



## Unhitched Andy Stanley

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Acts 15:1-2, 4-7, 10-11, 19-20, 23-31

### Introduction

1. Recently, I read yet another blog by another millennial who was leaving Christianity over something that had nothing to do with Christianity. She had read a book about the Bible “proving” that it couldn’t be true. “Since Genesis says this . . .” and “The ancient Israelites did that . . .” I thought, *We’ve done a terrible job communicating the **foundation** of our **faith**. The church has done a terrible job explaining the church and the Christian faith.*
2. Thanks to the Christian version of the temple model, sacred texts became the foundation of the faith. The Old and New Testaments were given equal weight theologically. But they don’t have equal weight in the practical sense.
  - Deciding Christianity isn’t true based on something you don’t like or agree with in the Bible is the equivalent of me deciding you don’t exist based on an error on your birth certificate.
  - Your birth certificate **documents** you.
  - Your birth certificate doesn’t **determine** you.
  - The New Testament **documents** the resurrection of Christ and the birth of the church.
3. We’ve created a house of cards. If the creation account of Genesis isn’t true, if there’s not archeological evidence of the Exodus, and if the census announced in Luke doesn’t line up with other historical documents—which of course could not possibly be wrong—then the whole Christian faith comes tumbling down.
4. But it doesn’t.
5. If Christianity were that fragile, how did it survive the first three centuries? People abandoned Christianity in the first three centuries because you could be **killed** for believing Jesus was greater than the emperor. People wouldn’t hire you because you offended the gods, and the gods might deal harshly with anyone that hired you.

“If the Tiber rises too high, or the Nile too low, the remedy is always feeding Christians to the lions.” —Tertullian (160-225)
6. No one abandoned Christianity because of the inaccuracy of a Christian text. They didn’t have any texts. The Old Testament didn’t trip ‘em up. They never read it. Most couldn’t read.
7. Karen Armstrong echoes what every historian gives a nod to . . .
  - Picture of her book *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*
  - “Yet against all odds, by the third century Christianity had become a force to be reckoned with. We **still** do not really understand **how** this came about.” —Karen Armstrong
  - All historians look for natural causes.