

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective. The central page is white and contains the title 'The Reliability of the Word of God' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered on the page. The edges of the book's pages are visible, showing a slightly aged, yellowish-tan color. The background behind the book is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wooden table or a bookshelf.

The Reliability of the Word of God

Jude 3-4

Jude 3-4 Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

[NIV]

**IS THE BIBLE AN UNRELIABLE
DOCUMENT?**

God is the one who caused the Bible to be written

2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. [NIV]

God used men

2 Pet 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. [NIV]

God used man

- When God created the animals, He had the man name them Gen 2:19
- God wanted to judge a nation, He often used another nation to do it. Hab 1:5
- God employs man in the ministry of reconciliation: Reconciling man to God. 2 Cor 5:18

The Holy Spirit was promised to guide them into truth.

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.). [NIV]

Paul understood he was speaking from the Spirit of God

1 Cor 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. [NIV]

The Apostle Peter equated Paul's writing with other Scriptures

*2 Pet 3:16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.
[NIV]*

**WHERE DID WE GET THE
BIBLE?**

Answer:

Early on the church came to accept the four gospels canonical gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).

William Foxwell Albright

“We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80....,

Conservative Dating:

- Paul's Letters A.D. 50-66 (Hiebert)
- Matthew A.D. 70-8 (Harrison)
- Mark A.D. 50–60 (Harnak)
- A.D. 58–65 (T.W. Manson)
- Luke A.D. early 60s (Harrison)
- John A.D. 80–100 (Harrison)

Liberal Dating:

- Paul's Letters A.D. 50–100 (Kümmel)
- Matthew A.D. 80–100 (Kümmel)
- Mark A.D. 70 (Kümmel)
- Luke A.D. 70–90 (Kümmel)
- John A.D. 90–100 (Kümmel)

Early Church Fathers

- Clement In his epistle to the Corinthians (c. A.D. 95), he cites portions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and introduces them as the actual words of Jesus.
- Papias, (c. A.D. 130), cites the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, presumably as canonical.
- Justin Martyr, (A.D. 140), considered all four Gospels to be Scripture.
- Didache (AD 100). quotes extensively from Matthew's gospel

Early Church Fathers

Polycarp, a disciple of the apostle John, quotes portions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and refers to them as the words of Jesus (c. A.D. 150).

- Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp (c. A.D. 170), quoted from 23 New Testament books,
- The Muratorian Fragment dates to about A.D. 175, and lists the four canonical gospels. Indeed, it lists 23 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

“Even if we didn’t possess the early documents, they could be reconstructed from the quotations from the early church fathers.”
Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament.*

New Testament Canon:

- 1. Was the book written or backed by a prophet or apostle of God? This is the single most important test.**
- 2. Is the book authoritative?**
- 3. Does the book tell the truth about God and doctrine as it is already known by previous revelation?**
- 4. Does the book give evidence of having the power of God?**
- 5. Was the book accepted by the people of God?**

Canon Completed

Counsel at Carthage: AD 397

RELIABILITY OF ANCIENT TEXTS

Ancient Texts

- * The Chester Beatty papyrus (P45) dates to the 3rd century A.D., and contains the four Gospels and the Book of Acts (chapters 4-17). (P = papyrus.)
- * The Chester Beatty papyrus (P46) dates to about A.D. 200, and contains ten Pauline epistles (all but the Pastorals) and the Book of Hebrews.
- * The Chester Beatty papyrus (P47) dates to the 3rd century A.D., and contains Revelation 9:10-17:2.
- * The Bodmer Papyrus (P66) dates to about A.D. 200, and contains the Gospel of John.
- * The Bodmer Papyrus (P75) dates to the early 3rd century, and contains Luke and John.
- * The Sinaiticus uncial manuscript dates to the 4th century, and contains the entire New Testament.

**Archeology confirms rather than
disproves the Bible**

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE
SAY ABOUT JESUS?**

Truth of the matter:

The New Testament writers themselves fully recognized that Jesus was absolute deity.

The Apostle Paul:

Colossians 1: 16: For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

See also Psalm 102:25-27

Jesus is God:

Titus 2:13 while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Thomas:

John 20:28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus:

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

CONCLUSION

The image shows a stack of old, yellowed, and torn papers. The top sheet is white and has a question centered on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a book cover or a folder. The papers are slightly crumpled and have irregular edges, suggesting they are old and have been handled.

Are the Gnostic Gospels Reliable Documents?

Answer:

The Dead Sea scrolls (Discovered 1948) contain no New Testament Documents

Jesus warns of false prophets

Mat 7:15-17 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

[NIV]

Paul warned the Ephesians:

Acts 20:28-30 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. [NIV]

Peter's warning!

2 Pet 2:1-3 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them--bringing swift destruction on themselves.

Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

They actually prove the Bible:

"One document, the manifesto of the Valentinian school called 'the gospel of truth,' contains themes and passages from Matthew, Luke, John, 10 of Paul's 13 letters, 1 John, and Revelation and likely contained 2 John, Hebrews, and Jude. This is a sizable portion of our New Testament, and it was in place 120 years after Jesus."

Josh McDowell

Gnostic Writings:

- The Gospel of Thomas
- The Secret Book of James
- Basilides
- Naassene Fragment
- Gospel of Mary
- Dialogue of the Savior
- Gospel of the Savior
- Marcion

Gnostic Writings:

- Epiphanes
- Ophite Diagrams
- Ptolemy
- Gospel of Truth
- Excerpts of Theodotus
- Heracleon
- Acts of Peter
- Acts of Thomas

Gospel of Judas:

- 1) We have a papyrus copy that carbon dates to about 300 A.D.
- 2.) We do not have a Greek text of this Gospel, we have a Coptic one from which the English translation has been made.
- 3.) We only know some document called the Gospel of Judas existed around 180 because Irenaeus mentions it. One could also raise the question of whether Irenaeus is referring to the same document.
- 4) This document reflects the same sort of dualism that we find in many other Gnostic documents. **BEN WITHERINGTON**