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## **HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CHANGED?**

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**I**t is commonly assumed that the Bible has been corrupted over time in at least two ways: by unintentional errors, or by intentional changes. But these assumptions are historically untrue.

**So how can we know that the Bible we have today, is what was originally written?**

### **THE “TELEPHONE GAME THEORY”**

In describing these assumptions, many people cite “The Telephone Game” theory. This theory recalls the childhood game in which one child thinks of a phrase, then whispers it into the

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ear of her friend, who in turn, whispers to her friend on down the line, until the last person says the phrase out loud, and everyone laughs at how much the phrase has changed through the "transmission process". But there are several fundamental issues with this theory:

### First: It Was Not All Fun and Games.

When kids play the "telephone game", they are motivated by the hope that the phrase will change, so they can all laugh! But the people involved in recording, preserving and distributing the Bible had an entirely different motivation. They considered the scriptures so sacred that the thought of changing them would have been deplorable to them (rather than funny).

Many times throughout history people found in possession of these texts were put to death just for having them. So rework the "Telephone Game theory," but instead of a bunch of kids who are just being silly, there were devoted followers of an intensely persecuted religion, willing to die for the message they were transmitting. The gravity of the process in reality is hardly comparable to a childish game.

### Second: This is NOT the Way it Happened.

The Telephone Game theory assumes a completely linear transmission process. Imagine that one person wanted to change the text, and alter the teaching of the Bible for future generations. They could simply make the changes and pass them down the line. But this just isn't how it happened.

Instead of one person speaking to one person, on down the line, we have many people, sharing written copies of the New Testament with many other people, across multiple continents, and languages. The Bible we have today is comprised of a careful study of all the available ancient texts of the New Testament of which we have more than 26,000. This "exponential transmission process" provides a way to easily identify any variants that exist and test them against the thousands of other manuscripts.

This means that there has never been a time since the original manuscripts were first distributed that any one person, or group

of people, could change the Bible, either on accident or on purpose without everyone knowing about it.

## **THE GREAT “BIBLE-CHANGING” CONSPIRACY THEORY.**

But what about evil churches and religious leaders that wanted to control their people with the Bible? Couldn't they have changed the texts without anyone knowing? Based upon the rapid and wide-spread circulation of these texts throughout the underground world of the persecuted church, it would have been impossible for any organization to hunt down and change every text that exists.

To believe that a group of wicked leaders could accomplish this feat would mean believing in the most far-fetched and exhaustive conspiracy theory that has ever occurred in all of human history. Besides, a careful study of history shows that the way that evil church leaders have tried to control people in the past was not by changing the Bible, but by not allowing their people to read or trust the Bible.

## **THE BIBLE PASSES THE TEST.**

Think back again to the Telephone Game. How would you know if the “transmission process” in that game was corrupted? By comparing the phrase at the end with the one at the beginning. The transmission process of the Biblical texts can be tested in the same way. We can compare the Bible that we have today with the earliest available texts to determine with certainty if the text has been changed since then.

Some of our earliest NT manuscripts date back to the first generation of the Christian church, and the earliest OT manuscripts date back to more than 150 years before Christ. When we compare our Bible today with these ancient manuscripts we find that we have the same writings today, that they did 2,000 years ago! That means that our Bible passes the test and we can know without a doubt that it has not been changed!

## **WHAT’S THE POINT?**

The LDS church teaches that the Bible is only trustworthy “as far as it is translated correctly”. But a critical look at the

transmission process proves with certainty that the Bible has *not* been changed over time.

This means that God has faithfully preserved His Word, so that you and I can know the truth about what He has taught, and be able to test everything that our religious leaders teach us—against the unchangeable truths of the Bible.



**“...God has faithfully preserved His Word, so that you and I can know the truth about what He has taught, and be able to test everything that our religious leaders teach us against the unchangeable truths of the Bible.”**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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### Ritch

Ritch was born and raised in the western suburbs of Chicago. He served as a U.S. Marine in the Iraq War before returning to Illinois where he met and married his wife (Laura) and served a local church as a pastor for 7 years. In September of 2013, the Sandfords moved to South Jordan, where they planted The Mission Church and created GodLovesMormons.com. They host a weekly Bible study for ex-Mormon Christians, and are actively involved in evangelism in their community.

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