

## The Bible

It would not be good if we never listened to God and what he is saying to us.

The fact is, God speaks to us and he wants us to listen to him. He has communicated with us—that’s what the Bible is.

You may not be ready to simply accept what the Bible says without some information on why the Bible is reliable. Here are five ways the Bible is reliable:

### I. Reliable Manuscripts



Compare the two ancient manuscripts considered most reliable by historians (that is, most accurate to what was originally penned):

Document	New Testament	Homer’s Iliad
No. of ancient copies	24,000	643
Date originally written	AD 40-100	900 BC
Date of earliest copy	AD 125 (incomplete copy)	400 BC (incomplete copy)
How long between original and earliest copy	@25 years	@ 500 years

Thousands of ancient copies of the New Testament were found in North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

Here are 3 variants of an original statement, with typical copying errors. None is the same as the original, but it’s obvious what the original said:

Manuscript #1: *Jesus Christ is the saviour of the whole worl.*

Manuscript #2: *Christ Jesus is the saviour of the whole world.*

Manuscript #3: *Jesus Christ is the savor of the whole wrld.*

It’s even easier to see clearly what the original said when you have 24,000 manuscripts to compare! Scholars point out that once obvious mistakes (typos) are removed, the remaining copying errors add up to less than 40 lines of the New Testament, where we are really not certain which reading is original. None of these has any impact on any central teaching of Christianity.

If you reject the accuracy of the New Testament documents, you have to write off all of our ancient history, because no other historical documents even come close to the credentials of the New Testament.

# Topic 4 – The reliability of the Bible

## 2. Reliable History

Historians have two primary tests to determine the historicity of ancient documents:

1. The internal test: Do the documents claim to be historical or just stories? If it claims to be historical, is it the recording of things heard from others or is it eyewitness testimonies. And is it written like history?

The Bible claims to be history and much of the historical section of the Bible was written by eyewitnesses.

2. The external test: Is it confirmed by historical evidence from other sources?

Renowned non-Christian archaeologist Nelson Gluek said, *“It...may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”*

Every major event of Jesus’ life is also referred to by non-Christian historical sources from that day.

## 3. Reliable Prophecies

About 2,500 prophecies appear in the Bible, and about 2,000 of these have already been fulfilled with amazing precision! The remaining 500 have to do with the future and will continue to unfold as the days go by.

## 4. Reliable Consistency

Although the human authors of the Bible are from vastly different backgrounds, cultures, languages and occupations, the Bible holds together as one book with one message. How? Because it’s God’s book, with God’s message.

## 5. Reliable Spiritual Truth

The Bible is life-changing. What other source of truth has transformed lives like this?

God is speaking to you, but as long as your Bible is closed you are missing so much of what he wants to say and do in your life.

### Discussion questions (pick some to discuss)

- What do you think is the best-known quote from the Bible? Why do you think that is?
- The main talk said that the Bible is a book with one message. What do you think that message is?
- How do most people in society today feel about the Bible?
- How much of your opinion about the Bible has been formed from other people’s opinions and how much from reading the Bible itself?
- Why do you think the Bible has had such a great impact on so many people?
- When you heard how many of the Bible’s prophecies have been fulfilled, how did that make you feel?
- If the Bible truly is God speaking to us, what does that mean for us?