Can We Trust Our English Bibles?

Buddy Payne · 2 Timothy 3:14–17 · Series: **Evidences: Buddy Payne**

INTRODUCTION

- Do you realize, beloved, that you have God's word in your language in your hands? Many languages on earth do not have that. That's a great blessing.
- So here's the church, the dominant church in the Middle Ages, forbidding common folk like you and I to have any part of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue.
- So how can we know that this book in English in the 21st century is an accurate reflection of what was written in those books so many years ago?

1 The Bible Claims God Will Preserve His Word

Psalm 119:152–160; Mark 13:31; 1 Peter 1:22–25

- The Bible claims God will preserve his word.
- The entirety of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous judgments endures forever.
- Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall never pass away.
- All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is the flower of the grass, the grass withers and its flower falls away. But the word of the Lord endures forever.

2 The Transmission of the Old Testament

Joshua 1; 2 Chronicles 34; Nehemiah 8:1–8

- From the time of Moses when the first books of the law were written until the time of Nehemiah, some 830 years, the book was preserved.
- He would very carefully write letter by letter precisely what was on the one in front of him. And every letter had to match exactly.
- They knew how many lines there were going to be, and precisely how many letters on each line, and if any of that was wrong, they threw it away.
- The oldest complete text of the Old Testament dates to 1008 A.D. It is called the Leningrad Codex, one of the Masoretic texts.
- If those copies became old or worn, not usable anymore, they gave them a ceremonial burial, destroyed them so that nobody could use them improperly because they had the name of God on them.

3 Then Came the Dead Sea Scrolls

- Every book of the Old Testament is represented among those scrolls, except the book of Esther.
- It is guesstimated that those copies were made sometime between 250 BC and the year zero.
- Here are scrolls that are over a thousand years earlier than the oldest previous Hebrew manuscripts in our possession.

- With the complete scroll of Isaiah A in hand, the revision committee of the revised Standard Version of 1952 adopted only 13 variant readings in the entire book of Isaiah.
- The Dead Sea Scroll's testimony is those scribes were unbelievably accurate.

4 For the New Testament, Manuscripts Are Overwhelming

- The New Testament is by far the best attested ancient document by light years.
- With 5,656 manuscripts to compare with each other, it is very certain that we can come up with what the original said.
- 86% of the material in the New Testament, there is no variation whatsoever among all those manuscripts.
- Out of all of those minor variations that have something to do with the text, no doctrinal issue is affected at all by any of them.
- The church fathers quoted the New Testament so much that it is said if you lost all the manuscripts and all the versions, you could reproduce the New Testament just from their quotes.

MY NOTES