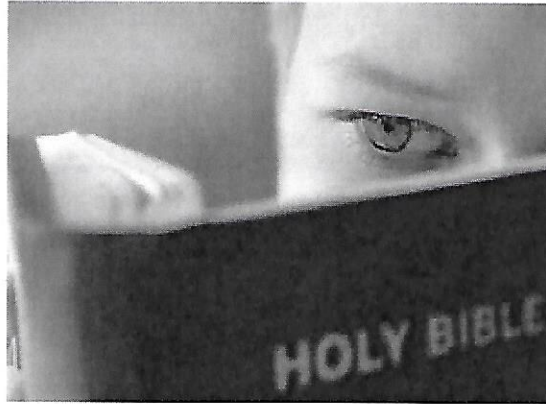


Prove to me that the Bible manuscripts are reliable



OK! Let's give it the same tests for reliability as any other historical document. There are three such tests:

1...bibliographic –

2...internal evidence –

3...external evidence –

In fact, the Bible encourages testing. In 1st Thessalonians 5:21, it says to test everything and hold unto that which is good. Let's look at just the New Testament for now.

Regarding test#1, the bibliographic test, see below...

Author	Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	# of copies
Homer	Iliad	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	400 yrs	643
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,350 yrs	8
Thucydides	History	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs	8
Plato		400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1,400 yrs	200
Caesar	Gallic Wars	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs	10
Livy	History of Rome	59 B.C.-17 A.D.	4th century partial mostly 10th century	400 yrs 1,000 yrs	1 partial 19
Tacitus	Annals	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs	20
Pliny Secundus	Natural History	61-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7
New Testament	Greek manuscripts	50-100 A.D.	114 A.D.(fragment) 200 A.D.(books) 250 A.D.(most of NT) 325 A.D.(complete NT)	50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs	5,686
New Testament	Non-Greek manuscripts				19,284
New Testament	Total manuscripts				24,970

The closer the time interval between the original & the earliest copy of a document, the more accurate the document tends to be. It is apparent that the New Testament stands head-and-shoulders above all the other most authenticated ancient documents.

Even if we didn't have any copies of the New Testament, we could virtually reconstruct it from the early church fathers quoting of it. **See below...**

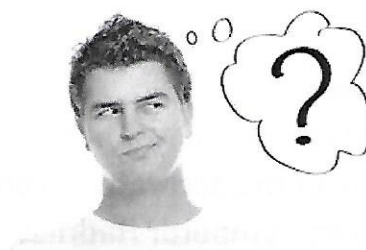
Early Church Father Quotations of the New Testament

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4	Column5	Column6	Column7
Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline letters	General letters	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

Regarding test#2, the internal test...

- the disciples couldn't afford to risk inaccuracies
- the disciples appealed to common events that the average person knew about...
- despite the popular rumor, there are no errors or contradictions in the Bible.

There's nothing more frustrating than trying to prove something to somebody who doesn't want it proven to them.



There are usually three types of errors/contradictions;

- spelling or word order errors
- numerical errors
- interpretation errors

Some New Testament MS's spell John with one 'N' while others spell it with two 'N's'. This may be related to how John is spelled in that particular language.



All of these alleged errors/contradictions are easily answered by...

- looking carefully at the text in question
- looking up the text in a commentary or in a book of Bible difficulties
- knowing a little bit about translating from one language into another

No ancient document comes close to the Bible for this high level of accuracy.

The allegations of errors are usually based on a failure to recognize basic principles of interpreting ancient literature.

While we cannot answer every single question brought up about the Bible, neither can the critic answer everything about their philosophy of life. The fact that we can answer just about every 'seeming' error or contradiction is far superior to any other religion or philosophy of life.

Regarding test#3, the external test...

There are many non-Christian writings that confirm New Testament history, such as

- 1..Tacitus, a Roman considered one of the accurate 1st century historian
- 2..Suetonius, chief secretary to Roman Emperor Hadrian
- 3..Josephus, a Jewish priest, general and historian who confirms many, many Bible people and events including stating that Jesus was the Messiah who rose from the dead.
- 4..Thallus, who talks about the "darkening of the skies" and an earthquake when Jesus was crucified.
- 5..Pliny the Younger, a Roman administrator
- 6..Trajan, a Roman Emperor
- 7..Jewish Talmud, saying Jesus was crucified at Passover
- 8..Lucian of Samosata, a Greek writer who was very critical of Jesus, His crucifixion and Christianity

9..Mara Bar-Serapion, a Syrian writer

10..The Gospel of Truth, a gnostic document that confirms that Jesus was a historical person

11..The Acts of Pontius Pilate, an apocryphal document describing Jesus crucifixion.

12..All of the gnostic, pseudepigraphon and apocryphal writings. Who would write about a person that didn't exist?

13...the Dead Sea scrolls

There are also many Christian writings...

The many early church fathers who kept very detailed records.

By using the same manuscript tests that other reliable ancient historical documents use, the Bible (specifically the New Testament) is more reliable than all of them by a longshot.

Book references:

"New Evidence That Demands A Verdict" by Josh MacDowell

"Examine the Evidence" by Ralph O. Muncaster

"Hard Sayings of the Bible" by Kaiser, Davids, Bruce & Brauch

"When Skeptics Ask" by Norm Geisler

"Misquoting the Truth" by Timothy Paul Jones

Website References:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Manuscript.html>

<http://www.equip.org/article/facts-for-skeptics-of-the-new-testament/>

<https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2012/03/21/an-interview-with-daniel-b-wallace-on-the-new-testament-manuscripts/>

For His Kingdom,

Dave Maynard

<http://BSSSB-LLC.com>