

Can We Trust The Bible?

Old Testament Reliability

The Great Isaiah Scroll - In 1947, the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in the caves of Qumran, Israel. The most impactful discovery in this batch of scrolls was the Great Isaiah scroll, which included all 66 chapters. Scholars have dated this scroll to have been written around 125 BC. Before this discovery, the most ancient manuscript of Isaiah (Masoretic) we had was written around 800 AD. So the Great Isaiah scroll was written approximately 1,000 years earlier than the Masoretic text. Researchers examined both the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah and the Masoretic text and compared them to identify every difference between the two in order to see if it has changed over time. After comparing the differences, scholars have concluded that the two manuscripts are near identical. This goes to show that the book of Isaiah has indeed been accurately preserved over time. And because Isaiah has been accurately preserved, this give us good reason to believe that other books of the Old Testament have been accurately preserved as well.

New Testament Reliability

Over 25,000 New Testament manuscripts. This means that if an error ever did happen, we can retrace our steps backwards, compare a number of different manuscripts with each other and identify if/where the error occurred and then correct it moving forward. Basically, this gives us a way to reverse engineer our way back to what the original manuscripts said:

Example

John 3:16 "For **Bob** so loved the world that He gave his one and only son." - INCORRECT TRANSLATION

John 3:16 "For God so loved the **worm** that He gave his one and only son." - INCORRECT TRANSLATION

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He **ate** his one and only son." - INCORRECT TRANSLATION

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only **bun**." - INCORRECT TRANSLATION

Even though all of four of the above translations are wrong, can you figure out how to get back to what was originally written? Yes! This simple example along with the mountain of discovered manuscripts gives us good reason to believe that the Bible that we have today has remained absolutely reliable and accurate over time.

Joseph Smith, "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or corrupt priests have committed many errors."

Smith claims that many people have committed errors in translating the Bible implying that we cannot fully trust everything that is in it. **Is Smith's claim true?**

Joseph Smith - "There are many things in the Bible which do not, as they now stand, accord with the revelations of the Holy Ghost to me."

Smith claims that the "Holy Ghost" was talking to him. This spirit was telling Smith certain things that did not line up with God's Word. Instead of trusting the truth of God's Word/the truth, Smith chose to trust this spirit.

Is this how we should go about deciphering what is true and false? By trusting any spirit that speaks to us and makes us feel good? Or by trusting in God's Word and what it says?

*1 John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but **try the spirits** whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."*

How do we try/test the spirits to see if they are from God?

*John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**"*

We have the Bible, which is the Word of God and the Word of God is truth. If a spirit tells us something that confirms with God's Word...great! But if a spirit tells us something that conflicts with God's Word, we throw it out regardless of how good that spirit feels. Because if it conflicts with God's Word, we know that it is not of God.

Not only do we have the historical evidence that shows that the Bible has been accurately preserved and is trustworthy, Jesus himself declared in *Mark 13:31*

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

Who should we put our trust in?

A. The very words of Christ?

OR

B. The words of Joseph Smith and the spirit that spoke to him?

Do you believe that God is strong enough to protect His Word?