

PREMISE 1

The Old Testament Is The Best Preserved Text From Antiquity

Open-Book Review

Use ThinkCube to answer the following questions. The purpose isn't to test your memory, but to help you review and reinforce the most important ideas from this premise.

1. What three factors do historians use to evaluate how well an ancient text has been preserved?

- A. Number of manuscripts, age of manuscripts, and consistency between copies
- B. Length, popularity, and price
- C. Author, language, and number of chapters
- D. Paper type, ink color, and binding

2. Why were the Dead Sea Scrolls such an important discovery?

- A. They provided Old Testament manuscripts about 1,000 years older than previously known Hebrew copies
- B. They contained the original handwritten Bible
- C. They were the first Bible translated into English
- D. They contained only New Testament books

3. What did comparisons between the Dead Sea Scrolls and later Hebrew manuscripts show?

- A. The Old Testament text had been transmitted with remarkable consistency
- B. The entire Old Testament had been rewritten
- C. Most books were completely different
- D. The Hebrew language had disappeared

4. What did ancient Jewish scribes do to help preserve the text accurately?

- A. They used careful copying and checking methods
- B. They rewrote difficult passages from memory
- C. They removed repeated verses
- D. They translated every copy into Latin

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "The Old Testament was copied so many times that it must have changed completely." What could you ask about what the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed when compared with copies made about 1,000 years later?

2. Put it in your own words: Why does the manuscript evidence give us confidence that the Old Testament was carefully preserved?

PREMISE 2

The New Testament Has Been Preserved In More Manuscripts Than Any Other Ancient Work

1. Approximately how many New Testament textual witnesses does the ThinkCube say exist in Greek and other early languages?

- A. More than 24,000
- B. About 240
- C. Fewer than 50
- D. Exactly 27

2. What is a paleographer?

- A. A specialist who studies ancient handwriting and manuscripts
- B. A scientist who studies planets
- C. A translator who works only with modern languages
- D. An archaeologist who studies fossils

3. How does the manuscript support for the New Testament compare with other ancient writings?

- A. It has far more surviving textual witnesses than other ancient works
- B. It has fewer copies than most ancient books
- C. Only one complete copy survives
- D. It has about the same support as every ancient work

4. Why are manuscripts from different languages and regions helpful?

- A. Scholars can compare independent copies and check how consistently the text was transmitted
- B. They make the original text impossible to identify
- C. They prove every translation uses identical words
- D. They eliminate the need for textual study

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "We cannot trust the New Testament because the original handwritten copies are gone." What could you ask about how historians reconstruct other ancient works whose originals are also gone?

2. Put it in your own words: Why does having so many New Testament manuscripts strengthen confidence in its text?

PREMISE 3

Textual Experts Conclude The Bible Is More Than 99% Textually Accurate

1. What is textual criticism?

- A. Comparing manuscripts to identify variations and determine the earliest wording
- B. Trying to prove an ancient book is false
- C. Translating the Bible into modern English
- D. Studying only Bible stories

2. What kinds of differences make up most manuscript variants?

- A. Spelling, word order, and minor copying differences
- B. Completely different accounts of Jesus
- C. Entirely different Christian doctrines
- D. Different Ten Commandments

3. According to the ThinkCube, do the remaining textual variants change any central Christian doctrine?

- A. No
- B. Yes, most doctrines
- C. Only the resurrection
- D. Only the existence of God

4. How do scholars identify copying errors?

- A. They compare many manuscripts from different times and places
- B. They choose whichever manuscript is longest
- C. They ignore older manuscripts
- D. They rely on one modern translation

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "There are differences between Bible manuscripts, so we cannot know what the original said." What could you ask about how comparing thousands of copies helps scholars spot copying differences?

2. Put it in your own words: Why don't minor manuscript differences mean that the Bible's message has been lost?

PREMISE 4

The Writings Of Early Church Fathers Confirm Faithful Transmission Of The Text

1. Who were the Early Church Fathers?

- A. Early Christian leaders and writers from the first centuries of Christianity
- B. The twelve sons of Jacob
- C. Roman emperors who translated the Bible
- D. The scribes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls

2. Why are their writings useful for studying the New Testament text?

- A. They quoted and referred to New Testament books extensively
- B. They possessed the original of every New Testament book
- C. They wrote the four Gospels
- D. They translated the Old Testament into Hebrew

3. What does their wide use of New Testament books show?

- A. The books were circulating and treated as authoritative very early
- B. The New Testament was written in the Middle Ages
- C. Only one Gospel was known
- D. The books existed only in Rome

4. How can their many New Testament quotations help scholars?

- A. They provide another witness for checking the New Testament text
- B. They replace every surviving manuscript
- C. They reveal Jesus' handwriting
- D. They prove there were no variants

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "The New Testament could have been changed centuries after it was written." What could you ask about the thousands of quotations from it found in early Christian writings?
2. Put it in your own words: How do the Early Church Fathers provide another way to check whether the New Testament was faithfully transmitted?

PREMISE 5

The Bible Is The Most Textually Authenticated Work From Antiquity

1. What is the bibliographic test used to evaluate?

- A. How reliably an ancient document has been transmitted through surviving copies
- B. Whether an ancient author was famous
- C. Whether a book contains miracles
- D. How many modern copies were sold

2. Why does having many manuscripts help textual scholars?

- A. Copies can be compared to identify mistakes and recover the earliest wording
- B. More copies prove every claim is true
- C. It eliminates every manuscript difference
- D. Only books with thousands of copies can be historical

3. Do original handwritten copies survive for most famous ancient works?

- A. No, historians usually depend on later copies
- B. Yes, nearly all originals survive
- C. Only Greek originals survive
- D. Originals are required before historians study a work

4. What advantage does the Bible have when the same textual methods are applied?

- A. It has an unusually large amount of manuscript evidence for comparison
- B. Its manuscripts contain no copying differences
- C. It is the only ancient work written by hand
- D. Historians use different rules for the Bible

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "Since we do not have the Bible's original manuscripts, we cannot trust its text." What could you ask about whether we have the originals of works by Homer, Plato, Aristotle, or other accepted ancient authors?

2. Put it in your own words: Why does the large number of Bible manuscripts make the bibliographic test especially useful?

PREMISE 6

The Bible Has Been More Textually Scrutinized Than Any Other Work

1. What does the ThinkCube emphasize about scholarly study of biblical manuscripts?

- A. They have been examined extensively by generations of scholars using many methods
- B. They have rarely been studied outside churches
- C. Only modern translators examined them
- D. Most manuscripts are unknown to scholars

2. Which modern technologies are being used to study biblical manuscripts?

- A. Digital imaging, databases, and computer-assisted analysis
- B. Only handwritten notebooks
- C. Satellite weather radar
- D. Medical X-rays alone

3. Why compare the Bible with works such as Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and Shakespeare?

- A. It shows historians accept reconstructed texts even when originals no longer survive
- B. It proves those authors copied the Bible
- C. It shows all ancient books have the same message
- D. It proves Shakespeare lived in ancient Greece

4. What conclusion does this premise ask readers to consider?

- A. Whether skepticism toward the Bible is consistent with standards used for other ancient texts
- B. Whether ancient books should never be trusted
- C. Whether manuscript evidence is unimportant
- D. Whether only originals have historical value

Be Prepared to Share

1. Someone says: "The Bible has not been examined carefully enough to know whether its text is reliable." What could you ask about the centuries of manuscript comparison and modern technology used to study it?

2. Put it in your own words: Why should the Bible be judged by the same historical standards used for other ancient writings?