

Questions about the Bible

'How do you know the gospels are reliable?'

Scholars of history apply various tests to ancient documents to establish their historical reliability. When these tests are applied to the Bible it stands head and shoulders above any comparable early writings as a document to be taken seriously as reliable history. The New Testament writings were written close in time to the events of Jesus' life, and that of the early church. The large number of copies of the original manuscripts means we can be confident that what we read today is what was originally written. Other historical writings confirm what is recorded in the Bible at many points. Many of the Biblical authors themselves stress that they are recording historical events based on eye-witness accounts. The best way to check this out would be to read one of the accounts of Jesus' life (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) with an open mind and weigh up what it says about him for yourself.

Questions about other people

'What about people who have never heard of Jesus?'

The Bible does not specifically address this question. However, the Bible does reveal to us a God who will be absolutely fair in his judgements. Justice is good if you have done the right things. But if you have not, mercy is the best option. Many people behave as if they have heard nothing about God when in fact they have. You need to respond to what you have heard, and not use this question as an excuse for your inaction. With respect to those who have never heard, we need to trust God's fairness and justice

'What about other religions?'

There are many people who sincerely believe in a different 'religion' or 'creed'. However, sincerity is not the issue - people can be sincerely wrong. Truth is the issue. It is not possible for every religion to be true or right because they contradict each other. Christianity has some distinctive features which are not compatible with other religions. Other religions say you must do certain things in order to be right with God. Christianity says Jesus has done it all, by dying to take the punishment that we deserved so that we could be right with God. Jesus himself said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."