

Is the Bible Reliable?

Using the same criteria by which we judge other historical works, not only is the Bible reliable, it is more reliable than any other comparable writings. Reliability is a question of truthfulness and accurate copying. Writings that are historically and factually correct and that have been faithfully preserved over time would be considered reliable. Higher levels of historical verification and better confidence in transmission make it easier to determine whether an ancient work is worthy of trust. By those measures, we can consider the Bible reliable.

As is true with any historical work, not every single detail in the Bible can be directly confirmed. The Bible cannot be called unreliable simply because it contains parts which cannot be confirmed or have not yet been confirmed. What's reasonable is to expect it to be accurate where it can be checked. This is the primary test of reliability, and here the Bible has a stellar track record. Not only have many of its historical details been confirmed, but certain portions that were once in doubt have been verified by later archaeology.

For example, archaeological finds in the 1920s confirmed the presence of cities much like Ur, described in Genesis 11, which some skeptics doubted had existed so early. Engravings discovered in an Egyptian tomb depict the installation of a viceroy in a manner that exactly matches the biblical description of the ceremony involving Joseph (Genesis 41:39–42). Clay tablets dating to 2300 BC have been found in Syria strongly supporting Old Testament stories, vocabulary, and geography. Skeptics doubted the existence of the Hittites (Genesis 15:20; 23:10; 49:29), until a Hittite city, complete with records, was found in Turkey. There are dozens of other Old Testament facts supported by archaeological discovery.

More importantly, no facts presented in the Old or New Testaments have been shown false. This historical reliability is crucial to our trust in other statements made in Scripture.

Even the “miraculous” occurrences of Genesis have evidential basis we can appeal to today. Ancient Babylonian records describe a confusion of language, in accordance with the biblical account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). These same records describe a worldwide flood, an event present in literally hundreds of forms in cultures all over the world. The sites where Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) once sat have been found, displaying evidence of fiery and violent destruction. Even the plagues of Egypt and the resulting Exodus (Exodus 12:40–41) have archaeological support.

This trend continues in the New Testament, where the names of various cities, political officials, and events have been repeatedly confirmed by historians and archaeologists. Luke, the writer of that gospel and the book of Acts, has been described as a first-rate historian for his attention to detail and accurate reporting. In both the Old and New Testament writings, the Bible proves reliable

wherever it can be checked.

Accurate copying is also an important factor in the Bible's reliability. New Testament writings were composed within a few decades of the events they describe, far too early for legend or myth to overtake actual history. In fact, the basic framework of the gospel can be dated to a formal creed just a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus, according to Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8. Historians have access to a tremendous number of manuscripts, proving the New Testament was reliably and quickly copied and distributed. This gives ample confidence that what we read today correctly represents the original writing.

The Old Testament, as well, shows all evidence of being reliably transmitted. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the 1940s, they were 800 years older than any other available manuscripts. Comparing earlier and later manuscripts showed a meticulous approach to transmission, once again adding to our confidence that what we have today represents the original texts.

Those factors all give objective reasons to consider the Bible reliable. At the same time, it's critically important to examine those same factors in other texts we use to write our history books. The Bible has more empirical support, a shorter time between original writing and surviving copies, and a greater number of source manuscripts than any other ancient work, by far.

For example, there are ten copies of the works of Julius Caesar, the earliest from 1,000 years after he wrote, with no way to know how well those copies represent the originals. There are eight copies of the works of the historian Herodotus, the earliest from 1,400 years after he wrote. Archaeologists have found 643 manuscript copies of the works of Homer, allowing us a 95 percent confidence in the original text.

For the New Testament, there are currently more than 5,000 manuscripts, with most early copies anywhere from 200 to 300 years later, and some less than 100 years later. This gives a better than 99 percent confidence in the contents of the original text.

In short, we not only have objective reasons to claim the Bible is reliable, but we cannot call it unreliable without throwing out almost everything else we know of ancient history. If the Scriptures don't pass a test for trustworthiness, no records from that era can. The Bible's reliability is proven in both its historical accuracy and its accurate transmission.

-Josh McDowell

Josh McDowell is a Christian apologist and evangelist. He is the author or co-author of over 150 books. His book ***Evidence That Demands a Verdict*** was ranked 13th in Christianity Today's list of most influential evangelical books published after World War II. You can find out more about him and his work as an evangelist, author, and humanitarian at www.josh.org.

Our Mission

Meet others where they are and together be transformed into the image of Christ.

From Daniel's Den

9/11!



Our country just commemorated the 17th anniversary of the horrific terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Katherine and I were both stunned and sobered as we watched a two hour special on the National Geographic Channel last Tuesday evening about the September 11 attacks. So many innocent people died in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in the planes. At the same time, there were so many brave men and women who sacrificed their innocent lives to help others. Most of us could not conceive of passenger planes being turned into human missiles prior to September 11, 2001.

The reality of that horror became even more real as we reminisced about visiting the World Trade Center and taking the elevators to the top observation deck, only two months earlier. If you have not yet visited the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, you simply must do so. Plan to spend a day there.

Speaking of memorials, our Jewish neighbors celebrate the death of the Passover Lamb, and their deliverance from Egypt annually. That day is called Passover. And we Christians celebrate and memorialize the death of the innocent Son of God each week as we gather around the communion table. Jesus said, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

This Sunday as you memorize the death of Jesus, deeply ponder His death. An innocent man died for us. Also, as we memorialize His death may we boldly and confidently proclaim that He is coming again.

Eager to see you on Sunday mornings as we continue the sermon series:

"The Bible: Fact or Fiction? Does it Matter? "

Dan the Preacherman



Dan Cooper
aka
"Dan, Dan,
the Preacherman"

As we
memorialize
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Derrick Busch
Minister

As we seek to encourage one another towards godliness, let's start by filling our minds with the attributes of God.

"The Practice of Godliness" Seeking God

There are many things in this life that we seek, chase, pursue and give our entire lives to. And these **"THINGS"** seek the chief seat of honor in our hearts daily! So what introspective questions might we ask as we both practice and encourage one another towards godly living within the body? Here are three suggestions: *What are we intensely seeking and longing for? What are we truly living for? What has captured our hearts?* Is it any wonder that the timeless admonition of **Proverbs 4:23** which reads, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it," is still the doorway to godliness. But what truly matters in this life? *What is it that wars against our willingness to truly seek God and live godly lives?* Recall **Matthew 6:19-21** and **Luke 12:15** as a point of meditation. As we seek to encourage one another towards godliness, let's start by filling our minds with the attributes of God. This will be an ongoing article modified from allaboutgod.com.

Love: Love is such an important part of God's character that the apostle John wrote, "God is love." This means that God holds the well-being of others as His primary concern. For a full definition of love, read **1 Corinthians 13**. To see love in action, study the life of Jesus. His sacrifice on the cross for the sins of others is the ultimate act of love. God's love is not a love of emotion but of action. His love gives freely to the object of its affection, those who choose to follow His son Jesus.

Omnipotence: Literally this word means all-powerful. Since God is infinite and since He possesses power, He possesses infinite power. He does allow His creatures to have some power, but this in no way diminishes His own. "He expends no energy that must be replenished." When the Bible says God rested on the seventh day, it was to set an example for us and our need for rest, not because He was tired.

For a more in-depth study, join us every Wednesday in B4 as we study Jerry Bridges' book, **The Practice of Godliness**. -Derrick

We're All A Mess



Read *The Christian Chronicle*

Would you like a source for some really good information? Some good news? I have it. Read ***The Christian Chronicle***. It is published once a month, and it contains all kinds of wonderful information.

Our September issue just arrived, and among many other wonderful articles is an excellent article on "11 Tips for Successful Missions." The article begins on page 17, and is particularly applicable to our upcoming France and Ghana trips in 2019. Hey, I was even quoted in tip # 7.

To God be the glory. If you are not receiving this excellent periodical, please let Dottie know and we will get a free subscription started for you. **-Dan the Mission Man**

Save the Date **Women's Night of Praise and Worship**
Friday, October 19
More details next week!

Great Opportunity

Newfield Bank, which holds our church mortgage has just opened a new branch in Pitman at 51 N. Woodbury Road. As an incentive to customers who open new accounts, they are offering to make a \$25 donation for each new account to any non-profit organization in Pitman or the immediate area. They have allowed our church to become a recipient, so if you open a new account at the Pitman branch of Newfield National Bank, and mention our church as a nonprofit organization, the bank will make a \$25 donation to our church.

Just so you know, Katherine and I are doing this and would en-

lifegroups
2018 - 2019

Connect with Jesus, Family & Others

Join
one
today!



The congregation prayed over **Claire Hutchinson** last Sunday before her departure to Ishinomaki, Japan. Claire follows in the footsteps of her parents, Garth and Diana, going into full-time international missions ministry. She will be working with the "Be One Church" (English translation).

Coming Up This Month



The annual *See You at the Pole* special prayer event will be held here on Wednesday, September 26, at 7:00 pm. Please join us as we pray for our students, their schools, colleges, and universities, as well as teachers, professors, and administrators for the upcoming school year. Everyone will meet together in the auditorium. **The evening will begin with a BBQ at 5:30 by Dan and his crew. Sign up next Sunday!** We invite encourage **EVERYONE** to be here that night as we focus our prayers together as a church family.



Join us for an old fashioned Potluck Lunch!
First, we'll have a special worship service led by our Pitman Road Youth Group.
Then, plan to stay for a lunch and a time of fellowship.
Bring your favorite main course or side dish to share!

Please bring all hot food PREHEATED!

Beverages will be provided.

Desserts provided by elders' and deacons' wives.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! • HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

Our Schedule

Sunday

9:00 am Bible Classes
10:00 am Worship

Wednesday

7:00 pm Bible Classes

Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Last Week

Bible Class	141
Worship	209
LIFE Groups	159
Wednesday	56

Giving for August

August GOAL	\$39,320.00
Total August Contribution	\$37,185.00
Fiscal YTD GOAL	\$88,470.00
Fiscal YTD Contribution thru August	\$88,515.00

This Week's Prayer Requests

Pray for all those who are being affected by Hurricane Florence.

Claire Hutchinson as she travels to Japan to begin mission work.

Celie Brister, Mike Broyles sister, chemo and radiation treatments for incurable cancer.

Lance Cpl. Christopher Jones, Jr. is now at the MCAS in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi, Japan

Geen Richards, Brenda Busch's aunt; much progress shrinking the tumor and is feeling well most of the time, just tired. She will continue with chemo for now at a reduced dosage as a precaution. She thanks everyone for their prayers.

Lynne Sbaraglia, recovery at home for hip replacement surgery.

Bryson Spaeth, broken collar bone.

Albert Betts recovering from two back surgery.

Linda Prenger, continuing her radiation and chemo treatments. Please pray for her complete healing and emotional wellbeing.

Je'Ani Lyles, continues rehabilitation at home.

Sandy Sheehan; autoimmune hepatitis stage 1.

Kareem Rutledge, Jr. rehabilitation at Magee in Phila.

Larry Kellum, Sr., experimental drug treatment for MDS.

Dwight Thompson, treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma.

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Elder on Call for September and October: Mike Lazar

Serving Us Today

Nursery	TBA
Kids For Christ	Manny Vander Vennen
Jr. Worship	Brian Mansdoerfer/Harry Ake
Greeters: Front Entrance	Joe Marshall & Pat Monteleone
Greeters: Back Entrance	Justin & Rebecca Guy
Information Center	Shachara Adams
Ushers	Harold Pearl & Mike Lazar
Shepherd's Call	Dave Perine
Song Leader	Garth Hutchinson

LIFE Group	Location	Contact
Ageless	Mychajlowyczs' at noon	908-294-4056
Brook Besor	Durham's Tuesday at 7 pm	856-589-2280
Circle of Sisters	Manfre's Monday at 7pm	856-419-0544
Cornerstone	Meet with YM group, Church Bldg, at noon	
Covenant	Church Bldg. rm B4 at 5:30	908-294-4056
Hammonton	Destefano's at 6 pm	609-567-6907
Life Challenges	Church Bldg. rm B4 at noon	267-303-4877
Men's Bible Study	Church Bldg. Monday at 7 pm	856-217-3956
Solid Gold	Walkers' at noon	856-478-6972
Teens	Church Bldg, at noon	610-476-9057
Vineland	H. Pearls' at 6 pm	856-839-0051
Women in the Word	Church Bldg. FLC, Tues. 9:45 am	856-981-9754
Young Married	Church Bldg, at noon	856-899-9466

Find Us on Social Media:

 @pitmanroadcoc  www.facebook.com/pitmanroadchurchofchrist  @pitmanroadchurch

Thank You!

To the Pitman Road Church,
Thank you so much for the use of your building and kitchen; and your kindness as we laid our loved one to rest. Special thanks to Dottie for all your help! We appreciate you.
Love, The Dye Family

Area Wide Events

King of Prussia Church of Christ Ladies Fall Brunch

The Abundant Life • John 10:7-10

October 6 • 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Speakers: **Sisters Alyson Roberts, Becky Johnson, & Jennifer Kulp**

The event itself is free, but donations of new or gently used shoes for children ages 4-14 are requested. They will go to a school the congregation supports through Mission Lazarus in Haiti.

Contact Rebecca Hobbs at 610-322-2017 or
relohobbs@gmail.com for information or to RSVP.

Overbrook Park Church of Christ

invites you to

Revive Us...Again

Sunday, September 30: 11 am & 3 pm Worship
1:30 pm Fellowship & Lunch

Monday, September—Wednesday, October 3:
7:30 pm Revival Service

Speakers: **Bro. Leureuna Gilbert & Dr. Jeremy Flowers**

For more information:
www.overbrookparkcoc.com • 267-571-6003