

## ***“Can You Believe the Bible?”***

### ***How was it written?***

Writers wrote it down and then scribes copied it out so that we have many copies today. They used pointed reeds as pens, a compound of charcoal, gum and water as ink, and papyrus (dried and woven reed material) or parchments (sheep or goat skins) for paper.

### ***Has it changed or been corrupted?***

- **Number of manuscripts** – there are over 24,000 manuscripts for the Bible, compared with less than 650 manuscripts for Homer’s *Iliad* in Greek (which is regarded as a very reliable text from ancient literature).
- **Scope of manuscripts** – These manuscripts came from all across the ancient world, and they are all *virtually* identical.
- **Date of manuscripts** – there are manuscripts of the New Testament from 150 AD, and many from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, compared with the 500-1200 year gap between the writing and the earliest manuscripts of many other ancient works. For the Old Testament the oldest manuscripts are the Dead Sea Scrolls from around 100 BC, discovered in 1947, and virtually identical to the other later manuscripts for the Old Testament.

### ***Is the record of the story of Jesus Christ correct?***

- The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) were written by **eyewitnesses**, who have the closest record. Matthew and John were Christ’s personal disciples.
- Its **style** is like a newspaper or a biography. The style is not just to prove a point, but to record history.
- The **timing** of the writing is very close to the events (within 40-60 years of Jesus’ life, one early fragment from before 90AD has been found), so the possibility of legend is small.
- The **place** where the writings were distributed was in the area where Jesus lived, so that people could have disputed whether they were true.
- The writers **suffered** for what they wrote – they would not have done this if what they were writing was lies. The whole Bible has been a persecuted and attacked book, but it has still stood up! THIS IS A WONDER OF GOD IN ITSELF!!
- **The consistency test:** the writings agree in the main details; sometimes there are small differences in the minor details. But this is what we would expect if writers are recording history from their varying perspectives.
- **Archaeology**

### ***How is the Bible relevant to you?***

The Bible fits our situation. It describes us the way we are, and satisfies the deep longings of the human heart for significance, purpose, peace and forgiveness. The Bible gives us ...

#### **The Revelation of God**

*John 1:1: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”*

This verse describes the Lord Jesus as the WORD. We use words to communicate, and Jesus Christ was the communication of God to us when He came into the world. But we no longer have Christ as a man – instead He has left us *a written Word* – the Bible.

#### **Conviction of Our Sin**

Conviction notices from police/courts are always written down – that way the problem is clearly specified. God has “served us notice” in His Word.

*Romans 3:19: “By the law is the knowledge of sin”*

#### **Confirmation of Salvation**

How do we know a thing for sure? Assurance cannot come just from some vague or general feeling; assurance is best known when there is a solid fact. This is why the Bible records the solid facts of the promises of God.

*1John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

If being saved depended on us being good, doing good works and trying hard, we would never know how much would be enough for God. There would be no assurance. God can give assurance of salvation to you and me because He has done the work for our salvation Himself, and the work is all finished.