

Before Taking a Step of Faith ...

10 Questions to Ask When Exploring Faith With God

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Is the Bible true?

#2

The Bible is true. Upon that sacred volume I rest my hope of eternal salvation through the merits of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.² –Andrew Jackson

Yes, it is. There are three tests commonly used to evaluate whether or not a document is historically reliable. The Bible passes all three tests with flying colors, far exceeding the expectations placed on other historical works deemed accurate.

The bibliographic test examines the number of copies we have and the time span between the copies and the original manuscript. The New Testament was written in Greek, but when you include Latin and other language copies, there are approximately 25,000 portions of copies available to be evaluated. Homer's Iliad has the second most copies available in history: 643.

The internal evidence test evaluates the authorship of the writings. It asks whether or not the writers were in a position to accurately and reliably write what they did. In other words, can they be trusted? The New Testament authors were all eyewitnesses or gathered information from eyewitnesses. Equally important, their audience was also a group of eyewitnesses, so their words could have easily been challenged if they were not true.

The external evidence test asks whether the writing in question is consistent with what others have written. And, again, the Bible receives high marks as both religious and secular historians of all eras confirm the Bible's authenticity, as do numerous archaeological discoveries.

But is it true? Can the Bible be trusted? Norman Geisler sums up the matter best: "We know that the Bible came from God for one very simple reason: Jesus told us so. It is on His authority, as the God of the universe, that we are sure that the Bible is the Word of God. He confirmed the Old Testament's authority in His teaching, and He promised an authoritative New Testament through His disciples. The Son of God Himself assures us that the Bible is the Word of God."³



How is Christianity #3 Different From Any Other Religion?

Man, in his creativity, has invented innumerable religions in his attempt to reach God. God, in His love, has given us [Jesus], in which God attempts to reach man.⁴ –Got Questions Ministries

“Do versus Done.” I remember watching Pastor Bill Hybels write those words on a whiteboard, as he explained the difference between religion and the Christian faith. As the quote above reveals, religion is man’s attempt to connect with God. It’s a series of teachings to believe and activities to practice that are monitored, graded, and repeated. As long as you do, say, and believe the right things (in the appropriate way and in a timely manner), you remain eligible to connect with God or be accepted by God. In short, religion is defined by things we do. As long as we do, we’re in good standing.

Jesus changes everything. Because of his death on the cross, there’s nothing we need to do to have a relationship with God. Everything has been done ...by Jesus. All we do is receive. That’s why Christians distinguish between religion and relationship. God offers a relationship through Jesus, one that’s not based on what you do, say, or think. So if you’re looking for freedom, forgiveness, direction, and support, the Christian faith offers that. And all you have to do is receive what has already been done on your behalf.



#7

What if I Don't Trust The Church?

The local church is the hope of the world. –Bill Hybels

If you doubt the trustworthiness of the church, you're not alone. News reports abound with church leaders who deceive and abuse, creating mistrust amongst many. What you don't hear enough of, if at all, are the stories of hope and life change that God is doing in the church.

But if we're honest, here's the natural dilemma:

1. The church is filled with hypocrites, but that's because it's filled with people in process. No one has arrived. Everyone, even the most spiritually mature, is being molded and shaped into the person God created him or her to be.
2. The church is God's plan for change in the world. Jesus loves the church and died for her, so it's where we should invest our lives.

You don't have to instantly fall in love with the church. Any healthy church would rather you fall in love with Jesus. But over time, you will come to see that the local church is the hope of the world, and God wants you to use your gifts to help make his vision a reality.