

HISTORY & SCRIPTURAL RELIABILITY FACT SHEET

KEY VERSES:

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| Genesis 3:15 | Luke 1:1–4; 16:17; 21:33 | 1 Timothy 3:16 |
| Judges 2:10; 21:25 | John 1:14 | 2 Timothy 3:16 |
| Psalms 14:1; 199:89 | Acts 1:1–3; 2:32 | Hebrews 11:6 |
| Isaiah 40:8 | 1 Corinthians 15:1–9 | 1 John 1:1–3 |
| Matthew 5:18; 24:35 | Galatians 4:4 | Revelation 22:18–19 |
| Mark 13:31 | | |

KEY PUBLICATIONS:

Biblical Archaeology Review | www.bib-arch.org |

Christian History | www.christianitytoday.com |

KEY QUOTES:

"Paul regarded the resurrection as an event in history supported by the strongest possible eyewitness testimony, including his own (1 Corinthians 15:5-8). For Paul, the historicity of the resurrection was a necessary condition for the truth of Christianity and the validity of Christian belief."¹

"The earliest preachers of the gospel knew the value of...first-hand testimony, and appealed to it time and again. 'We are witnesses of these things,' was their constant and confident assertion. And it can have been by no means so easy as some writers think to invent words and deeds of Jesus in those early years, when so many of His disciples were about, who could remember what had and had not happened....

And it was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with; there were others less well disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus. The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of willful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so. On the contrary, one of the strong points in the original apostolic preaching is the confident appeal to the knowledge of the hearers; they not only said, 'We are witnesses of these things,' but also, 'As you yourselves also know' [Acts 2:22]. Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective."²

"There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."³

"There is, I imagine, no body of literature in the world that has been exposed to the stringent analytical study that the four gospels have sustained for the past 200 years. This is not something to be regretted: it is something to be accepted with satisfaction. Scholars today who treat the gospels as credible historical documents do so in the full light of this analytical study, not by closing their minds to it."⁴

"Skepticism toward the reliability of Scripture seems to survive in many academic circles despite the repeated collapse of critical theories. One still finds a disposition to trust secular writers whose credentials in providing historical testimony are often less adequate

¹ Ronald Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding* (Dallas, TX: Probe, 1984), p. 112.

² F.F. Bruce, *Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?*, 5th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), pp. 45–46.

³ F.F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, 3rd rev. ed. (Westwood NJ: Revell, 1963), p. 178.

⁴ Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Leicester, UK; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1987), p. ix.

than those of the biblical writers. Not long ago many scholars rejected the historicity of the patriarchal accounts, denied that writing existed in Moses' day, and ascribed the Gospels and Epistles to second-century writers. But higher criticism has sustained some spectacular and even stunning reverses, mainly through the findings of archaeology. No longer is it held that the glories of King Solomon's era are literary fabrication, that 'Yahweh,' the redemptive God of the Hebrews, was unknown before the eighth-century prophets, or that Ezra's representations about the Babylonian captivity are fictional. Archaeologists have located the long-lost copper mines of Solomon's time. Tablets discovered at Ebla near Aleppo confirm that names similar to those of the patriarchs were common among people who lived in Ebla shortly before the events recorded in the later chapters of Genesis took place."⁵

KEY SOURCES:

Online Articles: <http://www.summit.org/resources/essays/>

Scriptural Reliability (general)

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Canonization, Inspiration, and Inerrancy

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⁵ Carl F.H. Henry, "The Authority of the Bible," in *The Origin of the Bible*, Philip Wesley Comfort, ed., (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1992), p. 17.

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