

# IS THE BIBLE RELIABLE?

Part 2 of Reasons To Believe. Various Passages.  
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. May 5, 2024.

## HOW CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT JESUS?

**The earliest Christians asked the same question.**

- The apostles and other eyewitnesses taught about Jesus.
- Accounts of Jesus' life and works were written down and copied.

**The four Gospels are biographies of Jesus.**

- They were written to provide an accurate and permanent record.

John 20:31 (CSB) These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- John's Gospel was written for information and transformation.
- He gave enough information on which to base faith in Jesus.

## ARE THE GOSPELS RELIABLE?

**Dr. Craig Blomberg.**

- He is a leading expert who wrote *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*.
- He offers three insights.

**The Gospel writers were ABLE to write reliable history**

- First, they were eyewitness or close associates of eyewitness.
- Second, the Gospels were written shortly after the events. Matthew and Mark may have been written as early as 60 AD.
- Other ancient biographies were written hundreds of years after the events they report.

## **The Gospel writers INTENDED to write reliable history.**

- First, they recorded details not found in myths or legends such as verifiable events, genealogies, and name of important people.
- Second, they state their intention to write facts, not fiction.

John 19:35 (CSB) He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth.

- John emphasized the veracity of his first-hand account. It was a good basis for faith.
- Luke's Prologue insists on the reliability of his work.

Luke 1:1-4 (CSB Strong's) Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. 3 So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.

- "Account" is the same term used by other ancient historians.
- "Original eyewitnesses" indicates he based his work on evidence.
- "That you may know the truth" means not fiction or fantasy.

## **The Gospel writers DID write reliable history.**

- They included inconvenient details such as the testimony of women which would have been scorned by first-century Jews. Why include such information unless it was true?
- The details have been confirmed by archaeology. For example:
  - Coins, mosaics, and inscription with names of people and places.
  - An ossuary of a crucified man.
  - The Pool of Bethesda.

# CONCLUSION: WE CAN TRUST THE GOSPELS

## The Gospels provide facts we can trust.

- Our faith in Jesus is not foolish.

## If you need more information and insights ...

- Read *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* by Josh and Sean McDowell.

## If you're investigating the Christian faith ...

- Read the Gospels. The shortest is Mark.
- Pray before reading: ““God, if you're real and this Gospel is true, convince me as I read. Amen.”

## BONUS CONTENT

### One more thing ...

- We have thousands of ancient fragments, portions, and copies of the Gospels that confirm the reliability of the Gospels we read today.

“... the New Testament has far more manuscript evidence from a far earlier period than other classical works. There are just under 6000 NT manuscripts, with copies of most of the NT dating from just 100 years or so after its writing. Classical sources almost always have fewer than 20 copies each and usually date from 700-1400 years after the composition of the work. ... While this doesn't guarantee truthfulness, it means that it is much easier to reconstruct the New Testament text.

(Dr. Gary Habermas: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_manuscript#cite\\_note-35](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_manuscript#cite_note-35))

- The earliest known Gospel manuscript is a business-card-sized fragment of John's Gospel in the library of Manchester University in England. It contains parts John 18:31-33 and 37-38. It possibly dates from 100-150 AD.

# SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

## DIVE IN

- Review Peter's study guide. What were his three main reasons for trusting in the reliability of the Gospels?
- What questions do you have about these arguments? What insights can you provide?
- Evaluate the three main insights. Which may be most effective and least effective? Which one would you use with a friend?
- What questions do you still have about the reliability of the Gospels?
  - At some other time, consider watching one or more of the following videos:

Historical Reliability of the Gospels - Craig Blomberg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGVljZTzaeU>

Are The Gospels Historically Reliable? - Peter J. Williams

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zBceb15OHU>

The Reliability of the Gospels - William Lane Craig

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuY8KPx\\_rtU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuY8KPx_rtU)

## PRAY TOGETHER

- Pray for opportunities to share your confidence in Jesus and the Gospels.
- Pray for the Cornerstone - people, leaders, health, and faithfulness.
- Pray for our families, communities, and nation.