

Bible Must-Know (#1) The Miracle of the Bible: Reliability of the Bible

- “....your Bible was handed down 99% accurately and faithfully.”

Peter Flint – Hebrew scholar who studied ancient manuscripts of the Bible for over 20 years

That the Bible is 99% accurate, true to the ORIGINAL writings, is a miracle

- The entire Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years with the last book being written in about 90 AD
- The Bible was written by over 40 authors in multiple countries across 3 continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe
- The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
- There are over 66,000 ANCIENT copies of different parts of the Bible. This means the Bible has been copied thousands of times BY HAND! And yet, what we have today is 99% accurate
- The theme of Jesus Christ and salvation is in every book of the Bible – the symbolism and prophecies pointing to Him throughout the Bible is truly astounding for a book that took 1,500 years to write!

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- The Bible has history not only of the Jewish people but of the world, and it has been proven accurate again and again through archeological findings.
- It is not a "compilation of stories" – it is history.
- That it took 1,500 years to write is evidence of GOD being its author: who ELSE can write a book taking that long yet have it be historically accurate as proven by archeology; have a recurring theme of salvation in a coming Savior woven throughout in real humans; filled with hundreds of prophecies written hundreds of years before the event such as Jesus coming from the line of David, destruction of cities - and all of these actually come to pass exactly as predicted?
- Time to write the Quran: 23 years

The Bible was copied by HAND

- The printing press was not invented until 1440 AD
- The final book of the Bible was written in 90 AD – over 1,300 years before the printing press to make copies was invented

Wanna write a copy of the Bible by hand?

- The Bible contains 66 books, of which 39 are in the Old Testament and 27 in the New.
- The New Testament
 - 260 chapters
 - 7,959 verses
 - 181,253 words
 - 838,380 letters.
- The Old Testament:
 - 929 chapters,
 - 33,214 verses,
 - 503,493 words
 - 2,728,100 letters.

THAT is over 3,500,000 letters copied many times over through centuries by HAND!

- And yet, the Bible is 99% accurate. Truly miraculous.

What the original books of the Bible looked like:

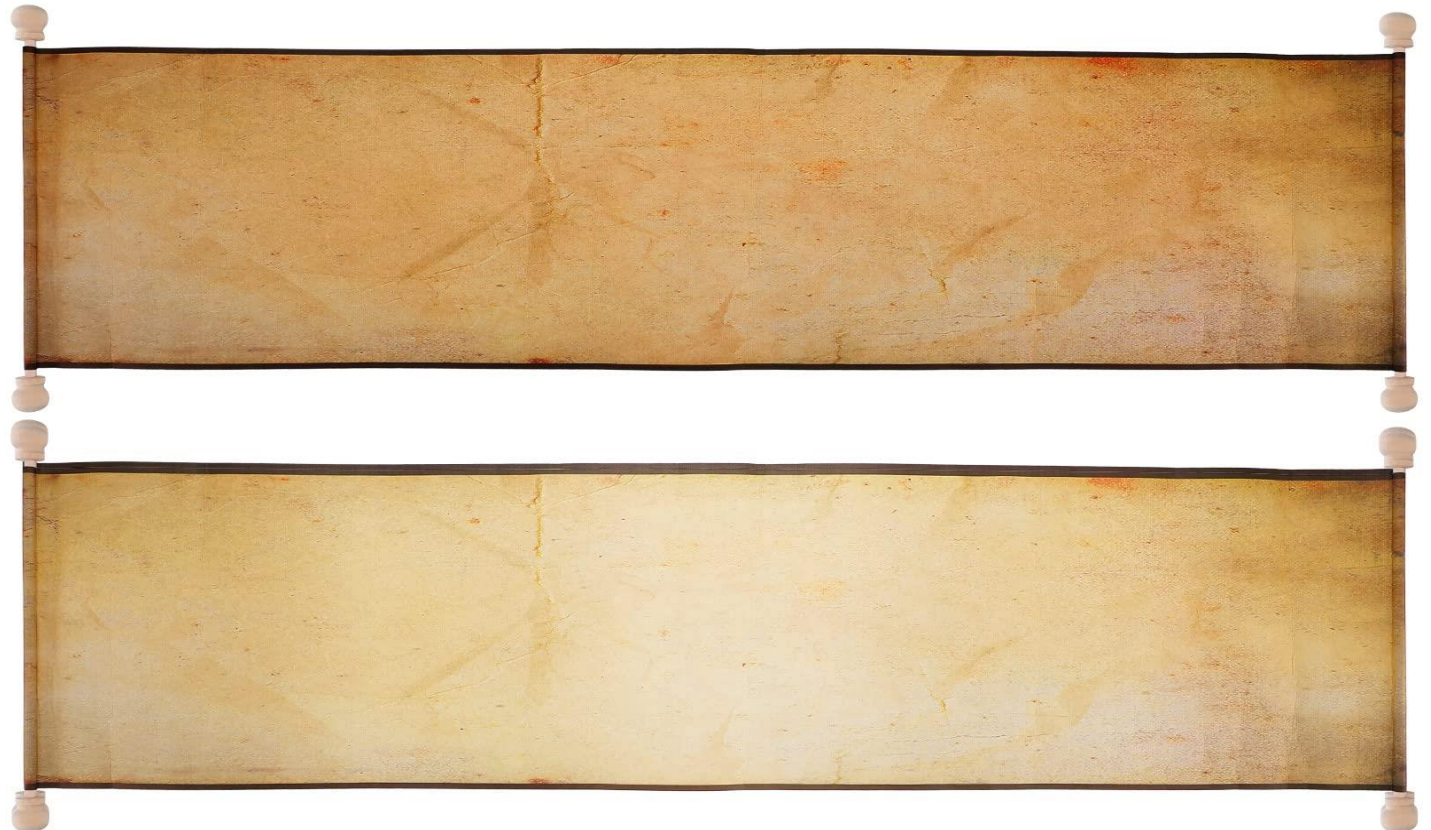


Written on:

Parchment: writing material made from animal skin (might be lamb, goat, deer, or cow)

OR

Papyrus: plant-based paper



How many manuscripts (copies) do you have?

- The more copies you have the easier it is to reconstruct the original text
- Few copies means it is hard to tell what the original text said
- A few hundred copies, maybe 300-400 hundred - there are principles that used to eliminate what isn't accurate and come up with the original

How many manuscripts (copies) do you have?

- For example, if you have 1 copy that says “My name is Constantine,” and one copy that says, “My name is Marcus Aurelius,” you can’t tell which one is correct
- But if you have 50,000 copies that say, “My name is Constantine,” and one copy that says, “My name is Marcus Aurelius,” which quote is probably correct? Right the one for which the most copies exist (“My name is Constantine”)

OT and NT Manuscripts (copies)

- **66,463 (!)**
- Remember 300-400 is good
- Yet over 66,000 hand-written copies of the Bible exist

The following ancient works are considered “authoritative,” “trusted,” yet there are so few copies – especially when compared with copies of the OT and NT: over 66,000!!!

- Julius Caesar - Gallic Wars: 215
- Plato – The Tetralogies: 210
- Thucydides (Greek “most accurate” historian) – 96
- Suetonius (Roman historian) – 8
- Aristotle – (Greek philosopher) – 49

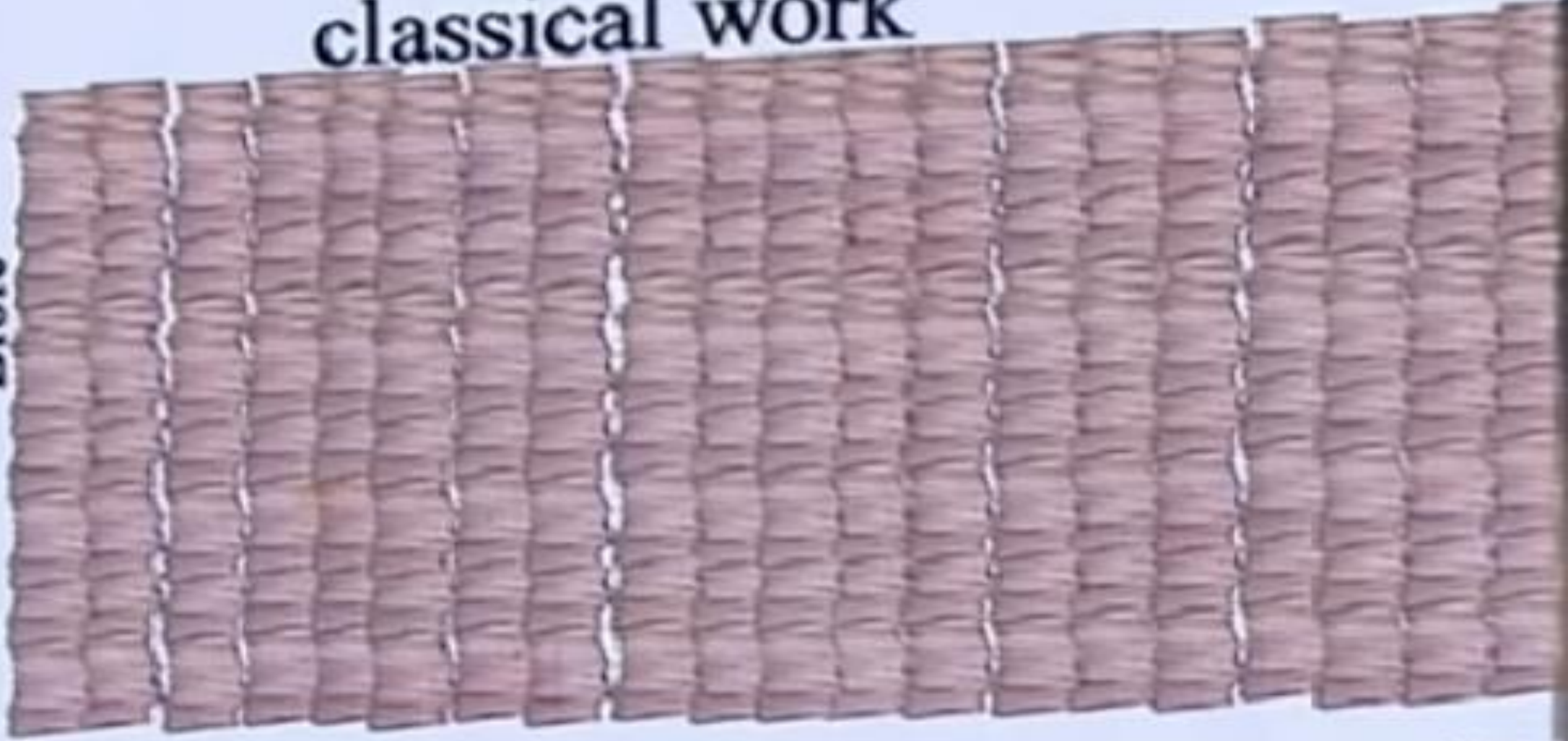
Visual of existing copies of the Bible as opposed to other ancient works (A tsunami!)

The BIBLE compared to the average classical work

Average classical work



Bible



Here is what the previous graph means:

- If the Bible cannot be relied upon despite the tsunami of manuscripts available, then we cannot rely on any of the ancient books of the history of the Roman Empire, botany, etc, OR the philosophical teachings of Plato and Aristotle because so few manuscripts of these exist when compared with the manuscripts of the OT and NT.

Example of accuracy of the Bible: Isaiah chapter 53.

These are the results when comparing Isaiah 53 from the Dead Sea Scrolls (ancient manuscripts) with the Bible you carry today - after 1,000 years of copying (!!!!)

Isaiah 53



- **identical, word for word, in more than 95% of the text**

Isaiah 53

- 680 letters
- 95% identical
- 4% are spelling variations like “savior” and “saviour”
- 1% in question (after over 1,000 years of hand-copying)

You don't have to be a scholar to know this is a miracle

Isaiah 53



The 17 letters in question:

- 10 were spelling variations
- 4 were simply stylistic changes
- 3 only in question through 1,000 years of copying

Copyist errors

- A "copyist error" refers to a mistake made by a scribe when manually copying a text, such as accidentally omitting words, changing letters, or transposing information, essentially a typo made during the process of hand-copying a document.

Copyists errors in the Bible

- There are copyist errors in the Bible, yet again, very few when compared to the thousands of manuscripts that exist and all done by hand
- These copyists errors have nothing to do with any doctrine or anything significant about the tenets of our faith
- As an example of a copyist error, compare 2 Kings 8:26 and 2 Chronicles 22:2
- Of course, the ORIGINAL written books as given directly by God to the authors are free of errors. Here we are talking about errors in HAND-COPYING

A final note:

- Some Muslims claim the Quran is free of errors in its copies and the Bible is not. Here are two facts about the Quran:
 - Much of it was handed down by MEMORY before it was set to writing
 - The Quran was also copied by hand
- Human memory and hand-copying are not error free!

Even this Muslim site agrees “there are more manuscripts for the NT than any other book from antiquity.” They need to do more study on the differences, however! Alislam.org

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Al Islam

The Official Website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^(as)

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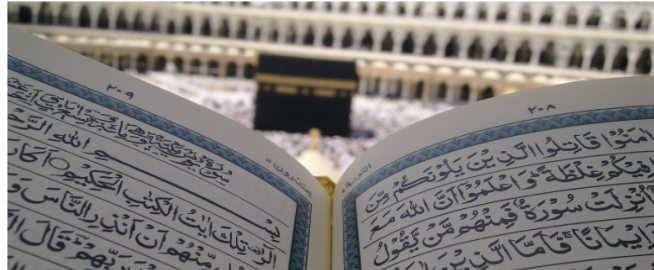
Was the Holy Quran perfectly preserved?

by Farhan Iqbal, Missionary, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Canada

Part II: Understanding the History and Differences of the Dialects of the Holy Quran

Among the ancient books available today, scholars agree that the New Testament is the most *well-attested* book. What that means is that there are more manuscripts for the New Testament than any other book from antiquity. There are thousands of manuscripts – partial or fully – both in the original Greek language in which these were written, and in the form of translations in Latin, Ethiopic, Slavic and Armenian. As a leading New Testament scholar Dr. Bruce Metzger proudly puts it, the book which is the runner-up next to the New Testament in terms of manuscript testimony is Homer's *Iliad* with fewer than 650 Greek manuscripts^[1]. However, when it comes to *preservation* of ancient texts, scholars have pointed out differences between these numerous manuscripts available which makes it difficult to know without a shadow of doubt what the original words were.

Related Content



Understanding the History and Differences of the Dialects of the Holy Quran



Please watch this YouTube video on the Reliability of the Bible by Josh McDowell. Video-stills in this presentation come from the video below.

 **New Perspective Church**
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Reliability of the Bible



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