



# CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

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# HAS THE BIBLE CHANGED?

It is commonly assumed that the Bible has been corrupted over time in at least two ways: by unintentional errors, or by intentional changes. But these assumptions are historically inaccurate. So how can we know that the Bible we have today is what was originally written?

## THE “TELEPHONE GAME THEORY”

Some people think that through history the Bible has undergone a process similar to the “Telephone Game”. This theory recalls the childhood game in which one child thinks of a phrase, then whispers it into the ear of her friend, who in turn, whispers to her friend on down the line, until the last person says the phrase out loud, and everyone laughs at how much the phrase has changed through the “transmission process”.

Contrary to the Telephone Game, however, the Bible was not passed down through history by word-of-mouth and by a single line of people. Instead, many thousands of people recorded and distributed written copies of the New Testament to many other people groups, across multiple continents, and languages. And unlike a childish game, these early Christians saw their task of spreading God’s Word as vital to the Christian mission – and even worth dying for.

*But what about evil churches and religious leaders that wanted to control their people with the Bible? Couldn’t they have changed the texts without anyone knowing?*

By using the above-described “exponential transmission process” the early Christians have made certain that there would never be a time that any one person, or group of people, could change the Bible – either on accident or on purpose – without everyone knowing about it.

Besides, a simple study of history shows that the way that evil religious leaders have tried to control people was not by changing the Bible, but by teaching people to distrust the Bible.

## THE BIBLE PASSES THE TEST

Think back again to the Telephone Game: How would you know if the “transmission process” in that game was corrupted? By comparing the phrase at the end with the one at the beginning. The reliability of the transmission of the Bible can be tested in the same way. We can compare the Bible that we have today with the earliest available texts to determine with certainty if the text has been changed since then.

The New Testament we have today is comprised of a careful study of more than 25,000 ancient manuscripts – the earliest of which date back to the first generation of the Christian church. The earliest Old Testament manuscripts date back to more than 150 years before Christ.

When we compare our Bible today with these ancient manuscripts we find that the text has not changed! We have the same writings today as the first Christians did 2,000 years ago! In fact, modern scholars agree that our Bible is the most reliably transmitted ancient writing in history.

God has faithfully preserved His Word, so that we can know the truth.

**“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16)**