

## ***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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

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## ***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 that 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).

It must be noted that living as God's children is not like animal instinct. Instead, 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

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### ***“Everything Happens for a Reason”***

We often hear people use the expression: “Everything happens for a reason.” This saying is the modern, New Age version of the old religious saying: “It’s God’s will.” Is this true? Is there a reason for everything? Does God’s will regulate all things?

First, some things happen because the Lord has placed certain ‘natural’ laws in place that cannot be violated without predictable results. For example: a man broke his leg. Why? What was the reason? He stepped off of a ladder and the ‘law of gravity’ prevailed. In this sense, we can understand and acknowledge that this ‘happened for a reason,’ though we doubt that this is what the New Age crowd means when they use that expression.

But, we must essentially protest the claim that God has totally predestined our lives, or that His ‘will’ controls every aspect of our existence. The Scriptures make it clear that God gives man choice. Joshua’s famous statement makes this abundantly clear: *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”* (Joshua 24:15). We know that the invitation for salvation is open to all, but each one must decide: *“The Spirit and the bride say, Come . . . and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely”* (Revelation 22:17). So, obviously, God has not predestined everything, else these statements about our freedom to choose would be senseless.

Further, we know that some things do, in fact, happen as a consequence of the choices God allows us to make. Good choices typically bring good outcomes, and bad choices produce bad ones. Many are suffering the ill effects of things they chose to do or not do, while others are enjoying the benefits of wise selections. Moses advised the Israelites: *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live”* (Deuteronomy 30:19). To put it simply, choices have consequences. And while this is a definite rule of God, the specifics are determined by us and our free will, not His.

Finally, we must note that there is not always a clear, one-to-one corollary to be seen in every event in our lives. Sometimes bad things happen to good people, and vice versa. Why? Frequently we can ‘see’ it, but often we can not answer, other than to lay it to the reality of living in this present world with its physical suffering and death. We may not be able to explain them, but we can use even the ‘bad things’ to provoke us to do what is right and just – as we seek for a world where such will never happen again (2 Peter 3:13).

- by Greg Gwin