

# The Reliability of the New Testament

# What is Our Claim?

## Some Key Points

- Reliable vs Divinely Inspired
- The Original Manuscripts Are Free From Error

The New Testament that we have today is reliable and is able to accurately tell us what the original authors meant.

# How Do We Know?

## We know because...

- We have a large amount of manuscripts to work with.
- We have manuscripts that date close to the original event.
- We have more manuscripts of the New Testament than other comparable literature can boast.

# What Do I Mean By Manuscript?

I will be using the word manuscript a lot. We do not have the New Testament in its original form. What we do have is large amount of manuscripts (copies) of the New Testament.

The manuscripts we have are a combination of papyri (earliest), parchment (3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> century), and paper.

We will talk more about these a little later.

Are there any  
questions at this time?

# The Amount of Manuscripts

## How many manuscripts do we have?

- 5,700 Greek Manuscripts (59 contain the whole NT)
  - 10,000+ of Latin Manuscripts (most influential language)
  - Other ancient versions: 5,000-10,000
- 
- Quotations from the NT used by Church Fathers (over 1 million)

# Manuscript Variations

How do the manuscripts compare?

- Most NT textual critics will say that all the manuscripts, regardless of time, largely agree with each other.
- Most of the variations are due to spelling error, repetition of words, and word order.
- None of these affect the reliability of the text or interfere with doctrine.

# Example of Manuscript Variation

## You know what is meant

- Seth tripped on the steps when walking down from the pulpit.
- Seth triped when walking down the from the pulpit.
- Sath tripped wh3n walking down from the pupit. He almost fell on the steps.
- He tripped on the steps when walking down from the pulpit.



Are there any  
questions at this time?

# The Date of the Manuscripts

## How do we date the manuscripts?

- By the material on which it was written (papyri is the oldest but also the most legible)
- By the type of alphabet being used (uncials vs minuscules)
- By the language being used
- By the type of ink being used
- By the internal evidence

# The Oldest New Testament Manuscripts

- P90-contains portions of the Gospel of John (18:36-19:7) written some time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century
- P104-contains portions of the Gospel of Matthew (21:34-37; 43; 45) written some time the 2<sup>nd</sup> century
- P98-contains the first chapter of Revelation written some time between A.D. 100-200 (Revelation written around 90s)
- P52-contains portions of the Gospel of John (18:31-33; 37-38) written around A.D. 100-150. Some have argued for A.D. 90)

# Why Is This Important?

**It dismisses the following claims that internet folks often make.**

- “The Bible is just a legendary embellishment of the real Jesus!”
- “The Bible is written hundreds of years after the events it is writing about!”
- “The Bible is just like every other religious book in the world!”

Are there any  
questions at this time?

# NT Manuscripts Vs. Ancient Literature

Source	Earliest Manuscripts	Time Difference	Amount of Manuscripts
<p>Tacitus 36-170 A.D.</p> <p>Roman Historian who wrote about 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century Rome. Wrote about Nero blaming the Christians for a fire that damaged Rome.</p>	A.D. 850	800 years after he wrote	33
<p>New Testament</p> <p>Various Authors.</p>	A.D. 100-150	Decades later	5,700+ Greek Manuscripts

Are there any  
questions at this time?

## So in Conclusion...

“I believe the New Testament is reliable because we have a large amount of copies at our disposal. These manuscripts are early and there are no significant disagreements between them. Furthermore, the New Testament not only meets the standards by which ancient documents are judged; it exceeds them even more than its contemporaries.”