

“Is the Bible from God?” (Psalm 119: Part 8)

Verse to Remember: “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89).

How do we know the Bible has not been corrupted through the years?**The Old Testament**

- The Dead Sea Scrolls, dating to before Christ, were discovered in 1950 and showed that the Bible could be copied faithfully over a period of a thousand years.
- We can trust that the Bible was not corrupted prior to the Dead Sea Scrolls since Jesus confirmed that the Scripture was accurate in his day (Luke 4:17; Mark 12:26; Matt 5:18; 4:4 cf. Deut 8:3).

The New Testament

- There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts of all or portions of the New Testament found all throughout the Mediterranean world, with some dating to very close to the time the originals were written. The number and quality of the manuscripts are far greater for the New Testament than any other book of antiquity. There are variants (discrepancies between manuscripts) within the copies of the New Testament, but the tremendous number of copies allows scholars to figure out with a fairly high degree of confidence what the original manuscripts likely said. Most variants are minor, such as a slip of the pen or accidentally leaving a word out or substituting a word of similar spelling or meaning. None of the variant readings affect doctrines.

Were the books of the Bible arbitrarily selected?**The Old Testament**

- Jesus confirmed that the Hebrew canon correctly identified the books of Old Testament Scripture (Luke 24:44; Matt 23:35 cf. Gen 4; 2 Cor 24).

The New Testament

- Books not included in the New Testament canon were those not written or authorized by Apostles, and not universally recognized by the people of the early church. It's a myth that there were dozens of equally viable books eliminated from contention, and that the process occurred in secrecy, and that the books that 'lost out' were destroyed or hidden. The reality is that various church councils merely stated publicly the books that had been widely accepted by the church for some time. The canon was mostly recognized by AD 180. In 367 Athanasius made a list of 27 New Testament books we use today. In 397 the Council of Carthage agreed. Representatives from all over the Christian world were at the councils. Interestingly there is actually a conspicuous lack of credible 'contenders' for the Canon. Books rejected from the canon were not destroyed. Many works survived and can be read today, and the reader can see why they weren't included.