GUIA DE ESTUDO

Can you really trust the Bible?

25 de julho de 2026

BIG IDEA

The Bible is historically reliable, carefully preserved, and trustworthy enough to be read as God's true story.

Shiloh, archaeology, and trust

The sermon opens with Shiloh, the first capital of Israel, where the tent was before Jerusalem was built. The preacher points to archaeology there as a living example of how discoveries keep matching the Bible's story. For him, the more archaeology is done, the better the proof gets.

Archaeology strengthens the case

The preacher argues that archaeological finds at places like Shiloh fit what believers would expect if the Bible is true. He also mentions Egypt as another example where new discoveries keep confirming more of what historical records say. His point is not that archaeology replaces faith, but that it repeatedly supports the Bible's historical claims.

> *And the more archaeology we do, the better the story gets, the better the proof gets.*
>
> — Archaeology and proof

Comparing ancient manuscripts

He then compares the Bible with other ancient writings such as Caesar's Gallic Wars and Plato. Caesar has about 10 surviving copies, and many ancient works have only a handful of manuscripts with the first copy coming more than a thousand years after the originals. By contrast, the New Testament has 5,686 Greek copies, and some fragments are within thirty years of the original writing. He argues that if people trust Caesar and Plato under those standards, they should not dismiss the New Testament so quickly.

> *We have 5,686 New Testament copies in the Greek language.*
>
> — New Testament manuscript count

> *We would lose contact with a lot of history if we treated those other manuscripts the*

> *way some folks would like to treat the New Testament.*
>
> — Historical comparison

Careful transmission, not a game of telephone

The preacher acknowledges the common objection that repeated copying could turn Scripture into a giant game of telephone. He says the Masoretes were extremely careful, especially with the Old Testament text, and used strict methods to protect accuracy. He points to the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 by a 14-year-old boy throwing rocks into a cave near limestone cliffs, as a major confirmation that the text had been transmitted with remarkable care. When the ancient scrolls were compared with later copies, the accuracy was said to be around 95% or even 99.5% for the scroll of Isaiah.

> *But the people who are copying it, the Masoretes, were very, very careful.*
>
> — Masoretic care

Their standards were exacting

He explains that the copyists counted words forward, backward, and even to the middle word to verify the text. If they found three errors, they threw out the whole manuscript. He also notes that if an old copy in a synagogue had a smudged letter, they would burn it rather than risk confusing the text. This, he says, shows an intense reverence for preserving God's words exactly.

> *If you don't have it right, you have to fix it.*
>
> — If it is wrong, fix it

The Bible's honesty about people

A major reason he trusts the Bible is the way it portrays real people honestly. The New Testament writers do not make themselves heroes; they include Peter's threefold denial of Jesus, and the Old Testament includes Abraham's lies and Noah's drunkenness. He says the Bible writes real stories about real people and does not paint over the failures that most authors would hide. That honesty makes the accounts feel authentic rather than manufactured to sell a religion.

> *The bible writes real stories about real people. It doesn't paint over things.*
>
> — Honest storytelling

> *They give us real pictures. It looks like an honest depiction of a person.*
>
> — Real pictures of people

Why the sermon matters

The preacher concludes that the Bible is historically reliable, uniquely preserved, and backed by archaeology and manuscript evidence. He is careful to say that this does not by itself prove divine inspiration, but it does show that the Bible we have is an uncorrupted representation of what was written. He then urges listeners to actually read it, mentioning Mark as a good starting point and John as a reflective Gospel written for readers who cannot interview eyewitnesses directly.

PARA REFLEXÃO

Discuss together

1. Why does Shiloh matter as an example of archaeology supporting the Bible?
2. Why does the comparison with Caesar, Plato, and Homer strengthen the preacher's argument about the New Testament?
3. What does the Dead Sea Scrolls story show about the transmission of the Old Testament?
4. Why is the Bible's honesty about Peter, Abraham, and Noah important for trust?
5. How does the preacher distinguish between historical reliability and divine inspiration?
6. What makes Mark or John a helpful starting point for someone reading the Bible for the first time?

REFLEXÃO

Personal reflection

Where do I rely more on feelings than on historical evidence when thinking about the Bible? Am I willing to examine manuscript evidence, archaeology, and the Bible's internal honesty before dismissing it? Which example from the sermon—Shiloh, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Masoretes, Peter, Abraham, or Noah—most challenges my assumptions? What would it look like for me to read the Gospels as trustworthy history rather than religious myth?

APLICAÇÃO PRÁTICA

What to do next

Read the Gospel of Mark to see the fast-moving account of Jesus that the preacher recommends. Then read John to hear a later, reflective witness aimed at readers who did not personally see Jesus. When doubts arise, remember the preacher's examples: Shiloh's archaeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the 5,686 Greek New Testament copies, and the Masoretes' strict counting methods. Use those concrete details when explaining to others why you trust the Bible's historical foundation.

ORAÇÃO

Response to God

Lord, thank you for preserving your Word through history, through copyists, manuscripts, archaeology, and careful witness. Help me trust the Bible not only as an ancient text, but as your true and reliable account of your work in the world. Give me humility to study it carefully, honesty to face its claims, and faith to read it, believe it, and obey it. Amen.