

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF THE FACTS IN THE BIBLE OCCURRED?

Video Clip transcript extracted from the talk IS THE BIBLE HISTORY OR MYTH

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This is just a different kind of book. It's a book of facts, not a book of personal subjective visions. You may say, "Well, yes, but the facts that are in this book, how do you know that they're the facts that actually occurred?" That is a problem. You can see that because these facts occurred thousands of years ago.

You can see there was lots of time for all kinds of people to write up imaginary accounts of these facts, to make up their own stories of the facts, to mutilate the facts, to pervert them. Maybe they could take an ordinary man Moses and they could make him seem to be a great leader. You can see how easy it is to do that when you consider that the original accounts of the facts were written on manuscript material that was very destructible and so the manuscripts were destroyed every 50 or 60 years and they had to be recopied.

So, you can see that it's difficult to tell whether somebody made a mistake in the copying or whether somebody changed it when they copied it. And it's the same of course with all ancient history. It's really a great problem. Most of us know Plato's "Republic". Plato wrote his "Republic" in 400 B.C. But would you believe that the first manuscript we have of Plato's "Republic" is 900 A.D.? There were 1300 years elapsed before we have a manuscript of Plato's "Republic".

Now, obviously there were many manuscripts before then, but the only one that exists today in our world, (all the rest have been destroyed), the only one that exists is 900 A.D. It's the same with most of the ancient history when you go to Cesar's "Gallic Wars" or you go to Homer's poetry. We believe Homer's poetry was written in 900 B.C. The first manuscript and the only manuscript we have earlier than 1000 A.D. is one at 900 A.D. So it's about 1800 years or 2000 years after Homer wrote the poetry that we have a manuscript of it. Do you know how many manuscripts we have of Homer's poetry altogether? Two. Two manuscripts and yet we don't question Homer's poetry.

But you can see why even the history department of our own university regards anything up to 200 years after the event as eyewitness accounts. You can see that, because ancient history is lamentable in its documentary support. Yet of course we don't question it. If you want to look, there is a picture of some of the typical examples in our own literature today. You can see that Cesar's "Gallic Wars" is 55 B.C. and there are only nine manuscripts. The first one is 900 years later than Cesar wrote his "Gallic Wars".

Then you see Levi's "History" written in 20 B.C. We have only 20 manuscripts of it and the first one is 400 years after Levi wrote the history. Tacitus's "History" was written in 100 A.D. We have only two manuscripts and the first one is 1000 years after Tacitus wrote the history. Tacitus's "History" was written in 430 B.C. There are only eight manuscripts and the first one is 1300 years later. Plato's "Republic" has four manuscripts. They are 1300 years after he wrote the book. Homer's "Odyssey" was written in 900 B.C. and it has only two manuscripts. The oldest one was written 2000 years later.

What about the Bible? Well, it's just unbelievable. There it is, the "New Testament" was written from 40 to 100 A.D. We have 4000 manuscripts of it. We have 4000 different manuscripts and the

unbelievable thing is, the earliest one was written 25 years after John's Gospel was completed. But do you see there are 4000 different manuscripts?

In other words, if somebody wanted to change the history of the New Testament, he had to have a very large family who could travel into all kinds of hidden, concealed caves in the deserts. These manuscripts were found in all kinds of places, right from the earliest days and he had to have all his poor sons laboriously change the history so that it all agreed.

The difficulty is, when he died, he had to ensure that all his sons had children and grandchildren because these manuscripts continued to be found in all kinds of different places, written in different styles of writing at different ages from the year about 100 A.D. or 125 A.D. to about the year 1000 A.D. There are 4000 different manuscripts. Ones like the "Alexandrinus" and the "Sinaiticus" are in the British Museum. The "Alexandrinus" is a complete manuscript of the whole Bible and is 350 A.D. in age (according to Carbon 14 method which works within hundreds of year but not when you're talking about millions of years). The style of the writing is also used to date them. The "Sinaiticus" is just opposite to it in the corridor of the British Museum. It's 450 A.D.

Nothing corresponds in other ancient history to this kind of documentation. The unbelievable thing is the manuscript that you can find in the museum in Manchester England. It is on its own completely. It's a scrap of John's Gospel which is exactly the same as the account of John 18:31-33 in the bigger manuscripts. It is dated by Carbon 14 and by style of writing at about 130-140 A.D. That is only about 30 or 40 years after John wrote the Gospel.

You can see the importance of that. Here you have an actual piece of writing that some people looked at, which were actually contemporaries of the people who wrote the Bible. That's the kind of manuscript evidence you have.

Full Talk: Is The Bible History or Myth by Rev. Ernest O'Neill