

## **Manuscript Attestation of the NT**

### **1- Objectives**

- ❖ Proof of the Authenticity of the Bible.

### **2- References**

- ❖ Authenticity and Reliability of the Holy Bible  
<http://www.suscopts.org/messages/lectures/scriptureslecture1.pdf>

### **3- Scriptural Verse**

- ❖ “For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1: 21)

### **4- Lesson Guidelines**

#### **Doubtful common questions**

- ❖ Where do we get most of the details we have about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- ❖ What evidence do we have that the NT is reliable? Not a forgery? Not erroneous? Not full of errors about people, places, and events that contradicted other historical documents?
- ❖ How can we trust that details about the Lord Jesus Christ’s life, death, and resurrection are true?
- ❖ How do we know that the version of the NT we have today has not been altered or perverted from the original; as some people claim?
- ❖ What if it was written over a 100 years after the fact? (Not written by eyewitnesses; not even written by those who we claim to have written it (St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Luke, etc.)).
- ❖ How could we trust the account of supernatural events, when the NT does not even explain the natural ones?
- ❖ What if manuscript evidence was scarce and copies were scarce and far removed from the originals?
- ❖ How accurate then is all the information in the NT since we don’t have reliable origins
- ❖ Does what it says match history?

#### **NT reliability is a critical issue**

- ❖ How can we quote scripture if we really don’t know if that was ever really said?
- ❖ How can we teach people to live by a Bible without any faith that what is in it is true and did not change over time?
- ❖ That’s why we need to prove reliability and early existence of the NT.

#### **Testing the reliability and early existence of the NT**

- ❖ Ending of the Book of Acts: Book ends abruptly with St. Paul in prison, awaiting trial. Plausible explanation: Luke wrote Acts before St. Paul finally appeared before Nero ~62-

63 A.D., meaning that Acts and Luke were written within thirty years of ministry and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- ❖ No book of the NT refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD although it records the Lord Jesus' prophecy that the temple and city would be destroyed within that generation (Mark 13:1-4, 14, 30; Luke 21:5-9, 20-24, 32). History records that in 70 AD Jerusalem with its temple was destroyed, exactly as the Lord Jesus foretold. Very unlikely if they had been written after 70 AD since that event helps to verify the Lord Jesus' claim to be the Son of God, and it is hard to imagine that any writer after 70 A.D. would not make mention to the fulfillment of this prophecy.
- ❖ Papyri Fragments
  - CHESTER BEATTY BIBLICAL PAPYRI dated 200-250 A.D: made public in 1931 and contains the Gospels, Acts, Paul's Epistles, and Revelation.
  - PAYPRUS BODMER II dated 200 A.D.: discovery announced in 1956 and contains fourteen chapters of John, and portions of the last seven chapters.
  - EARLY CHRISTIAN PAPYRI dated 150 A.D.: Made public in 1935 and written by someone who had the four gospels before him and knew them well.
  - JOHN RYLANDS MSS dated 130 A.D.: This is oldest fragment of the NT and because of its early date and location (Egypt), some distance from the traditional place of composition (Asia Minor), this portion of the gospel of John tends to confirm the traditional date of the composition of the gospel.
- ❖ Patristic Writings
  - EPISTLE OF POLYCARP TO THE PHILIPPIANS (dated 120 A.D.): A personal acquaintance of John, the apostle. He quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 1 John
  - LETTERS OF IGNATIUS dated 115 A.D.: Written to several churches in Asia Minor. He quotes from Matthew, John, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.
  - EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS dated 95 A.D.: This letter was written to encourage the church to respect their elders. He quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter.

### **Implications (Suggestions) of Evidence**

- ❖ NT was in existence and well known by 100 AD: Nelson Glueck, former president of the Jewish Theological Seminary said, "In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written between the forties and eighties of the First Century A.D." W F. Albright, biblical archaeologist said: "We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after 80 A.D."
- ❖ It was written in the same generation in which the events took place: It was circulated among the very people about whom these documents spoke while they were still alive to deny them. The fact that the first generation preserved the NT for posterity shows their regard for the genuineness of its contents.

## **Why do we believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God?**

- ❖ Many citations from the Bible that we all believe in and trust.
- ❖ Things people said about Him or things He said about Himself.
- ❖ Miracles He performed.
- ❖ Fulfillment of hundreds of prophecies from the OT.
- ❖ Resurrection of the dead.

### **5- Conclusion**

- ❖ NT was written in the same generation where the events took place and while eyewitnesses were still around to deny it, if it were not true.
- ❖ NT has more manuscript evidence than any document in history and manuscripts are closer to the originals than any other document.

### **6- Activities / Discussion Points**

Compare the first three chapters of the Holy Book of Genesis and the last three chapters of the Holy Book of Revelation:

- ❖ ‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). “A new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1).
- ❖ The first wedding (Genesis 2). The wedding between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church (Revelation 20).
- ❖ The temporary victory of the serpent, Satan (Genesis 3). The eternal defeat of “the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan” (Revelation 20:2–10).
- ❖ The sin that separates us from God (Genesis 3). Our redemption, “Behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God” (Revelation 21:3).
- ❖ God preventing Adam from coming near the tree of life (Genesis 3). “The tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:2).