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A (Not So) Brief Defense
Christianity

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Mind Games Survival Course Manual



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A (Not So) Brief Defense of Christianity

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SECTION II: ARE THE BIBLICAL DOCUMENTS RELIABLE?

V. Introduction

How do we know that the Bible we have today is even close to the original? Haven't copiers down through the centuries inserted and deleted and embellished the documents so that the original message of the Bible has been obscured? These questions are frequently asked to discredit the sources of information from which the Christian faith has come to us.

A. Three Errors To Avoid

1. Do not assume inspiration or infallibility of the documents, with the intent of attempting to prove the inspiration or infallibility of the documents. Do not say the bible is inspired or infallible simply because its claims to be. This is circular reasoning.
2. When considering the original documents, forget about the present form of your Bible and regard them as the collection of ancient source documents that they are.
3. Do not start with modern "authorities" and then move to the documents to see if the authorities were right. Begin with the documents themselves.

B. Procedure for Testing a Document's Validity.

In his book, *Introduction in Research in English Literary History*, C. Sanders sets forth three tests of reliability employed in general historiography and literary criticism. These tests are:

1. Bibliographical (i.e., the **textual tradition**—from the original document to the copies and manuscripts of that document we possess today

2. Internal evidence (what the document claims for itself)
3. External evidence (how the document squares or aligns itself with facts, dates, persons from its own contemporary world).

It might be noteworthy to mention that Sanders is a professor of military history, not a theologian. He uses these three tests of reliability in his own study of historical military events.

We will look now at the bibliographical, or textual evidence for the Bible's reliability.

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