

SESSION 4: Is the Bible True? (part 2)

Discovering Archaeological Evidence that Confirms the Bible is Historically Reliable

Reference: *Surprised by Faith*, pages 37-54 (fourth edition); pages 44-57 (third edition)

Making the Discovery

1. To be _____ reliable, a writing must be factual: containing information about real people, real places, and actual events. Historically reliable writings are often written by eyewitnesses of the events.
2. Writings that are _____, on the other hand, are exaggerated or fictional accounts of individuals, places or events. Legends are often written by people who lived at least 150 years after the events they wrote about.
3. _____ evidence, like archaeological discoveries, supports the historical reliability of the Bible. Archaeology has consistently affirmed the credibility of the New Testament as history.

New Testament _____ are real. For example, Jesus' brother James, Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas.

New Testament _____ are real. For example, the Capernaum synagogue, Peter's home, and the Pool of Siloam.

New Testament _____ are described correctly. For example, the Roman census and Jesus' crucifixion.

4. The discovery of early _____ of the New Testament supports its historical reliability.

Legends have never been shown to originate and to be accepted as historically true within the same generation as the actual events. Since the New Testament Gospels have been shown to be eyewitness accounts, they cannot be legends. This is especially true when the records are tested with people living in the same area as the people and events themselves.

...[F]or these stories to be legends, the rate of legendary accumulation would have to be "unbelievable"; more generations are needed... [E]ven the span of two generations is too short to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard core of historical fact (A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, p. 190).



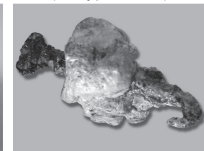
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DISCOVERY #4

"Ah-ha!" Archaeological discoveries have confirmed that the New Testament writings are historically reliable!

5. The testimony of _____ affirms the historical accuracy of the New Testament.
6. Whether the New Testament is historically reliable (trustworthy eyewitness records) is the essential condition for testing the claim that _____ is God.

Confirming the Discovery from God's Word

In summary of God's Word, the apostle John testified that he was writing about a Jesus whom he actually heard speak, actually saw, and actually embraced in his arms—a real man of history! Yet Jesus existed from eternity and in Him is eternal life (1 John 1:1-2). Just like the holy prophets spoke and recorded the Old Testament truth of God, so the apostles of Jesus spoke and recorded the truth recorded as the New Testament. Both are authoritative Scripture (2 Peter 3:2). Jesus fully expected that His words recorded in the New Testament would be preserved intact throughout the centuries and that all people will be held accountable to them (John 12:48). The Holy Spirit revealed to the apostle John that God will judge anyone who adds or subtracts from the Word of God. Its preservation through the ages as the New Testament records is assumed (Revelation 22:18-19).

Answers to "Fill in the Blanks": 1. historically; 2. legends; 3. External, people, places, events; (Photos, clockwise from top left: Pontius Pilate inscription, Joseph Caiaphas bone box, crucifixion victim, James bone box); 4. manuscripts; 5. scholars; 6. Jesus.