

WHY THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

Pastor P.W. Howard, firstbaptist-eurekasprings.org

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The devil's oldest trick is to sow doubt about God's Word (Gen. 3:1–5). **Don't fall for it.** Scripture warns that false teachers will rise among people who claim to believe (Matt. 24:24; 2 Pet. 2:1), that some will leave the faith by following “seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1 KJV), and that every religious claim must be tested by Scripture (1 John 4:1).

To distrust God's Word is to listen to the serpent rather than the Savior.

OBJECTION 1: “THE BIBLE IS MISSING BOOKS.”

Nothing you need was left out. The 66 consensus books (the ones all Christians agree on) give us all we need.

“The Ethiopian Bible is the first Bible, and it has extra books like 1 Enoch.” It can't be the first Bible. The OT was completed around 435 B.C., and the NT around 95 A.D. After that, churches across the Christian world—including Christians in Ethiopia—relied on the OT and NT books. In 367 A.D., Athanasius listed the same 27 NT books Christians had already accepted for generations. This was long before Ethiopia added its extra books.

The Ethiopian Bible contains the 66 consensus books, but adds writings the overwhelming majority of Christians have never accepted as Scripture. For example, 1 Enoch claims to come from Enoch before the Flood, but it was written around 300–100 B.C., thousands of years after Enoch lived. Someone else used his name.

The Jews and the vast majority of Christians throughout history—including Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox—have rejected 1 Enoch as Scripture. That very broad agreement across many centuries carries far more weight than the claims of recent internet influencers.

Importantly: Even if you accept 1 Enoch, it doesn't remove, weaken, or change anything taught in the 66 consensus books.

“Catholics have books Protestants removed.” Catholic Bibles include several pre-NT books called the Apocrypha. They weren't part of the traditional Jewish Hebrew Scriptures (OT), and the NT never quotes them as Scripture. Rome didn't officially declare them Scripture until the Council of Trent in 1546. Protestants didn't remove them; like the Jews, they never accepted them as inspired Scripture.

“The church hid the lost gospels.” It didn't. These fake gospels fail four simple tests. **First, they came too late.** They were written well after the apostles had died. **Second, they had no real link to the apostles.** Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would help the apostles remember and teach the truth (John 14:26; 16:13). Matthew and John were apostles. Mark wrote from Peter's preaching, and Luke used eyewitness testimony and traveled with Paul. The fake gospels merely borrowed apostles' names after their deaths. **Third, they tell a different story.** They contradict the real four gospels and include strange stories, including a talking cross, a boy Jesus killing other children, and Jesus saying women must become men to enter God's kingdom. **Fourth, Christians rejected them very early.** The Muratorian Fragment from 170 A.D. is a very early list of NT books that only listed Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the gospels. Also, every early manuscript containing more than one gospel includes the real four—not the later fake gospels. The church didn't hide these false gospels. It rejected them because they were clearly fake. See scholar Michael Kruger's work on the canon.

OBJECTION 2: "THE BIBLE WAS COPIED AND TRANSLATED TOO MUCH."

"It's been translated too many times—like a game of telephone." The Bible isn't a translation of a translation of a translation. Modern translators work directly from the earliest available Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. They compare thousands of copies to determine the original wording as accurately as possible.

"It was copied by hand for centuries—copies of copies of copies." But we can compare the copies. About 5,500 Greek NT manuscripts still exist, including some from the 100-200s A.D. When one copy differs, scholars compare it with thousands of others to find the original wording. Early Christian writers also quoted the NT so often that nearly the entire NT could be reconstructed from their writings alone. God has preserved His Word with remarkable accuracy.

"Constantine changed the Bible for power." He didn't and couldn't have. By his day, biblical writings were already widely distributed—no emperor or council could gather and rewrite them all. The core NT books were already widely recognized and accepted long before Constantine became emperor.

"The Old Testament is old—copies must have drifted." They haven't. Jewish scribes counted every letter and removed faulty copies. The Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) show the OT was preserved with remarkable accuracy. For example, they pushed our oldest known copy of Isaiah back about a thousand years, yet it still matches our text in over 95% of its words. The differences are primarily minor spelling or grammar changes.

OBJECTION 3: "THE COPIES ARE FULL OF ERRORS."

Skeptics say there are around 400,000 differences among the surviving handwritten Greek NT copies. Therefore, they say, we can't really know the original wording.

Most of these differences never appear in English translations—they're simply Greek spelling or word order. Bible scholar Daniel Wallace groups them into four kinds: **(1)** about 75% are spelling differences, often a single letter; **(2)** most of the rest are word order or word substitutions that mean the same thing in English; **(3)** a few affect meaning but appear only in late copies no one considers original; and **(4)** less than 1% both affect meaning and could be original—but none changes any Christian doctrine.

OBJECTION 4: "THE BIBLE IS FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS."

Assume consistency. Since the Bible is God's Word, and since God can't lie (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18; Num. 23:19) or make mistakes, then a real contradiction is impossible. Any alleged inconsistency is only "apparent" on the outside.

Use the **AIR** (Apparent Inconsistency Resolution) Method. **First**, pray for wisdom (James 1:5). **Second**, assume that if the Bible is God-breathed, then it is consistent and true (2 Tim. 3:16-17; John 17:17). **Third**, consider that when we say "God-breathed," we mean the eternal Triune God (Matt. 28:19). Therefore, there is no time in the Bible (OT or NT) when "God" does not include Jesus (John 1:1-3). Thus, every word of the Bible is equally important, not just "red letters" which were not in the original languages. **Fourth**, don't subject the Bible to your judgment but instead submit to the Bible. **Fifth**, consider that we may not be meant to know since there remain mysteries (Deut. 29:29; 1 Cor. 13:12). **Sixth**, consider what other respected teachers have said (Prov. 11:14). **Seventh**, interpret Scripture with Scripture. Don't cherry-pick passages without considering them in the whole context of the Bible.

Example of AIR Method: "Judge not." Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1 KJV), but the whole passage condemns hypocrisy, not all judgment: **first** remove the log from your own eye, **then** remove the speck from your brother's (Matt. 7:5).

The rest of Scripture agrees. Jesus said to "judge with right judgment" (John 7:24 ESV). See also: Lev. 19:15; Matt. 7:16; 1 Cor. 2:15; 5:12; 1 Thess. 5:21.

OBJECTION 5: “YOU CAN’T TRUST MODERN TRANSLATIONS.”

The King James Version is itself a translation. Some claim the KJV is the only valid Bible. It was first published in **1611**, and the KJV most people read today is the **1769 revision**. The KJV is a faithful translation, but it's not the only faithful translation. The KJV translators never claimed to produce the only perfect English Bible and openly defended revising translations when improvement was possible.

Newer translations rest on older evidence, not corrupted evidence. Some fear modern Bibles are translated from a text tampered with by skeptics while the KJV came from a more believing age. The KJV New Testament rests largely on the Textus Receptus, a Greek text developed during the 1500s from a relatively small number of mostly late medieval manuscripts.

Many modern translations, such as the NASB and ESV, use far more manuscript evidence, including copies **many centuries older** than those used to produce the Textus Receptus. Where they differ from the KJV, it's usually because the best and oldest copies read differently—copies made long **before** any modern skeptic could alter them. No essential Christian doctrine depends on any disputed reading.

Not all translations are equal. Word-for-word translations (ESV, NASB, NKJV, and KJV) render the original as literally as English allows — which are best for careful study. Thought-for-thought translations (NIV, NLT) translate idea by idea for easier reading, which lets in more of the translator's interpretation.

God's Word is not locked in English. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Nowhere does Scripture say or imply that only English translations are true translations. God's Word is for **every** nation (Matt. 28:19-20) and **every** tongue (Rev. 7:9).

CONCLUSION

No other ancient book has been copied, preserved, and scrutinized more than the Bible — and none comes close to the evidence for its faithful preservation. The evidence for every other ancient work is far weaker.

Ultimately, you either believe the Bible is the Word of God or you don't. If the eternal Triune God is who the Bible says He is — omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, the One who made everything from nothing — then He surely can and did preserve His Word well enough to stake your eternal soul on it.