



# AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

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## Are the Biblical Manuscripts Fatally Flawed?

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One need not look far today to find allegations that the Bible is no longer reliable as a record of God's message to humankind, if indeed it ever was. Why? Because, it is said, the Bible is based on manuscripts that have been corrupted, and have thus become so flawed over time as to leave its message and meaning unclear. Here are a few current examples of this charge:

■ **ISLAM** — The Qur'an, Al-Maidah 5:13, as quoted in *Corruption of the Torah* (see [www.islamworld.net/torah.html](http://www.islamworld.net/torah.html)): "And because of their breaking their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts. They change words from their places and have abandoned a good part of the message that was sent to them. And you will not cease to discover deceit in them, except a few of them. But forgive them and overlook (their misdeed). Verily! Allah loves the kindly."

■ **CNN** — in an article by Richard Allen Greene, published in London on July 6, 2009: "The world's oldest known Christian Bible goes online Monday, but the 1,600-year-old text doesn't match the one you'll find in churches today. Juan Garces, the British Library project curator, said it should be no surprise that the ancient text is not quite the same as the modern one, since the Bible has developed and changed over the years."

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■ **BART EHRMAN**. Dr. Ehrman is a professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and author of *Misquoting Jesus*, © 2005 Harper San Francisco, in which he writes:

"There are more variations among our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament." (p90), and "If one wants to insist that God inspired the very words of scripture, what would be the point if we don't have the very words of scripture? In some places, as we will see, we simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately. It's a bit hard to know what the words of the Bible mean if we don't even know what the words are!" (p11)

**Are there any credible answers to such harsh charges? Can anyone know that the Bible is really reliable?**

**The answer to both questions is a resounding, "Yes!"**

For every allegation against Biblical reliability, intellectually credible answers can be found in books, DVDs, scholarly articles, and on the web.

Here are two examples, followed by a few other resources for further study. In addition, we'll be happy to send to you *at no cost* a copy of *AIIA's 2011 Index of 100 Leading Apologetics Resources*, many of which touch on this subject.

◆ **HANK HANEGRAAFF** in *Christianity in Crisis*, ©2009 Thomas Nelson:

"Suppose you wrote an essay and asked five friends to produce a handwritten copy of it. Imagine further that each of them asked five friends to do the same. The first five would make mistakes and those who copy the copies would make additional errors. By the fifth generation you would have approximately four thousand flawed manuscripts. Sounds pretty grim, right? But think with me for a moment. Your five friends made mistakes, but they didn't all make the same mistakes. If you compared the copies, you would find that one group contained the same mistakes, while the other four did not. This, of course, would make it easy to tell the copies from the original. Not

only so, but most of the mistakes would be obvious—such as misspelled words or a missed conjunction. Even if you lost the original, as long as you had access to the copies, it would be a rather simple matter to reproduce the original piece. That's essentially the situation with the New Testament. We have thousands of copies that have been classified by scholars into groups, and, thus, we can determine with great precision what the originals actually said. While it can be argued that there are differences in style and spelling among the various manuscripts, it cannot be credibly asserted that there are significant differences in substance.

◆ **GOTQUESTIONS.ORG**, an excellent and extensive web site: <http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-corrupted.html> — "...any unbiased document scholar will agree that the Bible has been remarkably well-preserved over the

centuries. Copies of the Bible dating to the 14th century A.D. are nearly identical in content to copies from the 3rd century A.D. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, scholars were shocked to see how similar they were to other ancient copies of the Old Testament, even though the Dead Sea Scrolls were hundreds of years older than anything previously discovered. Even many hardened skeptics and critics of the Bible admit that the Bible has been transmitted over the centuries far more accurately than any other ancient document." "There is absolutely no evidence that the Bible has been revised, edited, or tampered with in any systematic manner. The sheer volume of biblical manuscripts makes it simple to recognize any attempts to distort God's Word. There is no major doctrine of the Bible that is put in doubt as a result of the minor differences that exist between manuscripts."

### SOURCES & RESOURCES

- Check out our own previous article, *Islam vs. the Bible* at: <http://aiaa.christiananswers.net/resources/thoughtletters/144/>
- *Nothing But the Truth*, by Brian H. Edwards, © 2006 EP Books; 512 pages
- *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, a pamphlet published by Rose Publishing, authored by J. Randall Price. To order, call 1-800-532-4278.



**More Evidence in Defense and Confirmation of the Christian Faith**