

Explain why the Bible is authentic

The OT was accepted without question by Jesus and the apostles, who quoted it frequently. Its accuracy and authenticity is not really questioned and the OT canon was confirmed by the council of Jamnia in 90 AD. The fanatical obsession of Jewish scribes for accuracy (one mistake resulted in the destruction of a manuscript) has ensured that the OT text we have today is authentic.

History affirms that contemporary people who knew first-hand the key events described in the NT did not criticise its accuracy as the books appeared; indeed many became Christians as a result and died in times of persecution for their belief. It is a matter of record that large numbers in the Roman world became Christians in the first century and beyond. The internal evidence (style, accuracy etc.) also endorses the validity of what appears in the NT text. Furthermore, the NT contains prophecies that have been fulfilled.

The NT has more surviving manuscripts than any other written work. Further, these originate relatively soon after the autographs. For instance: there are nearly 5000 Greek mss, about 200 contain all of the NT. There are 8000 Latin and 1000 other language versions. The oldest were written within 300 years of the close of the NT. Some fragments of the NT mss date to within 100 years. In the case of classical works, the oldest mss of classical Greek authors is a 1000 years or more after the author's death, of the Latin writers, the minimum is 300 years for Virgil. Manuscript evidence is also much slimmer: for Aeschylus - 50 mss, for Sophocles - 100 mss, for the Annals of Tacitus - 1 ms and for the Poems of Catullus - 3 mss. In the case of Plato's works, the earliest extant ms was copied 1,300 years after his death; for Euripedes, it is 1,600 years.

There are various versions of the NT based on the original text (translations into Syrian, Coptic and Latin) that help us compare mss to ensure accuracy. The Syrian version was originally made in the 2nd-3rd century. In addition the Lectionaries (Bible Readings for the year) also help us confirm the text. No secular writing has so much available evidence to support it.

The NT has been subjected to critical scrutiny by enemies of Christ for 2,000 years and no one has been able to successfully deny its authenticity. Indeed, some atheist scholars have been converted while seeking to damage it.

The Bible is authentic and trustworthy, more than any other historical document.

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