

Evidences for the Resurrection of Christ
Lesson 10 – A Certain Foundation for all that we do
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Introduction: We live in a time where reason is distained.

- A. How many current political worldviews have affected our culture?
1. Many have plainly stated that we cannot trust reason based upon what we see and hear! They have openly shown us the fruits of this view!
 2. Many churches have been divided by those adopting such an anti-reason worldview! They say the Bible should be viewed as a nebulous “story.”
- B. How did God chose to reveal His Son and to establish confidence in His identity?
1. He gave facts for others to consider, test and then draw conclusions!
(See Lesson 1) **(Mt 16:15-16)**
 2. This same approach must be used for the Christian in all that he does.

I. Honest objections provide a great opportunity for certainty

- A. Consider the opportunity to consider an “opposing” view!
1. Did the disciples steal the body? (See lesson 7) **(Mt 28:11-15)**
 2. When an honest objection is raised then the one raising it can become better acquainted with the facts and the implications!
 3. Any good teacher can tell you the value with allowing a hearer to struggle with the possible implications of known truths! **(Jn 7:40-43)**
 4. Consider some common views that deny the resurrection.
- B. Jesus swooned on the cross and revived on the 3rd day.
1. There are two camps that push this view: (1) That the Apostles were honest but mistaken; (2) That the Apostles and Jesus dishonestly planned to falsify His death and resurrection.
 2. Most knowledgeable men would admit the apostles were sincere, honest men!
(See lesson 7) **(1 Cor 15:30-32)**
 3. What kind of problems does this view have?
 - a. The evidence of His death! (See Lesson 6) **(Jn 19:31-35)**
 - b. The absurdity of the post resurrection accounts. (Ex. A14 mile walk?) **(Lk 24:13)**
 - c. What happened to Jesus after that? Did He disappear? He was never heard from again?
 - d. The conversion of the apostle Paul. Did Jesus set an ambush with a bright flash of light that blinded only Paul? When He spoke then but only Paul could see and understand Him? **(Acts 26:12-14; 22:9)**
 - e. Contrast the consistency of the truth of the resurrection with the irrational and gullible positions raised in opposition!
- C. Claiming the New Testament documents are not genuine or have been altered.
(Mt 24:35)
1. Those who raise these kinds of objections have not seriously researched how we got the New Testament documents. (See “Answering a Muslim Critic”)

1. We do not have the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible.
2. The original manuscripts were copied by fallible men and as a result every copy that we possess today contains errors. In fact, no two manuscripts are alike.
3. Because these errors exist, then whatever was originally in the Bible is “unknowable” today.
4. The copyists intentionally put their own “mischievous” beliefs into the text..
 2. We have a greater certainty that we have the original words because they were copied and widely distributed! Some passages were written and buried in the tombs of early Christians!
 3. It was impossible for anyone to round up all the copies and make changes!
 4. What do we find when we examine the errors of the copyists?
 5. Consider the astounding test of the Dead Sea Scrolls! What great confidence we can have in the whole Bible text!

II. This evidence provides a foundation for how we reason from scripture

- A. Why did the Apostles direct the 1st century church to observe the 1st day of the week? (See Lesson 9) **(Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:1-2)**
 1. Do we have a basis to demand these practices from scripture?
 2. The foundational work of the apostles showed Christians that a delivered example from the Apostles should be carefully handled. **(1 Cor 11:20-24)**
 3. When an inspired writer tells us something or shows us something, we must carefully reason from these truths and stay within what was delivered.
 4. Have you ever heard of CENI? This describes language and how all communication occurs with words.
 5. We are to strictly stay within the revealed words of the apostles and prophets of the New Testament! **(Eph 2:20; Jn 12:48-50)**
- B. What can we know about Jesus return and life after death?
 1. The resurrection and ascension of Christ was an historical event involving Jesus’ physical body.
 2. Jesus’ physical body was raised. **(Lk 24:39-45)**
 3. Jesus physically ascended on a cloud. **(Acts 1:9-11)**
 4. An angel of God tells us how this example will be repeated!
 5. John also tells us about how this future event will affect people that are now dead! **(Rev 1:7; Jn 19:32-37)**
- C. There will be a literal physical resurrection of all men who ever lived.
 1. Paul reasoned with unbelievers that they would be held accountable at the judgment day because of the resurrection of Christ. **(Acts 17:30-31)**
 2. Consider how Paul develops this reasoning with Christians. **(2 Cor 4:13-14; 1 Cor 6:14; Phil 3:20-21, 1 Jn 3:2)**
 3. Is this resurrection a figurative resurrection of a cause?
 4. These doctrinal truths must not be compromised!
 5. There were some in the 1st century that improperly reasoned from scripture about these things. **(1 Cor 15:12, 2 Tim 2:15-19)**

Answering a Muslim Critic (Part 1) **by Larry Rouse**

This week I received an e-mail from a Muslim, Mr. Husain, that was severely critical of those who believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God. He reasoned that because the Bible was so discredited that our only alternative was to believe in the “only 100% purely existing religion in this world” which “is Islam!” He also advertises his website that he calls the “Niche of Truth.” I wish to examine in this article the assertions Mr. Husain presents that led him to conclude that the Bible was so unreliable that “the truth as Jesus taught is unknown now!”

The Reality of Truth

I commend to everyone the honest pursuit of truth. Truth never fears investigation and a lover of truth will never run from an honest discussion. Those who follow Jesus Christ understand the real battle between truth and error. Jesus wants you to find the truth that will “make you free” (**John 8:32**). Jesus’ followers are instructed to “give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (**1 Peter 3:15**). Any such defense must be based upon facts, not tradition, feelings or the threats of terror.

Do We Have an Accurate Bible?

Our Muslim critic brings these attacks upon the Bible:

1. We do not have the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible.
2. The original manuscripts were copied by fallible men and as a result every copy that we possess today contains errors. In fact, no two manuscripts are alike.
3. Because these errors exist, then whatever was originally in the Bible is “unknowable” today.
4. The copyists intentionally put their own “mischievous” beliefs into the text since the Bible records examples of sexual sins. One example he cites is that the Bible “displays lady’s nude bath! (II-Samuel 11: 2-5).”

Admissions by Our Critic

Our Muslim critic acknowledges that Jesus, Abraham and Moses were prophets of God. He also acknowledges that when the original documents that comprise the Bible were written, that they were, in fact, the word of God. He asserts that copyists’ errors made these writings so unreliable that they are now “dangerous” and should be kept “under lock and key.” Let us compare the assertions and charges of this fallible man to the promises of Jesus. “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (**Matthew 24:35**).

The Testimony of the Manuscripts

The original ancient texts had to be copied by hand in order to be preserved. There are no original manuscripts in existence. However, honest scholars can easily determine if the present Bible was transmitted accurately or if there was some conspiracy to later change the text. We have at least 5,366 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament in existence today, in whole or in part, that testify to the accuracy of the New Testament. There are nearly complete manuscripts that date from 280 to 350 AD and there is a fragment that is dated around 125 AD. For the Old Testament we have the Dead Sea Scrolls that were written around 100 BC, which include a complete scroll of the book of Isaiah, along with other ancient manuscripts.¹ What do we find when these scrolls are examined and compared to what we have today?

When the text of Isaiah found in the Dead Sea Scrolls was compared to what had previously been the oldest known text of Isaiah (written 900 years later), the two texts matched word for word with only minor variations.² Jesus read from one of these texts of Isaiah in His ministry and called it scripture (**Luke 4:16-21**)! By doing so He gave His approval for the accuracy and authority of these scrolls produced by copyists.

Critics, like our Muslim friend, prey upon the ignorance of others when they talk about the “errors” in the manuscripts. The bulk of these differences are in spelling and word order that have absolutely no affect upon the meaning! For example:

“The king Herod” verses **“Herod the king”** and
“Jerusalem with Him” verses **“all Jerusalem with Him”**

are the common kinds of differences that exist in these manuscripts.³

If some men had developed a conspiracy to deliberately change the text, then there should be numerous examples of major differences in these manuscripts. These kinds of differences simply do not exist. In fact, it would have been impossible for any later conspirators to find all the manuscripts that were spread over several countries and then change them (in some cases parts of scripture were copied and buried with the bodies of Christians!). Because we have in our possession these vast numbers of accurate documents, we can be assured that there was no such conspiracy.

The only conspiracy that exists today is found in those that misrepresent the truth about the Bible so as to accommodate some latter-day prophet.

The Bible Tells the Truth

Our critic reveals his own bias against the prophets of the Old Testament when he attacks them for simply telling the truth about the failings of men that followed God. One of the examples he cites is of David and Bathsheba, which is simply a fact of history. David saw her bathing on her roof and, as a result, gave into temptation and sinned. He later was confronted, repented and was forgiven. What is dangerous about that? These and other examples cited by our critic as being added by “mischievous” men are, in truth, God’s words that warn us by example against such sin. In this our God also shows us the way back to Him.

Does our Critic Really Want the Truth?

Yes, truth is attainable, but many are offended by it. Rather than using existing cultural prejudices to judge God’s word or acting out of fear of those who would physically harm others that choose to find and speak the truth, I call upon this critic and all others to enter into an examination of the claims made concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. I will affirm that there is credible evidence that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. If our critic wishes to affirm the existence of a latter-day prophet, I also will gladly participate in such a discussion.

I challenge everyone to answer this question asked by Jesus Himself: “But who do you say that I am” (**Matthew 16:15**)? This is a truth that we can know, if we are willing to pursue it and test it. Will you take up this challenge of Jesus? “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority” (**John 7:17**).

Do you really want the truth?

1 - Bruce, F.F. (1953), *The New Testament Documents—Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), fourth edition.

2. - The Reality of Copyists' Errors URL: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/608>

3. J. W. McGarvey (1886), *Evidences of Christianity*, Page3 13-15