600 years, in three languages. The authors ranged from military generals to poets, Kings like David, to scholars and shepherds and doctors and priests and fishermen. Every single one of them had different backgrounds. They had different histories, and environments, and experiences, and upbringings, and all of that stuff.

And despite all of these critical differences, when you look at all of the 66 books as a whole, there is a remarkable unity to the message of the Bible. The Bible covers hundreds of subjects. It's not just God and salvation, like two. No, it's God, creation, good, evil, life, death, Egypt, money, worship, clouds, lightening, love, marriage, angels, souls, history, suffering, kings, peasants, animals and dozens of more subjects in the Bible. And here's what you can do. You can take every passage in the Bible on a specific subject, put them all together, and develop a

systematic theology of that subject. Why? Because there are no contradictions. You would put them all together and realize it all fits together perfectly to teach you about what the Bible says about God, or what the Bible says about death, or what the Bible says about animals. You can do all of that. Only because there is a consistency to this word.

Now that doesn't mean there aren't Bible difficulties, and some are harder to reconcile than others. But they can be reconciled. And the message is consistent throughout. In other words, there are no actual contradictions in the doctrine of the Bible or in the details of the Bible. And if it's consistent, then it's true, and it's reliable, and you should trust it. And then what you do is, you take the 66 separate books, and you put them all together and it gives you one message. I tried to summarize the message of the Bible in 10 words and it is this; God glorified, God honored, God worshiped in the salvation of sinners, through Jesus. That's the summary of the Bible. That's the whole Bible in 10 words. He is the unifying theme, Jesus is, of the Bible. This is what he said, John 5:39, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. It is they that bear witness about me." Or Luke 24:27, "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all of the scriptures the things concerning himself."

So all of the parts of the Old Testament that were concerning Him, He's like, let me take you to Genesis three, let me take you to Micah, chapter five. Let me take you to Isaiah nine. Let me take you to Isaiah 53. He walked through the entire Old Testament and said, showed them over and over again that he is the unifying theme. That he is in the Old Testament concealed, and in the New Testament revealed. That in the Old Testament, He is anticipated. In the New Testament, He makes his appearance. He is the unifying theme. Now, if you and I, if I said to everybody, "Hey, I want you to write five sentences about your experience here today at church." And we would take those five sentences from all of you and put it together, we'd be all over the map.

The Bible is written over a millennia and a half. 40 different authors, writing 66 books. And yet when you put it all together, there is a consistent, non-contradictory message across all of the books and all of the authors. This is nothing short of miraculous proof for the Bible being the Word of God, just like Jesus said it was. And therefore you should trust it.

Now what about those who say there's no physical evidence for the Bible? Like a guy last night who said to me, "You can't feel it, you can't taste, you can't touch it, you can't smell it. How do you even know it's true?" No physical evidence. Well, to that I point people, point **#3) to archeological discoveries. Archeological discoveries.** Discoveries of archeology have given strong confirmation to the accuracy, historical authenticity, and the reliability of the Bible. In fact, let's hear a couple smart guys talk about it.

Here's Nelson Glueck. Well, it's not really him in the picture, but he said this, "It may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."

Controverted, if that's not part of your vocabulary, it wasn't mine, I had to look it up. It means to deny the truth of something. So no archeological discovery has ever proven the Bible to be untrue.

Here's another guy, Millar Burrows. If you're like, who are these guys? They give you their credentials underneath their names. Millar Burrows put it this way, "On the whole, however, archeological work has unquestionably strengthened confidence in the reliability of the scriptural record. More than one archeologist has found his respect for the Bible increased by the experience of excavation in Palestine." Well, I want your respect for the Bible to increase. So what I'm going to do for you is I'm going to give you a bunch of archeological discoveries that support the Bible.

Let's start with this one. These are Nuzi tablets. You can see these with your own eyes, like I did, in the British Museum. And if you could read that, which I can't, and you can't either, what it would do is it would confirm customs that are in the book of Genesis. You read it, and you're like, "That's kind of weird. The deathbed promises, and marriage, and inheritance and all of that stuff." Well, you can read in the Nuzi tablets the same exact things you read about in the book of Genesis. Go home later, and read Joshua chapter eight versus 30 to 35. It talks about the building of an altar on at top of a place called Mount Ebal. And you could go to Mount Ebal today, and you could go to this exact spot. And you could see this, Joshua's Altar, exactly as it's described in Joshua chapter eight.

Here's the Stela of King Merneptah. He was a Pharaoh in Egypt. And he's writing about his great accomplishments, and chisels it into this rock that dates to about 1229 B.C. And on this thing that's listing all of his accomplishments, he mentions this group of people living in Palestine and he uses the word to describe them, Israel. This is written during the time of the judges. This is the oldest non-biblical reference to the Hebrew nation. Now, I took this picture. So I've seen this with my own eyes. This is exactly what it says.

This is Gideon's Stream. Remember Gideon, the story of Gideon? His army was too big. And the idea was that, "Well, your army's too big." God says to him, "And so they're going to think that you accomplished the victory, and not me. So we got to whittle this thing down from thousands down to 300." And so here's the stream where Gideon took his men, and all of the ones that put water in their hands and lapped it up, they were the ones that were to stay. And all the rest were to leave. Got it down to 300. Well you could go there today and do like I did. Put your hand in there and drink it. Because this is history. This is not fantasy.

Let's keep going. Moabite Stone, 840 B.C. If you read Second Kings, chapter three today, you'll read about a rebellion that took place in Northern Kingdom. And in that, you'll read about all of this there, and you'll read about it on the Moabite Stone, if you could. And you'd see words, Israel, Yahweh, the name of God in the Bible, and maybe even the phrase House of David, which would prove that David is a historical figure. Other archeology does that.

Here's the Taylor Prism. Go home and read Second Kings 18 and 19. And you'd read about King Sennacherib from Assyria, who shows up at Jerusalem. Has gone back and forth with King Hezekiah about destroying you, and not destroying you, blah blah, blah. And all of that. You read about that in Second Kings 18 and 19. And you can read about it on the Taylor Prism. No contradiction, confirmation.

This one is cool, Isaiah Seal. Isaiah the prophet, he's not a real person. And then in 2018 they found this. This is a seal. So you'd have a ring and you would squeeze it into some some pottery or whatever. And it would create the thing that says belonging to, and then your name. So the top part that says belonging to is not there. But what they can put together, scholars, they can see that, yeah, it says belonging to, that's what's normal. The middle part is, it's it's almost clear, a hundred percent, that it says Isaiah. But the bottom part, which is clear is the word Navi, which in Hebrew is Prophet. So this is an impression from the seal of Isaiah the prophet's ring. You can find out more about this online. Just type in Isaiah Seal, it'll blow your mind. Here's another one, King Nabonidus cylinder. You're like, who's King Nabonidus? Well, we don't know him from the Bible. But we do know his son Belshazzar, who is named on this cylinder.

Well, did I just give you the only ones that exist? No, not at all. Legal codes like the Book of Exodus. Existence of people's like Canaanites, Philistines, Hittites, biblical cities. I'm not going to read all of those, but there is a ton there. You can go to these actual places described in the Bible. And you can be there, see it with your own eyes. The existence of Solomon's temple, invasion of Pharaoh Shishak, that's described in the Bible, evidence for that. Existence of King Uzziah. King Hezekiah's tunnel. Seals... So, So this is something else that they've found. So this Isaiah Seal, how do they know that it's Isaiah? Well, it's because it's found in the layer of dirt that corresponds to this exact time when Isaiah was a prophet working with Hezekiah, King Hezekiah, at the same exact time. They found evidence of Hezekiah, a Hezekiah Seal in the same place. And then there are these random guys mentioned in the book of Jeremiah. Gedaliah, get Gemariah, and Jucal. Just random people in the book of Jeremiah. Except that they found their seals too, in the same place. Random people. Persian King Cyrus, letting the Jews go back. So there's a ton of, and even this is just a small fraction of what's out there. What's the point? The point is this. William F. Albright, "There can be no doubt that archeology has confirmed the substantial history of the Old Testament."

Well what about the New Testament? I'm just going to give you a couple of examples of this. Nearly every city in Acts has been identified. Many have been excavated. Many still have people living there to this day, like Rome. And here was something that was kind of cool in the '60's and before. If you're a New Testament scholar and you want to be taken seriously, you would say something like, Uh. You wouldn't say uh like that. But you would say, "Pontius Pilot never lived. He was just a figment of the gospel writer's imagination. They needed to make somebody a bad guy. And so they created this Pontius Pilot." And for centuries, New Testament scholarship, that's what they taught. And then in 1961, some Italian archeologists were excavating a Roman amphitheater and they found this stone. And they were like, "Oh, that's great." Well, interesting, as they looked closer, and they got off all the dirt, they found that it said Pontius Pilot, Prefect of Judea. Whoops..

Here's another one. You read Acts 18, 12 to 17. Three times it mentions this guy Gallio. And everybody's like, you know, Gallio, great. Until they found his actual name exactly where the Bible said it would be. And then there's Erastus. You read Roman chapter 16, it just says Erastus, the city treasurer greets you. That he was in Corinth when he wrote that. And wouldn't you

know, 1924 in Corinth, here's a monument with the name of a guy named Eratus, exactly at the level, first century level of excavation, city treasurer.

Well that's probably all there is, right? No, not so much. So aside from evidence for big names like Jesus, Paul, Augustus Caesar, Tiberius, and all of that. Lesser-known people, like it says there, Herod the great, Herod Antipus, Lycaeus of Abeline. You're like, who are these people? Luke three just mentions a guy, Lycaeus of Abeline. Yeah, well guess what? There's proof that he's a real person just like Caiaphas, the high priest. Cities like Chorazin and Capernaum, and Caesarea of Philippi where Jesus actually walked. You can go there and see it with your own eyes. I have. Existence of James, Jesus's brother, proof for that. Same with Sergius Paulus. And then you could go to Jacob's well, what we've been talking about in John chapter four. It's in Palestinian territory, so it's kind of hard to go there. But you can go there. And the pool of Bethesda. And Peter's house. And the synagogue. And Capernaum, where Jesus healed the man who was afflicted by demons. You can go to the pool of Siloam, Lazarus tomb, Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus tomb. You can go to all of that stuff. See it with your own eyes. Why? Because this is not fantasy. This is history in your Bible.

A beloved college professor of mine used to say, "Every time an archeologist turns his spade, another skeptic says, Oops." Why? Because your Bible is historically accurate. There are dozens of more discoveries like this, Old and New Testament. I kind of slowed down. But I didn't want to give you a bunch of examples for this reason. So you would get bored at the mountain of evidence there is to show why you should trust your Bible from archeology. So if you're like, I want to know more. Many of you are like, I don't even know how to spell archeology, so whatever. But for those of you who are like, I want to know more about this. This is super interesting. Three books I want to recommend to you.

First, *'Through the British Museum with the Bible'*. I actually took this bible to the British Museum way back in 2013 when my sister got married to a British guy there. And so I was out there for a week and I took this there and it was fascinating. All of the incredible things that you see. Like you're walking around and you don't know what it is. But you have this little book that explains this was from this thing, connected to this in the Bible. Blows your mind. Here's another one, Expedition Bible. They came out with a book, *'Where God Came Down'*. Awesome book, beautiful, all kinds of pictures. I'd really love for you to go to their website, or their channel on YouTube. Because they come out with these videos, high quality, that are just amazing. Where you can see not stuff that happened a hundred years ago, not just that. But stuff that's happening now where people are finding things to support the Bible. And here's a third one, *'Associates for Biblical Research'*. They have a YouTube channel that is equally awesome. And the thing I love the most about this channel is, every year towards the end of the year, they come out with a show that is top 10 archeological discoveries to support the Bible in, and then it gives you the year. So you can go back to 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. And see all of the things not, again, not found a hundred years ago, but being found now, to support the fact that this book should be trusted because it's true. It is historically accurate. Because it is the word of God.

Now, maybe you've heard somebody say this, "The Bible's totally corrupted. You can't trust that. How do you know that what was here is what was written? There's so much corruption, there's so much, people get in there and they take stuff out all of the time and put other stuff in. You have no way to know." Oh really? Point #4) *why you should trust the Bible is, manuscript evidence. Manuscript evidence.* So I just have to warn you right now, if there's a nerdiest part of this nerd sermon, it is this point. This is the nerdiest of all the nerd points. And um, it's because there's a lot of dates and words and all of that. And so I'm just going to try to make it simple as possible.

The word manuscript means a copy of the Bible. And it could be a small fragment of one verse, all the way to the entire Bible. No matter which where it is or something else, like a fraction of a paragraph, to a book, to multiple books, to the whole Bible. All of that would be called, each one would be called a manuscript. Well, when it comes to the Old Testament, let's talk about that first. We don't have a lot of copies, 700 of them. And well, we'll get back to that in a second. So I'm going to try to just give you a brief history of the Old Testament when it comes to the manuscripts that make up what we have here.

So New Test, I'm sorry, Old Testament written between about 1400 and 400 B.C. So that thousand-year span, that's when those 39 books were written, 1400 to 400 B.C. Now the earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament, that we had, dated to 900 A.D. Okay, so you've got 400 plus 900, that's 1300 years to 2300 years, between the writing of the Old Testament and the earliest copies of the Old Testament that we had. How many did we have of those? 700. You're like, wow, that's like 2300 years. You only have 700 copies. Why is that? Well, think about it, paper decays over time, number one. Number two, lots of wars in that area of the world. So lots of destruction. And unlike us who, when our Bible starts to break down, we put tape on it and we love it and we take care of it. When the Jews, when their scrolls got old, they copied the scroll and then they threw the old one away. And so for those reasons and others, that's why we don't have a lot, just 700. And then a second thing happened, is around 200 B.C., the Jews translated the Hebrew into Greek. And so so before 1950, we had 700 Hebrew manuscripts, we had the translation of the Hebrew into Greek, and some other translations, and that was it. So if you had a Bible before 1900, that's all you had. Before 1950, that's all you had. And here's how much they took incredible care to make sure that they didn't mess up their copies. Notice, here's the philosophy of copying the Bible from the second century for the Jews, "My son, be careful, because your work is the work of heaven. Should you omit even one letter, the whole world would be destroyed." They went to extreme measures, the most extreme detail oriented, beyond anal, measures to make sure that they did not miss a letter. So when you take those 700, and you take that translation into Greek, and you put them all together, there is very little conflict between what is written in all of these copies, very little. And the conflict that there is, the differences that they're in, are so small, they're insignificant. They don't affect anything really of true importance. That's really incredible.

And then in 1946, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Probably the most significant archeological discovery in history for the Bible. And if the Bible's the greatest book in history, which it is, then it's the greatest archeological discovery in history. Because what it did, remember, 1400 to 400

B.C., that's when the Old Testament's being written. 900 A.D., that's our earliest manuscripts. And then what this did is, our manuscripts went from 900 A.D. down to 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. So that's a movement closer to the originals of a thousand years. And the question back then was this, "What are the Dead Sea Scrolls compared to the Bible that we have right now? What's the difference? There's got to be a ton of difference. There's got to be so much discrepancy. Because there's a thousand-year difference between our oldest copies until the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Dead Sea Scrolls. There's got to be all kinds of additions and stuff taken out." Nope, not that at all. Overwhelming confirmation, again, that the copies of the Bible that we had before 1950, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, matched. I'll just give you one example of this is the book of Isaiah. They found the book of Isaiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls. And immediately they compared it to the 900 A.D. manuscripts of Isaiah. And you know what they found? They found.. No, no, before I tell you that, I want you to think about Isaiah for a second. It's only got one chapter right? No, it's got 66 chapters. In that Bible we give away, it covers 70 pages, front and back. There's got to be a ton of differences right, between these two copies of Isaiah that have a difference of a thousand years. Three differences. Three differences in the spelling of words. And that's it. So some people spell tomato with an E at the end, I don't, you crazy weirdos that do that. And then the normal people just spell tomato and end with the O. It's that kind of difference. Just three. Over 66 chapters, over a thousand years, God preserves His word.

Now some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the copy has kind of expanded the Old Testament and others. They were exact like the book of Isaiah. But what we saw, what you see, is God confirms, God protects His word. So much so, one scholar put it this way, Edward Voss, "The significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls is tremendous. They push the history of the Old Testament back a thousand years. They help to establish the accuracy of the Old Testament text."

Now I warned you this is the nerd moment. Because all I've talked about is the Old Testament. If you're like, that's nerdy enough. Well then we've got the New Testament. So here's this chart, that I'm not going to go through every point of it. But what I want you to see on here is I'm going to give you some ancient documents, some ancient books, the date those books were written, the earliest copy we have of those books that were written, the time gap between when it was written and the earliest copy that we have, and how many copies we have. So if you're like, I'm not going to be able to write all this down. No, you don't need to. It's going to be in the email, if you get that. Or email us info@redeemeraz.org.

So here's ancient documents. These are the best ones, many of the best ones that we have. And you can see that there's a massive time gap between when it was written and the copies we have. And there's, for many of them, there are not a lot of copies at all. And I mean you can understand that. Some of these books are 2,500 years old. How are we going to have copies of this? How are we going to have all of that to check? All of that time, the paper degrades. And there's wars, and there's all kinds of crazy things going on. What about the New Testament? Date written, 50 to 95 A.D. That's when all of the 27 books of the New Testament were written, in that 45-year span. Earliest copy. We've got just a fragment, which we'll see in a minute. It's 114 A.D, book of John. 200 A.D. That's an entire book of the New Testament, that the earliest one we have dates to 200.

Doesn't mean we don't have fractions of all of the other books. We do. 200 A.D., whole book. And then whole New Testament, 325. Time gaps, 30 years, a hundred years, 200 years. And how many copies of the New Testament, in Greek only, how many copies do we have? As of 2003, 5,735. Now again, that's either a fraction of a verse or the whole New Testament. And I've been told, the last time I did this, seven years ago, a scholar contacted me. He was like, "Well actually it's over 6,000." And I read a guy yesterday who said it's actually over 7,000 now. Because they keep finding more manuscripts in caves, and monasteries, and museums all over the world.

I want you to notice the red box, there's not a single ancient document, within 200 years of it being written, of us having a copy. And yet when it comes to the New Testament, you've got thousands written very close. And so one scholar summarizes the evidence this way. He says, "There is in fact three times as many manuscripts of the New Testament within 200 years of it being written. Then there are the average classical authors work within 2000 years of it being written." So we have a lot of evidence to show us, what did the biblical authors write? And a lot of ways to compare and to look and to see, what is it that they actually said? So here's one. Oops. Here is the oldest fragment of the New Testament. It's of John Chapter 18, written somewhere around 114 A.D. You remember what's happening in John chapter 18? Jesus is on trial. And around verses 30 to 40, he's talking to Pilot, who didn't exist until 1962. And they're having a conversation. You remember what it's about? Pilot asked him a question. What is truth? What is truth? When truth was standing right in front of him. Interesting that this is the oldest fragment of the New Testament that we have. Also, interestingly, John is written around 80, 90, somewhere in there. And this dates to 114. That's about a 30-year time span, 25 years. It was found in Egypt. John probably wrote in Ephesus. That's about 1500 miles away. They didn't have planes, they didn't have cars. But these books were spreading all over the Roman Empire, so that within 25 years this book has traveled 1500 miles. Here's the oldest complete copy of the Bible. You can go to the British Museum and see this with your own eyes. Not the British museum, the British Library.

Now, we have a lot more than just Greek manuscripts. We have quotes from the New Testament on broken pieces of pottery, and ancient walls, and pillars, and coins, and monuments. Add to that over 2000 books that were used in the early church for their church services, which quote the New Testament in Greek. Add to that the writings of the church fathers who, there are five early church fathers who quote the New Testament 36,000 times. Just five. They quote it so much, you can reconstruct the entire New Testament just from their writings before 300 A.D. You don't even need the copies of the New Testament if you just had them. Then add to that some 20,000 copies of ancient translations of the Greek New Testament into other languages. And then add to that hundreds of quotes from the New Testament in the writings of groups that were attacking the New Testament Church. Think about that. Put that all together. That's tens of thousands of copies of the New Testament, that all go in to help you understand that what is written here is exactly what was written.

So the question should be, well how much, after all of those thousands of things, all of those different discrepancies and copies and all of that. How many different readings of all these tens

of thousands of source. How much are scholars still not able, with certainty, to say this is what was originally written? Probably like 50% of the New Testament. No, maybe like 25? Maybe 5% of the New Testament? 1% of the New Testament? No. Try 1/1000th of the New Testament. To take those 27 books, divide it by a thousand equal parts. Take one equal part out. And that's the equivalent of the amount of the New Testament. The scholars are like, we have the actual answer. We're just not sure which the answer is. Because the differences are so close that it's hard to tell which is the actual one? What does that equal? About one half to three quarters of one page of your New Testament. And most of it, by the way, is the end of Mark. Just go to the end of Mark, verses nine to 20 have brackets around them. And it says, "Not sure if this is original." So nobody's hiding it. Nobody's like, we can't tell you the parts that we're not sure of. No. They put footnotes in it so that they can... Because it's clear, it's obvious. And it's only 0.01% of your New Testament.

I say all of that to say, let's hear some smart guys on this. "Frankly, when skeptics try to make the claim that we simply have no clue what the original New Testament text said, one has to wonder what drives their dogmatic skepticism, because it certainly isn't the evidence... There is simply no room for uncertainty about what the New Testament originally taught." People are like, "Oh, there's so many things that have been taken out." No, that's not true.

So for you Christian, "You can take the whole Bible in your hand and say without fear or even hesitation that you hold in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries." So again, if you've been told, "Hey, there are many great and precious promises that have been taken out of the Bible." If you've been told that it's been corrupted by wicked scribes that had an agenda to take stuff out and put stuff in, it's either because of ignorance or deception. Almost nothing at all, surely nothing of significance, has been taken out of the Bible has been lost. And listen, we didn't need to do any of that if we would just listen to what Jesus said, when he said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Right. Think about that. It is easier for the universe to disappear than for one word to be lost from the Bible. Why? Because Jesus is God. And that means that this statement applies to the whole Bible. So when someone says to you, "The Bible's corrupted, we don't have the words of the original authors." Just say this, this is what I say to them, "That's really interesting. Can you show me where? Or do you just believe that by faith? Do you have any evidence for that? Or are you just pulling that out of the air?"

Fifth and final reason you should trust the Bible is God's word is because *the prophecy fulfilled, prophecy fulfilled*. Isaiah 40 to 48, read it sometime. God doesn't just say, Hey listen to me because I'm God. But he says, Listen to me because I'm going to give you the future in advance. So that when it happens you will be able to say this is a supernatural message. Because there's no way in the world that somebody could predict this with the precision that God predicts it, and then it come true. And God also does this for us. Because there's a lot of people out there saying they're speaking for God, they're hearing from God, God spoke to them. Well, how do you know they're right? How do you know it's true? How do you know you should listen to them? God gives us a test. And you might think it's like, Oh it's you got to go away and you got to sit under a

tree and you got to just, God, please tell me, is this true? Is this true? Is this true? No, it's super simple, super easy. Because God loves us, he makes it super easy to know whether or not somebody is speaking for him. Deuteronomy 18:21, "If you say in your heart, how may we know the word that the Lord has spoken?" Answer, "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him." Translation, if somebody says to you, this is a word from the Lord, or that God spoke to me and said, If that person gets even one thing wrong ever, you don't need to listen to them. Why? Because God doesn't get anything wrong, ever.

Now, here are eight examples. I'm not going to go through all of them because I'm already over my time. But there's nothing after. So it doesn't really matter. But what this chart says, so when you look at it later, it's got the date the prophecy was given, was written, the prophecy itself, when it was fulfilled, and what the time gap is between when the prophecy was given and when it was fulfilled. And these are specific prophecies. So the Messiah would be born to the line of Judah, to the line of David, in the city of Bethlehem, and he would be crucified. The statistical probability of any of that coming true is mind boggling. Put it all together and it's just totally proof that this is a supernatural book. This is just eight prophecies, by the way. There are dozens like this in the Bible. Each of which fulfilled literally, exactly as God said it would be. All of which support not just the reliability of the Bible, but the supernatural source of the Bible, which is the one true and living God.

So if you're like, I would like to know more about this, how we got our Bible. I'm going to give you three books here. First is, *'How We Got the Bible'*. If you're a person that's like, I'd more pictures than words, this is the super helpful one for you. Second is the book, *'From God to Us'* by Norm Geisler, *'How we Got the Bible'*. Super helpful. And then there's a new book coming out from the guys at Phoenix Seminary called, *'Scribes and Scripture'*, which I haven't read yet, because it's not out yet. But I look forward to. So somebody says to you, "Why should I trust the Bible?" That inner skeptic says to you, "Why should I trust the Bible?" Teacher in college is encouraging you to deconstruct, "Can't trust the Bible." That family member, that coworker, "Yeah, that Bible, that stuff's nonsense. What do you care about that stuff for? It's not true."

Now, just remember Jesus' CAMP. Remember that Jesus had a high view of the Bible. How high was his view of the Bible? That every word came from God. There's a consistent message across 66 books and 40 different authors. Archeological discoveries outside the Bible prove the Bible to be true. Manuscript evidence support the truth of the Bible. And prophecy fulfilled shows that this book is from outside of time. If you're like, that's too hard to remember. Here, I made it simple. Jesus, consistency, archeology, manuscripts, prophecy. All point to the fact that you and I and everybody should trust the Bible. But let me end with this. If all of this is true about the Bible, then let's put down our phones, and let's turn off Netflix, and let's stop watching the Cardinals who are awful anyway. Just kidding, kind of. And let's be people who are experts in this book. Because it is the Word of God. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for these truths. Thank you for this word. Thank you for your goodness in our lives. I pray that you would take these truths and that you would use them in our lives. Not just to be confirmed and convinced the Bible is your word. And not just to be able to share it with other people. But that these truths would help us in our times of doubt, skepticism, pain, and trials. That we would have a sure anchor for our soul in your word, which points to your Son. This in the name I pray. Amen.