

Is The Bible Trustworthy? **(Proof to the New Testament)**

Bibliographic proof is a test regarding the textual transmission through which ancient documents come to us. In other words, due to the fact that we don't have the original manuscripts, we need to ask: Are the replicas that we have trustworthy? How many manuscripts have survived? Are they coherent? What is the gap of time between the original manuscripts and the existent replicas?

We can appreciate the enormous wealth of authority that the New Testament manuscripts have when we compare them with the available textual material that support other remarkable ancient writings.

We have Thucydides' history (460 – 400 BC) available from only eight manuscripts dated 900 AD, almost 1300 years after it was written. The manuscripts of Herodotus' history are equally late and scarce.

Aristotle wrote his *Poetics* around 343 BC, and the most ancient writing that we have is dated 1100 AD (a gap of almost 1400 years), and there are only 49 manuscripts available.

Caesar composed his *War histories* between 58 – 50 BC, and the authority of his manuscripts rely on 9-10 replica dated 1000 years after his death. In comparison, the New Testament alone has more than 5600 Greek documented manuscripts.

More than two hundred biblical manuscripts (ninety of them of the New Testament) were discovered in Mount Sinai in 1975 when a hidden compartment of the Saint George's Tower was revealed. Some of these manuscripts are very old. These recently discovered manuscripts confirm that the transmission of the New Testament has been accomplished with purity and that God knows how to preserve the text from destruction. Besides these manuscripts, there are 50,000 fragments sealed in boxes. In these fragments, thirty manuscripts aside the New Testament have been identified, and the scholars believe that perhaps there are a lot more.

When we talk about the authority of the New Testament manuscripts, the abundance of written material is astonishing in contrast with the availability of the manuscripts of other Classic texts. After the discovery of the first manuscript written on papyrus, which covers the period of time between the time of Christ and the second century, a flood of manuscripts came forth. By 2009, there were more than twenty thousand replicas of the New Testament manuscripts in existence. The Iliad, which after the New Testament is considered to be in second place as an authority on manuscripts, has only six hundred forty three manuscripts in existence.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, former director and main librarian of the British Museum and whose authority over ancient manuscripts is peerless, concluded:

So then, the gap between the dates of the original composition and the first existing evidence becomes so small so as to be insignificant in reality, removing any doubt that the Scriptures came to us in a substantial way, just as they were written. In conclusion, the general authenticity and integrity of the books of the New Testament has been established.

Craig Blomberg, former main researcher guest of Cambridge University in England, who today is a professor of the New Testament in Seminary of Denver, explains that the New Testament texts “*have been preserved in a larger number and with more care than any other ancient documents*”. Blomberg concludes that “*ninety seven to ninety nine percent of the New Testament can be rebuilt far beyond questionable doubt.*”

The New Testament Greek scholar, J. Harold Greenlee adds: “*Since, by general rule, scholars accept the writings of the ancient Classic texts as trustworthy, even when the first manuscripts were written a great deal of time after the original writings and, in many cases, the number of the existing manuscripts is very few, it is evident that the trustworthiness of the New Testament text is assured in like manner.*”

The application of the bibliographic proof to the New Testament guarantees us that the manuscripts have more authority than any other ancient work of literature. If we add to this authority the more than one hundred thirty years of intense textual critique on the New Testament, we can conclude that an authentic text of the New Testament has been established.

[Taken from *Revista Maranatha*, number 34; July-August, 2014; by the title: *The Bible*]