

# WitnessKit Class 5

Science Concepts Inside  
Bible Text,  
Unity and Diversity of the  
Bible,  
Textual Certainty

# Here is what we have done so far.

We began from outside the Bible and we used reason to pursue spiritual truth. We concluded several things.

1. A **Personal Beginning** answers far more questions that humans long to answer than any other possibility. It is the only option that contains purpose for life.
2. A Personal Beginning—who is **Good**, who has **communicated**, who created people as **good**, and who allows humans to make **real choices**—is the only possibility that explains how God can be good while evil exists in the world.
3. Only the Bible gives us that picture of God.

## Refining the Search: Data about the Bible. Do the data support the idea of a true message from a GOOD GOD?

- For communication to come from God, miracles must be possible. Communication from God IS a miracle.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a miracle SO BIG that it shows communication from God IS possible.
- His resurrection is the only explanation that matches the evidence from history.
- This further confirms that the Bible is a book from God.

So we have firmly established

The **REAL Philosophical Possibility**—even the **LIKELIHOOD**—That the Bible is a book from God.

Now we need to look at data from the book, to see if **the book itself** fits that idea.

Josh McDowell's *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* is filled with data.

It is a BIG book.

The more good data we have, the stronger our confidence is.

The overwhelming volume of data in support of the Bible affirms its credibility over and over again.

McDowell's book covers data from the following nine categories:

# We can trust that the Bible is true because it has

9  
Reasons  
to  
believe  
the  
Bible  
is  
True

1. Amazing internal **consistency**.
2. Many **fulfilled prophecies**.
3. Amazing textual **preservation**.
4. **Survival** from persecution.
5. Insistence upon **reliable testimony** and multiple independent accounts of important events.
6. **Verifiable history**, from a location where the arid climate preserves objects for thousands of years.
7. An astounding yet **soul-satisfying** picture of God.
8. A **believable** picture of human beings.
9. Clear reasons to believe in **objective right and wrong**, matching our understanding from within.

# *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

- McDowell's book has so much data, we will spend the rest of the course learning it. We will look at all nine topics during this course.
- But first, we want to look at some amazing information inside the Bible itself—
  - ▣ information that would be impossible to explain, unless God really is the Author behind the scenes.
  - ▣ We will cover a few items in this category. The homework questions will cover more.

# Lesson 5: Confidence in the Bible

Lecture  
Topic:

3 Kinds of  
Data about  
the Bible

We can gain confidence that the Bible is from God by seeing three kinds of data:

1. Scientific truths hidden in the text
2. The unity and diversity of the Book
3. The certainty that we have the original words of the Book.



# Confidence in the Bible: Nuggets of Scientific Truth

- #1: Genesis 1:14 “Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and FOR SEASONS and for days and years.”
- Psalm 104:5, 19 “He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever....**He made the moon for the seasons.**”

# “God made the moon for the seasons.”—Psalm 104, Genesis 1

- Why does the earth’s axis not wobble?
- The path and size and gravity of the moon are exactly right to stabilize the earth’s axis, so that it goes rigidly around the sun at an angle. This gives us predictable seasons.
- When was this scientific truth discovered?
- In 1993, according to **THE CASE FOR A CREATOR.**

# “God made the moon for the seasons.”

- Since that truth was discovered in 1993, how did those words arrive on the pages of our Bible? Who knew?
- Note also that predictable seasons are necessary to sustain life as we know it – seasons that went from arctic to tropical heat in varying years would not sustain an ecosystem.
- Note that this truth is revealed in some of the earliest portions of the Bible – Genesis and Psalms. (1400 BC, 1000 BC)

# Confidence in the Bible: How Did They Know?

- Since the truth of the moon's giving us seasons was discovered in 1993, how did the writers of the Bible long ago know about it?
- Skeptics often go to great lengths to claim late dates for authorship of Bible books, so that the prophecies are "after the fact." Do they have that option with this scientific truth?
- This sort of truth is evidence for God's hand behind the human writer's.

# Science Nugget #2: The Genetics of Goat Breeding

- Most domesticated sheep and goats have solid coats rather than striped or mottled or speckled coats. The coats are said to “breed true.”
- This implies recessive genes. If a flock has all recessive genes it will produce predictable offspring.
- Dominant genes in a mostly recessive gene pool will produce unpredictable offspring – sometimes matching parents and sometimes not.

# Note

- The charts in the following explanation only work for traits that are rather simply defined in the gene pool, involving only one pair of genes. Traits that involve multiple gene pairs cover a range of values and are less predictable, as appears in human eye color ranging in various shades from blue to gray to green to brown. The simple case is much easier to chart than the complicated cases.
- In domesticated animals, traits that define a breed are most often recessive, and therefore “breed true.”
- A mix of dominant and recessive genes produces unpredictable traits in the offspring.

# Modern Genetics

- Modern Genetics as a field of study is on the cutting edge of advances in science. The definition of the genome for humans and for various animal species is an amazing feat, and is millions of times more complicated than the elementary items we will consider in this set of slides.
- The simple concepts are important, though. They provide a framework for understanding the field, and pursuing more up-to-date information.
- The simple concepts required MANY centuries to be discovered.

# How to read the charts:

- Capital letters stand for dominant genes and lowercase letters stand for recessive genes.
- The genes of the parents are shown at top and sides of each chart, and resulting combinations for offspring are in the four lower right boxes.
- The background colors of the boxes show which traits appear in the offspring as a result, where the offspring box color matches the parent box color.



# Genetics of Sheep and Goats: One Solid Coat Parent

Genetic Inheritance for simple traits	If one parent is solid coated and one is MM, all offspring will show the unusual coat.	<b>Female</b>	
		Solid Coat c	c
Male	M Mottled Coat	M c	M c
	M	M c	M c

This chart shows, where one parent has both dominant mottled coat genes

All offspring are mottled.

# Genetics of Sheep and Goats, Both Mottled Coat Parents

<p><b>Genetic Inheritance</b></p>	<p>If both parents are Mm mottled, three fourths of the offspring on average will be mottled and one fourth solid.</p>	<p><b>Female</b></p>	
		<p>Mottled Coat M</p>	<p>C</p>
<p>Male</p>	<p>M Mottled Coat</p>	<p>M M</p>	<p>M c</p>
	<p>Recessive solid coat C</p>	<p>M c</p>	<p>C C</p>

Where both parents have mottled coats, but with both having a recessive gene for a solid coat

About one fourth of the offspring would have the solid coat.

# Genetics of Sheep and Goats: Solid Coat Parents

Genetic Inheritance	If parents are both solid coated, the offspring will all be solid coated.	<b>Female</b>			
		Solid Coat c		C	
Male	Solid coat c	c    c		C    C	
	c	c    c		C    C	

Where both parents have the  
solid coats

All offspring have solid coats.

# Genetics of Sheep and Goats: One Solid Coat Parent

<b>Genetic Inheritance</b>	If one parent is solid coated, and one is Mc mottled, the offspring will be, on average, half unusual coat and half solid coated.	<b>Female</b>	
		Solid Coat c	c
Male	M Mottled Coat	M c	M c
	c	c c	c c

Where one parent has a solid coat and one has a mottled coat, but with a recessive gene for solid coat,

About half the offspring would have the solid coat.



# Genetics of Sheep and Goats

- Solid coats are preferred for making fabric: They are more even in receiving dye, making better quality fabric.
- The unusual coated animals were usually the culls.

# Confidence in the Bible: Did Jacob Understand Genetics?

- In Genesis 30: 25-43, Jacob made a bargain with his uncle Laban. What was the bargain?
- Why did Laban agree?
- Why did Jacob feel a need to prove his honesty?

# Jacob's Poor Bargain

- What was the bargain? The bargain was that Jacob would prove his honesty by keeping only the odd colored sheep and goats as his wages for taking care of Laban's flocks.
- Jacob would keep his newly born spotted flocks away from Laban's.
- Laban took the original culls from the flock three days' journey away for his sons to herd.

# Why did Laban agree?

- Laban agreed because the funny animals were the culls – he thought he was getting a great bargain. Jacob was getting paid with the rejects that were worth less, and that were less often produced.
- The problem was that only solid coated animals were left in Laban's herd, so theoretically Jacob would not receive any wages.

# Jacob and Genetics

How did Jacob plan to get paid?

- He put carefully marked sticks where the female animals would see them while pregnant, in hopes that they would bear more funny offspring.
- Did Jacob understand genetics?
- Would this have worked so that he would be paid for his work?

# Jacob and Genetics

Was this as silly an idea as it seems?

Certain chemicals or poor diets during pregnancy do affect offspring. During Jacob's time, nobody knew how all this worked.

- Some things happen because of genetic inheritance from parents.
- Some things happen because of environment.

# Jacob and Genetics...

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Even though Jacob's idea seemed reasonable to him, it would not work. If all Laban's flock were solid coated, and no other animals were involved in breeding, Jacob would not receive any wages.

# Did God Understand Genetics When Genesis Was Written?

Gregor Mendel, 1822- 1884, discovered the first basic laws of genetics by fortuitously choosing 2 traits in the breeding of garden peas that each only involved one gene per chromosome and clear dominant and recessive characteristics. This was the initial breakthrough that allowed modern genetic science to begin.

Was Mendel's discovery before or after Genesis was written?



# Answer: LONG after

- Genesis 1400 BC
- Mendel's discovery mid 1800s AD
- Time difference more than 3200 years

# Did God Understand Genetics When Genesis Was Written?

In Genesis 31: 1-12, God explained how He arranged for Jacob to be paid. Was His explanation consistent with genetics?

- God arranged for the sheep to breed when they went to the water troughs, when OTHER flocks were present. God arranged for the striped and mottled males from **other** flocks to be the sires of Laban's flocks. That is where the funny coats came from.

# Did God Understand Genetics When Genesis Was Written?

Would Laban's flocks of solid coated animals have produced any wages for Jacob without God's help? –No!

- Does this show God's hand behind chance or at least guiding animal behavior?
- Does this show God's authorship behind the authorship of Genesis?

# Did God Understand Genetics When Genesis Was Written?

- The authorship issue is the really important one. God understood principles and explained things in light of those principles that people did not grasp until the 1800s. His explanation in Jacob's dream was perfectly consistent with modern science.
- He spoke truth, but not exhaustive truth.
- He protected His word through many generations of copyists who respected it enough to preserve it accurately—long before they understood the science.

# It is significant

That Genesis records BOTH Jacob's error in understanding

AND GOD's correct understanding of genetics.

- The record was made when people did not understand genetics at all, yet the scientific truth is all on God's side. The record stood truthfully for more than three thousand of years until science learned the answers.
- God communicated to Jacob.
- God cared about Jacob's wages and fairness and honesty.

# Would you call this a miracle?

How many things in this account would you describe as miraculous?

- The communication from God through a dream?
- The correct scientific knowledge conveyed only from God's communication?
- The truth of the entire scenario protected for thousands of years until science caught up to the knowledge in the Book?

# Genetic Principles are Complicated.

- A beautiful description of the workings of the cell is found in the appendix of Michael Behe's book, *DARWIN'S BLACK BOX*, copyright 1996. He reports that humans have about **three billion** nucleotide "letters" of DNA in each cell.
- The *Signature in the Cell* is another book that reveals Intelligence behind the intricacies of nature.
- Would you consider the intelligence to design DNA a miracle?

# The Intelligent Design Movement

- Does **not** demand that science recognize miracle. Rather the movement only asks that science use the tools of mathematics to identify intelligence as a cause of information in nature, without restriction in biology.
- If you have an integrated worldview, rather than a compartmentalized worldview, the vastly complex world of genetics impels you toward worship of the Mind that was able to invent such powerful information.
- Even though worship is outside science, the spirit is in tune with the mind. The spirit is called to worship when the mind glimpses God.



# Confidence in the Bible

## Part 2 Data:

- We can gain confidence that the Bible is a book from God by understanding three kinds of data:
  1. Scientific truths hidden in the text
  2. **The unity and diversity of the Book**
  3. The certainty that we have the original words of the Book.

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Moses	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy	Born a slave, Adopted by a king's daughter, fugitive, sheep herder, judge	Escape from Egyptian slavery, desert, giving of the law for a new tribal nation
Joshua	Joshua	Military leader, judge	Aggressive military campaign

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Samuel	I and 11 Samuel	Prophet and Judge	Tribal culture
David	Psalms	Shepherd, poet, exile, king	Beginning of kingdom era, tribal and national warfare

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Solomon	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon	King	Peaceful trading culture, at height of kingly power
Isaiah	Isaiah	Prophet	Divided kingdom sliding into idolatry, northern kingdom taken captive by barbaric enemy

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Jeremiah	Jeremiah, Lamentations	Prophet with priestly duties	On brink of and just after hostile takeover by world empire
Ezekiel	Ezekiel	Prophet in captivity	Tiny fraction of population survived

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Daniel	Daniel	Nobility in captivity	Serving a cruel conqueror
Hosea	Hosea	Man with family trouble	Divided country

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Amos	Amos	Herdsman and fig grower	Divided country
Ezra	Ezra	Scribe and priest	Returning to ruins of country

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Nehemiah	Nehemiah	Cupbearer (Security service) for pagan Emperor	Returning to govern ruins of country
Mark	Mark	Friend of Apostle Peter	Written from Rome



# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Matthew	Matthew	Tax collector, collaborator with Rome, Apostle	Roman empire takeover of country
Luke	Luke and Acts	Physician, only Gentile author, travelling companion of Apostle Paul	Travelling around the Roman Empire

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
John	John, I, II, III John, Revelation	Best Friend of Jesus	Israel to Turkey to Patmos exile
Peter	I, II Peter, background for Mark	Leader among Apostles, called the Apostle to the Jews	Galilee to Rome

# Unity and Diversity of Biblical Authors: Many Authors, One Voice

Author	Books	Identity	Cultural Setting
Paul	Epistles Romans - Philemon	Former persecutor, missionary and church planter, trained as rabbi, by Gamaliel, Pharisee	Often wrote from prison due to persecution, travels around the Roman empire
James and Jude	James and Jude	Half-Brothers of Jesus	Roman Empire

# Long Time Span

- Around 1500 years were required to complete the book, from the time of Moses (1400 BC) until the Apostle John wrote Revelation (95 AD). The world underwent enormous changes over that time span.
- That time span saw the rise and fall of 5 or 6 different empires, with different world languages becoming dominant.
- Yet the book speaks with one voice on many controversial issues.
- It is one unfolding story often told through short biographical sketches and historical documents.

# Unity in Diversity

The Bible employs various different forms of writing—

- ▣ Historical descriptions,
- ▣ Law codes,
- ▣ Architectural construction directions,
- ▣ Letters,
- ▣ Biographies,
- ▣ Poetry and songs, a romantic drama,
- ▣ Thirty-one chapters of sound bites for teenagers in Proverbs,
- ▣ Philosophy in Ecclesiastes, and
- ▣ Prophetic predictions.

Yet the themes are consistent throughout.

# One of the important rules in God's Law in the Bible:

- Multiple witnesses are required to establish truth in legal proceedings.
- The Bible itself follows that rule, for our benefit.
- We can trust its truth because multiple witnesses agree, over long spans of time, regarding many vital principles.

# The Unity within Diversity backs up the claim in II Timothy 3:16-17.

- “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

# Many Authors, One Voice

- The Bible claims that God is its ultimate Author, and that He inspired the people who actually wrote the words.
- If that is true, we would expect agreement on controversial issues even when different writers placed the words on the scrolls. That characteristic **is true** of the Bible.



# Many Authors, One Voice

- The words were written over a period of about 1500 years, from 1400 BC, when Moses wrote, to AD 95, when the Apostle John wrote.
- The expectation of One Voice is extraordinary, given the diversity of life experiences of the human authors.

# Many Authors, One Voice

- The unity of thought on many controversial issues is revealed in *an unforced manner* throughout the varying literary styles of the human authors.
- Often, humanly-authored “books with a message” seem stilted and flat in their writing.
- The Bible does not seem stilted at all. The unifying themes and issues flow naturally and unconsciously through the text, even though the topics of the individual texts are so diverse.

# Two out of Three Monotheistic Religions

Rely on the Bible as their most holy book.

- The third monotheistic religion is Islam, which relies on the Qur'an as its most holy book.

Do you think the Qur'an has similar unity in diversity as does the Bible?

# Two out of Three Monotheistic Religions

Do you think the Qur'an has similar unity in diversity as does the Bible? *The answer is that it shows the opposite characteristic.* It was written from the words of one man, who spoke them over the course of 22 years. It requires a *doctrine of abrogation* so that the later spoken verses over-rule the earlier verses in time, because the verses do not agree on important issues.

# The unity within diversity of the Bible

- Demonstrates that the Bible is unique, and unique in a miraculous way that is far different from other holy books.

# Just as the Bible

- Has the only answer to the question of how God can be totally good when evil is in this world,
- It has the only answers to how we can KNOW that God is the author of its pages, without having to depend on just one person's claim.
- Some skeptics assume that the sense of ONE VOICE came through careful human editing. The next section of our slides dispels that view.

# Confidence in the Bible

## Part 3 Data

- We can gain confidence in the Bible by understanding three kinds of data:
  1. Scientific truths hidden in the text
  2. The unity and diversity of the Book
  3. **The certainty that we have the original words of the Book.**

# Confidence in the Bible:

How can we be sure we have the actual words of the **New Testament** authors?

And the **Old Testament** authors?

- We will examine the **New Testament** first, since the documents are closer in time to us now. Later in the course we will consider the Old Testament.



# Confidence in the Bible:

Note that we already found scientific evidence from the Old Testament, which the critics often *assume* is a collection of primitive ideas,

- so we already have seen strong evidence for God's inspiration there.
- Time constraints require that we save the OT document evidence for later.

# Stating the NT Problem:

- Some skeptics claim that the church went to the New Testament documents and edited them to create the sense of “one voice, ” but our studies will show that this claim is not correct.
- We can trace the words of thousands of hand-written copies back to the same originals, from diverse locations.

# Confidence in the New Testament before the Printing Press

We have an astounding number of early New Testament manuscripts existing today—  
(manuscripts = hand written copies)

- More than 5,000 in Greek
- More than 10,000 in Latin
- Plus other languages
- Plus lectionaries used for public reading
- Plus quotes from the early church leaders.

A museum in Europe keeps photocopies of all existing manuscripts available for scholars.

# Manuscript Comparison: The time gap is between the time of writing and the earliest copy still available.

Book:	Number of Copies	Time Gap in years
Homer's <b>ILIAD</b>	643	400
Herodotus' HISTORY	8	1,350
Thucydides HISTORY	8	1,300
<b>Plato's</b> works	7	1,300
Demosthenes' works	200	1,400
<b>Caesar's</b> GALLIC WARS	10	1,000
Livy's HISTORY OF ROME	19 complete	1,000
□	1 partial	400
Tacitus' ANNALS	20	1,000
Pliny II, NATURAL HISTORY	7 copies	750 years
<b>New Testament Greek</b>	5,366 copies	250 years (entire book)
earliest fragment		<b>15 to 50 years</b>

# Confidence in the New Testament

- The New Testament has more and earlier documentary evidence than any other piece of ancient writing, including a book written by a Roman emperor.
- In addition, scholars believe that the entire New Testament can be recreated from the quotes in the early church leaders' letters and books.

# quotes from the early church leaders

Believer	AD Dates	Location	“Then and Now”	Number of Quotes
Justin Martyr	133			330
Clement	150-220	Alexandria, Egypt		2400
Tertullian	160-220	Carthage, Africa		7000+
Origen	185-254	Alexandria		18000
Hippolytus	170-235			1378
Irenaeus	180	Lyons, France		1819

# To Repeat: Confidence in the New Testament **before the Printing Press**

An astounding number of early New Testament manuscripts (hand written copies) exist today—

- More than 5,000 in Greek
- More than 10,000 in Latin
- Plus other languages **leading to around 25,000 total**
- Plus lectionaries used for public reading
- **Plus quotes from the early church leaders.**

# Because we have so many

Handwritten copies to compare, we can trace back to the exact words of the original manuscripts, for more than 99% of the words.



# Confidence in the New Testament

- We are able to know the exact words of the original documents for more than 99% of the Greek words.
- None of the 1% of words in question affects any major doctrine, and many of these have duplication of meaning elsewhere in scripture.

# Confidence in the New Testament

- Sometimes you will hear of “hundreds of thousands of errors” in the Bible. This is massive exaggeration of the data by sloppy reporting.
- Each time a variant letter appears in a stream of copies, each copy is sometimes counted as one variant. Therefore one “error” can be inflated to 500 “errors” if it shows up in 500 copies.

# Confidence in the New Testament

- The age and “family history” of a manuscript is born out by the locations of the variant letters. Three different manuscript streams can be traced, one in Europe, one from Africa, and one from the Eastern Roman Empire. More Greek manuscripts are found in the last category because Greek was used in Christian worship for a longer time, after Europe switched to Latin when Jerome translated the Vulgate.
- The copies converge to the same original, with 99% certainty. 99% of the original words are established.

# Confidence in the New Testament

Not all variations are *errors*. (Most are variations in spelling.) Spelling drifts over time—as can be seen by comparing American and British spelling of words like *color/colour* or *center/centre*.

There are **four categories of variations**.

**Historiography methods lead to assurance of the original for 99% of the words.**

- From *Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture*, Komoszewski, Sawyer, and Wallace, Kregel Publications, 2006.

# 4 Categories of Variations:

1. The first category is of **spelling differences and nonsense errors that are obvious**. The original words are all known in this category.
2. The second category is **variants in the Greek that do not affect translation**, such as whether or not “*the*” appears with proper names. These variants make no difference in meaning for translation.

# Example from category 2: Variants that do not affect translation.

- Between Mark 6:31 and Mark 8:26, for 89 verses the name of Jesus does not appear.
- The lectionaries for public reading took portions of this passage and added Jesus' name to help the listeners understand.
- Some of the manuscripts have the added names. Perhaps the scribes were thinking about what they heard as they wrote.
- **Do the added names change the meaning? No.**

# Categories of Variations: #3&4

- The third category is of **changes that would affect meaning, but which are *obvious as not being in the original***, such as variants in little local clusters of manuscripts far removed from the source.
- The last category, of fewer than 1% of the words, are **matters in question** as to original wording.

## Example from category 4: Romans 5:1 where an original word is in question

- The Greek is exomen or exOmen—either an omicron or omega—pronounced alike.
- If the verb is exomen, it is indicative mood, meaning “we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- If the verb is exOmen, it is subjunctive mood, meaning “LET us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”



## Example from category 4: Romans 5:1

- The context of the passage is helpful here. Parallelism with the rest of the paragraph makes the omicron the more likely original letter. Can we say dogmatically that the omicron is correct? No, but it is reasonable. Most translations use the omicron meaning.

# Confidence that we have the original words:

- Far more differences exist in options for translating from one language to another using identical Greek words, than differences related to questionable words in Greek.
- The actual original Greek manuscript is far more certain than the modern translations are certain in representing the meaning of those words.

# Confidence that we have the original words:

In other words, what we don't know about the original Greek wording is trivial.

- It is important to study good word-for-word translations as well as the thought-for-thought translations, so that the impact of the meaning reaches us. A one-semester course in Biblical Greek can open up the meaning as well, especially if we learn to use helpful tools such as parsing guides and lexicons.

# Confidence that we have the original words:

- It is a good idea to read more than one translation to gain insight into the differences due to language translation.
- For example, King James English is a beautiful language, but it does not match modern ways to express thoughts. Study another translation along with the King James Version.
- It is also very good to study Greek words to reach a more exact understanding of the text. It is easy to obtain an *Interlinear Greek English New Testament* and look up important Greek words in a *Lexicon* whenever you study a passage.

# We Have Confidence that we have the original words:

- **Every variant has been exhaustively catalogued and studied.**
- The Roman empire was a period of highly developed civilization, with literacy, engineering, and enforced peace. We have many documents from that era, and the New Testament is the **BEST sourced** of all those documents.

# Confidence that we have the original words:

There is NO REASON to think our New Testament was corrupted or changed from the time it was written until now.

When it is possible to

- define the variants, letter by letter and word by word,
- establish the original words,
- and determine that the unknowns are all trivial,

THEN the text is pure.

# This fact also negates

- ❑ Mistaken ideas about “newly found manuscripts” discrediting the Bible. Popular fiction sometimes speculates this way.
- ❑ Truly, so many trustworthy manuscripts exist, and their “family history” has been traced back to the original text, that finding a new and different manuscript would NOT negate their validity at all. A manuscript that was different in major ways would be obviously late and spurious.

# Someone may ask, “What about the Old Testament? Is it reliable?”

- My short answer is “the Dead Sea Scrolls.” From the Dead Sea Scrolls, we know that the Old Testament is virtually unchanged from the era before Christ. Gleason Archer’s estimate between the Dead Sea *Isaiah Scroll* and the modern Hebrew text is 95% agreement overall, according to McDowell. Considering the greater age of the Old Testament, 95% is a very good level of textual agreement.
- We have already seen some amazing scientific facts from the Old Testament. The homework sets in the workbook discuss more of those. They show God’s Authorship of the Old Testament as well.



# An example of textual variation:

- The modern **53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah** is identical in the Dead Sea *Isaiah Scroll* chapter except for one word, which is left out of our modern ones, and that is the word “light” in verse 11, rather than “*it*.”
- (Words in Italics in the English Bible are words implied by the grammar of the original languages but not stated in those languages.)
- The word “light” is included in the *Septuagint*, so the Dead Sea Scrolls have confirmation from that Hebrew to Greek translation.

# Isaiah 53 describes the Suffering Messiah who atones for the sins of the people.

- The older Dead Sea Scrolls word, “light” only makes the message of the chapter stronger. It implies physical resurrection from the dead for the suffering Messiah, in that He sees “light” after dying.
- The chapter matches the experiences of Jesus Christ, written hundreds of years ahead of time.

# Resolution:

- We see reasons to be confident in the words of the Bible as being from God.
- We know that the picture of God presented in the Bible is a God who is totally GOOD. His character is the source of all the goodness in the universe.
- “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” James 1:17

# Resolution:

- We can expect His word to be truth, because He is good.
- We can trust Him because He is good.
- His word is “*the word of truth*,” as James 1:18 says.

# So what should our response be to this information?

- We should confidently search in the Bible for spiritual truth.
- We should encourage others to search in the Bible for spiritual truth as well.
- We should be courageous about witnessing.
- **We should make the search a priority for ourselves and our families and friends.**

Jesus Christ said,

*“If you abide (**STAY**) in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”--John 8:31b-32*

# Homework Class 5 Set 1

Read chapter 2 of THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT. Define these terms:

- Papyrus (translated bulrushes or reeds in Exodus 2:3 and Isaiah 19:6-7)
- Parchment (2 Timothy 4:13)
- Vellum
- Ostraca/ potsherd (Job 2:8)
- Iron pen for stone tablets (Jeremiah 17:1, 2 Corinthians 3:3,7)

# Homework Class 5 Set 1

- Clay tablets (Ezekiel 4:1)
- Wax tablets
- Stylus
- Pen
- Ink (Deuteronomy 17:14-20, Jeremiah 36:18, sometimes also used on lime coated stones -- Deuteronomy 27:1-8,)
- Scroll or Roll
- Opisthograph



# Homework Class 5 Set 1

- Codex
- Uncial
- Miniscule
- Canon
- When were vowel markings added to Hebrew writing? What was unusual about ancient Greek manuscripts?
- What were general tests for recognition of a book as belonging in the canon? What tests were specific to the New Testament?

# Homework Class 5 Set 1

- How were the early church services described by Justin Martyr between 100 and 165 A.D.?
- What impact did problems such as imitation writings, the need for translations into new languages, and even persecution have on collection of the official list of books for the New Testament?
- When did Athanasius circulate his complete list of the New Testament canon, and who were the church leaders who agreed?
- When did Irenaeus list almost the complete New Testament canon? Why is his testimony so important? Which books were on his list? Which books did he omit?

# Homework Class 5 Set 1

- The Old Testament canon or official list was established during the four hundred years between the writing of the Old Testament and the birth of Christ. Which were the last books written in the Old Testament and when were they written?
- When was the Septuagint written, and what was it?
- How did Jesus authenticate the Hebrew canon—the list of books in the Old Testament?

# Homework Class 5 Set 2

Read Job 26:7-10. More examples of God's knowledge of science intruding on the poetry of Scripture: What scientific facts do you notice in these verses?

Read THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT chapter 3. Historiography is the study of historical reliability, and it uses three basic principles for determining that:

- The bibliographical test,
- The internal evidence test, and
- The external evidence test.

Describe the bibliographical test.

# Homework Class 5 Set 2

- How does the New Testament meet the bibliographical test in comparison to other writings of the same era?
- Make a table listing some of the ancient manuscripts with the number of copies and the time gap between known copies and the original.
- What are two internal evidence tests?
- What are some principles to use in deciding whether two passages are contradictory?

# Homework Class 5 Set 2

- Read page 95, Section 3C for an example of an apparent contradiction in the Old Testament that was solved by an archaeological find, and describe it.
- How does the New Testament meet the first internal evidence test, according to Dr. Gleason Archer? What are his credentials?
- How did Dr. Archer explain the difference in descriptions of Judas Iscariot's death?
- How does the New Testament meet the second internal evidence test?

# Homework Class 5 Set 2

- What are three sources of external evidence for the historical nature of the New Testament?
- Other than the Biblical record itself, what kind of information from early Christian sources is available?
- Summarize the evidence about the life of Christ from first century non-Christian writers as listed on page 60.
- Give at least three examples of archaeological evidence that correspond to the New Testament record.

# Homework Class 5 Set 3

Read Job 38:30. God is answering Job by telling him things he does not know that God knows, and describing ocean water. How does He describe it, and where is it that way?

How likely do you think it would be for Job to have knowledge of that in the ancient Middle East?

- Read Chapter 4 of **THE NEW EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT**.
- Prior to finding the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid twentieth century, what dates are assigned to the earliest Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament?



# Homework Class 5 Set 3

- What dates apply to the Dead Sea Scrolls?
- How well do the later manuscripts agree with the earlier one on the wording of Isaiah?
- How many important words are different in Isaiah chapter 53, and does that wording in the Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll match or diverge from the Septuagint versus the Masoretic text?
- What accounts for the accuracy of transmission over so many centuries?

# Homework Class 5 Set 3

- What are some guidelines to identify the correct reading where there is variation?
- What are two types of archeological evidence in support of the Old Testament text?
- What is the area of greatest difficulty in archeology of the Middle East?
- What are some factors to bear in mind in regard to interpreting archaeology?
- Briefly list the archaeological artifact evidences in this chapter that support the Old Testament text.

# Homework Class 5 Set 3

List some of the outside written evidence of practices and names and events that support the Old Testament record.