

# Why Trust the Bible - Week 3

## Chapter 2: Lost in Translation?

### Week 2 Highlights

- Jesus *authenticated* and *endorsed* the Old Testament as the Word of God. This is especially important if we can historically establish that Jesus was who He said He was.
- We reviewed the ideas of seeking truth in science versus seeking truth in history and how we have to make certain presuppositions in order to eventually accept what is justifiably reasonable, in order to avoid circular reasoning “or it’s turtles all the way down.”
- Epistemology - the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion
- We defined the “**Chain of Reliability**” as a chain of evidence based on a series of 5 questions that you can ask to determine if the historical document you are reading is reliable.
  - Can we be confident that the *translation* of the Bible from the original language into our language accurately reflects the original?
  - Can we be confident that the *copyists* accurately transmitted the original writing to us?
  - Can we be confident that we are looking at the *right* set of books?
  - Can we be confident that the original authors were, themselves, *trustworthy*?
  - Can we be confident that the events the original authors described *really* took place?
- We compared Historical Confidence and Mathematical Certainty:
  - **Historical Confidence**  
There is enough evidence to support the belief that a recorded event actually happened
  - **Mathematical Certainty**  
“Pure mathematics (or logic, which is merely the same discipline under another name) [is defined] as ‘the science whose propositions contain no constants.’ That is, all the ‘things’ about which logic and mathematics seem to assert specific propositions - the truth values, universes of discourse, classes, syllogisms, etc., with which logic deals, and the numbers, integral, fractional, real and complex which form the subject-matter of arithmetic and algebra, the points, lines, and planes of geometry, and the functions, definite integrals, etc., of analysis - are mere constructions, made to help us express and explain what certain sorts of propositions have in common, and not all things of the real world.”  
  
Norbert Wiener - Harvard University  
*The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* (1915)
  - **The Point**  
Attempting to apply Mathematical Certainty to history is impossible.

## Chapter Questions

Why is the question of translation so important?

Refer to the Kidspeak illustration on pages 32-33. Give an example of how you've done translation in your own life.

If translation is possible, then why are there so many Bible versions? Does the existence of so many translations undermine the claim that translation is possible? Explain why or why not. (See pages 33-40)

Pick out a verse at random, look it up online, and copy down three or four various translations of that verse below. Do you understand what the biblical author was trying to communicate?

*We have done this work for you below...*

## A Comparison of Translations using Philippians 4:11

### Interlinear Greek Bible

11.	<u>3756</u> ouch	<u>3754</u> hoti	<u>2596</u> kath'	<u>5304</u> husterēsin	<u>3004</u> legō	<u>1473//1063</u> egō gar	<u>3129</u> emathōn	<u>1722</u> en	<u>3739</u> hois	<u>1510</u> eimi
	οὐχ	ὅτι	καθ'	ὕστερησιν	λέγω	ἐγὼ γὰρ	ἔμαθον	ἐν	οἷς	εἰμι
	<u>Adv</u>	<u>Conj</u>	<u>Prep</u>	<u>N-AFS</u>	<u>V-1SPA1</u>	<u>PPr-1NMS//Conj</u>	<u>V-1SAAI</u>	<u>Prep</u>	<u>RIPr-DNP</u>	<u>V-1SPA1</u>
	Not	that	according to	lack	I say,	for I	have learned	in	what <i>state</i>	I am
	<u>842</u> autarkēs	<u>1511</u> einai								
	αὐτάρκης	εἶναι								
	<u>Adj-NMS</u>	<u>V-PAN</u>								
	content	to be.								

**KJV:** Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

**NKJV:** Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

**NIV:** I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

**CSB:** I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself.

**ESV:** Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

**MSG:** Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances.

## Comparison of Ancient Source Material

Tacitus - Annals of Imperial Rome - AD ~116

- Relevant because historians widely accept it as accurate
- 16 Books
- Books 1-6 in one manuscript dating AD 850
- Books 7-10 are lost
- Books 11-16 in another manuscript dating AD 1000-1100
- **Differential: 740 - 950 years**

Josephus - The Jewish War - AD 66-70

- 9 manuscripts dating from AD 900-1100
- **Differential: 840 - 1040 years**

Homer - Iliad - 800 BC

- < 650 Greek Manuscripts today
- Dated from AD 100 - 200
- **Differential: ~1000 years**

The New Testament

- > 5,000 early manuscripts
- Many found near the Nile on Papyrus dating back to at least AD 200
- One fragment dating back to between AD 100-150 (John, dating AD 90)
- **Differential: 10-60 years**
- *"The quantity of New Testament material is almost embarrassing in comparison with other works of antiquity."* - Bruce M Metzger, Ph. D

## Quality of Translation - The Harmony of Ancient Manuscripts

Below is a table of ancient copies of the New Testament we have. The primary point here is that these copies and / or translations confirm the text of each other, even though they were found hundreds of years apart, and in different places on Earth.

ca. A.D.	200	250	300	350	450
Matthew		P45	B	Sin.	A
Mark		P45	B	Sin.	A
Luke		P4, P45, P75	B	Sin.	A
John	P66	P45, P75	B	Sin.	A
Acts		P45	B	Sin.	A
Romans-Hebrews	P46		B	Sin.	A
James-Jude			P72, B	Sin.	A
Apocalypse		P47		Sin.	A

P66 is the most complete papyrus manuscript available, known as the Bodmer Papyri.

P = Papyrus

*The following are all almost complete Parchment manuscripts:*

B = Vaticanus

Sin = Sinaiticus

A = Alexandrinus

**Source:** [library.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/manuscripts.html](http://library.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/manuscripts.html)

The oldest manuscript, known as P52, was discovered in 1938 and dates to AD 100-150. It contains text from John 18: 31-33, 37-38. It measures 3.5 x 2.5" and is currently housed at John Rylands University Library Manchester, UK



... said to him **the Jews**, "**For us it is not lawful**  
**to put to death anyone.**" **This was to fulfill the word**  
**that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of**  
**death he was going to die. So Pilate entered his headquarters**  
**again and called Jesus and said to him,**  
**"Are you the King of the Jews?"**

<https://youtu.be/pyfROAsRaX4>

## Generally Accepted Scholarly Dating of the Gospels

Both Christian and non-Christian scholars generally accept historically early writing dates for the Gospels. Most scholars agree that Mark was written in the 70's, Luke in the 80's, and John in the 90's.

Blomberg believes there is evidence to support an even earlier dating. It starts with the book of Acts.

Acts ends abruptly, with Paul under house arrest, probably because it was written before Paul's execution, which happened in A.D. 62.

Luke would have been written before Acts, as Acts was Part 2 in a 2 part series.

Since Luke incorporates parts of Mark, that would put Mark's writing at an even early date, possibly into the 50's.

## Establishing Early Creeds & Oral Traditions

Taking into account that the Pauline letters were written before the Gospels, probably starting in the 40's and surfacing in the 50's, can we look at Paul's writing and see anything that looks like early creed or canon that would have been given to him?

Yes we can, in 1 Corinthians 15:

"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born."

So if the crucifixion was roughly A.D. 30, then Paul's conversion would have been ~ A.D. 32.

He was immediately taken to Damascus, where he met with Ananias and some other disciples, and his first meeting in Jerusalem would have been about AD 35 where he met with the apostles.

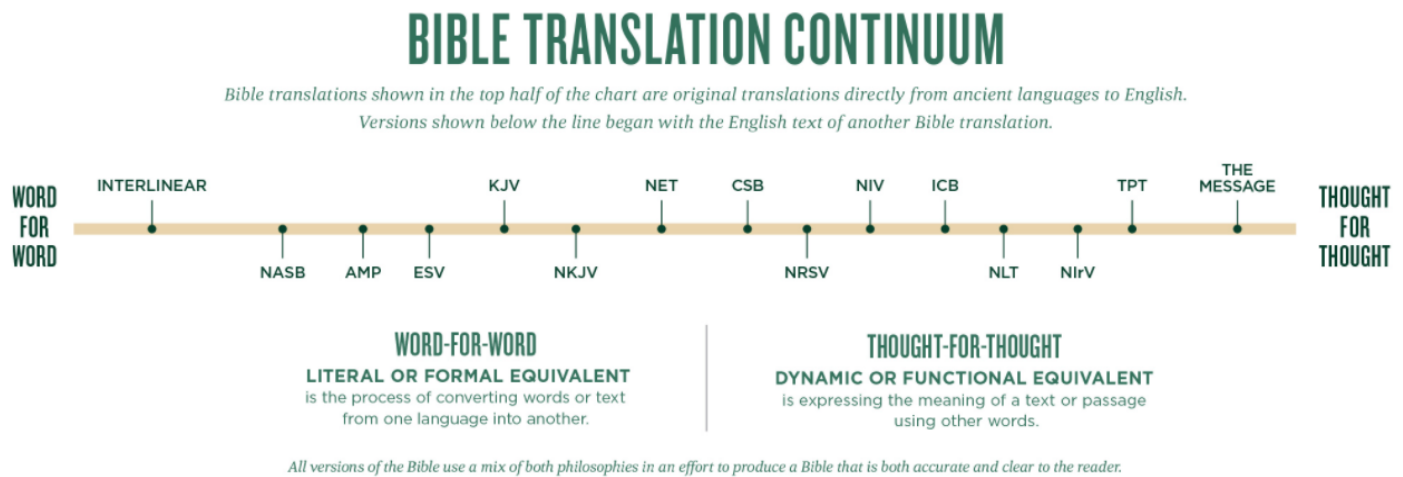
At some point during this time he was given this creed that he is passing on. This is significant because you have reasonable evidence that the key facts about Jesus' death and resurrection for our sins (including great detail on who had actually seen him, which means the ability to get eyewitness accounts of these things) dating back to within 2 - 5 years of the actual events happening.

So to repeat / rephrase, a good case can be made that the Christian belief in Jesus' resurrection, though not yet written down, can be dated to within a couple years of it actually happening.

## Chapter Questions

What are the two aims of a good Bible translation? (See page 40.)

A good translation is marked by both *accuracy* and *readability*



## Apologetics Bonus

### Edwin Hubble & The Beginning - Understanding the Cosmological Argument

Science used to believe the universe was eternal. However, In the 1920's, Edwin Hubble observed that other galaxies are in motion, and moving away from us.

This seemingly innocuous discovery has some pretty big implications, in particular, that all matter in the universe seems to be moving away from a **point of origin**. Because of this, theories about an origin began circulating in the scientific community.

Hubble's finding was a big deal, because it was major evidence supporting a **Beginning**.

And this is where the **Cosmological Argument** takes root.

The **Cosmological Argument** states that:

1. The universe has a beginning. Science agrees.
2. Anything with a beginning, must have a beginner, because matter doesn't appear from nowhere.
3. Any logical "cause" of the universe must have, at minimum, these attributes:
  - a. The ability to choose to create the universe
  - b. Not caused by anything itself
  - c. Not bound by any attribute of the universe, like time, space, matter, or energy
  - d. Must be immensely powerful
4. When considering the attributes of this "cause," they are consistent with what we call God.

**A personal note...**

For me, this creates an odd comfort and peace with the HOW of the beginning. I can't even conceive of a universe without time, space, matter, or energy. Go ahead, try.

People like to argue 6 physical days vs 6,000,000,000 years as a day, etc...

But my question is: when considering the power and might required to perform the task in the first place, and that God is an entity that operates outside of these constructs (indeed, he created them), does it really matter? What does it change about our faith, or belief in a creator God?