

# Introduction

Has the Bible Been Corrupted Over Time?

This is a common objection.

It's a major belief of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), as well as many Muslims. You'll hear it from New Age gurus like Deepak Chopra, as well as everyday skeptics on Twitter—or from those you know.

This is what we're talking about today.

This is a special presentation of the Think Institute and Worldview Legacy, the show that helps Christian men become the worldview leaders their families and churches need.

My name is Joel Settecase. I'm a former pastor and Bible teacher who used to defend my faith the wrong way. Then God changed my attitude and my approach, and now I help believers get equipped to explain, share and defend the Christian message.

## What Do People Think About The Bible Being Corrupted?

If you ask the question, "Has the Bible been corrupted" on Twitter, as I did recently, you'll get replies like this:<sup>1</sup>

- "For starters how about the missing books of the Bible??? It was corrupted so the Catholic Church could control the masses. And then treated the people like dirt. Disgusting Fake Religious power hungry pigs." (This was followed by a list of supposedly missing books, and then...) "They were already IN it, and were removed. Then all the rest changed by the Church. Evil." —Janice Diaz

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<sup>1</sup> Other replies I received can be found at <https://twitter.com/ThinkInst/status/1615069494380036106>

- “Any written work that has been subjected to selective editing and numerous translations is 100% going to differ from whatever is considered the original.” —LostinPA (@towerguyjohn)

## The Two Forms Of This Objection

This objection takes two forms:

1. The Bible was corrupted through *copying*—the process of rewriting and translating into other languages.
2. The Bible was corrupted through *composition*—the process of selecting which books would make it “in” and which would be excluded.

Have you wondered yourself?

How ready do you feel to answer this challenge?

Knowing how to answer this question is going to help you become the worldview leader your family and church need.

Your kids, your wife, and you must know how to handle this, both in order to clear away objections for those to whom you share your faith, and for yourself. After all—since the Bible is the word of God, it should stand up to scrutiny, right?

The good news is, it does.

## Want to Go Deeper?

Now, if you find this thought-provoking—and you want to have more confidence answering this and other challenges, then I want to tell you about our free community.

It's *the* group where you can join together with 775 others on the same journey you're on, toward building a legacy for their families.

You'll get solid answers to questions from the Bible, healthy conversation to sharpen your positions, and stuff to help grasp the tools of theology and philosophy in *practical terms*, so you can pass on the faith to the younger generation.

It's a fellowship of people, connected together to share ideas, skills, and practical help.

And I'll tell you more about the group and how to join at the end of this presentation.

## The Questions We Will Answer:

Specifically, today we will answer:

- **Why does this question matter?**
- **What's the problem with undermining the Bible?**
- **What is the Bible's testimony about itself—and why does that matter?**
- **Has the Bible been corrupted in its composition?**
  - Was the Bible put together at the Council of Nicaea?
  - How were the books of the Bible chosen?
    - Why can we trust the Old Testament canon?
    - Why can we trust the New Testament canon?
    - Are there books missing from the Bible?
    - What are we to make of books like the book of Enoch, or the Apocrypha? Were they inspired writings?
- **Has the Bible been altered through copying?**
  - Has the Bible been altered through translation and copying?
    - How accurate is our Old Testament today compared to the original?
    - How accurate is our New Testament today compared to the original?
      - What about all the New Testament variants?
      - Did scribes intentionally change Scripture?
  - Does it matter that we don't have the original manuscripts?

## Why Does The Integrity Of The Bible Matter?

Someone might say this question doesn't really matter, but it does. Saying it doesn't matter is a coward's way out. It's something you would say if you didn't believe the Bible really could stand up to scrutiny.

This question of the integrity of the Bible matters, because the Gospel matters. The Gospel is the central message of the Bible. If the Bible were to have been

corrupted, then we could not trust the Gospel. And if the Gospel were not true, then we would still be dead in our sins!

Furthermore, Jesus staked His own reputation on the integrity of the Bible. He said the Scripture cannot be broken (Jn 10:35). So if we can't trust the Bible, then we can't trust Jesus.

And finally, this has implications for our evangelism. How can we tell others to trust in the message of a book we can't trust ourselves?

## What Is The Danger Of Undermining The Bible?

James R. White has pointed out something really important. When people question the integrity of the Bible, they are often trying to substitute something else in its place. There is always some other, non-biblical authority at work. It might be the Qur'an, or Joseph Smith, or their own supposedly-autonomous reason.

If the person's final authority is not the Bible, then they have some other authority. And that authority never—never—stands up to the same scrutiny that they would subject the Bible to (James R. White, *Scripture Alone*, ~153).

Remember this when you are defending the integrity and purity of the Bible: what's the alternative? If not Scripture then... what? The questioner is not neutral, and neither are you. Everyone has some final authority to which they appeal.

For Christians, the foundation of our worldview is the Bible. So let's turn our attention to what the Bible says about itself.

## What Does The Bible Say About Itself?

The Bible's own testimony about itself is important. Here's why. As Christians, the truth of the Bible is one of our most basic beliefs. It's how we make sense of the whole world. So, if the Bible says it will keep its integrity and not become corrupted, then that is a belief that we are obligated to believe, in order to remain

consistent. If the Bible is our foundation, then it makes sense that we must believe what it says.

## The Bible Must Be True For The World To Make Sense

Has the Bible been corrupted, though?

To even answer that question, we need to first be able to make sense of the world. The world needs to be the kind of place where evidence is a real thing.

There are certain things that must be true, in order for us to make sense of the world. First, there must be certain rules in place that allow us to make sense of our experience. Laws of logic, mathematics, etc., must be true and unchanging.

Additionally, our minds must be aimed at truth and capable of knowing true things. And the world must be the kind of place that makes true things knowable. Oh, and there must be such a thing as “truth.” Otherwise, it wouldn’t make sense to try and get to the “truth” of whether the Bible has been corrupted /

Now, the Bible presents the only worldview in which all these things come together. According to the biblical worldview, laws of logic and mathematics are grounded in the mind of God. According to the Bible, God has created our minds capable of seeking and knowing truth. And God made the world as the kind of place where true knowledge would be possible.

## The Bible Is A Cohesive Whole

All these teachings are found in the Bible. And they are embedded in passages which all fit together into the Bible’s narrative. That narrative is not random—it has a point. And it all points to Jesus Christ. The whole Bible is ultimately about Him.

That means if you take the biblical worldview—and again, you have to, if you want to make sense of the world—then it will lead you inevitably to Jesus Christ.

And what did Jesus say: He said all Scripture is true. He said Scripture cannot be broken (Jn 10:35). He also commissioned His apostles to write the other books of

the New Testament, when He said the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all truth” (Jn 16:13).

We could list passage after passage in Scripture indicating that the Bible cannot be corrupted (cf. Mt. 24:35; Ps 12:6–7; Mt 5:18; Ps 119:89; Is 40:8; Ps 119:160; 1 Pe 1:23-25; Lk 21:33; Mk 13:31).

## To Question The Bible, You Must Presuppose It To Be True!

All this can only mean one thing: the Bible says Scripture cannot be corrupted. That same Bible presents the only worldview that makes sense of the world. We must make sense of the world in order to investigate whether the Bible has been corrupted. This means that, in order to examine the Bible, we must already presuppose that it is true... and that means believing that it is true when it says it cannot be corrupted!

Alright, that might be helpful for you, if you are already a Christian

However, I’m sure you came for some actual evidence and answers from history. So let’s get into that.

We’ll start by looking at the composition, or canon, of Scripture

## Has the Bible been corrupted in its composition?

When we’re talking about the composition of the Bible, we’re not talking about how it is written on the page. The books of the Bible, as originally written, would have looked very foreign to us. There were no chapters or verse numbers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Chapters first appeared in the Pentateuch in 586 B.C. (ETDAV, 24). The first New Testament chapters showed up around 350 A.D. in Codex Vaticanus (ETDAV, 23. The author cites Metzger and Ehrman, TNT, 17). Verses were added to the Old Testament in about 900 A.D. (ETDAV, 25, citing Geisler and Nix, GIB, 339). Verses showed up in the New Testament thanks to the French printer Stephanus in 1551 (ETDAV, 25, citing Geisler and Nix, GIB, 341).

No, we're talking about the canon. What is the canon? Canon means "The officially accepted list of books" that make up the Old and New Testaments (ETDAV, 25, citing Earle, HWGOB, 33).

James R. White calls the canon an "artifact of revelation." This means it is the result of the Holy Spirit having breathed out certain books of the Bible, and not others (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

But the composition of the Bible is a target for those who want to undermine the Bible. People will accuse various councils of conspiring together to choose books that gave them more power, and to exclude books they didn't like. The whole thing is supposed to have been very sinister.

## How were the books of the Bible chosen?

Let's talk about how the books of the Bible made it into the canon as we have it today. We'll start with the Old Testament.

### Why can we trust the Old Testament canon?

In their book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, Josh and Sean McDowell note that, "Biblical scholar David Ewert explains that, no human authority and no council of rabbis ever made an [Old Testament] book authoritative. These books were inspired by God and had the stamp of authority on them from the beginning. Through long usage in the Jewish community their authority was recognized, and in due time they were added to the collection of canonical books" (ETDAV, 34, citing Ewert, FATMT, 72).

The Old Testament is historically composed of three divisions: Torah (Law or Instruction—the first five books), Nevi'im (prophets) and Ketuvim (writings).

You have the three divisions of the Old Testament cited in the Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as in the writings of Philo (writing during the life of Christ) and Josephus (writing in the late First Century).

## How Were the Books of the Old Testament Chosen or Recognized?

Josh and Sean McDowell give several tests that were applied, to determine if a book belonged in the canon.

Was it written by a prophet of God? Was the author authenticated by acts of God? Was the book's message about God true? Did it come with the power of God? Was it accepted by the people of God?

The books of the Torah, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim (or Tanakh for short) were all recognized as having met that criteria. They were arranged differently than how they are in our Bibles today, but the content was the same.

## What About the Council of Jamnia?

Sometimes people will say that the Council of Jamnia (ca. 90 AD) determined which books would be in the Old Testament. However, that's not the case.

Rather this rabbinical council answered questions about whether books that were *already* in the canon would remain. These books included Esther, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Ezekiel.

Jamnia seems to have been a more informal, non-binding council (ETDAV, 34, citing Rowley, GOT, 170).

## What are we to make of books like the book of Enoch, or the Apocrypha? Were they inspired writings?

The Apocrypha and other books like 1 Enoch are not recognized as being God-breathed. The Apocrypha refers to books written between the Old and New Testaments. Today they are included in Roman Catholic Bibles, but excluded from Protestant Bibles.

In his excellent book *Scripture Alone*, James White lays out the following points about the Apocrypha:

The writers of the Apocryphal books don't seem to have considered their own books to be Scripture. For example, in 1 Maccabees it is indicated that



prophecy had already ended (1 Maccabees 4:46; 9:27; 14:41). No prophecy, no Scripture.

Furthermore, in the New Testament, the Scripture is referred to as "The Law and the Prophets." Jesus also mentioned the Psalms (as shorthand for the Ketuvim, or writings). In other words, Jesus and the New Testament authors did not consider the Apocrypha as Scripture. When they spoke of Scripture, they had the Old Testament books in mind.

What's more is that the Apocrypha contains historical error. For example, Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned as being in Nineveh over the Assyrians.


Dr. White has much more good information about the Apocrypha in his book, and I highly recommend you check it out.

Now let's look at the New Testament Canon.

## Why can we trust the New Testament canon?

Similar to the Old Testament, there were tests for which books would be recognized in the New Testament canon.

First, it had to be apostolic (whether written by an apostle, or by an associate of an apostle, as with the Gospel of Mark or the book of Acts, written by Luke). It had to be authentic. This is why Paul would sometimes sign his letters with his own hand—because there were counterfeits circulating, and he wanted his readers to know it was really him writing (DA Carson,

 [How can we trust the Canon created by the early Church?](#) ).

Second, it had to be universally recognized by the church. Sometimes this took time. But the approval process was not a top-down one, but rather bottom-up. It was the people of God collectively, together, who authenticated the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the writings of Scripture.

And thirdly, its message had to be in line with the Gospel. The teachings of each book had to be consistent with what God had previously revealed.

The canon had to be recognized by 303 A.D., because that was the most intense period of Roman persecution of Christians (James White, “HWGOB,” cf. ETDV, 31). During that period, Roman officials forced Christians to give up their Scriptures or face death. Christians didn’t want to die for merely religious books that were not also sacred (ETDAV, 30).

But there were great moments of recognition prior to that, as well as afterward.

Polycarp (ca. 115 AD), Clement of Alexandria (200 AD), and others refer to the Old Testament and New Testament as “scriptures” (ETDAV, 30).

Justin Martyr referred to the Gospels as Scripture, ca. 100–165 AD.

Irenaeus recognized the Gospels, Acts, and many of the Pauline epistles as Scripture.

Origen (ca. mid-3rd C.) appeared to have given a complete list of New Testament books that is “nearly the same as the 27-book canon eventually affirmed by the later church” (ETDAV, 30, citing Kruger, OL, 100). He affirmed the four Gospels, Acts, the 13 epistles of Paul, Hebrews, 1–Peter, James, Jude, 1–3 John and Revelation.

By 367, Athanasius wrote up a list of New Testament books identical to our canon today.

## Was the Bible put together at the Council of Nicaea?

New Testament scholar (and self-proclaimed “happy agnostic”) Bart Ehrman claims that “multiple theologies competed for orthodoxy within the early church. The views that the orthodox deemed ‘heretical’ in the later centuries... existed side by side with the orthodox view, which eventually ‘won’ allegiance at Nicea” (ETDAV, 715).

According to Ehrman,

Some Christians maintained that there was only one God. Others argued that there were two Gods—that the God of the Old Testament was not the same as

the God of Jesus. Yet others argued that there were twelve gods, or thirty-six gods, or even 365 gods. How could someone with those views even be Christian? Why didn't they simply read their New Testament and see that they were wrong? The answer, of course, is that the New Testament did not yet exist. To be sure, all the books that were later collected and placed in the New Testament and deemed, then, to be holy scripture were in existence. But so were lots of other books—other Gospels, epistles, and apocalypses, for example—all of them claiming to be written by the apostles of Jesus and claiming to represent the 'true' view of the faith. What we think of as the twenty-seven books of 'the' New Testament emerged out of these conflicts, and it was the side that won the debates over what to believe that decided which books were to be included in the canon of scripture" (ETDAV, citing Ehrman, HJBG, 286).

What's the response to this?

Yes, there was diversity in the Third and Fourth Centuries, among those who claimed to be Christians. However, that is not reflective of the situation in the First Century.

Darrell Bock points out that, other than the Ebionites (who accepted Jesus but questioned His deity), there is no evidence of groups like the Gnostics and Marcionites in the First Century (ETDAV, 716, citing Kostenberger, Bock and Chatraw, TCD, 113–114).

Instead, we have a true timeline tracing orthodox Christology and belief straight through from the (early) writings of the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse of the NT.

This line of orthodoxy continued straight through the end of the First Century and into the Second. As the Apostles died, and later as the Apostolic Fathers died and the church moved into the Third Century, these teachings were passed on, right through to the Fourth Century, when orthodoxy was settled and solidified (ETDAV, 717).

Here's an important and valid consideration, too: so *what* if many—even *most*—of those who self-identified as Christians believed heterodox views?

Orthodoxy doesn't depend on popular vote! Orthodox Christianity is derived from Scripture, the authentic teachings of which can be traced back to the Apostles themselves.

In summary, Nicaea did not suppress any authentic forms of Christianity. Christianity was not a multifarious, diverse religion with a spectrum of views in the Apostolic First Century.

Nicaea was not a conspiracy to secure power. Rather, it was a genuine council that authenticated and recognized the established, biblical doctrine traced back to the Apostles.

### Are there books missing from the Bible?

Several "pseudepigraphal" books (falsely attributed) were never recognized by orthodox fathers, canons, or councils (cf. ETDV, 32). These are heretical in nature and include the "Gospels" of Thomas, The Ebionites, Peter, The Hebrews, The Egyptians, Philip, and Judas.

Various other early writings were considered beneficial but not canonical. These books include These include The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, The Epistle to the Corinthians, The Shepherd of Hermas, The Didache, The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, The Seven Epistles of Ignatius, The Apocalypse of Peter, The Second Epistle of Clement, The Epistle to the Laodiceans, and The Gospel According to the Hebrews

They were not included in the official canon, for the following four reasons:

- (1) "None of them enjoyed any more than a temporary or local recognition.
- (2) Most of them never did have anything more than a semi-canonical status, being appended to various manuscripts or mentioned in tables of contents.
- (3) No major canon or church council included them as inspired books of the New Testament.
- (4) The limited acceptance enjoyed by most of these books is attributable to the fact that they attached themselves to references in canonical books (e.g., Laodiceans to Col. 4:16), because of their alleged apostolic authorship (e.g., Acts of Paul). Once these issues were clarified, there

remained little doubt that these books were not canonical.” (ETDAV, 33, citing Geisler and Nix, GIB, 317).

So the canon was not imposed from the top downward, against the will of the laity.

Rather, it consists of books that met the criteria that authenticated them as having been breathed out by God. God’s people trusted the Spirit of God to do His work, and the Spirit of God empowered His people to recognize that work. It’s really a beautiful thing.

Now let’s turn our attention to the actual process of copying the Scriptures through the centuries.

We have dealt with the accusation that the Bible has been corrupted through *composition*. Now let’s turn to see whether it was corrupted through *copying*.

## Has the Bible been altered through copying?

### How accurate are the Old Testament and New Testament today, compared to the original writings?

We won’t spend much time on the Old Testament, because we need to get to the New Testament. It suffices to say the following.

Our English translations of the Old Testament are largely derived from the Masoretic Text.

The Masoretic Text (MT) refers to the texts created by the Masoretes, “a group of Jewish scholars from the eighth century C.E. onward who maintained ancient traditions and developed new ones for copying the biblical text for liturgical or scholarly use” (Flint, DSS, 36–37, cited in ETV, 100).

### Does the Masoretic Text reflect the original Hebrew text, as originally written by the Old Testament authors?

Yes. Enter the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1946 or 1947 by Bedouin shepherds in a cave near the ancient site of Qumran. Eventually 11 caves were discovered to contain almost 1,050 scrolls.

They date from 250 BC to 135 AD. Previously, our earliest known MSS were from 1,200 years or more after the originals!

These scrolls matched up remarkably well to the MT, which helped to rule out variant readings as later developments. In other words, the Dead Sea Scrolls helped to authenticate the Old Testament as we have it today, as being the same as what was originally written.

As a result, the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls has rightly been called the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th Century.

There have been other discoveries, such as the silver Ketef Hinnom Scrolls. These were discovered in 1979 and feature the Aaronic Benediction from the book of Numbers. They might be the oldest surviving manuscript of the Bible, dating from the late 7th to early 6th C. BC (Cf. <https://ketefhinnomsilverscrolls.github.io/about.html>). Props to Mason Maestro Ministry on Twitter for alerting me to this!

Now let's look at the number of manuscripts.

## How accurate is our New Testament today compared to the original?

To determine the accuracy of our New Testament today, we have to look at manuscript evidence. We must apply what is known as the "bibliographic text."

This is important. As Josh and Sean McDowell explain, "The bibliographical test is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents reach us. In other words, since we do not have the original documents, how reliable are the copies we have in regard to the number of manuscripts (MSS, MS singular) and the time interval between the original and extant (currently existing) copies? (ETDAV, 46, citing Montgomery, HC, 26)."

They continue, “For any particular work or collection of works, the greater the number and the earlier the dating of the manuscripts, the easier it is to reconstruct a text closer to the original and identify errors or discrepancies in subsequent copies” (ETDAV, 45–6).

### So how many manuscripts do we actually have?

We have New Testament manuscripts in various languages: Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Gothic, Ethiopian, Latin, Syriac, Georgian, and Slavic.

All told, there are 23,986 Greek and Non-Greek manuscripts of the NT.

There are also 42,300 Old Testament manuscripts (17,300 if you don’t count 19th–20th C. manuscripts).

This brings the total to 66,286 MS evidences of the Bible (41,286 not counting 19th–20th C. Old Testament MSS).

### How does the manuscript evidence for the Bible compare with other ancient works?

No other ancient book or collection of books comes close in terms of “good, textual attestation” (ETDAV, 52, citing Bruce, BP, 178).

If you were to stack the MSS we have for the average classical writer, you’d have a pile 4’ high.

If you were to stack the New Testament manuscripts, you’d have a stack a mile high! And you’ll make that stack 2.5mi high, when you add the Old Testament!

### What are the implications of this?

If you throw out the New Testament, you must throw out all ancient documents and text-based knowledge of the past.

James White notes that fidelity is an important concept. Errors (and authentic readings) are passed on in copies, making it possible to trace their origins, and further making any hypothetical tampering stick out like a sore thumb (White,

*Scripture Alone*, 138-145). So, the more manuscripts, the merrier.

## What about all the New Testament variants?

Bart Ehrman has famously said (repeatedly) that there are 400,000 New Testament variants.

Christian scholar Dr. Ed Gravelly says that, when you hear that there are 400K variants, it can make you start to panic. There are only 135K words in the NT! (Source: [▶ Aren't there 400,000 variants or errors in the New Testament? \(Pa...](#)

How did we get this number? There are five kinds of variants.

1. Blunders. Scribal errors. No spell check back then! These are common, but easy to spot. They make the reading nonsensical. And scribes spotted them too. And they would sometimes fix them. They don't show up in apparatuses.
2. Non-viable readings. They occur in a single manuscript—e.g. a Middle-Ages manuscript that contains a few extra verses.
3. Orthographic variations: e.g. spelling differences.
4. Using the definite article with proper nouns. Greek word order is different and various. 99% of textual variants don't even affect the nuance of language.
5. Major variants.

The vast majority (99%) of variants have to do with things like grammatical endings and word order differences—or things like the “movable nu.”<sup>3</sup>

How do these come about? Scribes will insert things. They will make mistakes called “parallel corruption”—these are mostly coming from Matthew or Mark. Scribes attempted to make them the same. Sometimes they did this purposely, and sometimes they did it because they already had it memorized (What Do We Do with Textual Variants: with Dr. James White <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOIhbZOZj50>).

When it comes to “major” variants, we're talking about 3,500–4,000, or one percent of all variants.

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<sup>3</sup> A Greek linguistic concept similar to how we say “an apple” vs. “a tree.”



Only 1500–2000 could actually impact the meaning of the text. This is important; they do need to be examined, and they do have theological significance. For example, does Acts 20:28 say “the blood of God?” Does John 1:18 say “the only-begotten Son,” or “the unique God?” Does Mark 1:1 say, “the Son of God?”

The longest variants are 12 verses. These are the Woman Taken in Adultery: Jn 7:53–8:11 and the Longer Ending of Mark: Mk 16:9–20.

We can deal with these. Take the Woman Caught In Adultery. The first manuscript we have of this story is from the 5th Century. It’s unreliable, and it contains idiosyncrasies. Often this story pops up at different places in John. Sometimes it’s in Luke. It’s not in the first three centuries. The story probably doesn’t belong in the Bible. We can recognize this.

The same conclusion is true for the Longer Ending of Mark. When you look at the whole body of information, it’s probably not supposed to be there.

Another example would be 1 John 5:7, known as the Johannine Comma. Its earliest appearance is in a Latin manuscript in the 6th C. James White affirms that it has no possibility of being original.

So, does all this mean the Bible has been corrupted?

No. We can identify these discrepancies. This is literally the point of textual criticism.

Because we can discover these problematic passages, we can get closer to the original text. That is what we want. And this is a blessing from God.

Happily, not one single variant that we have affects our theology.

Scholar Dan Wallace says that, we have so many thousands of manuscripts and one million quotations among the church fathers.... And we only have 400,000 variants? Dan Wallace finds this surprising. He would expect it to be much more than that—in the millions!

The integrity of the Bible is astonishing.

Think of the Bible as a puzzle. We are not missing pieces. Instead, we have more than enough pieces to determine what the whole looks like. James White has noted that, if the New Testament were a puzzle, it's not like we have only 990 out of 1000 pieces, and we have to fill in the gaps. It's more like we have 1100 out of 1000 pieces. We can tell which pieces do and don't belong.

### Does it matter that we don't have the original manuscripts?

By God's grace, in the vast majority of cases we can determine which readings were in the original writings. And for those instances when we cannot, the variants do not affect our theology.

It does not matter that we don't have the original manuscripts. We can trust our Bibles today.

## Conclusion

We've covered a lot of ground. Here's the main takeaway: the Bible is trustworthy. It has not been corrupted.

It has not been corrupted by composition, and it has not been corrupted by copying. You can trust your Bible.

Now, if you're not a Christian, here's where I want to challenge you.

The Bible is totally unique among books of the world. It presents the true story of our origins. It explains what's wrong with the world—our sin against the holy God. It says all sin earns death. And it presents the only possible remedy for that sin and death: the eternal life that comes through Jesus Christ.

That life is a gift from God. He loved the world by sending His unique Son, so that everyone who believes in Him would not perish, but would have everlasting life.

I hope you will repent and believe in Him today.

And if you already trust in Jesus, then you can trust His word. And you can feel confident telling others about that word, knowing that the Bible you have today accurately reflects the Bible as it was originally written. It's God's message for the world—and that includes your coworkers, family, and the people in your local area.

## Final Word

Now, if you found this entertaining and educational, and you've been inspired to learn more, you need to know about the ThinkSquad community.

Now is the time to become the worldview leader your family and church need! Join the ThinkSquad today.

Just open up Facebook and search for ThinkSquad. That's t-h-i-n-k-s-q-u-a-d. Answer the short membership questions, and that's all it takes.

Thanks for listening to this special presentation from The Think Institute and Worldview Legacy. Thank you to my high school apologetics students, (they were the first guinea pigs for this talk). This episode was produced by Yours Truly, Joel Settecase, and is a production of the Think Institute.

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In this episode you'll learn:

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- What about all the New Testament variants?
- Did scribes intentionally change Scripture?
- Does it matter that we don't have the original manuscripts?

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### Resources for You:

- *Scripture Alone*, by James White:  
<https://www.christianbook.com/scripture-alone-james-white/9780764220487/pd/220489>
- *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, by Josh McDowell and Sean McDowell:  
<https://www.christianbook.com/evidence-demands-verdict-changing-skeptical-world/josh-mcdowell/9781401676704/pd/676704>
- EhrmanProject on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@ehrmanproject/videos>
- When Were The Gospels Actually Written? [Ultimate Guide] (Video):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4CjSpT-Rdg>
- How Long After Jesus Were The Gospels ACTUALLY Written? [Ultimate Guide] (Podcast): <https://pod.link/1462722483/episode/5fa858445db261ba8e99269a380d8776>

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