

## **The Bible has been copied and re-copied so many times by man that it must have been corrupted**

NT has 99.5% MSS (MS or MSS is short hand for manuscript) agreement across 24,000 Manuscripts all dated before 800AD (the traditional beginning of the Middle Ages)

- different linguistic and cultural traditions
- varied geographic locations
- transverses the Mediterranean, Aegean, N.Africa, Asia Minor
- What about the errors?
  - Word order errors don't matter in Greek.
  - 7/8ths of all errors in NT are orthographic (fancy-talk for grammar and spelling errors)

## **So much time has passed that the person of Christ has taken on legendary material much like King Arthur.**

As we have already seen, this is simply not true because we have extant texts that are well within two generations of the authorship and three of the events that are recounted.

BUT, there is still evidence that shows the core beliefs of Christianity were there well before the NT began to take form:

The Creeds of Paul

- We can tell from the language and words that Paul uses that he is quoting creeds that he was taught. Paul's conversion takes place within 5yrs of the resurrection plus his decade in the wilderness
- Phil 2:6-11, Col 1:15-20 (Prison Epistles, so written in the late 50s or early 60s)
  - Paul was martyred in 65 or 66AD
- 1 Cor 15:3-7 (written in 42-47 AD)
  - Unquestioningly acknowledged as the first book in the NT written
- Show belief in atonement, resurrection, and divinity of Christ

## **But we don't even have the originals?!? AND there is a huge gap between when they were composed to the earliest copies!**

The composition to copy gap, when compared to other books in antiquity is negligible (as we shall see later...)

4 Gospels, 8 Pauline Epistles, Hebrews, Revelations and Acts dated to 200ad

- Gap of 170yrs from death of Christ (no time for legendary material to creep in)

John Rylands Library MS (P52) of Gospel of John dated to 98 to 138AD (rules of Trajan or Hadrian)

- Found in Alexandria, Egypt
  - John composed the gospel in Ephesus, Turkey
- Has 5 total verses, The front (recto) contains parts of seven lines from the Gospel of John 18:31–33, in Greek, and the back (verso) contains parts of seven lines from verses 37–38.
- John died around 90 AD
- Agreed to be the last gospel account written down
- places other synoptic gospels to within 60 to 70 yrs of Jesus' death

Bodmer Papyrus II contains 2/3rds of John's Gospel dated to 150 to 200 ad

Chester Beatty Papyri

- #1 has 4 Gospels, Acts, to 200s ad
- #2 has most of Pauline Epistles, part of Hebrews to 200s ad
- #3 most of Revelations to 200s ad

Fragment 7Q5

- Found in Qumran cave #7 and was the fifth fragment found in the cave
- About 4x5 cm
- Contains portions of 7 words. ID-ed in 1979 and 1982, the most prominent word on the fragment is the word "kai" which means "and", however, the arrangement of the letters leaves only 7 possible sources of the text. Only one of them would be religious which would fit with the Qumran community.
- Hotly debated
- If 7Q5 were identified as Mark 6:52-53 and was deposited in the cave at Qumran by 68 AD to 139 AD, it would become the earliest known fragment of the New Testament, predating P52 by at least some if not many decades.

Acts does not end with an account of Paul's martyrdom that occurred in 65 or 66 ad

- Acts was the 2nd in the two part series written by Luke
- Inference places the composition of the Gospel of Luke to within 30 yrs of Jesus crucifixion for surely Luke would have mentioned Paul's death had it happened before his writing of the Gospel
- That is one account placed within one generation and therefore still easily verifiable or refutable.....it wasn't refuted.

## How does the NT stack up against other books from ancient times?

The Bible holds up better to scrutiny than any book in history; hands down, no question

Volume of manuscripts (MSS)

- 24,000 total MSS
- 5,300 Greek NT MSS (latest dated to 800ad)
- 10,000 in Latin Vulgate
- 9,000 MSS in other languages from antiquity

BUT, let's make it easy on the doubters and throw out anything not in the original Greek

5,300 MSS in Greek

- Greatest volume of texts in antiquity

Iliad has 650 MSS (earliest dated to 400 BC)

- Most analogous because it was sacred to Greeks, also had system of commentaries and expositions sprung up around it
- Composed 8th to 9th centuries BC
- Composition to copy gap of 500 yrs.
- has 95% MSS agreement

Josephus' Histories has 11 MSS

- MSS dated 9th to 12th centuries ad
- composed 1st cent ad
- 800 to 1100 yr comp to copy gap
- used in text books!!!

The Other Major Writings from Ancient Times:

Author	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# of Copies
Ceaser	100-44 bc	900 ad	1000	10
Livy	59bc to 17ad	900ad	1200	20
Plato	427-347 bc	1100ad	1300	7
Tacitus	100bc-100 ad	1000ad	900	21(-)

Pliny the Younger	61-113 ad	850ad	750	7
Thucydides	460-400bc	900 ad	1300	8
Suetonius	75-160ad	950 ad	800	8
Herodotus	480-425 bc	900 ad	1300	8
Sophocles	496-406 bc	1000 ad	1400	193
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53bc	1550 ad	1100	2
Catullus	54 bc	1550 ad	1600	3
Euripides	480-406 bc	1100 ad	1500	9
Demosthenes	383-322 bc	1100 ad	1300	200*
Aristotle	384-322 bc	1100 ad	1400	49^
Aristophanes	450-385 bc	900 ad	1200	10

(-)Mostly incomplete MSS, \*all of one copy, ^of any one work  
 Even without the MSS, 36,289 quotations of the NT by Early Church Fathers

The writings of the past have come to us along the thinnest threads of preservation. If you were to throw out the NT, then you would lose the writings of the past as well.

It is important to remember that we have ALL of the books of the NT dated to within 200 yrs of the Resurrection of Christ! That means they are dated to within 100 to 150 years of their writing. When compared to the other ancient texts, the gap is minimal and objection enters the realm of absurdity.

### **What about the OT? Isn't that unreliable?**

Called the TANACH

- OT was established by a rabbinical council centuries before
- Torah, Nevi'im, Kethubim
  - Division attested and established firmly by Christ
  - It was confirmed by the early church from what Jesus quoted and alluded to
  - 200bc translated into Greek by Hebrew scholars at Alexandria, referred to as Septuagint

- Hebrew Bible consists of the Masoretic Text and Septuagint

-It is important to consider the esteem in which the transcribers and translators held the Tanach. The word being copied or translated had to be said out loud three times before writing and whenever God's name (YHWH) was written it required a new pen and inkwell. A page that was found to have even one mistake was burned in the fire!

-Canon closed by 400bc

#### Dead Sea Scrolls and Isaiah

-Discovered in Qumran in Feb or March of 1947 by shepherd boy

-Dated to 125bc

-Isaiah 53 compared to what we have now. This chapter is important because of the Messianic overtones and the clear prophetic indicators of Christ. Before the Qumran discovery, it was widely believed that 53 was added by monks during the Middle Ages.

-166 words in the chapter

-17 letters in question

-10 letters of those are spelling issues

-4 letters are stylistic changes like conjunctions

-3 letters remaining compose the word "light" that was added in v.11 which does not change the meaning greatly

-3 letters, one word over two thousand years of transmission

-Showed our Hebrew bibles to be 95% accurate over two millennia

#### The Qumran Discoveries: A Breakdown

Canonical Division	OT Book	Qumran MSS #
Pentateuch	Genesis	18+3?
(Torah)	Exodus	18
	Leviticus	17
	Numbers	12
	Deuteronomy	31+3?
Prophets (Nevi'im)	Joshua	2

	Judges	3
Former Prophets	1-2 Samuel	4
	1-2 Kings	3
Latter Prophets	Isaiah	22
	Jeremiah	6
	Ezekiel	7
	Twelve (Minor Prophets)	10+1?
Writings (Kethubim)	Psalms	39+2?
	Proverbs	2
	Job	4
The Five Scrolls	Song of Songs	4
	Ruth	4
	Lamentations	4
	Ecclesiastes	3
	Esther	0
	Daniel	8+1?
	Ezra-Nehemiah	1
	1-2 Chronicles	1
	Total	223 (233)

#### KH1 and KH2

- Two small silver scrolls that were worn around the wrist or neck as an amulet
- Excavated at a site outside of Jerusalem called Ketef Hinnom in 1979
- Took three years to figure out how to unroll them without destroying them
- Found to have quotes from the Hebrew Bible inscribed on them

- KH1

[Top line(s) broken]

...] YHW ...

[...]

the grea[t ... who keeps]

the covenant and

[G]raciousness towards those who love [him] and (alt: [hi]m;)

those who keep [his commandments ...

...].

the Eternal? [...].

[the?] blessing more than any

[sna]re and more than Evil.

For redemption is in him.

For YHWH

is our restorer [and]

rock. May YHWH bles[s]

you and

[may he] keep you.

[May] YHWH make

[his face] shine ...

[Bottom line(s) broken.]

- Could be a few verses: Exodus 20:6, Deuteronomy 5:10, Deut 7:9, Daniel 9:4, Nehemiah 1:5.

- Most likely not quotations of Daniel or Nehemiah since they recount events that occurred after the scrolls were engraved

- KH2

[Top line(s) broken: For PN xxxx]

-h/hu. May be blessed h/sh-

-[e] by YHW[H,]

the warrior/helper and

the rebuker of

[E]vil: May bless you,

YHWH,

keep you.

Make shine, YH-

-[W]H, His face

[upon] you and g-

-rant you p-

-[ea]ce.

[Bottom line(s) broken.]

- Numbers 6:24-25
- Dated to 700BC to 600BC, 500 to 600 years older than the Dead Sea Scrolls
- Oldest quotation of scripture we have ever found.
- They predate the destruction of Solomon's Temple and Judah's fall to the Babylonian Empire.
- Definitively shows that Monotheistic concepts were strongly present in Israel before the Babylonian exile
- Previously, it was postulated that the Hebrews were not monotheistic until after they were influenced by Zoroastrianism during the Babylonian Exile.

**But the books of the Bible were chosen in a secret and selective council by means of cloak and dagger!!!!**

This objection is just a poor understanding of historical context. It is important to get a few dates down:

- 313 Edict of Milan – Gave Christianity legal standing in the eyes of Roman government just as the other religions of the time had. It effectively ended the time of persecution

- Council of Nicaea 325 – Effort by Constantine to establish some semblance of orthodoxy of belief throughout the empire. It settled the question of Christ's divine and human nature and the Arian Controversy. It was also the site of a fist fight involving Arius and St. Nicholas over Arius' heresy.

- Edict of Thessalonica 380 – Effectively made Nicaean (or Orthodox) Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire, although pagans were not persecuted and more than half of the roman elite remained pagan during the reign of Theodosius the Great.

- Council of Carthage 397- 28<sup>th</sup> of August established the canon of the Bible, quoted as, "*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, 4 books of Kingdoms, 2 books of Chronicles, Job, the Davidic Psalter, 5 books of Solomon, 12 books of Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Tobias, Judith, Esther, 2 books of Ezra 2 books of Maccabees, and in the New Testament: 4 books of Gospels, 1 book of Acts of the Apostles, 13 letters of the Apostle Paul, 1 letter of his to the Hebrews, 2 of Peter, 3 of John, 1 of James, 1 of Jude, and one book of the Apocalypse of John.*"

Canon requirements:

- Apostolic Authority
- Conformity to "rule of faith" or canon
- Continuous acceptance and usage by larger church

Term "canon" means standard



There simply is not enough time for Dan Brown-esque conspiracies to spring up especially when you consider:

List of *disputed books* prior to Carthage

- Clement of Rome's List 195ad via Eusebius
  - Jude, Barnabas\*, Hebrews\*\* Revelation of Peter
- Origen's list 228ad
  - 2 Peter\*\*, 2 John, 3 John
- Muratorian Fragment 157ad
  - Jude, 2 John, 3 John, Book of Wisdom\*, Revelation of John, Revelation of Peter\*
- \*= considered apocryphal (uninspired) NOT heretical
- \*\*= disputed because of authorship questions
- 21 of 27 NT books were undisputed 130 yrs before Nicene
  - Irenaeus' list of confirmed books 180 ad
    - Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Eph, Phil, Col, 1 and 2 Thess, 1 and 2 Tim, Titus, 1 Peter, 1 John, Revelations
    - Irenaeus is important because he was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John
  - Polycarp counts Synoptics, Acts, Pauline Epistles martyred 156ad at 86 yrs old
    - "the gospel is the pillar and base of the Church and the breath of life, so it is natural that it should have four pillars.."
    - "Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews (ie., Jews) in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, (ie., their death), Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on His breast (a reference to John 13:25 and 21:20), himself produced his Gospel, while he was living at Ephesus in Asia."
- Clement of Rome (c. 96AD) quotes 1 Cor, Romans, Hebrews
- Tatian writes Diatessaron in 160 AD, harmony of 4 gospels therefore, all four Gospels existed so he could harmonize them
- Justin Martyr (c. 100-165) counts all 4 Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, 1 John, Rev
- Tertullian (c. 160-225) counts all NT except James, 2 Pet, 2 & 3 John

"It is a simple truth to say that the New Testament books became canonical because no one could stop them doing so" - William Barclay

The canon is not an authoritative list of books, but a list of authoritative books. BIG DIFFERENCE. Also, the canon was established during periods of persecution and repression. The bishops that attended the councils that decided the canon were men that bore in their bodies the scars of loving Jesus. They had lost property, family members, and friends to torture and spectacle.

### **But they left out books!! It was a conspiracy I tell you!**

Pseudographia -Label applied to a collection of writings that were of dubious character or appeared well after the life-time of the apostles

- Eusebius (c.270-340) called them "totally absurd and impious"

- Gospel of Thomas adds pantheistic and anti-feminist tones to what Jesus says. For example, saying that Mary must become a man for her to enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Collection of 114 sayings no narrative structure

- Majority quotations from Gospels

  - Ex: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and render unto God what is God's. Render unto me what is mine."

- Copy found in 400s ad written in Coptic

- Probably written in Syria in 140ad

- Inclusion of Johanne Epsitles is a direct and purposeful move to invalidate gnostic sects that appeared in the early church

### Muratorian Canon 157 AD

"There are also in circulation one to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul, and addressed against the heresy of Marcion; and there are also several others which cannot be received into the Catholic Church, for it is not suitable for gall to be mingled with honey."

### Apocrypha

- The gap between OT and NT that appears in catholic bibles

- Jerome (c. 340-420) debated the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the OT

- Augustine was main proponent of inclusion of Apocrypha

- Apocrypha was canonized during the counter-reformation at the Council of Trent between 1545 and 1563

### **Here are some interesting little tidbits about the Bible.....**

Matthew 1 is written in heptadic structure aka divisible by 7.

-If we look at the first 17 verses of the New Testament (The Gospel of Matthew) which deals with a single principal subject: the genealogy of Jesus Christ, It contains 72 Greek vocabulary words in these initial 17 verses. We find the following structure throughout these original Greek verses in the Bible.

- The number of words which are nouns is exactly 56, or  $7 \times 8$ .
- The Greek word "the" occurs most frequently in the passage: exactly 56 times, or  $7 \times 8$ .
- Also, the number of different forms in which the article "the" occurs is exactly 7.
- There are two main sections in the passage: verse 1-11 and 12-17. In the first main section, the number of Greek vocabulary words used is 49, or  $7 \times 7$ .
- Of these 49 words, the number of those beginning with a vowel is 28, or  $7 \times 4$ .
- The number of words beginning with a consonant is 21, or  $7 \times 3$ .
- The total number of letters in these 49 words is exactly 266, or  $7 \times 38$ -exactly.
- The numbers of vowels among these 266 letters is 140, or  $7 \times 20$ .
- The number of consonants is 126, or  $7 \times 18$ -exactly.
- Of these 49 words, the number of words which occur more than once is 35, or  $7 \times 5$ .
- The number of words occurring only once is 14, or  $7 \times 2$ .
- The number of words which occur in only one form is exactly 42, or  $7 \times 6$ .
- The number of words appearing in more than one form is also 7.
- The number of 49 Greek vocabulary words which are nouns is 42, or  $7 \times 6$ .
- The number of words which are not nouns is 7.
- Of the nouns, 35 are proper names, or  $7 \times 5$ .
- These 35 nouns are used 63 times, or  $7 \times 9$ .
- The number of male names is 28, or  $7 \times 4$ .
- These male names occur 56 times or  $7 \times 8$ .
- The number which are not male names is 7.
- Three women are mentioned-Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth. The number of Greek letters in these three names is 14, or  $7 \times 2$ .
- The number of compound nouns is 7.
- The number of Greek letters in these 7 nouns is 49, or  $7 \times 7$ .

- Only one city is named in this passage, Babylon, which in Greek contains exactly 7 letters.

-Just food for thought....

### Genealogy in Genesis 5

- Genesis 5:3-32 gives a genealogy from Adam to Noah
- Now let's put it all together:

<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>English</i>
Adam	Man
Seth	Appointed
Enosh	Mortal
Kenan	Sorrow
Mahalalel	The Blessed God
Jared	Shall come down
Enoch	Teaching
Methuselah	His death shall bring
Lamech	The despairing
Noah	Rest, or comfort

-Gospel message in the first book of the Bible!!

The Masorites were meticulous counters when they made their copies of the Tanach, they had the number of vowel markers and letters per page memorized. They noticed this pattern:

-Genesis and Exodus every 49th letter spells TORH

-Numbers and Deuteronomy 49th spells HROT

-Leviticus 49th spells YHWH

-The implication is that the law (torah) points to God

Jesus and rabbinical tradition

-During Jesus' times, there were not chapters and verses so a rabbi would reference a portion of scripture or psalm by reciting the first line

-Flip to Matthew 27:45-46, Jesus is quoting the first line of Psalm 22

-Flip to Psalm 22:11-18. Remember, we have copies of the Psalms that predate Christ by at least a century!

-The Psalm was written by David approximately 600 years before Christ and describes precisely how Christ suffered and died even though the Persians had yet to come along and invent crucifixion.

-mind=blown

There is plenty more that could be placed here, but dig in and "taste and see that the Lord is good."

**Further Reading:**

Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell

Bruce Metzger

Craig Blomberg

Norman Geisler

F.F. Bruce