

Searching for the Original Bible

By Randall Price (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2007), 293 pp., \$13.00

Dr Price holds a Th.M. In Old Testament and Semitic Languages from Dallas Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. In Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas and is Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies at Liberty University. He also serves as Professor of Archaeology and Biblical History at Trinity Southwest University and is founder and president of World of the Bible Ministries. He is has also authored more than 20 books and is known for his expertise on the Jewish Temple.

This book was written partly in response to a wide range of ideas which have more recently been put forth in an attempt to undermine the perceived reliability of the biblical text. From the forward, written by Dr. Charles Ryrie:

New School, Higher criticism. Textual criticism. The Jesus Seminar. The Judas Gospel. Gnosticism. Postmodernism. The Apocrypha. Inerrancy. What do they mean? Should we be concerned about them? How do they affect our attitude toward and our understanding of the Bible? In this important book, Dr. Price deals with these matters for a variety of readers. . . . How anyone could read this book without having more confidence in the accuracy and dependability of the biblical text we have today would be a mystery to me.

In a nutshell, the book answers the question set forth as the title of the first chapter: “Why Believe the Bible?”

The presentation within the book is divided into three parts:

1. Searching for Evidence of the Original Bible
2. Searching for the Reliability of the Original Bible
3. Searching for the Truth about the Original Bible

Part 1 discusses the reasons why the original bible matters, including an examination of what constituted the original bible, what happened to it (why don't we have the original autographs), and what are the witnesses to the original text of both Old and New Testaments.

Part 2 identifies the witnesses to both Old and New Testament texts and their preservation in order to determine whether what we have today is a trustworthy representation of the original bible. Dr. Price discusses both primary sources (manuscripts such as the Dead Sea Scrolls) and secondary sources (versions, recension, ancient commentaries, patristic citations, and related texts). Theories that the ancient texts were modified or written at later dates are discussed and found wanting.

In Part 3, Dr. Price answers questions such as whether there are books missing from our Bible, how the decision was made to include various books in the bible (the canon), how to understand differences in the list of books included in some bibles, and whether the truth about Jesus in the original gospels has been lost—only to be found in newly

popularized “lost gospels” as claimed by some? Dr. Price examines some of the teachings of the “lost gospels” in light of the canonical gospels allowing the reader to see that incompatibility of the lost gospels with the canonical teachings and understand why the lost gospels were not considered authoritative by the early church. The author includes an easy-to-understand overview of the topic of textual criticism: the science of comparing textual witnesses to the original text of the bible and the rules which are used in helping to understand minor variations and what the variations infer about the original.

This book will prove very helpful to people who are unfamiliar with the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts underlying the bible, especially in evaluating the constant barrage of outlandish claims put forth by the secular media claiming that the bible has been proven unreliable or as missing important information from gnostic “lost gospels.”

One of the strongest aspects of the book is its introductory and clear treatment concerning textual evidence for the biblical text and its preservation. Much of this information is available through other means to those who have had the privilege of studying the original languages of Scripture, but has not been readily available in an easy-to-read presentation aimed at the average person wondering about the origin of the bible.

If you wonder about the accuracy and preservation of the bible or simply want a better understanding of the attacks being made against the biblical text and how they stack up against the history of its origin and transmission, this book will prove helpful.

Reviewed by [Tony Garland](http://www.SpiritAndTruth.org) of www.SpiritAndTruth.org.