

Exacting Bible Copying Methods

How can we know if the original manuscripts of the Bible have been accurately transmitted to us? One method for determining the reliability of any ancient manuscript is to note the total number and the agreement between the various copies. There are over 24,000 ancient manuscripts containing various portions of the New Testament. Except for extremely minor variations these copies agree word for word. **No other ancient document even begins to approach such massive authentication.** By comparison, the *Iliad* by Homer, has the second highest number of surviving manuscript copies - totaling only 643! No one doubts the authenticity or accuracy of the *Iliad*, yet the Bible, with far more evidence in its favor, is under constant attack. One wonders, why the hostility?

God said in the Bible that His Word would never pass away. His Word has far more supporting evidence than any other book in history. **God gives us overwhelming evidence (which archaeology continues to verify) that Scripture has been accurately maintained, reproduced, and passed down through the ages.** Only the Bible can make this claim.¹

The Bible was written on material that deteriorates and so it had to be copied and recopied by hand for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press. **This copying did not diminish the accuracy of the original Hebrew Bible because of the unique nature of the copying process.**

The Jews preserved Scripture as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. **They meticulously kept track of every letter, syllable, word, sentence, and paragraph** by counting each separate division, on every page, and comparing all of the tallies with the original before allowing the page to be put into use. Scribes, lawyers, and massorettes were special classes of men within Jewish culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with perfect fidelity. **If you compare the Bible with all other ancient writings, you will find it has more copies of the original manuscript, with less variation between manuscripts, than any other 10 pieces of classical literature combined.**²

This article is a compilation of two entries (July 21 & Dec. 10) on the subject of “Evidence From Biblical Uniqueness” taken from the book, *A Closer Look At The Evidence*, by Richard & Tina Kleiss.³ Although this amazing book contains evidence, researched from over 70 expert sources, for the **existence of a Creator**, for the **reliability of the Holy Bible**, and for the **trustworthiness of Christianity**, the information in this article was condensed from the books, *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* and *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, by Josh McDowell. These books are an excellent resource on biblical accuracy.

1. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict* and *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell, Here’s Life Pub. Inc., San Bernardino, CA (Nelson Pub., Nashville, TN) p. 39 & pp.33-116 (respectively).

2. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Josh McDowell, Here’s Life Pub. Inc., San Bernardino, CA (Nelson Pub., Nashville, TN) p. 19.

3. *A Closer Look At The Evidence*, Richard L. & Christina (Tina) E. Kleiss, Search for the Truth Pub., Midland, MI.