

Men's Discipleship

“Can I Trust the Bible”

Notes

- The bible is 66 books, written over a period of 1600 years, on 3 different continents by close to 40 different authors, in 3 different languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic). Old Testament Books written from 1500 BC to 400 BC & New Testament Books written from 40 AD to 100 AD (in a single lifetime).
- Ancient papyri, in places like Oxyrhynchus (city on banks of Nile Northern Egypt), were being grown and made into writing material.
- Between 1895 – 1897 over half a million papyri were discovered, including every book of the bible, and influential classical and religious texts.
- The earliest copies of papyri were discovered recently, in the last 200 years. They did not alter the way that we understood the text of the bible before that these recent discoveries. What they did was confirm that what we had was shockingly close to the text we had, even centuries and millennia later.
- Hebrew Old Testament translated to Greek ; the Septuagint (LXX) (3rd Century BC) during reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt (285-246 BC). Translated by Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. While the exact number and circumstances are debated, it's widely accepted that the translation was a collaborative effort by Jewish scholars of the time.
 - While some scholars believe that the specific Hebrew manuscripts used for the Septuagint are lost, it's more accurate to say they are not the same as the Masoretic Text, which became the standard Hebrew Bible.
 - The Septuagint was translated from Hebrew manuscripts that existed before the standardization of the Masoretic Text.
- 200 years before Jesus, the Old Testament, and specifically the first 5 books (Pentateuch in Christian tradition and the Torah in Jewish tradition.), were commissioned to be translated out of the Hebrew and into the Greek.
- Although translated into many languages, the Bible (itself) is not a translation of a translation. Judeo-Christianity has always been a “literary tradition” that has never stopped copying/translating its books in order to be read.

- When we look back at how the books of the bible were being copied & translated across the ancient world (ancient papyrus to modern day print), it is not some sort of layered web of translations, but a **single step** going from the **original Hebrew and Greek directly into our Bibles today**.
- Over time, as we've uncovered more of these fragments and manuscripts, they haven't complicated our understanding of the Bible, but **clarified** it.
- The documents that sit behind the history of the Bible, and the way we translate them today, gives us confidence in their reliability to go from the original languages into our own.
- Even though we're almost 2,000 years removed from the last book of the Bible that was written, as discoveries are made, we are not getting farther away from the text but getting closer.
- This evidence confirms and gives us good reason to trust that our Bibles have been faithfully and accurately copied and that what we have now is what the original authors wrote.
- When we have differences, the fact is we know that there are the differences. When you read your modern translation of the Bible and you see a citation note at the bottom of the page, that should not make you panic. That should give you confidence that we have such a glut of information that we are able to pinpoint those things to a very credible and exact level.
- The vast majority of these differences within the Bible are inconsequential and make no difference in the translation out of the original language.
- No textual variants affect any essential Christian doctrine. There's nothing that relies on one verse that has a question about it in the history of the textual traditions of the Bible.
- We have confidence that what we have in our New Testament is what the original authors wrote and the books that we have are the documents that get us closest to the timeframe of Jesus.
- How do we know that it's not only the right words that were written on these ancient documents, but that it's true? Luke went to lengths to demonstrate that his narrative is placed within an actual time and location.
- In the first 3 verses of Luke 3 we are given 7 historical characters that mark out the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. In these 3 verses alone, there are 22 historical references to locations and people that have been verified by archeology and ancient literary sources "outside" of the Bible. Luke is literally pinpointing where these events actually took place in history.

- Tacitus Annals, Book 15.44 = describes what Christians are doing and believing = Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate as being the “procurator”. In 1961 a stone was found in Caesarea Maritime known as Pontius Pilate stone which has the title of “Pontius Pilate Governor”.
- Luke accurately described Pilate as “governor”. Luke got it right!