

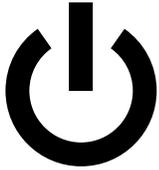


Speaker: Sean McDowell

Title: Evidence for the NT

Summary: We can count on God's Word for truth/transformation.

Key Verses: Luke 1:1–4; 2 Peter 1:15 – 16; 1 John 1:1; Matt. 22:37



Power Up: *Take a moment to prepare*

Sean opens with a humorous story of how he put high school students on the spot while sharing their faith with him at the mall. Explain how sharing our faith can be an example of loving God with our minds (or not).



Replay: *Take some time to watch*

Note the flow of Sean's talk: **1)** the Composition Test (concerning authors); **2)** the Companion Test (concerning manuscripts); **3)** the Corroboration Test (concerning archaeology); **4)** the Change Test (concerning hearts).



Comment: *Take some time to talk*

The Composition Test considers the honesty of an ancient writer's history.

Read Luke 1:1 – 4. What words indicate Luke cared to tell the truth?

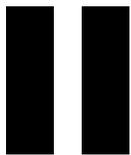
Read 1 John 1:1. How did John support the truth of his account?

What are some examples of "the criterion of embarrassment" in the gospels? How does this add credibility to the gospel accounts?

How does the ancient manuscript evidence of the NT compare to the rest of the ancient world both in the time gap and quantity of manuscripts? What does this suggest about the reliability of the text?

How are the 300,000+ variants used to discredit the NT?

"Evidence does not change us," Sean says. **So what's the good of knowing the evidence? How does real heart change happen?**



Pause: *Take a moment to pray*

Thank God for giving us His word and preserving it with such care. Thank God for the evidence that proves our faith is reasonable. Ask God to help us personalize the information so we can proclaim Jesus with boldness.



Take Action: *Make it personal*

Sean only introduces the evidence. As his father said, "a tsunami" of it is available... if we simply look. Spend some time on Sean's website or buy a copy of the revised *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* to start reading.

Bonus Features: Additional Notes and Quotes from Sean McDowell

“There’s a tsunami of evidence if Christians would just look for it and find it,” Josh McDowell.

The Composition Test:

- **Key Question:** Does the writer of the document care about the truth?
- **Eyewitness accounts:** Luke 1:1-4; 1 Peter 1:15–16; 1 John 1:1
- **Historical specificity:** Luke 3:1
- **Embarrassing details:** Peter’s denial (Matt. 26:70); Jesus called Peter “Satan” (16:23); disciples fell asleep three times in Gethsemane (25:36-45); disciples don’t understand Jesus (Mark 4:1-12); women listed as the first witnesses of the empty tomb (John 20)

“The gospels are filled with embarrassing material that cast the writers in a negative light. The writers care more about truth than the world’s impressions of them.”

- **Deaths of the OT Apostles:** Peter, James, John, and Paul certainly martyred.

“When we look at the writings of the gospels, they had the character to write down and go to the grave since they believed it was true.”

Companion Test:

- **Key Question:** Have these documents reached us accurately?
- **First Test:** What is the time gap between the original and the copies we have today?

“We want a smaller time gap... A little information can be get lost in a copy. The further removed, there’s a greater chance we’ve lost some of the accuracy.”

- Pliny the Elder (700 years from original to copy)
- Josephus (800 years from original to copy)
- Heroditus (1500 years from original to copy)
- Sophocles (1400 years from original to copy)
- NT (40 years from original to copy) – John Ryland Papyrus (P25)

“We have four biographies of Jesus within a century from when he lived.”

- **Second Test:** How many manuscripts do we have?

“There are so many [manuscripts] because these Christians, with their Jewish roots, learned to reverence the Scriptures that God has spoken to them.”

- Caesar – 10 manuscripts
- Plato (tetralogies) – 7 manuscripts
- NT – 24,000 manuscripts
- Homer – 1900
- **Reality of Variants:** 75% are spelling variants; many are pronouns; most < 2 verses. These variants do not discredit the NT. “There are always undisputed passages one can consult that teach these same truths,” wrote NT scholar, Craig Blomberg.

The Corroboration Test

- **Key Question:** Do other historical materials confirm or deny the testimony provided by this document itself?

“We consistently find archaeological information that confirms NT.”

- Engraving found at Caesarea Maritima corroborates the existence of **Pontus Pilate**, which had been disputed. He’s placed in the time of Tiberius Caesar.
- Ancient pool in Bethesda found with **5 porticoes** confirmed John 5:2.
- 1967 Dead man’s heel with 7-inch nails dispelled the myth that crucified victims were bound by ropes in the feet (see John 19:32).

“We haven’t found everything. Archaeology provides one important piece of evidence that helps confirm the New Testament record” (Evidence Demands a Verdict).

“The evidence doesn’t change us. Opening our heart changes us... Faith is not blind. Faith is trusting God because we have reason to believe it is true.”

For more resources, check out www.seanmcdowell.org



the reason.
1 Peter 3:15