



# Is the Bible Reliable?

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Throughout the course of history, the Bible is without a doubt, the most influential, most read, most purchased, and most translated book of all time.

## Best Selling Books of All Time

1. The Bible (2.5 billion)
2. Quotations from Chairman Mao (800 million)
3. The Koran (400 million)
4. The Chinese Dictionary (400 million)
5. "A Tale of Two Cities" by Charles Dickens (200 million)
6. "The Lord of the Rings" by J.R. R. Tolkien (150 million)

## Most Translated Books of All Time

1. The Bible - New Testament (1,240 languages)
2. The Bible - Complete (484 languages)
3. "Pinocchio" by Carlo Collodi (260 languages)
12. The Koran (112 languages)

Still, the essential question that one must ask is, "How do I know that the Bible is reliable, accurate, and credible?" Throughout history, men and women who have considered the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God, and have committed themselves to its teachings, have given themselves over to all kinds of suffering, imprisonment, torture, and death, because they were not willing to deny what they believed about the Bible.

The claims and teachings of the Bible require whole surrender to its teachings or not at all. Thus, it is a wise endeavor for a person to research whether or not the Bible is reliable. Of all books that have ever been written, none others demand the attention of this one. The following are the four most basic evidences for why anyone can be confident in the historical accuracy, integrity, and truth of the Bible. For further study, refer to "Life Issues" by Randy Pope, "Evidence That Demands a Verdict" by Josh McDowell, or "The Case for Christ" by Lee Strobel.

## Reasons to trust that the Bible is reliable:

### 1. Archaeological evidence

There has never been one archaeological finding throughout the history of the world that has contradicted the Bible. In fact, the Bible has actually helped archaeologists in their findings. Multiple times, there have been people groups and cities mentioned in the Bible that historians doubted ever existed, until archaeologists discovered findings that proved the Bible to be true. *"Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of the in- numerable details and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history."* –William Albright, archaeologist

### 2. Prophecy evidence

This may be the strongest argument of them all. Most would agree that a very high measure of credibility would be given to a person or book that accurately predicts future events in great detail. The Bible contains more than 1,000 prophecies that have been fulfilled (300 of which are specific to Jesus), with not one prophecy that has proven to be inaccurate. There is no other "holy book" that compares to making the attempt of prophecy as we see in the Bible.

### 3. Belief of the Historical Church

Throughout history, the historical church has considered the Bible to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God, as evidenced in the willingness of countless followers to give up their lives. To be certain, there is a difference between the martyrs of the early church (who actually saw with their own eyes) and martyrs of all religions today

who give up their lives (or blow themselves up). The early church consisted of people who saw with their own eyes what we read in the Bible. They knew it to be true, and no one in their right mind would give up their life for something that they knew was not true. Today, we must believe, by faith, that what we read is historically accurate. The significant fact is that 11 of 12 disciples that followed Jesus and saw with their own eyes (i.e., knew to be true) were willing to die excruciatingly painful deaths because of what they believed.

Peter, disciple of Jesus (64 AD) was crucified upside down. Matthew, disciple of Jesus, (66 AD) was nailed to the ground with short spears and then beheaded. Bartholomew, disciple of Jesus, (70 AD), was skinned alive. Simon, disciple of Jesus (70 AD) was tortured and crucified. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (168 AD) was burned at the stake and stabbed to death. John Huss (1415) was scalped and burned at the stake. John Bradford (1535) was burned at the stake. Thomas Hauker (1555) was burned at the stake. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1945) was hung. For these and more stories, read "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" or "Jesus Freaks."

#### **4. Manuscript Preservation**

There is common theory that the accuracy of the Bible has been reduced over time as the Bible was communicated from one generation to the next. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls practically squash that theory. In 1947, Bedouin herdsman found (in a cave near the Dead Sea) ancient manuscripts of nearly every Old Testament book dating back to 150 B.C. with an over 99.5% accuracy with today's manuscripts. Additionally, there exist today over 14,000 ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament, with an accuracy to each other of over 99.5%. The next texts that most would agree to be historically true and reliable are Homer's *Iliad* (of which there are 643 copies in existence) and Caesar's *Gallic Wars* (of which there are 10 copies in existence).

#### **5. Life Change**

Perhaps the most compelling and undeniable evidence for the reliability of the Bible is the transformation that occurs in people's lives once they encounter and embrace the truth of its teachings. Most notably, the Apostle Paul, author to most of the New Testament books, was previously known as Saul, a man feared by many in the early Church because of his commitment to persecuting and killing Christians. Saul's life was radically transformed when he encountered Jesus Christ while traveling to Damascus. As a result, Saul went from persecuting Christians to being willing to receive persecution because of his faith and belief in Christ, and was beheaded because he could not let go of that which he knew to be true.

Most likely, you also have friends and family members whose lives have been radically transformed because of their experience, as a result of reading the Bible and embracing faith in Christ. Life transformation includes people moving from hopelessness to purpose, sadness to joy, despair to peace, anger to love, selfish to selfless, addiction to freedom, relational brokenness to reconciliation, and the list goes on.

There is no other book ever written that can compare to the Bible. Hebrews 4:12 says, "*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*" Many books can impact our hearts and our minds, but only the Bible has the power to touch and transform our soul and spirit. At the end of the gospel of John, the writer says this about why this book was written. John 20:31 says, "*but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*"

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17*