

How Do You Know What You Know Is True?

Introduction:

I. The Gospels and the book of Acts are historically reliable documents.

A. Assessing the reliability of the text.

Author	Work	Date Written	Earliest MSS	Time Gap	Copies
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 BC	c. 400 BC	400	1757
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480-425 BC	10 th Cent.	1350	109
Sophocles	Plays	496-406 BC	3 rd Cent. BC	100-200	193
Plato	Tetralogies	400 BC	895	1300	210
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 BC	9 th Cent	950	251
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59BC-AD 17	Early 5 th Cent.	400	150
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	AD 100	1 st half 850 2 nd half 1050	750-950	31
Pliny	<i>Natural History</i>	AD 49-79	5 th Cent	400	200
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460-400 BC	3 rd Cent. BC	200	96
Demosthenes	Speeches	300 BC	AD 1100	1400	340
NT		AD 50-100	AD 130	40	5795

B. Assessing the reliability of the authors.

1. Are the authors reliable?

¹Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,
²just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,
³it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;
⁴so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. Luke 1:1-4 (NASB)

²⁴This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. John 21:24 (NASB)

¹What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—²and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3 (NASB)

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 2 Peter 1:16 (NASB)

2. Is the testimony internally consistent?
3. Is the testimony consistent with external testimony?
4. Does external evidence (artifacts, preserved items, and archaeological discoveries) support the testimony?

II. How the Bible compares to the Quran and Book of Mormon