

How Can We Trust the Bible?

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] I do a lot of reading. I like to read.

I read for instruction. I read to prepare Bible studies, to understand the Bible more. I read, read, read, read for instruction and understanding.

I also read for inspiration. I read a lot of Christian books. And historical books to understand history. I also read for amusement.

I read novels, senseless, not senseless, but amusing novels at night, only for the purpose of getting thoughts out of my head so that I can go to sleep. So I do that too.

Sometimes the story's too interesting and I stay up, but that usually works. So I do a lot of reading. But the only book that can reach the deepest level in me is the Bible.

[1 : 05] Only the Bible revives my soul. Only the Bible pierces my heart. Only the Bible has the power to transform my character.

Slowly though, but does transform me more to love the Lord and to seek to be like him. Only the Bible keeps me coming back.

I have favorite books that I will read again at times, but nothing in comparison with the Bible. Only the Bible do I really treasure as a book, as a resource, as something that moves me and works in me.

It has only been the Bible that has continued to teach me year after year, month after month, week after week for 45 years. No other book has come close to that.

And so today, I think we come to some important questions. As we come to the end of Mark, we see that it says, for most of your translations, you'll have probably a footnote.

[2 : 22] Mine, the English Standard Version, actually has little brackets from verse 9 all the way to verse 20. And a footnote that says, some of the earliest, oldest manuscripts do not contain these verses.

They're just not there. And so it raises questions. What about these extra verses? What do we do with that? There are other places, like John, the Gospel of John chapter 8, where the opening 11 verses there have that same footnote.

But these verses are not found in the oldest or earliest manuscripts. The end of the Lord's Prayer. What about those verses?

Not all our modern Bibles have them, or they're in a footnote. Remember where it says, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever? What about those kind of verses?

What do we do with all that? Do we dismiss these things, ignore them? What are the implications that we have verses in our Bible that have footnotes that say not all the versions have it?

[3 : 34] Can we trust the Bible? How do we know what is original and what is not original? Now, I will make this caveat. We do not find this very often.

It's actually quite rare. But it does raise some questions, and that's why I wanted to take this opportunity today as we come to one of those very rare places where we have 12 verses that may or may not be Scripture.

So it raises some questions. How is the Bible written? If these verses are not original, why are they still included? So these are good questions, and they're honest questions, and I think we should look at them.

I think it's of value. So we're going to look at this and try to answer some of these questions. It's a unique opportunity for us to find some instruction that we wouldn't normally have in this venue.

Now, I am not an expert, but I'm able to read the experts. I've been trained enough to kind of be dangerous. I know enough to be dangerous.

[4 : 44] I guess that's how they say it. But also careful. One of the reasons I went to seminary is so that I didn't have to read others to find out what was going on so that I could actually find out for myself.

So let's ask the first question. How is the New Testament written? This is something that is a whole book, and I'm going to give it to you in about two minutes. So how is the New Testament written?

Well, at first, obviously, Jesus and the apostles preached, and nothing of that was recorded that we know of for 20 to 30 years. So the first gospel that we know of that was recorded is the gospel of Mark that we're looking at about 20 years after Jesus ascended to heaven.

that other gospels followed, that Mark and Luke, and a bit later, the gospel of John. And they were written, obviously, at first, Mark is writing one that Peter is based on the preaching of Peter.

Luke is writing a gospel that is based on the research that he did as he interviewed witnesses and as he took notes and tried to write down carefully, did a very careful job.

[6 : 00] Matthew wrote a gospel that he himself was a witness of. He's one of the disciples. And John, as well, was a witness of Christ and wrote a gospel somewhat later that has a lot of information in it that is different than the first three gospels.

So they wrote all these originals, but then copies were made. Obviously, as people wanted to find out more and as the church expanded, there were many, many copies made.

So a document would come, a gospel, say Mark's gospel, would come to a church or a region and that region would want to copy it down and then pass it on to someone else.

So they were circulating and growing. And so you have lots and lots of copies. Eventually, these copies were put together into a scroll. So Mark would have its own scroll, maybe 23 to 25 feet long.

Some of the longest scrolls were about 32 feet long. Some of the longer documents like, that's why Luke, who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, is actually in two volumes because his gospel took up about 30 feet of scroll space and so did Acts.

[7 : 15] So there were basically two different documents, but the same author who was continuing. These were written, back in the first century, they didn't have paper.

They had to make their own material to write on. And so they had two sources that they used. Papyrus, which is a plant, would be dried out and smoothed out and then would be sewn together to make a scroll.

Parchment was made from animal skin. And so that would be smoothed out as well to be able to write on, dried out and smooth. And papyrus plant was more fragile, did not last as long, which is probably what the apostles were using at the very beginning, which is why we don't have any of their original, original documents.

But later they used parchment, which did last longer. First century, everything was done by scroll. By the second century, they began to use a method called the codex, which is what we would simply call a book, where the parchment, the animal skins, were then sewn together and into a book form like we have.

Ours is actually, our bindings are actually sewn as well. So it was similar method. And that would help the book or help the document be preserved longer.

[8 : 40] So the apostles preach, they write down, copies are made. We do not have, as I mentioned, the original documents. We don't have Mark's original.

We don't have Matthew's original. We don't have John's original. But what we do have are copies of each of these documents. In fact, some complete New Testaments going back to the third century.

But we do have our very oldest copies, our very oldest manuscripts, date from 135 B.C. And they date all the way to 1200, not B.C.

Did I say B.C.? Sorry. That would be like prophecy. From 135 A.D., about 100 years after Christ, and then up to 1200 A.D., we have some 5,000 manuscripts, ancient manuscripts, which is way more than any other ancient document.

So if you go back to an ancient document like Plato, you might have a handful. But with Scripture, with the New Testament, we have 5,000 documents, which shows you how many there were, how much it spread.

[9 : 59] And what's remarkable about this is that in all of these copies spread over 1,100 years, there is remarkable agreement. You'd expect there to be all kinds of variations and differences.

There are differences, but the differences are so minor. About the spelling of a word, about a different word might be used in one document versus another one.

The grammar might be just a little bit different in one than another one. So the difference is that even among all these 5,000 documents, they're so minor.

And none of the variants have anything to do with doctrine. There is nothing even close to a contradiction of who was God, who was Christ, how were we saved, who was the church, all these major things that we believe.

All of those are consistently taught. So when we look even at a passage like here at the end of Mark, what we read there, there's nothing surprising there.

[11 : 12] Everything we read in these verses are okay. I got a couple of questions in there, but nothing's heretical or false. When you read the passage in John chapter 8 about the woman caught in adultery, there's nothing in there that's heretical or changing how we view anything.

The ending to the Lord's prayer, for thine is the kingdom and the glory and the power forever. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that statement. It's just likely not from the very original document.

So even in the variants that we have, see, there's nothing that would say, oh, see, there were conflicting views of who they thought Jesus was or conflicting views of how Jesus lived.

No, absolutely nothing like that. In addition to that, we have ancient testimony from the very first century, second century, of these men, church fathers, witnesses, who talk about the scrolls that were already in existence, that they had seen.

So they testified to the validity that they were already there. Though we can't see them, they saw them. So we have several testimonies that tell us these things were already in existence.

[12 : 33] Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement, Origen, okay, I'm not going to try to push my memory on some of these guys' names, but lots of guys that verified.

Okay, so that's how the scripture was written. And some professor, if he heard me, would say, that's not enough information. But anyway, told you it would be a two-minute version, maybe three.

So here we come to Mark 16, which is a notorious exception to the norm. We have all this, all these documents that agree, and here we have one that's a bit different.

But even as we look at Mark 16's ending, there's nothing in there that's contrary in terms of teaching or doctrine. But there is some differences. And so we ask, why, if it's not original and all the scholars believe, yes, there's a consensus that these 12 verses were not in the original, why are they still included?

Well, they're included because they're still very ancient. And there is evidence that it was around in the time. So, let's, all of this raises a couple of questions that I think would be of value for us to ask today.

[13 : 59] Two questions. One, how can we know which verses are original? If we have these kind of statements, how do we know what do we know Mark really wrote?

How do we know that? How can we be certain that what we have is the Word of God that was delivered through Mark or through Matthew or through Luke or through John or through Paul?

How do we know? And then secondly, is there anything in these verses when we have these additional verses that are not in the oldest manuscripts, is there anything in them we should be careful about?

Is there anything we should be cautious about? Or should we treat them just like the rest of Scripture? So, two questions. So, first of all, how do we know which verses are original?

Well, scholars look at two things. They make a comparison. And the science by which they apply this is called textual criticism, which when I first heard that word, textual criticism, I thought guys stood around, put a book on the table and stood around and just criticized it.

[15 : 05] You're too small. You're too short. You just don't have all the right vocabulary. You spelt. No, that's not textual criticism. That's just criticism of a text from my weird mindset.

So, it doesn't mean that. Textual criticism is a science by which they try to compare, first of all, external evidence, the manuscripts that we have, physical manuscripts that we have, as well as internal evidence, so how they're written, do they compare with what we know is original?

So, it's simply comparison. So, two things, external evidence and internal. So, first of all, external evidence has to do with the actual manuscripts that we do have. So, those 5,000 manuscripts that we do have, when we compare them, how does this section compare?

And what we find is that our two oldest, our two best, our two most important documents omit these 12 verses. These two documents are from the 4th century, so in the 300s.

One document is the complete New Testament that was already put all together into a codex, into a book by the 300s. It was called Vaticanus, which is named that because it's in the Vatican.

[16 : 32] And the other one is called Sinaiticus because it was found at Mount Sinai in a monastery, literally saved from the fire because they didn't know what it said and they were just burning papers to stay warm and an archaeologist happened to arrive when he found they were putting these ancient documents into the fire and he literally saved it from the fire.

And it also has the complete New Testament bound in a book with the exception of the book of Revelation. Very old manuscript. And if they're already put together in a book, they've already been gathered, we know that they're based on copies of things that were much older than that.

Now, not just those two documents, we have translations. Remember, from the first century on, our originals were written in Greek, but then there were copies that were made for other countries.

So there were Latin translations, there were Egyptian translations, there were Georgian, Syriac, Armenian, there were like, there's like a hundred Armenian versions that don't have this copy, that don't have these verses.

And these are also from about the third century, third and fourth century, very old. They're just not there. Then we have the testimony of church fathers like Clement who wrote in 215 AD and Origen who wrote in 245 AD, so very, very early, beginning of the second century, third century, who also did not even know of these verses.

[18 : 08] But there were others who knew of these verses as early as the second century, but they note in their side text that they doubt that they are original.

So even though they have them, there's a little asterisk, even in the ancient text like we have today, that these probably aren't the original. So there are the external evidence comparing of the old manuscripts.

Now another question that comes up from time to time because things like the History Channel run things like what about the other gospels that the churches don't tell you about? What about those other gospels?

Like the gospel of Thomas, and the gospel of Judas, and the gospel of Mary, which are second century documents, but do not pass the test of the rigorous test that scripture applies to.

In the early church when they decided what's original, what is the word of God and what's not, by the end of the fourth century, they're putting a list together and saying these are the books we trust. These are the books we verify.

[19 : 21] These are the books that have all the evidence and testimony and have no question about them. This is what we trust. Well, gospel of Thomas, gospel of Mary, gospel of Judas, they don't make the list, among several others, because, one, there's not evidence that they existed before the second century, and two, because of the character of those books.

Gospel of Thomas tells all these fanciful stories about how Jesus did things when he was a little child and he would do all these kind of strange acts. And you read it and you kind of go, sounds made up.

And it was. So, rigorous testing that goes on. So, they look at external evidence, you also look at internal evidence. So, let's look at what is the internal evidence regarding verses 9 to 20 here in Mark as it compares with the rest of Mark.

And as we look at the character of these verses and how it's written, the language, the grammar, we see that these verses are clearly not written by the same author.

they're clearly added. Why? Well, several reasons. First of all, you go to verse 9. Well, look at verse 8. Look at the transition. It's very awkward. Verse 8 ends, they went at, talking about the women who were told, go and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen.

[20 : 46] Verse 8, and the women, they went and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. The original gospel ends there.

Verse 9 then starts out, now when he rose early on the first day of the week. He who? Well, obviously, we're talking about Jesus, but Jesus hadn't been the subject for the first eight verses.

So now, all of a sudden, and then, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. Now, Mary, we already know, was mentioned, but why is she reintroduced, and why is more information given about her?

That's awkward. We already know who she is. And then, one of the most obvious things that show that this is not written by Mark is all the new words.

In 12 verses, there are eight new words not used anywhere else in Mark. Eighteen. Some of them we expect, like the word, he appeared.

[21 : 54] Okay, yeah, this is a text about appearance, so we'd expect that to be a new word. But then we come to verse 10, and the word for she went is nowhere else in Mark. Verse 11, the word foreseen by her.

At the very end of verse 11, the word not believe, not a Mark word. Verse 12, the phrase another form, nowhere else in Mark.

Again, verse 13, the word went. Again, at the end of verse 13, not believe, not a Mark word. Beginning of verse 14, afterward, totally new word for Mark.

We come to words like creation, we come to words like poison. Poison, in verse 18, the word poison, actually, it's nowhere else in the New Testament, only here.

Very curious. The word at the end of verse 18, where they lay their hands on the sick and they will recover, that word recover, is nowhere else in the New Testament.

[22 : 56] It's a very odd, strange phrase, and here it is. So it's not only not Mark kind of language, it's simply not New Testament language. So we have those kind of things, we have unique phrases, some of Mark's signature words.

Now Mark stands out for the way he writes, because there's a couple of words he uses all the time. He uses the word and, he wants to keep his document moving, moving, moving, moving, and there's a particular Greek word that he used for and, and this section starts with a different word for and, not a big deal, doesn't mean Mark can't do that, it's just not his style.

And then there's another word he uses 41 times in the first 15 chapters. It's the word immediately. He's like a fast pace, this is a gospel that he wrote to be kind of listened to, it's kind of like, it's kind of fast pace, it's just moving, it's meant to be listened to.

And so immediately after that, this happened, and then immediately after that, this happened. He just kind of keeps it moving. Well, not at all here, again. Not a, by itself, a knock it out of the scriptures issue, but when you put all these things together, okay, it doesn't sound like Mark either.

That doesn't sound like Mark. That doesn't sound like, then we come to verse 14. Look at verse 14. It says, He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and watch this, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had raised.

[24 : 37] Now, I looked at that word for rebuked. Jesus does rebuke the disciples sometimes, but this word is never used for rebuke. It's used for reviling, for insulting, for shaming.

It's the word that the enemies of Jesus used against Jesus when he hung on the cross. They reviled him. Now, does that sound like Jesus, that Mark presents, that Jesus would revile and insult the eleven because they didn't believe?

No. No. He challenged them in Luke 24. He did say, oh foolish low of heart, but he's not insulting them.

He's simply going, didn't you hear? Aren't you looking? You know how Jesus is. So anyway, it's simply out of Mark's character. So we have the external evidence and the internal evidence.

And when you put these things together, if it doesn't agree with the oldest documents, there's not agreement. And then secondly, if the language is different, then the greatest likelihood is that these verses are not original.

[25 : 47] But the thing that I end with in this connection is though we don't have the originals, the agreement of the vast amount of manuscripts that we do have and the little to no changes that are made between the various documents gives us certainty that we have the same text that was written as the original document.

The historical church used faithful, rigorous standards, applied them consistently and faithfully. They didn't just let anything in.

They looked at it very carefully. They looked at evidence, they looked at history, they looked at documents, and we now today can look back at many of those documents and see for ourselves, yeah, okay, yeah.

I can see how they all agree, they must be all from the same source. They're not changing the story. So, and as we said, though these verses are not original, there's really nothing in them to bother us.

There's nothing in them that are teaching something different. So, why is this important? important? If we have verses that, okay, so they're not original, but they're not teaching anything false or different, you know, why is that important?

[27 : 18] What do we want? Why are we so concerned about the originals? Well, for me, I want the original. I want as close to what we have, and I want to know what Jesus really said, and that's why I went to seminary, so I can study this stuff and I can know for sure.

What did he actually say? Not just what does this translation have, but what did the Greek actually say that preserves what he actually said? I want to know that, because there are nuances and issues that clarify how I apply that, how I understand that, that deepens my faith, that helps me walk.

So I want to know what the word is. Listen to what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3. He's encouraging young Timothy, say, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, and these sacred writings, and he's speaking about the Old Testament there, these sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and then he makes the statement that we're all probably familiar with, all scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

That's the word that I want. I want the God-breathed stuff. I want the stuff that is profitable. I want the stuff that will make me complete. Another translation of that word is adequate.

I want the word of God that will make me adequate. Why? Because I feel inadequate. And I want the powerful word, I want the original word that will make me adequate, that teaches me, that encourages me, that builds me up, that puts me in the right place, that's profitable in all these ways.

[29 : 17] So certainly the Old Testament is called scripture. Jesus verified that he viewed all the Old Testament as scripture, as from the word of God. The apostles also quote from the Old Testament and trust it as the word of God.

What about the New Testament? How do we know that the New Testament then is also scripture? See, the Jews would disagree with us about that. The Old Testament, yeah, that's the scripture.

What about this new stuff? What about what Jesus says and what the apostles say? How do we know that's also scripture? Well, people can disagree about it, but here's something that Peter thought about Paul's writing.

We know that all the apostles considered what Jesus said to be scripture. We know that they considered what Jesus said to be from the word of the very word of God. So they testify that by the writing of the four gospels.

But what about Paul? Paul wrote about half of the New Testament. What do we think about him? What did they think of him? Well, listen to the end of 2 Peter. This is Peter commenting about Paul and his writings.

[30 : 20] Peter says, we count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, so he's conscious of Paul being given wisdom, as he does, as Paul does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

Still speaking about Paul's letter, he says, there are some things in them, in the letters that are hard to understand. Pause there. Isn't that good to hear Peter say that?

Isn't it good to hear Peter say that Paul was hard to understand? Even Peter had a trouble. Now, Peter, he's a fisherman, but that doesn't mean he wasn't smart. I know he was smart, but Paul's kind of on a different plane.

And so even to hear Peter say, gotcha, brother Paul, some of it, whew, right? Okay, so that's not the point though. In them, they're hard to understand.

Then watch what he says, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, watch this, as they do the other scriptures.

[31 : 37] In other words, Peter is saying Paul's letters are being treated just like the other scriptures. In other words, Paul's letters are also scripture, considered by Peter.

So, Paul, what is scripture? Well, like I said, the early church has applied rigorous standards and testing and confirmation to the books that are compiled and what we have as the New Testament, the 27 books of the New Testament.

So, first question, how do we know which verses are original? Well, we could do some comparison with the external and internal evidence. second question, let's get a little more practical. That's some background, let's get practical.

Should we be cautious about applying these verses? If they're not original, should we be cautious about applying these verses? Should we treat them just like scripture or should we treat them a bit differently, at least cautiously?

Well, let's look, and I'm looking particularly at verses 17 and 18 where he talks about the signs that accompany. Well, let's start at verse 15 where he gives the commission.

[32 : 50] Verse 15, we have the record that Jesus said to them, go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Here's the commission, go and proclaim the gospel.

Does that sound like it's out of left field? No, that says the same thing in Matthew, says the same thing in Luke, basically has that theme in John. Okay, that's not a problem.

Though he uses the word all creation, which is not in the other gospels or from the words from the mouth of Jesus, but is used by Paul, so it does sound like a little later insert, but still, what he says is not surprising.

Just as in the earlier verses, we have the three appearances. Verse 9, he appeared to Mary Magdalene. Well, is there any problem with that? No. Both Matthew and John record Jesus appearing first to Mary Magdalene.

Okay, so that's true. Verse 12, his second appearance was to other disciples as they're walking on the road. Well, does the other gospels verify that?

[33 : 56] Yeah, Luke verifies that. They're on the road to Emmaus. So, okay, that's true. There's nothing wrong with that. Verse 14, when he comes to the eleven, did he appear to the eleven as well?

Yes, Matthew, Luke, and John all record him appearing to the eleven more than one time. So, that information is not something to be troubled with.

But now, look at verse 17. Here's where it gets a little different. In fact, unique. So, verse 17 talks about the confirmation signs.

The signs that will accompany those who believe. believe. Now, it's interesting, he says, those who believe, not those who are the preachers. See, Paul talks about signs that will accompany an apostle.

In fact, it's one of the verifying things of a true apostle, is that there are signs that verify him. Here, the text is not about apostles, but about those who believe. Okay?

[34 : 58] So, what are the signs? Well, he mentions five of them. In my name, they'll cast out demons. Okay?

Did they do that? Yeah, the gospels talk about, even Mark talks about in chapter three, he gave them authority to over demons. So, okay, that one's fine.

That one's clear. Jesus said that. Second one, they will speak in new tongues. Well, wait a minute, we've got a problem. Jesus, from the mouth of Jesus, never comes the word tongues.

In this, he talked about the tongue, but he doesn't talk about tongues as a new language. Jesus never talked about that. In fact, there's nothing in the gospels about tongues as a language, as a gift.

We see it in Acts 2, and then we see it in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. So, Jesus didn't talk about that. What about verse 18?

[35 : 54] They will pick up serpents with their hands. snakes. Okay, that's new. That one's new. Jesus does talk about snakes a couple times.

He talks about you will tread on snakes and scorpions and all the power of the evil one or the enemy. So, there he's talking about a spiritual battle, not a physical snake battle.

Jesus does talk about snakes and other references where he says, if your son asks for a fish, you're not going to give him a snake. But he's not talking about this. So, Jesus never talked about this. Then come to the third one.

They will drink deadly poison. It will not hurt them. Well, as I mentioned before, the word poison, it's only here. Nowhere else in the New Testament does it talk about poison. Nowhere else.

What about they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover? Well, yeah, we do see the disciples doing that. We do see the apostles do that. So, that one's there. That one's fine. But there are a couple of them here that are a little bit interesting.

[36 : 58] A little bit, I don't know, would Jesus really say that? There is one instance where Paul got bit by a snake at the end of Acts 28. So, that did happen and he didn't die.

So, that's probably where this document's getting that idea. Jesus, in all the other gospels, Jesus did not say there's these set of signs. The New Testament says, generally, yes, there are signs that follow.

God testifies to his messengers. We see that in Acts, as early as Acts 5. The many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles.

So, yeah, God did do that. The other thing that's interesting in the gospel of Mark is when you contrast the word signs here at the end with how Mark used the word signs in his gospel.

He used it in two other places. In both places, it was used in a negative sense, in a cautionary sense. So, he said in Mark 8, the Pharisees came to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him, and Jesus sighed deeply in his spirit and said, why does this generation seek a sign?

[38 : 17] Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation. So, that's the first instance, negative signs. And then later in chapter 13, when he's talking about the time to come, he says, if anyone says to you, look, here is the Christ, or look, there he is, Jesus says, don't believe them.

For false Christ and false prophets will arise and will perform what? Signs. Signs and wonders, why?

To lead people astray, if possible. So, in other words, the two other times that the word signs appears in Mark, they're both negative and cautionary. It just seems out of place all of a sudden that Mark would throw in, and not that, like I said, it's not that God didn't use signs, he did use signs.

But this is the only place in the text we have a list of some ones that are a little bit poison and snakes. That seems a bit extreme. And we know that the churches that do, there are some churches that practice that stuff, and they're mostly considered extreme.

It's not very much of a testimony to the power of the gospel. And the other thing about signs, let me just make this one other clarifying statement in the scriptures.

[39 : 40] When the disciples did cast out demons, when the disciples did heal people, they did not call people to come to a healing service.

They did not call people to come to a deliverance. They didn't set it up that way. Jesus never set it up that way. How did he do exorcisms and healings?

He was preaching, people came, people would ask, Jesus would give. It wasn't designed. It's kind of like the way it's done today is a little bit put in the cart before the horse.

Whereas when God did it, it just evolved. It was dynamic. It wasn't staged or set up. Anyway, bottom line, what difference does all of this make?

And I hope it's been instructive. I hope I haven't bored you to tears. I hope it's been helpful. But bottom line, can we trust the Bible?

[40 : 47] Can we trust the Bible? That's what these verses kind of say. Well, how do we know? And the bottom line is that there is overwhelming evidence that the word of God is trustworthy and faithfully preserved.

The great care that is given in the copies of the originals. The remarkable agreement over 5,000 copies over how many centuries now?

By the way, years ago when they discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls, there wasn't a lot of New Testament stuff there. Most of what they discovered was Old Testament manuscripts. And what they discovered was the some manuscripts of the Old Testament that were 1,000 years older than anything they had possessed before.

1,000 years earlier. And when they compared those older documents with the ones that they have that are 1,000 years later, they're like the same. It was like the faithfulness and what it testifies to is the faithfulness and the carefulness that the copies were made with.

There's great care. even the texts that do show these minor differences, it's never an issue of truth. It's never an issue of doctrine.

[42 : 14] The church history from the very beginning has applied rigorous standards and tests to ensure that the word that we have is the word that was spoken to the apostles.

apostles. So, conclusion, the Bible is the most faithfully preserved, tested, confirmed document in history by miles.

This kind of rigorous testing isn't done with any other ancient document. Not what has been applied to the scriptures. Can we trust it? Yes. The overwhelming affirmation is yes.

the fact that God unites all these different writers over centuries of time and their message is all the same.

There's one consistent message from Genesis to Revelation and the message is man is in ruin, Christ is the remedy.

[43 : 15] from Genesis we learn of man's ruin and from Genesis on we learn of a one to come who will remedy all of man's issues.

The same purpose is in all 66 books to reconcile rebels to a peaceful relationship with God. So, again, I say, I've read a lot of books but only the Bible, can reach the deepest level in me.

Only the Bible can revive my soul and pierce my heart and transform me from the God denying God failing person to faith and walking with him by grace.

Only the Bible. Only the Bible is that which I return to over and over and over again. is that which gives me truth and power and transformation.

Let's pray, shall we? Our Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you even for these extra verses that are here that help us or bring us to ask some important questions.

[44 : 39] things. And Father, as we look at the evidence, as we hear about the evidence, we see all the testimony that is given. And we see how rigorous was the church about being certain that what they had was what you in fact have said.

We thank you, Lord, so that we can have faith in what we read. and Father, when we do read it, we recognize the power of this word. Power like no other book possesses.

Power to act upon us. The word of God is living and active and able to discern the thoughts and the intentions of our heart.

We thank you, oh Father, for the power of your word that you apply through the power of your spirit. May you do that in these moments today, we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

Lost or safe, find their way At the sound of your grave All condemned Feel no shame At the sound Of your grave Every fear Has no place At the sound Of your grave The enemy He has to leave At the sound Of your grave The enemy He has to leave At the sound Of your grave Worthy is the Lamb that was

[47 : 19] Slain for us Son of God And man You are high And lifted up And all the world Will praise Your great name All the weak All the weak Find their strength At the sound Of your grave All the weak Find their strength At the sound Of your grave And the sick Receive Grace At the sound Of your grave The Father lives, they find their rest at the sound of your great name.

And the sick are healed, and the dead are raised at the sound of your great name.