

WAS THE ORIGINAL RECORD OF THE BIBLE TRUE?

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

By: Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Well, you can see that one of the important ways of checking out if it is true is if you had people who were living while these people wrote the record. In other words, today is about 15 years after Kennedy's assassination. I think if one of you decided, we'll write a history of Kennedy's assassination showing how LBJ actually killed Kennedy, then there are millions of us here who would say, "No, no. It didn't happen that way". Some of us saw it, some of us were there, and some of us know people who were there and we know that isn't true. The book would immediately be looked upon as a fraud.

Do you see that's the same situation you had in the first century? The records of Jesus' life were being circulated from a 40-100 A.D. During that time there were hundreds of people alive who had actually seen these events themselves. All they had to do was say, "No, Mark wrote all that? It isn't true. It isn't true".

In fact, you have the opposite situation. You have people like Papias, who was born in about 60 A.D. and he writes and tells us of his conversations with the old white-haired John. He tells what he discovered in those days. He said, "The elder John used to say, "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered". Another man called Polycarp was born in 69 A.D. He also knew John personally also and yet lived well into the second century. Polycarp would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words, and whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord and about His miracles and about His teaching. Polycarp, having received them from eyewitnesses of the life of the word, would relate it altogether in accordance with the scriptures.

In other words, when John says, "Listen, we were eyewitnesses of these things, that's why you can trust us", you don't have to just take his word. You can look up other history books of men that knew John and that indicate that he lived in the first century and that he observed the things that he observed.

Of course loved ones the interesting thing is, you don't even have to trust just the New Testament itself. You can go to people like Tacitus. He was the foremost historian of imperial Rome and here's what he says, "The author of the name Christians was Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, suffered punishment under his procurator Pontius Pilate."

Another man called Tertullian, who doesn't appear in the Bible at all, was involved with the government in their archives and he said this, "Tiberius accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favor of Christ. The senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected his approval. Caesar held his opinion, threatening wrath against all the accusers of the Christians."

A man like Josephus, who was a Jew, (and therefore really committed against Jesus, from the point of view of Christianity) writes, "There was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call

Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as to receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ and when Pilate at the suggestion of the principle men amongst us, had condemned Him to the Cross, those that loved Him at the first, did not forsake him, for He appeared to them alive again on the third day".

And so, all that is written by the men who knew Jesus Himself in this book, is confirmed by hundreds of other histories that were written at the same time. And maybe the greatest reason for believing them is -- did they grow rich? Did they grow prosperous and famous? Did they live to a ripe old age because of what they told about this man Jesus? No.

If they had been content just to say He was a good teacher, that's what would have happened. But they insisted on saying that He was the son of God. That's the thing that brought them onto the crucifixion hills and into the lion's arenas. Maybe the greatest argument for believing what these men said really happened, is that they suffered for what they talked about. They suffered. They did not gain from it. They suffered for it.

Now, men will die for a thing that they think may be true, but nobody will die for what they know is a lie. Many of us used to say, "Well, maybe they imagined it. Maybe they made the story up". Yes, but you won't die for something you make up. You'll only die for what you know is true.

In other words, if you just allow your mind to work logically, it's very difficult to get away from the fact that this is the most reliable history book of ancient times that we possess. When you read this book, you are reading actual historical records of what our Creator has done over 4000 years of our existence. That's why loved ones, we believe that there is a God because we can see how He has dealt with us human beings over a period of 4000 years and we believe that He is the Father of Jesus Christ.

Full Talk: IS THE BIBLE HISTORY OR MYTH? By Rev. Ernest O'Neill