



How Do I Know... The Bible Is Reliable?



I. INTENTION OF THE WITNESSES

To Provide Genuine Eye-Witness Testimony

John (John 20:30-31; 1 John 1:1-3)

Peter (2 Peter 1:6); Luke (Luke 1:1-4)

Paul (1 Corinthians 15:14-15)

II. ACCURACY OF THE WITNESSES

Luke / Acts ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the New Testament)

“Luke is a historian of the first rank... Luke’s history is unsurpassed in respect of its trustworthiness”

“In all, Luke names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands without error”

(Sir William Ramsey)

Proper Titles of Governing Officials

Tetrarchs (Luke 3:1); Proconsuls (Acts 13:7; 18:12);

Praetors (Acts 16:35); Politarchs (Acts 17:6);

First Man (Acts 28:7); Stradopedarchs (Acts 28:16)

Record of Paul’s Voyage

Acts 27-28 has been called, “one of the most instructive documents for the knowledge of ancient seamanship” (H. J. Holtzmann).

If New Testament writers were so accurate in their reporting of incidental historical details, would they fail to be accurate in the major points of their accounts?

III. AUTHENTICITY OF THE WITNESSES

Manuscript Evidence

John 18:31-33, 37-38

P⁵² ~ 125 AD

Matthew 21:34-37, 43, 45

P¹⁰⁴ ~ 150 AD

1 Corinthians 1-16

P⁴⁶ ~ 200 AD

Luke 3-18, 22-24

P⁷⁵ ~ 175-225 AD

Mark 4-9, 11-12

P⁴⁵ ~ 250 AD

These copies would date the original New Testament manuscripts all within 50-60 years after Jesus’ death.

Citation Evidence

	Pseudo Barnabas 70-130 AD	Clement of Rome 95-97 AD	Polycarp 110-150 AD	Hermas 115-140 AD	Didache 120-150 AD	Papias 130-140 AD	Iraeneus 130-202 AD
Matthew	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mark	X		X	X			X
Luke	X		X		X		X
John		X	X				X
Acts			X	X		X	X
1 Corinthians			X		X		X

~36,000 citations within 400 years after Christ’s death

Early Testimony

“Matthew published his own Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue... Mark... himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter’s preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by his teacher. Then, John, the disciple of the Lord... himself produced his Gospel while he was living at Ephesus in Asia” (Iraeneus c. 180 AD)

IV. QUANTITY OF THE WITNESSES

“On the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed” (Deuteronomy 19:15)

How Many Witnesses?

Matthew; Mark (*Peter*); Luke (*Many Witnesses*); John

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Over 500 witnesses could have either confirmed or denied the truth of the Biblical witnesses.

V. CORROBORATION OF THE WITNESSES

All the witnesses of the scripture were Christians, not objective and dispassionate observers.

Some would dismiss their testimony to personal bias.

If you’ve witnessed someone raised from the dead, how long will you remain a dispassionate observer? Should we look for witnesses who weren’t convinced by what they saw?

Witnesses in Secular History

Josephus (37-100 AD)

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats...

When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life”

(Antiquities XVIII. 33)

Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 AD)

“Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace.

Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out” (Annals XV. 44)

Julius Africanus (c. 220 AD)

“Thallus, in the third book of his histories (50-75 AD), explains away this darkness (at the time of the crucifixion) as an eclipse of the sun—unreasonably, as it seems to me” (Chronography XVIII. 1).

Lucian, Seutonius, and Pliny the Younger also make references to Jesus in the 2nd century AD.

Even the Jewish Talmud refers to Jesus as a false Messiah who practiced sorcery (miracles) and was the product of an illegitimate birth (virgin birth).

VI. MOTIVE OF THE WITNESSES

What Motive Could They Have to Lie?

Money? Fame? Earthly Indulgence?

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

- Matthew** was impaled and beheaded in Ethiopia.
- Mark** was dragged through the streets of Alexandria behind horses until dead.
- Luke** was hung in Thebes.
- John** was exiled to the island of Patmos.
- Peter** was crucified upside down.
- James** was thrown off the pinnacle of the temple.
- Paul** was tortured and beheaded in Rome.
- Jude** was shot multiple times with arrows.

VII. EFFECT OF THE WITNESSES

1 Corinthians 1:22-23

Society in the first century was not fertile soil for a message like this. Yet, these witnesses started the greatest religious movement the world has ever seen.

How is that possible? **It was the truth!**