

# The Reliability of the New Testament

## Good News for the Entire World

### Jesus Christ Lives Today

- I. Three Tests for Text Reliability and accuracy.
  - A. Bibliographic Test
  - B. Internal Evidence Test
  - C. External Evidence Test
- II. A *bibliographic test* is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us.  
In other words: **We don't have the originals, how good are the copies.**

### Textual Comparisons

Author/Work	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span in Years	Number of Copies
Caesar	100- 44 BC	900 AD	1000	10
Livy	59 BC - 17 AD	4th Century partial Mostly 10th century	c. 400 c. 1000	1 partial 19 copies
Plato (Tetralogies)	400 BC	900 AD	1300	7
Tacitus (Annals)	100 AD	1100 AD	1000	20
Pliney the Younger (Natural History)	61 - 113 AD	850 AD	750	7
Thucydides (History)	460 - 400 BC	900 AD	1300	8
Suetonius	75 - 160 AD	950 AD	800	8
Herodutus (History)	480 - 425 BC	900 AD	1350	8
Sophocles	496 - 406 BC	1000 AD	1400	193
Lucretius	Died 55 or 53 BC		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
Homer (Illiad)	800 BC	400 BC	400	643
<b>New Testament</b>	<b>40 - 100 AD</b>	<b>125 AD</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5366 ***</b>
* All from one copy    ** Of any one work    *** Greek Manuscripts only				

## The Reliability of the New Testament

### Breakdown of Surviving New Testament Manuscripts

Version	Number of Extant Copies
Greek	5686
Latin Vulgate	10000 plus
Ethiopic	2000 plus
Slavic	4101
Aramenian	2587
Syriac Pashetta	350
Bohairic	100
Arabic	75
Old Latin	50
Anglo Saxon	7
Gothic	6
Sogdian	3
Old Syriac	2
Persian	2
Frankish	1

### Examples of Text Reliability

Work	Number of Lines	Number of Doubtful Lines	% of Total
New Testament	20,000	40	0.2
Iliad	15,600	764	4.9
Mahabharata (National Book of India)	250,000	26,000	10.4

The reliability of the New Testament is supported by early Church Fathers.

“...as I possessed all the existing works of the Fathers of the second and third centuries, I commenced to search, and up to this time I have found the entire New Testament, except for eleven verses.” Sir David Dalrymple

III. The *internal evidence test*: The Aristotle dictum states that the benefit of the doubt must be given to the document itself, not arrogated by the critic to himself.

Therefore: **don't reject the document unless the author disqualifies himself by contradictions, or there are known factual inaccuracies.**

- A. The authors were eyewitnesses.
- B. Jesus and his works were well known at the time.

III. The *external evidences test*: What other sources substantiate the New Testaments accuracy, reliability, and authenticity.

- A. Other historical documents
- B. Archeology

IV. Conclusion: You can trust that the New Testament. Use it to build your faith and your life.

## Additional references:

### Textural Reliability

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	No. of Copies
New Testament	50 -100 AD	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	50 100 150 225	5366

## Early Patristic Quotations of the New Testament

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1038	194	499	23	65	1819
Clement (Alexandria)	1107	44	1127	207	11	2496
Origen	9231	349	7778	399	165	17922
Terullian	3822	502	2609	120	205	7258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1378
Eusebius	3258	211	1592	88	27	5176
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>19458</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>14035</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>36379</b>

## The Internal Evidences Test

Conservative Dating		
(In some cases {e.g. Matthew's Gospel}, now being revised as not conservative enough)		
Paul's Letters	A.D. 50 - 66	Hiebert
Matthew	A.D. 70 - 80	Harrison
Mark	A.D. 50 - 60	Harnak
	A.D. 58 - 65	T. W. Manson
Luke	Early 60s	Harrison
John	A.D. 80 - 100	Harrison
Liberal Dating		
(In some cases, proven to be impossible {e.g. John's Gospel}; in others, rarely accepted by competent scholars today)		
Paul's Letters	A.D. 50 - 100	Kummel
Matthew	A.D. 80 - 100	Kummel
Mark	A.D. 70	Kummel
Luke	Early 60s	Kummel
John	A.D. 170	Baur
	A.D. 90 - 100	Kummel

Sources:  
 Everette Harrison  
 D. Edmund Hebert  
 Werner Georg Kummel  
 F. C. Baur

Next Week the Reliability of the Old Testament