

Is The New Testament Trustworthy?

No one questions the authenticity of Plato, Aristotle, or Homer, but the manuscript evidence for each of these is far less than that of the Bible. We can be assured that the Bible text we have today is the text of the first century.

The Iliad and The Odyssey

Written: around 900 B.C.
Earliest available manuscript: 400 B.C. (500 years later)
Total manuscripts: 643

Works of Plato

Written: 427-347 B.C.
Earliest available manuscript: A.D. 900 (1200 years later)
(There is one fragment from 3rd century B.C.)
Total manuscripts: 7

Works of Aristotle

Written: 384-322 B.C.
Earliest available manuscript: A.D. 1100 (1400 years later)
Total manuscripts: 49

Works of Julius Caesar

Written: 100-44 B.C.
Earliest available manuscript: A.D. 900 (1000 years later)
Total manuscripts: 10

Works of Pliny

Written: A.D. 61-113
Earliest available manuscript: A.D. 850 (750 years later)
Total manuscripts: 7

The New Testament

Written: 1st Century
Earliest available manuscript: 1st Century (within 30-40 years)
Total manuscripts: 5,800

The Bible has over 5,800 early Greek manuscripts available to confirm the accuracy of today's New Testament. In addition, there are thousands more in Latin, Syriac, Slavic, Gothic, Ethiopic, Coptic and Armenian.

- via House-to-House

Living Up to the Name

Animals are predictable in their behaviors. You can count on them to behave a certain way based upon what kind of animal they are. You would be surprised to find a cat who didn't at least swat at a mouse that ran by, or a dog never sniffed around or refused to wag his tail. Animals only do the things that are based upon what they should do. They live up to their name.

God expects His children to do what they were redeemed to do – to live up to their name. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children" (Eph. 5:1). "Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you" (Eph. 5:2). "Do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints" (Eph. 5:3). "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Eph. 5:11). "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise" (Eph. 5:15).

However, living as God's children is not a matter of instinct. We are challenged to remind ourselves daily of who we are because of God's great mercy and grace. Only as we do this consistently are we living up to our name.

- by **Shane Williams**

Things Left in the Pews

Church members are prone to leave things behind in the pews. We've even known of some folks who drove away from the meeting house before discovering that they left one of their toddlers sleeping in the pew. Anyone taking a turn at cleaning the church building is in for an eye-opening experience. It is amazing to see the things that get left in the pews. For example:

- **Trash!** Candy and gum wrappers, scraps of paper, Kleenexes, and other rubbish frequently get carelessly strewn in the seats. Some of this is accidental, but the volume of trash left in some pews is extraordinary. Everyone could easily help with this by simply 'policing' their area before leaving.

- **Personal items.** Blankets, sweaters, foot stools, children's books and toys, and other such things are common in the pews. We understand the need for some of this, but we'd encourage some organizing and tidiness to make a better appearance and impression – especially on visitors.

While these things are normal, and can easily be tolerated, there are some other things that represent a more significant issue:

- **Bibles.** If you leave your Bible in the pew, it suggests that you don't really use it on a regular daily basis. That's a problem that needs to be fixed immediately. Take your Bible home. Read it every day.

- **Class materials.** Our children's teachers work hard to make the Bible classes the best they can be. They almost always have teaching aids and handouts to send home with the kids. Too often these are carelessly left behind. Please, parents, pay special attention to these things. Gather them up. Take them home. Review the subjects with your children. And, of course, the older kids and adults need to take their books home and study, too! If you leave your class materials in the pew, it's pretty obvious that you are not making any effort to come to class prepared.

- **God's truth.** The most serious of all things that get left behind in the pews is the truth. Too many walk away from Bible classes and sermons without any serious consideration that the things that have been taught need to be put into practice in their daily lives. They are effectively unchanged by the exposure to the essential truths of His Word. *"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."* (James 1:22-25)

Before you leave the pew, make sure that you haven't left anything behind. Think!

- by **Greg Gwin**