

Lesson 8: Is The New Testament True?

TWO QUESTIONS for investigating the reliability of the New Testament:

1. Do we have an accurate copy of the original NT documents?
2. Do the original NT documents tell the truth?

HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE An Accurate Copy Of The Original NT?

1. EARLIER Manuscripts
2. MORE Manuscripts
3. MORE Accurately Copied
4. MORE Abundantly Supported Manuscripts

How Do We Know What The Original Said If We Don't Have It?

Copy 1: God is #ust and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Copy 2: God is j#st and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Copy 3: God is ju#t and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Copy 4: God is jus# and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus.

Original: God is just and the justifier of the one who believes in Jesus.

The NT Documents Have **Far Fewer** Variations Than This Example

HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE An Accurate Copy Of The Original NT?

1. 43% of 8,000 NT verses are in Manuscripts from the 2nd Century
2. Over 36,000 quotations from the NT in the early Church Fathers (almost half the NT – 46%)
3. In addition to 5,700 Greek manuscripts, there are over 19,000 manuscripts in other languages
4. Total manuscripts would stack over one mile high (compared to 4 feet for classical Greek authors).

What about “Misquoting Jesus”?

Attempts to spin the data to cause doubt as to the accurate reconstruction of the NT documents.

Problems:

1. How can you know the original had been altered without knowing what the original said?
2. About 80% of manuscript variations are spelling – no change in the meaning
3. Only 1% affect any meaning and none affect any significant Christian doctrine
4. Bart Ehrman doesn't even agree with himself!
(In book to general audience, “We don't know what NT originally said”. Same year in book to academic audience, “We do know the NT documents originally said”.)

MISQUOTING JESUS? - Ehrman Agrees NT Text is Reliable!

“Bruce Metzger is one of the great scholars of modern times, and I dedicated the book to him because he was both my inspiration for going into textual criticism and the person who trained me in the field. I have nothing but respect and admiration for him. And even though we may disagree on important religious questions – he is a firmly committed Christian and I am not – we are in complete agreement on a number of very important historical and textual questions.”

“If he and I were put in a room and asked to hammer out a consensus statement on what we think the original text of the NT looked like, there would be very few points of disagreement – maybe one or two dozen places out of many thousands. The position I argue for in ‘Misquoting Jesus’ does not actually stand at odds with Prof. Metzger’s position that the essential Christian beliefs are not affected by textual variants in the manuscript tradition of the New Testament.”

Bart Ehrman, Pg. 252 of Misquoting Jesus

Daniel Wallace, PhD: On Ehrman's view

“[Bart] Ehrman is part of a very small minority of textual critics in what he's saying. Frankly, I don't think he has challenged his biases; I think he has fed them.”
the Case For The Real Jesus, p. 72

MANUSCRIPTS SHOW: The New Testament Is Accurate

“It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain:
Especially is the case with the New Testament.”

Sir Fredrick Kenyon – Former Director of the British Museum - Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, p. 23

TWO QUESTIONS for investigating the reliability of the New Testament:

1. Do we have an accurate copy of the original NT documents? - YES!
2. Do the original NT documents tell the truth?