

**Ten Reasons To
Trust The Bible**
(The Ten Wonders Of The Bible)

By

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10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Ten Reasons To Trust The Bible
(formerly titled The Ten Wonders Of The Bible)

By Don Stewart

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10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible: The Ten Wonders Of The Bible

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Introduction

Christianity is a faith that is based upon a book. Indeed, for Christians, in all ages, there has been one supreme and comprehensive source of knowledge about God and humanity; the collection of writings known as “the Bible.”

We also find that the Bible itself claims to be the last word on all matters. Whenever it speaks on a subject, it speaks with the ultimate authority of the Living God.

These are the claims of Scripture. But are they true? How do Christians know they are not deceived when they believe them? How can non-Christians know the Bible can be trusted?

This book provides evidence as to why we should accept these claims – “Ten Reasons to Trust the Bible,” or “The Ten Wonders of the Bible.” It looks at ten specific things that set the Bible apart from any other book that has ever been written.

Once this evidence is considered, it will be clear that the Bible is a trustworthy book. Indeed, the facts will demonstrate that it is exactly what it claims to be—the divine revelation of the living God to the human race.

With this in mind let’s look at the “Ten Reasons to Trust the Bible.”

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 1

The Intelligent Faith The Bible Presents

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37)

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Reason 1

The Intelligent Faith The Bible Presents

Our first reason to trust the Bible recognizes the astonishing nature of this one-of-a-kind book. Indeed, the fact that we can even have this discussion in the twenty-first century is a true wonder!

Although the various books of the Bible were composed between two thousand and four thousand years ago, they still have the power to challenge intelligent men and women in our modern world. In fact, the Bible can stand the test of the most rigorous academic assault and will prove to be intellectually satisfying to anyone “honestly” investigating the evidence. A number of observations need to be made about this amazing feature of Scripture.

1. Biblical Faith Is Intelligent Faith

To begin with, we note that the Bible constantly encourages people to put their “faith” in God. Unfortunately, many people equate faith with a blind leap in the dark or wishful thinking. But the faith that the Bible requires is “intelligent” or “reasonable” faith. It is neither blind nor irrational.

Biblical faith asks us to put our trust in an object (God) who is worthy of our faith. No one is asked to sacrifice their intellect when they put their faith in the God of the Bible.

Indeed, Christian faith is based upon the solid foundation of what the living God has done in history. He has revealed Himself to humanity and this disclosure of Himself is recorded in the Scriptures. The Bible tells us what God requires of us and that we are to respond to Him by faith. In doing so, we are never expected to stop thinking or to “assassinate our brains.”

In fact, Jesus emphasized that coming to God involves the mind as well as the heart and soul. When asked about the greatest commandment in the law He responded as follows.

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Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37).

Notice that Jesus said we are to love the Lord with all of our, “mind.” The Bible expects its readers to use their minds to evaluate the truth, to weigh the evidence of its message.

2. In Scripture, Intelligence Is Equated With Knowing God

When Jesus had a conversation with one of the teachers of the Jewish law, He equated intelligence, or wisdom, with knowing God. The Bible says.

And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions (Mark 12:34).

An intelligent, or wise, response from the teacher of the law caused Jesus to say that the man was close to the kingdom of God. This is another indication that the Bible encourages people to use their minds when examining the evidence.

3. Scripture Says That We Are To Test Everything

The Apostle Paul encouraged people to “test things” to see if they were true. Indeed, people were not merely to blindly believe. He wrote the following to the Thessalonians

But test them all; hold on to what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

These people were told to test “everything;” every claim that was made about God. Blind faith was not an option.

The Apostle John wrote something similar. He put it this way.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

Again we find the emphasis on “testing things.” Christians are not told to believe everything that they read or hear.

How do we do this? We are to test things by using our mind. It is clear that God does not want us to exercise “blind faith” when it comes to determining what is true and what is false.

4. The Lord Issues A Challenge To Test Him

In the Old Testament, we find the Lord issuing a challenge to those who believed in gods other than Him. The Bible says.

“Present your case,” says the LORD. “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King. “Tell us, you idols, what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear” (Isaiah 41:21-23).

Notice that the living God of the Bible challenges those who believe in these other gods to bring forth evidence to prove they exist. He speaks of “presenting their case” and “bringing forth arguments and evidence.” In other words, God challenges them to lay out the facts that would support their claims.

Obviously, they cannot do so since these so-called gods do not really exist. On the other hand, there is the confidence that the God of Scripture has provided sufficient evidence to meet the needs of those honestly desiring the truth. In contrast to these non-existent gods, the God of the Bible has given us overwhelming evidence to believe in Him.

5. People Were Encouraged To Examine The Evidence About Jesus

We also find that the New Testament writers challenged people to investigate the claims of the Christian faith. They could encourage this type of examination because they knew the events they recorded were

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true. In other words, the writers of Scripture were confident that they were not spreading myths or legends.

In fact, Simon Peter showed that the New Testament writers were well aware of the difference between mythology and fact. He wrote.

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain (2 Peter 1:16-18).

In this passage, we find that Peter emphasizes two important things.

First, he knows what he is preaching and writing about Jesus is true. Why? It is because he was there! Peter was an eyewitness to these events. So he knew what he was writing was accurate.

Second, Peter tells us that he realizes that there is a difference between “clever stories” or “myths” and what he is writing about, the truth. This follower of Jesus makes it clear that his account of the life and ministry of Christ is based upon fact, not mythology. Again, he could make that claim because he saw the events in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ with his own eyes. Peter was there!

6. Jesus Gave Many Infallible Proofs To Prove His Identity

In the Book of Acts, there is another reference of Jesus providing sufficient evidence that He was the One whom He claimed to be. Luke wrote about His resurrection appearances.

After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).

Notice that Luke stresses the fact that the appearances of the resurrected Jesus were “convincing proofs” that Christ was indeed alive after His

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death on the cross. In fact, for forty days Jesus showed His disciples that He had truly risen from the dead. They received all the proof that was necessary to establish His resurrection.

To sum up, the New Testament writers were either eyewitnesses to the events they wrote about or they recorded eyewitness testimony. They knew what they wrote was true, and welcomed an honest investigation of the facts. Blind faith was never encouraged. This is crucial to understand.

Thus, God does not expect people to act in faith toward Him unless that faith is an intelligent or reasonable faith. It must be built upon the solid foundation of what He has done in history, and what He has recorded in His Word.

7. The Evidence For The Christian Faith Is Sufficient For Those Honestly Examining The Evidence

In sum, we will discover that the evidence is more than sufficient for those who wish to know the truth. In fact, there have been many cases of people who have actually attempted to disprove the message of the Bible and have ended up becoming believers because of the impressive evidence.

The Story Of The Skeptic Frank Morrison

For example, at the turn of the twentieth century there was a man who wrote under the name of Frank Morrison. Morrison, who had been brought up in a non-Christian environment, had come to the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was nothing but a myth. Morrison planned to write an account of the last days of Jesus which would refute the biblical account of the resurrection. He went to the Holy Land to do his research to write “the” book that would give the true answer as to what really happened to Jesus after His death.

But after a thorough study of the facts, he changed his mind. His book, instead of refuting the resurrection, advocated it. The first chapter of his book is significantly titled, ‘The book that refused to be written.’ In his book, he documented that his mind was changed because of the sheer

weight of the evidence. In other words, a close examination of the facts made him a believer in Jesus Christ.

The Testimony Of Skeptics Gilbert West And Lord Lyttleton

Author Michael Green, in his book *Man Alive*, provides further examples of people who set out to refute the Christian faith only to become believers. He wrote.

Two able young men, Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton, went up to Oxford . . . determined to attack the very basis of the Christian faith. So Lyttleton settled down to prove that Saul of Tarsus was never converted to Christianity, and West to demonstrate that Jesus never rose from the tomb.

Some time later, they met to discuss their findings. Both were a little sheepish. For they had come independently to similar and disturbing conclusions. Lyttleton found, on examination, that Saul of Tarsus did become a radically new man through his conversion to Christianity; and West found that the evidence pointed unmistakably to the fact that Jesus did rise from the dead. You may still find his book in a large library. It is entitled *Observations on the History and Evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, and was published in 1747. On the fly-leaf he has had printed his telling quotation from Ecclesiasticus 11:7, which might be adopted with profit by any modern agnostic: 'Blame not before thou hast examined the truth' (Michael Green, *Man Alive*, Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1968, pp. 55,56).

This suggestion of West, written so long ago, still holds true today. People should not reject the claims of Christianity until *they* have personally examined the evidence.

In his own book, Lyttleton made the following comment about the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to the Apostle Paul.

I thought the conversion and the Apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity as a Divine Revelation (George Lord Lyttleton, *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, London, 1814).

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Therefore, we have the testimony of two men who became convinced that the Christian faith was true after doing a detailed examination of the facts. Though they started out as unbelievers the sheer weight of the evidence made them change their minds.

William F. Albright

The late Dr. Clifford Wilson was a personal friend of the author. He related the story of a conversation he had with the world's greatest archaeologist at the time; William F. Albright. Dr. Albright came to faith in Christ at the end of his life. In his conversation with Dr. Wilson he made it clear it was because of the evidence that he had discovered through his long and brilliant career. He went from skeptic to believer.

Examples of these types of testimonies can be multiplied. Indeed, to this day, former skeptics continue to become believers in Jesus Christ because of the overwhelming evidence.

Confidently, we may conclude that twenty-first century men and women can take the Bible, intelligently examine it, and find it completely satisfying. It truly is a wonder that this ancient book does meet the intellectual needs for modern humanity.

What is the reason for this? It is because the Scripture is what it claims to be – the very Word of the living God.

Summary To Reason 1: The Intelligent Faith The Bible Presents

One of the many factors which makes the Bible different from all other ancient books is its relevance to modern humanity. Indeed, the Scriptures are as relevant today as they ever were.

How is this so? For one thing, the God which is revealed in the Bible encourages people to think – to weigh and evaluate the evidence. The biblical writers did not expect their readers to exercise blind faith. Instead they expected them to think, to use their minds.

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Consequently, the Christian faith is not something which people accept by denying the facts but rather by investigating them. Christianity welcomes an open and honest investigation of the truth. When the facts are checked out it will be found that the Christian faith matches up to known reality. In other words, the facts will prove the claims of Scripture to be true.

For one thing, we are told to love the Lord with, “all of our mind.” This means that we are to think. We are to test the various claims which the biblical writers make to see if they are true. Thus, Christianity is not afraid of the truth.

This is consistent with what we find in the Old Testament. The prophet Isaiah records God offering a challenge to the gods of the ancient world. He asked them to “set forth their case.” In other words, He wanted them to provide evidence that their claims were true. Obviously they could not because these gods did not exist. The God of the Bible, on the other hand, offers evidence which is more than sufficient to cause people to believe.

Simon Peter made the point that the disciples of Jesus had not followed after fables or myths when they made known to people the message of Christ but were actually eyewitnesses of the events they recorded. They knew what they wrote was true because they were there! This is why they could preach and write with such confidence and assurance.

We also find that there are numerous historical examples of people who started out as skeptics toward the Christian faith but eventually became believers in Jesus Christ because of the abundance of evidence. This is still happening today. Indeed, when people honestly check out the facts that support the truth of the Christian faith they are faced with the overwhelming evidence for the case for Christianity.

Therefore, the fact that an ancient book like the Bible is intellectually satisfying for modern humanity is truly a wonder.

With this in mind, let’s examine some of the specific evidence that Scripture provides for us.

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Reason 2

The Bible's Unique Design

Jesus said, “The Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35)

Reason 2

The Bible's Unique Design

The Bible has a “unique” design. Indeed, it is one of a kind - like no other book that has ever been written. There is nothing like it, and it has no equal. This can be seen in a number of ways.

1. It Was Fifteen Hundred Years In The Making

From the composition of the first biblical book until the last, a period of about fifteen hundred years elapsed. The Old Testament was written between 1400 and 400 B.C. The books of the New Testament were written from approximately A.D. 40 to A.D. 90.

Thus, we have about fifteen hundred years from the writing of the first book to the composition of the last book.

2. The Bible Was Written By Many Authors From Various Occupations

Thousands of years ago, God chose certain men to receive His divine Words, and then record them for humanity. In total, over forty different human authors wrote the books of the Bible. These writers came from a variety of backgrounds and occupations.

These people included shepherds, Hosea and Amos, fishermen Peter and John, a former tax collector, Matthew, a doctor, Luke, and a military general, Joshua. At least four of the writers lived in the royal household: the kings, David and Solomon, a prime minister, Daniel, and a cupbearer, Nehemiah.

Only a few of them, such as Paul, Luke, Daniel and Moses, received the finest education of their time.

In sum, each of these authors had unique experiences and each one of them was different in their character or makeup.

3. Scripture Was Written In Different Literary Forms With Different Writing Styles

The Bible consists of a number of different literary forms. Scripture is a collection of letters, sermons, laws, poetic descriptions, narratives of historical events, prayers, praise, practical sayings, and the warnings of the prophets.

The sixty-six books also contain a wide array of writing styles that express the entire range of human emotions. Therefore, what we find in the Bible is a wide range of literary forms as well as different literary ability on the part of the authors.

4. The Biblical Books Were Written Upon Three Continents

The books of the Bible were composed upon three different continents - Africa, Asia, and Europe. For example, the writings of Ezekiel were composed in Babylon (Asia); Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible in the Sinai desert (Africa); and the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the believers in Philippi while in Rome (Europe).

5. Scripture Was Composed In Different Physical Circumstances

There were a variety of circumstances in which the Biblical books were composed. Moses, for example, wrote while leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. Jeremiah penned his book while in a dungeon in Israel. Ezekiel composed his work while a captive in Babylon. The Apostle Paul wrote several of his letters while in a Roman prison. John the evangelist wrote the Book of Revelation while banished to the island of Patmos. Obviously, there was not one particular place or circumstance in which all of the biblical books were composed.

Though many other religions had a certain place where the “divine” word was revealed, this is not the case with the Bible. The God of the Bible was able to reveal Himself in many different places and over an extended period of time.

6. Three Different Ancient Languages Were Employed In The Writing Of Scripture

The Bible was written in three different ancient languages. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew with some parts composed in Aramaic - a language similar to Hebrew. The New Testament was originally written in Greek.

7. There Are Many Different Subjects Covered In The Bible

The Bible also covers a variety of diverse subjects. Some of these subjects were historical, what has happened in history, while some of the subjects were prophetic, what will happen in the future. These subjects include such things as: the existence and nature of God, the creation of the universe, how human beings originated, the meaning of human existence, the purpose of our existence, and the final destiny of humankind, and the planet earth.

8. They Wrote About The Unknown Future

Many of the biblical writers wrote about events that were to happen in the future. These events were unknown to humans, but known to God. While not every biblical author addressed events in the future, many of them did. Therefore, the Bible is a book that contains a number of different predictions of future events from a variety of different writers.

9. The Biblical Writers Received Their Message In Different Ways

There is also the fact that the writers of Scripture received their messages in different ways. God directly told some writers what to say. Others were given their message in visions and dreams. Still others were given divine inspiration when they wrote.

And finally, there were others whom God directed to record historical events as well as God's interpretation of the events. The point is this: the writers of Scripture received God's Word in a number of different ways.

The writer to the Hebrews noted this when he wrote.

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In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe (Hebrews 1:1,2).

God spoke at different times, in different ways, and to different people.

10. Most Authors Did Not Know One Another

Because the Bible was written over a period of fifteen hundred years, most of the writers did not personally know the other writers of Scripture. Neither were they familiar with their writings. For example, the Old Testament authors would have been unfamiliar with the New Testament writers and writings. Indeed, it was not composed until 400 years after the Old Testament was completed.

Therefore, since most of the writers were separated from one another by both time and space, and were not personally acquainted with each another, there is no chance that they could have conspired together.

Conclusion: We Would Expect Chaos To Result From These Diverse Circumstances

Hence, the Bible was written over a period of fifteen hundred years, by forty different human authors from various backgrounds who wrote in different languages, upon different continents, in different circumstances, upon different subjects, including the unknown future, and in different literary forms. These authors, for the most part, did not know each other. With all of these contrasts, one would expect something chaotic and disjointed when their writings were assembled into one book.

The Amazing Thing: There Is One Unfolding Story In Scripture

Yet the Bible is a unity; one unfolding account from beginning to end in complete harmony and continuity. The Old Testament is incomplete without the New Testament, and yet the New Testament does not make sense without the Old Testament. Together the two testaments give a harmonious account of the dealings of God with humanity without any contradiction. Jesus made this clear when He said the following.

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Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).

There is one system of teaching, and one plan of salvation.

Scripture Is Christ-Centered

There is more. The main theme of the Bible is the Person of Jesus Christ. Both the Old and New Testaments testify to Jesus Christ as the Lord of Glory.

Jesus Himself told the religious rulers of His day that the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of Him. The Gospel according to John records Jesus saying the following.

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me . . . If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me (John 5:39,46).

According to Jesus, Old Testament history is *His story*. He is the theme of the Old Testament.

On the day Jesus rose from the dead, He walked alongside two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. During their conversation the Bible records Jesus explaining how the Old Testament spoke of Him. We read.

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:27).

The resurrected Christ explained that the Old Testament predicted His coming.

Later on that day, Jesus said the following to His disciples.

This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44).

Thus, according to Jesus, the Hebrew Scripture is all about Him.

As we shall see, the evidence demonstrates Jesus' claim to be true.

The Old Testament—Preparation For The Christ: The Promise Of His Coming

After the creation and fall of humanity, God promised to send a Savior. He established an elaborate system of sacrifices that looked forward to the coming of the Savior or Deliverer.

The Old Testament prepares for the coming of the promised Deliverer – also known as the Messiah. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this. He wrote.

A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (Isaiah 40:3).

The theme that runs throughout the entire Old Testament is the establishment of the kingdom of God through the reign of the Messiah. The Old Testament looks forward to His coming.

The Gospels—The Manifestation Of The Christ: The Proof Of His Coming

The gospels record the manifestation of the predicted Messiah. The New Testament testifies of the arrival of the One promised in the Old Testament. We read John saying about Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1,14).

The Messiah came as promised.

John the Baptist testified that Jesus was the One who would take away the sins of the world. The Bible says.

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The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy regarding the promised Savior.

Acts—The Propagation Of Jesus’ Message: His Message Goes Out To The Entire World

The Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, came into the world as had been predicted in the Old Testament. However, Christ was not accepted by His people. The Bible tells us that Jesus died on a cross for the sins of the world and three days later rose from the dead. Forty days after His resurrection He ascended into heaven. Before returning to heaven, Jesus told His disciples the following.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

They were instructed to tell others the gospel, or good news, of His death and resurrection. The propagation of the message of the risen Christ is recorded in the Book of Acts.

Paul—The Explanation Of Jesus’ Coming: The Two Comings Of Christ Explained

Why did the Christ, or Messiah, have to die when He came into the world? Was this something that the Old Testament had predicted? Yes it was. In his letters, the Apostle Paul, gives the explanation of the two comings of Christ. He wrote to the Colossians.

I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-- the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:25-27).

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The “mystery” or “sacred secret,” has now been revealed. The Old Testament Scripture actually spoke of two different comings of Christ into the world. The Christ, or Messiah, would come the first time to die. Jesus fulfilled this prediction at His first coming. Scripture records how He died for the sins of the world but then rose from the dead three days later. Later He ascended into heaven.

However, our world will see Jesus again. Indeed, the Bible says that He will come a second time to the earth. The same Jesus who was crucified and rose from the dead will return to our earth to rule over it. This is what the Old Testament also predicted. The Apostle Paul was the man chosen by God to explain these two comings of Christ.

Paul emphasized that Christ now resides in those who believe in Jesus by means of the Holy Spirit. This promise is given to everyone who believes in Him. This includes Gentiles, non-Jews, as well as Jews.

Revelation—The Consummation Of All Things In Christ: Jesus Christ Will Return

Finally, we come to the Book of Revelation, which records Christ coming back to rule and reign upon the earth. The Bible says.

“Look, he is coming with the clouds,” and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him”; and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.” So shall it be! Amen (Revelation 1:7).

All things that have been predicted in the Old and New Testament will be consummated in the return of Jesus Christ.

To sum up, the Old Testament records the preparation for the coming of Christ while the Gospels record His coming or manifestation. The Book of Acts chronicles the propagation of the gospel (the good news) concerning Jesus Christ and the letters of Paul explain the two comings of Christ as well as the implications of the gospel for our lives.

The Book of Revelation describes the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of His eternal kingdom. Again, it is all about Him!

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The Bible glorifies Jesus Christ and centers on Him. It provides one harmonious message from beginning to end, and this message is all about the Lord Jesus.

A Challenge To Duplicate The Unity Of The Bible In Modern Times

Those who do not consider the harmony of the Bible as something amazing should accept the following challenge.

Locate twenty people, all living at the same time, who all speak the same language, who have the same amount of education, and come from the same social background. Put them in separate rooms and ask them to write their opinion on only two controversial subjects, such as the nature and existence of God, and the purpose of life here on earth.

Would you expect their writings to agree? Would you find one unfolding account from beginning to end with no contradictions or distortions? Not at all! You would expect to get about twenty different opinions.

Then how can we explain the unity of the Bible? The Bible consists of forty authors, not twenty, writing over a fifteen-hundred-year time span, not writing at the same time, writing from different educational backgrounds, in different languages, from different cultures and writing on many different subjects (including the unknown future).

Yet, they write with complete unity and harmony. The way that the Scriptures have been composed argues against their unity, yet we find that there is an intelligent design throughout the pages of Scripture.

Conclusion: There Is One Author Who Is Behind All The Books: God Himself

The explanation that the Bible gives for its remarkable unity is that God has divinely inspired the process. The one author of the books of the Bible is God the Holy Spirit. The Bible says the following.

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All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

The claim is that all Scripture is “God-breathed.” This means the authority of God is ultimately behind the composition of each book. Peter wrote about how all of Scripture is divinely inspired. He said.

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Ultimately, the Scriptures are not of mere human origin.

Hence, the harmony of the Bible can be understood by realizing that the ultimate author behind the books is God. This fact puts the Bible in a class by itself.

It is evidence like this that led the great archaeologist, W. F. Albright, to make the following conclusions with respect to the Bible.

The Bible towers in content above all earlier religious literature; and it towers just as impressively over all subsequent literature in the direct simplicity of its message and . . . its appeal to men of all lands and times (W.F. Albright, *The Christian Century*, November, 1958).

Therefore, the unique design of the Bible is truly a wondrous thing. It is different from all other books that have ever been written. Throughout its pages, it clearly shows that an Intelligent Designer is behind each and every Book.

Summary To Reason 2: The Bible’s Unique Design

The Bible has a unique makeup. It is different from any other book that has ever been composed. Over forty different authors wrote the various books over a period of fifteen hundred years. These authors came from

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all walks of life with different experiences, different levels of education, and different personal makeup. They include fishermen, shepherds, a doctor, and a former tax collector. These differences are reflected in their writing styles.

The biblical authors lived on three different continents – Africa, Asia, and Europe. They also wrote under a number of different circumstances – including persecution and prison. The authors of Scripture wrote in three different languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The Bible was written in a number of different literary forms such as narrative, poetry, and law.

The writers of the various books cover many different topics such as the existence of God, the creation and purpose of humankind, the explanation for the origin of evil, and the coming of the Savior. They also wrote about the unknown future.

In addition, the writers received their messages in a number of different ways including dreams, visions, and direct revelation. Also, the writers of Scripture, for the most part, did not even know one another.

Yet when their writings are put together there is one harmonious account from beginning to end with Jesus Christ as the main character. What is the best explanation for this feature? It is the one that the Bible gives about itself – it is the Word of the living God.

In fact, Jesus Himself testified to the unity of the Scripture. He said that the Old Testament was all about Him. While it looked forward to His coming, the gospels record the fulfillment of these promises. The Book of Acts records the message of Jesus going out to the world. The New Testament letters provide the explanation of the two comings of Christ while the Book of Revelation records the consummation of all things in Christ.

Consequently, when we examine the Scripture, we find clear evidence of intelligent design from beginning to end. This unique design of the Bible is a true wonder.

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 3

The Bible's Survival

Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35)

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 3

The Bible's Survival

We now move on to another unique feature of the Bible. The fact that the complete written text of Scripture has survived throughout history is a powerful testimony to the preserving power of God. The Bible has survived through time, criticism, as well as through unrelenting persecution. The evidence is as follows.

The Bible Has Survived Through Time

The first book of the Bible was written some three thousand five hundred years ago, while the last one was completed nearly two thousand years ago. The originals (autographs) of each biblical book were written on perishable surfaces and have long since disappeared. We are now dependent upon copies, and copies of copies to reconstruct the text. The texts are reconstructed through the science of textual criticism. When textual criticism is applied to the books of the Bible we are assured that the text we have today is an accurate representation of the original. The text of the Bible not only has survived throughout the centuries, it has survived virtually unchanged.

The Old Testament Reads The Same As When Originally Written

With respect to the Old Testament, it reads the same as when originally written. From the time of their composition, the Jews considered the books of the Old Testament holy. These written works were not ordinary literature or history; they were God's Divine Word communicated to His people. Because these books were held in such high regard, the people took great care to preserve the texts precisely as they were originally written.

1. The Priests Preserved The Law Of God

The Bible says the priests in Israel were responsible for the preservation of the Law. They were to store the sacred writings beside the Ark of the Covenant; the container, or chest, which held the Ten Commandments. The Old Testament records the command for the placement of the Law.

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Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you (Deuteronomy 31:26).

The Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. When the temple eventually was built in Jerusalem, the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies in the temple. The Scriptures were always with the people.

The kings of Israel were required to have the Law as a guide in their administration. In fact, they were to make a copy of the Law of Moses for themselves. We read the following in the Book of Deuteronomy.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees (Deuteronomy 17:18,19).

Since these writings were considered holy, they were to be preserved and copied with the greatest of care. The historical evidence reveals that this preservation was consistent and precise.

2. There Is An Unbroken Tradition About How The Old Testament Scripture Reached Us

Fortunately, we have an unbroken historical tradition concerning the people responsible for the preservation of the Old Testament text. The Mishnah (compiled in A.D. 200) is a written record of the Jewish oral traditions from the time of Moses until the first century A.D. The Mishnah informs us as follows as to how the text was transmitted from the earliest times.

Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue. They said three things: be deliberate in judgment, gather up many disciples, and make a fence around the Law (H. Danby. trans. *The Mishnah*. London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 446).

The “men of the Great Synagogue” refers to the people who lived at the time of Ezra (about 400 B.C.). From this passage, we find that we have a continuous history of the transmission of the text from the time it was composed until the end of the Old Testament period.

3. The Sopherim Counted Everything

We also know that from the completion of the Old Testament (400 B.C.), until A.D. 500, the transmission and care of the Old Testament text was in the hands of a group of scribes called the *Sopherim* (“counters”). The scribes were given this name because of the manner in which they checked the accuracy of the texts they were copying. These “counters” counted the number of letters in each completed copy and the number of words in each section of Scripture and compared them to the texts from which they copied. As transmitters of God’s sacred Word, the Sopherim went to great lengths to insure the purity of the text.

4. The Masoretes Continued The Faithful Copying Of The Text

Eventually a group of specialists arose to become the preservers of the body of Jewish tradition. This Jewish tradition included the sacred writings, laws, history, and tradition of the people. These specialists were known as the Masoretes. Their name was derived from the Hebrew word *Massorah*, meaning, “tradition.” The Masoretes worked in both Palestine and Babylon from approximately A.D. 500 to A.D. 900. The Masoretes contributed to the textual preservation of the Old Testament in several significant ways.

First, the Masoretes collected all the textual-critical remarks of the rabbis, all the additional marks added to the margins of the sacred texts (which include memory devices, and pronunciation aids), and entered these in the side margins of the copies they made. They also did extensive tabulations concerning the contents of the text which were added to the upper and lower margins of the page.

These specialists considered the text so holy that they never altered it even when the text they were copying contained an obvious error. In such an instance, the procedure was to enter the error into the text they

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were producing and then enter remarks in the margin concerning how it could be corrected.

The contributions of the Masoretes to the preservation of the text of the Old Testament cannot be overstated. They not only enhanced our understanding of the text by their marginal contributions, they also carefully preserved all of the alternative or variant readings of the texts. This service has proved invaluable to today's textual critics in their work to determine the Old Testament's original text.

Biblical and literary scholar Sir Frederic Kenyon commented on the work of the Masoretes. He said.

Besides recording varieties of reading, tradition, or conjecture, the Massoretes undertook a number of calculations, which do not enter into the ordinary sphere of textual criticism. They numbered the verses, words, and letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and middle letter of each. They enumerated verses, which contained all the letters of the alphabet, or a certain number of them; and so on. These trivialities, as we may rightly consider them, had yet the effect of securing minute attention to the precise transmission of the text; and they are but an excessive manifestation of a respect for the sacred Scriptures which in itself deserves nothing but praise. The Massoretes were indeed anxious that not one jot nor tittle, not one smallest letter nor tiny part of a letter of the Law should pass away or be lost (Sir Frederic G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1941, p. 38).

Their work gives us further confidence that the Old Testament has been accurately transmitted.

5. The Writings Have Always Been Considered To Be Sacred

First-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote about the Jewish reverence for the Holy Scriptures. He explained it in this manner.

We have given practical proof of our reverence of our own Scriptures. For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is an

instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as the decrees of God, to abide by them, and, if need be, cheerfully die for them. Time and time again ere now the sight has been witnessed of prisoners enduring tortures and death in every form in the theatres, rather than utter a single word against the laws and the allied documents (Flavius Josephus, "Flavius Josephus Against Apion," in *Josephus' Complete Works*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1960, pp. 179, 180).

These writings were always considered sacred by the Jews and thus were copied with the utmost care.

6. The Discovery Of The Dead Sea Scrolls Reveals Older Hebrew Manuscripts

Though the work of the Masoretes assured us of the careful transmission of the text, until recently, the oldest surviving complete manuscript of the Old Testament dated from around A.D. 1000. This is a full one thousand four hundred years after the completion of the Old Testament. Because of this long time span, there were those who speculated that significant changes could have crept into the text.

This speculation ended in 1947. In that year a dramatic event occurred that revolutionized Old Testament textual criticism. As the story goes, a young Bedouin goat herder in Israel was searching for a lost goat in the caves in the cliffs that are above Wadi Qumran (these caves are located about a mile southwest of the northwest corner of the Dead Sea). In one of the caves he found several clay jars. These jars stood over two feet high and were approximately ten inches wide. In each of those jars he found leather scrolls wrapped in linen cloth. Shortly after his discovery, some of the scrolls fell into the hands of an antique dealer in Bethlehem while others were obtained by the archbishop of the Syrian Orthodox monastery in Jerusalem.

One of the first persons to examine the scrolls was the scholar E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Sukenik immediately recognized their antiquity and value and contacted other scholars for verification. Dr. W. F. Albright, one of the world's leading archaeologists,

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confirmed the amazing find. Albright labeled the find “the most important Old Testament manuscript discovery ever made.”

The recovery of the Qumran scrolls was halted by the Arab-Israeli war. It was not possible to go back to investigate further until the peace of 1948. The investigation then revealed hundreds of scrolls in a dozen different caves. They were most-likely placed there by a Jewish sect called the Essenes.

The Essenes had established a fortress nearby which they occupied from about 100 B.C. to around A.D. 68, when they fled the advancing Roman armies. Before they abandoned their community, they carefully hid their library in the nearby caves of Wadi Qumran, where they lay undisturbed for almost 1,900 years.

Analysis showed that most of the scrolls were written between 100 B.C. and A.D. 68. They contain portions of every book of the Old Testament (except Esther) as well as numerous documents relating to the doctrines and practices of the Essene community.

One of the most significant finds was a complete copy of the book of Isaiah. The Isaiah scroll, found in Cave 1, dates one hundred years before Christ. In addition, an important fragment of Samuel, dating 400 years before the birth of Christ, was found in Cave four. These, as well as other significant finds, revolutionized Old Testament textual criticism. The scrolls from Qumran were given the name “the Dead Sea Scrolls.”

7. The Dead Sea Scrolls Show The Accuracy Of The Hebrew Text

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide for us irrefutable evidence that the present Old Testament text has been faithfully copied from the originals. This is in spite of transmission through long centuries.

An example can be found in the text of the prophet Isaiah. After comparing the entire Isaiah manuscript from the Dead Sea Scrolls with the present Hebrew text of Isaiah, Old Testament scholar Gleason L. Archer concluded the following about the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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[They] proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The 5 percent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling (Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago, Moody Press, 1968, p. 263).

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls put to rest any speculation against the basic reliability of the Old Testament text. Indeed, we now know without any doubt that the text has been accurately transmitted to us.

Summary And Conclusion On The Old Testament

As we have seen, the evidence in support of the trustworthiness of the Old Testament text is overwhelming. Though the oldest parts of the Old Testament are probably three thousand four hundred years old, if not older, we can be confident that the text we possess today accurately represents what was originally written. We conclude this because of the following evidence.

1. The Jews Believed They Were Copying God's Word

Throughout the centuries the Jewish scribes viewed the text they were copying with reverence and care. They wholeheartedly believed they were copying God's Word. This reverence toward Scripture has always been with the Hebrew people from the very beginning.

2. The Masoretes Did Not Change The Text When Copying It

When we compare the manuscripts from the Masoretic tradition among themselves there is very little variation in the text. Any variation that is found does not materially affect the meaning of the text. In other words, all of the manuscripts we find tell the same story.

3. The Dead Sea Scrolls Confirm The Text Was Copied Correctly

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide overwhelming confirmation that the Hebrew texts were copied faithfully over a period of one thousand years.

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Concerning the accuracy of the transmission of the Hebrew text, scholar Basil Atkinson, who was Under-Librarian of the library at Cambridge University, says it is “little short of miraculous.”

William F. Albright, the dean of American archaeologists, made the following conclusion.

We may rest assured that the text of the Hebrew Bible . . . has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other Near Eastern literature (cited by H. H. Rowley, *Old Testament and Modern Study*, p. 25).

Hence, when we read our present-day Old Testament we can have the assurance that we are reading basically the same thing that originally was written by the biblical writers. This is what the facts tell us.

The New Testament Has Been Transmitted Accurately

Now we take a look at the New Testament. What do we know about its reliability? Is it trustworthy? What manuscripts, or hand-written copies, do we have to reconstruct its text?

The books of the New Testament were originally written in the common Greek of the day called *koine*. In the first century, Greek was the international language. As is the case of the Old Testament, we do not possess the autographs (originals) of the New Testament books, but are dependent on copies, and copies of copies to reconstruct the text. We will discover, as we did with the Old Testament, that we can have complete trust that the text of the New Testament has been transmitted to us in a reliable manner as well.

In the case of the New Testament there are three lines of evidence available to reconstruct the original: the Greek manuscripts, the versions (translations) of the Greek text and the writings of the church fathers.

The First Line Of Evidence: The Greek Manuscripts

The problem with many ancient writings is the lack of existing manuscripts, or hand-written copies, to reconstruct the text. Many

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ancient writings have the slimmest manuscript evidence by which scholars attempt to establish the original.

In the case of the New Testament, however, there is no such problem because we are not lacking manuscripts to reconstruct the text. On the contrary, we have such an abundance of manuscripts that it makes the establishment of the text virtually certain.

There Are Four Ways Of Dividing The Greek Manuscripts

The oldest and most important evidence to reconstruct the New Testament text are the Greek manuscripts; since the New Testament was originally written in Greek. These manuscripts are categorized according to writing material (papyri), the style of the letters (uncial and minuscule manuscripts) and the format of the document (lectionaries). We can make the following observations.

Papyri

The first group of manuscripts, the papyri, is named after the material they were written upon. Papyrus is the surface upon which the originals (autographs) of the New Testament were composed. Strips of the papyrus reeds were pressed together to make this writing material. It must be noted that papyrus is extremely perishable, surviving only in warm, dry climates.

The papyrus fragments that have survived contain some of the earliest witnesses to the New Testament text. In fact, about sixty-five of the earliest New Testament fragments we possess were written on papyri (all of these dating before A.D. 300).

At the turn of the twentieth century there were only nine known papyrus fragments that contained parts of the New Testament. There are now about two hundred known papyrus manuscripts (and still counting). These papyrus manuscripts are designated by the letter “p” followed by a superscript Arabic number (e.g. p⁵² or by a capital P followed by the number, thus P52).

Uncials

The second line of evidence to reconstruct the text of the New Testament are the uncial (or inch high) manuscripts. The name is derived from the inch-high size of the letters. Uncial writing consists of uppercase letters that are deliberately and carefully written. There are over three hundred uncial manuscripts of the New Testament—all written on parchment (animal skins).

The uncial manuscripts were basically written between the fourth and tenth centuries—there are five fragmentary uncials that date from the third century.

Minuscules

In the ninth century A.D., uncial writing began to be replaced by a faster method known as minuscule writing. Minuscule writing was a script of smaller letters not as carefully executed as uncials. By using minuscule writing, books could be turned out much faster. Minuscule writing was in use from the ninth to the sixteenth century.

Lectionaries

The last witness, which we have to the New Testament text, are portions of Scripture known as lectionaries. Lectionaries came about as a result of the Christians following the custom of the Jewish synagogue.

In the synagogue, different portions of the Law and Prophets were read at services on each Sabbath. In the same manner, believers in Jesus would read a different part of the Gospels, and of the New Testament letters at their services. This was done according to a fixed order of Sundays and Holy Days. The Scripture portions are the lectionaries. Fragments of lectionaries come from as early as the sixth century A.D., while complete manuscripts are found as early as the eighth century.

It should be noted that when we speak of manuscripts or copies we are referring to any part of a manuscript or copy that has survived. Thus, the copy could be anything from a mere fragment to a complete text.

Though the total number of surviving Greek manuscripts is larger than all other ancient works, they are not the only means available for reconstructing the original text.

A Second Line Of Evidence: The Versions (Translations)

A second line of evidence by which the New Testament text can be established comes from the versions. Versions are translations of the different New Testament books into languages other than Greek. Ancient literature was rarely translated into another language with the New Testament being an important exception.

From the very beginning, Christian missionaries, in an attempt to spread their faith, translated the Greek New Testament into the various languages of the people they encountered. These translations, some made as early as the middle of the second century, give us an important witness to the text of that time.

Because the versions are translations from the original Greek, they are not as valuable as the Greek manuscripts in reconstructing the text. However, they are an important witness to the text's reliability.

3. More Evidence: The Church Fathers

A third line of evidence, used in establishing the New Testament text, is quotations from the writings of the early Christians known as the "church fathers." In their writings, they often quoted from the New Testament text. Every time we find a biblical quotation in their writings, we have a further witness to the text.

For example, seven letters have survived which were written by a man named Ignatius (A.D. 70-110). In those letters he quoted from eighteen different books of the New Testament. Every time he cites Scripture, we can observe the Greek text he was using.

Thus, the early church fathers provide us with an excellent early witness to the text. We must be careful, however, in relying too heavily on the fathers because sometimes their quotations were often paraphrases (not word for word citing's) of the biblical text. In addition, the manuscripts

of their writings have gone through a period of copying, during which mistakes have slipped into the documents. Nevertheless, their writings remain an important witness to the New Testament.

Summary And Conclusion On The New Testament Text

Although we do not possess the originals of any of the books of the New Testament, the evidence shows that it has been transmitted accurately throughout history. We summarize the evidence as follows.

1. There Was A Short Time Span Between The Originals And The Earliest Copies

The time span between the date of composition of the books of the New Testament and the earliest surviving manuscripts is relatively short.

In fact, there is in existence a complete New Testament manuscript (Codex *Sinaiticus*) which was copied within 250 years of the time of the writing of the New Testament.

In addition, we have about seventy fragments of the New Testament that go back even earlier. They contain about two thirds of the text of the New Testament. The classical writings (Plato, Aristotle, etc.) are viewed as having been transmitted in a reliable manner, yet, the time span between the original and their earliest copy is over a thousand years. The New Testament documents, if considered on the same basis, also must be considered trustworthy.

2. There Are Many Manuscripts To Reconstruct The Text

Not only is the interval shorter between the writings of the New Testament and the earliest existing manuscripts, the number of manuscripts (over 5,500 in Greek) gives us confidence that nothing has been lost.

3. The New Testament Was Translated At An Early Date

The New Testament was translated into other languages at an early date. Those versions provide further evidence in establishing the true text.

4. There Is The Added Testimony From The Church Fathers

A further line of evidence is found in the writings of the church fathers, where verses, passages and entire books are cited.

Given the above facts, we conclude that the New Testament has been accurately transmitted throughout history.

Sir Frederic Kenyon, former keeper of ancient manuscripts and director of the British Museum, was an authority second to none on manuscript evidence. After a lifetime of study of ancient documents, he came to the following conclusions.

It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain . . . The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world (Sir Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1941, p. 23).

Kenyon also emphasized that the New Testament text has been once and for all shown to be reliable. He wrote.

The interval between the dates of the original composition [of the New Testament text] and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established (Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archaeology*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1940, p. 288).

It is clear that the New Testament text has survived and survived in a reliable manner.

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The fact that the text of the books of the Old Testament and the New Testament has survived intact is a true wonder. This is difficult to explain apart from the fact that the Bible is God's divinely inspired Word. Indeed, very few writings from the ancient world have survived.

We can go a step further. Most books printed in modern times do not survive for even twenty years! The great majority of books that have been printed are now long gone.

However, there was something that made scribes copy these biblical texts over and over again for thousands of years. Not only did they continue to copy the text, they made certain to accurately copy and care for these writings. Why did they take so much care in their copying? The answer: they believed that they were copying the very Word of God!

The Bible Has Survived Unrelenting Persecution

This brings us to our next point. The survival of the Bible is all the more amazing when we consider the fact that the Bible has been the object of never-ending persecution. It has been the most intensely hated book of all time. Every possible effort has been made to destroy this book. All attempts have miserably failed.

The fact that the Bible has been singled out for this type of persecution points to the fact of its divine origin; sinful human beings do not want to hear its message of condemnation for sin and future judgment. From the time the Bible was completed, it has been persecuted with an unrelenting fervor. No other book in history has received the same types of attacks as has the Bible.

1. Jeremiah's Book Was Destroyed

Actually, this type of attack against Scripture is not something new. From the Old Testament, we learn that an evil king destroyed the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. Scripture records what took place.

The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. It was the ninth month and the king

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was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them. After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up" (Jeremiah 36:21-28).

Though the Scripture was burned by this wicked king, the Lord made certain that it was written again. The truth of God's Word cannot be destroyed.

2. Antiochus Destroyed Copies Of The Scripture

During the time between the testaments, about 168 B.C., there was a Syrian ruler named Antiochus IV who captured the city of Jerusalem. Not only did he defile the temple, Antiochus also destroyed copies of Scripture. He declared that those who possessed a copy would be punished by death. We read about this in the apocryphal book of First Maccabees. It says.

The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death by decree of the king (1 Maccabees 1:56,57).

Antiochus, like many others, attempted to destroy the Holy Scripture. Yet his attempt also failed.

3. The Edict Of The Roman Emperor Diocletian To Burn The Scripture

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The persecution of Diocletian is another example of the type of attack the Scriptures have endured. In A.D. 303, the Roman emperor Diocletian wrote an imperial letter ordering (1) the destruction of all Christian churches, (2) the burning of all Christian Scriptures, and (3) the loss of civil liberties by all professing Christians. Diocletian's edict did not stop the spread of Christianity or the production of copies of the Bible.

Diocletian was so convinced that he had wiped out Christianity that he ordered a medal struck with the following words.

The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored

Diocletian, like so many others, has been proved wrong in his attempt to destroy Christianity and the Holy Scriptures.

4. The Edict Of The Next Emperor Constantine To Produce Copies Of Scripture

The historical irony is that Constantine, the Roman emperor who succeeded Diocletian, converted to Christianity and eventually ordered fifty copies of the Scriptures to be produced by the best scribes at government expense! This is another example of God's Word enduring despite unrelenting persecution.

The list goes on and on. No other book, ancient or modern, even comes close to the persecution and hatred the Bible has received. Why? Why is this one Book so hated? Simply put, it is because it tells the truth about God and us. However, many people do not want to hear this truth.

The Bible Has Survived Constant Criticism

The Scriptures have also survived criticism from a variety of different sources. The criticism has been constant and unending. Two points need to be emphasized.

1. No Book Has Been Criticized As The Bible

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No other book has been subjected to such thorough criticism as has been leveled at the Bible, yet the Bible has been equal to that challenge, withstanding the most rigorous criticism imaginable.

The late theologian Bernard Ramm made the following observations about the various attempts that have been made to silence the Scriptures.

A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and the committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knived, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology . . . of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line, and tenet? (Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Christian Evidences*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1957, pp. 232-233).

Nothing compares to the criticism the Bible has received. Attempts have been made to equate the Bible with other religious writings; to explain it as a product of its times. The stories of Scripture are portrayed as mythical and the scientific references as ignorant.

However, the evidence proves the opposite. The historical references are accurate and the scientific statements do not reflect the ignorance of the day.

Modern unbelieving scholarship, while attempting to destroy the confidence in Scripture, has not succeeded in proving its case. To the contrary, objective investigation shows, more than ever, that the Bible is a unique book in a class by itself.

2. Millions Still, Read, Love, And Trust The Bible

We must note that the criticism of Scripture has not made any real impact. Millions of people still love and trust the Bible.

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The impact of two thousand years of persecution and criticism of Scripture has been aptly summed up by H.L. Hastings. Over one hundred years ago he wrote.

Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels with all their assaults, make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer would on the Pyramids of Egypt. When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, 'Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.' So the hammers of infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures. If this book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives (H.L. Hastings, as quoted by John Lea, *The Greatest Book in the World*. Philadelphia, PA., 1922, pp. 17, 18).

The Bible has survived, and continues to survive.

Conclusion: The Survival Of The Bible Is A Wonder

Though time passes, the Bible remains a dramatic testimony to the keeping power of God. Rulers and critics come and go, but the Bible remains. Most books do not survive twenty years. Fewer still will survive for one hundred years and the fewest of few have survived for one thousand years or more. Yet the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture were written from one thousand nine hundred and fifty years ago to three thousand four hundred years ago. They have not only survived for this long, they have also survived intact.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking two thousand seven hundred years ago, made the following declaration.

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

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The fact that the Scriptures have through survived time, unrelenting persecution, and constant criticism is a true wonder.

Summary To Reason 3: The Bible's Survival

A remarkable feature about the Bible is the fact of its survival. Although the various books were written from two thousand to three thousand five hundred years ago on perishable material, the books have survived. Not only have they survived, they have survived intact. A number of points need to be made.

First, the text of the Old Testament has been transmitted with amazing accuracy. Indeed, today we can read the Old Testament with complete confidence that it is the same account of what was originally written. The message of the God of the Bible has not been changed or altered. God's Word in the Hebrew Scriptures, or the Old Testament, has been accurately transmitted to us here in the twenty-first century.

The same can be said for the New Testament. What was originally written by the writers of the New Testament is exactly what we find today. The words of Jesus Christ, as well as His message of forgiveness of sin, have been transmitted to us intact. Therefore, humanity is held responsible for acting upon the claims of Jesus which are found in the New Testament.

The fact that the text of Scripture has survived in such a manner is a true wonder. Most ancient writings were never copied! Yet, the Scriptures have been copied and recopied over and over again. Why? It is because the individuals copying them believed they were copying more than mere history or the story of an ancient people. Indeed, they believed they were copying the very Word of God!

There is still more. The Bible has survived time, persecution, and criticism. We must appreciate how important this is. First, the fact that the Bible has survived at all is a true wonder. When we realize that the books were written upon perishable material, thousands of years ago, we should not expect them to survive to this day. But they have. Again, this is a true wonder.

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In addition, the Bible has been persecuted like no other book in history. It is recorded that one of the kings of Judah destroyed the entire text of the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. Yet the Lord told Jeremiah to write it again, and he did. The message was not destroyed! This type of persecution has been repeated over and over again in history. However, the Scriptures still exist. It has been impossible to get rid of them. Again, we must ask ourselves the question as to why this is so.

Finally, the Bible has been criticized like no other book ever written. Every line, every word, every syllable has been subject to the most intense criticism and evaluation. Why has this one book been hated by so many people? Why do we find these attempts to prove the Bible is not what it claims to be? According to the testimony of Scripture itself it is because its words reveal the truth of God to sinful humanity. Truths that many people do not want to hear.

While the Bible has been the most attacked and criticized book in history it stands today as strong as ever. Indeed, it is still changing the lives of millions of people who daily read it. The fact that it has survived such criticism is a true wonder.

These factors make the Bible unique among all other books that have ever been written. It is indeed a one-of-a-kind book in the fact of its survival.

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Reason 4

The Bible's Historical Precision

Jesus said, “Your Word is truth” (John 17:17)

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 4

The Bible's Historical Precision

The entire Bible centers around what God has done in history. Within the pages of Scripture we find many references to people, places and events. Thus, the question of whether the Bible is historically precise in its description of these references is of crucial importance.

Were the people mentioned in Scripture real people? Did the places which are named actually exist? Did these events take place as the Bible says they did? What does the evidence say?

We will discover that the Bible is different from all other ancient literature is its historical precision. Indeed, the science of archaeology, along with the testimony of secular historical records, confirms the precision of the references in the various biblical books. This minute attention to detail observed by the biblical writers is unparalleled in any other ancient literature. We can make the following observations.

The Old Testament

From the very beginning of the Old Testament, we find that God has intervened in the lives of His people. Furthermore, the Old Testament gives testimony to the importance of God acting in history. Indeed, the Lord often reminded His people that He had intervened in the past.

In the Book of Exodus, we find that God claimed to be the One who rescued the people from slavery. The Bible says.

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Exodus 20:1,2).

The nation was continually urged to remember these mighty deeds of God. In addition, the events recorded were always treated as actual historical events.

Later, we read the following in the Book of Kings.

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But the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices (2 Kings 17:36).

Again, we find the emphasis on these historical events, along with accompanying miracles.

This truth is often emphasized in the Old Testament. The Lord also said.

My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD (Micah 6:5).

Note that the people were told to “remember.” Indeed, since God acted in history, His people were to remember these divine actions. In each and every case, these events were assumed to have literally happened.

The Old Testament Matches Up With Known History

The claim that God has acted in history is backed up by the evidence. The archaeologist, John Elder, who spent over thirty years working in the Middle East, offers a fitting summary of the issue of the Old Testament’s historical reliability. He wrote.

It is not too much to say that it was the rise of the science of archeology that broke the deadlock between historians and the orthodox Christian. Little by little, one city after another, one civilization after another, one culture after another, whose memories were enshrined only in the Bible, were restored to their proper places in ancient history by the studies of archaeologists . . . The over-all result is indisputable. Forgotten cities have been found, the handiwork of vanished peoples has reappeared, contemporary records of Biblical events have been unearthed and the uniqueness of biblical revelation has been emphasized by contrast and comparison to the newly understood religions of ancient peoples. Nowhere has archeological discovery refuted the Bible as history (John Elder, *Prophets, Idols, and Diggers*, Bobbs-Merrill, Co. 1960, p. 18).

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On so many occasions, the Old Testament has shown to be accurate when it speaks of historical events. We offer the following illustrations.

1. **The Old Testament Is Familiar With Local Laws**

There are a number of biblical episodes that show intimate understanding of local laws at the time. For example, when Sarah the wife of Abraham was childless, she suggested that Abraham take Hagar his handmaiden as a secondary wife and raise up an heir through her. This fits well the practice at that time as recorded in the Eshnunna law code – a law code that dates about 1900 B.C.

The Nuzi tablets, 20,000 clay tablets that were discovered 150 miles north of Baghdad; also confirm such customs as to the role of secondary wives and their rights of inheritance. Therefore, the episode of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar fits the local laws of the time.

2. **Local Customs Are Correctly Recorded**

We find that the customs recorded in Scripture fit the time frame in which the stories were said to have occurred.

From the Nuzi tablets we also find that one brother sold his birthright for three sheep – similar to Esau selling his birthright to his brother Jacob for a bowl of soup. This confirms that the practice was legally binding at that time in history. It also tells us that the price paid for the birthright did not have to be of equal value.

In another example, we find that the Bible states the patriarch Joseph was sold for twenty shekels of silver. We read in Genesis.

So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt (Genesis 37:28)

Although the price paid for Joseph is an incidental detail, it proves to be an exact representation of what slaves were being sold for in that day. Joseph lived in the eighteenth century B.C. Before that time the price of slaves was cheaper – ten to fifteen shekels. As time went by, the price of a

slave increased. The price of twenty pieces of silver fits into the period when the Bible says that Joseph lived.

After that time the price of a slave further increased. Thus the recording of Joseph being sold for twenty pieces of silver fits only a limited historical period; the same one in which the Scripture says the story took place. It seems clear that the writer of this account had access to accurate historical information.

3. The Geographical References Are Minutely Accurate

There are a number of specific geographical references in Scripture. As we examine the evidence we find that they match up to the geography of that day. For example, the biblical account of the life of Abraham documents a number of cities that he visited. The location of almost every one of these cities is now known. All of those that have been positively identified were important caravan centers during the time the Bible says that Abraham lived.

However, in later times, not all of these cities were important centers. This is another indication that the travels of Abraham fit exactly into what is known of that particular historical period, but would not fit with a later period.

In another illustration, we find that the Scripture is very specific as to the route that the nation of Israel took from Egypt on its way to the Promised Land. For example, in Numbers 33, there is a detailed description of where the Israelites camped on their way to Jericho. It says.

They left Iye Abarim and camped at Dibon Gad. They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim. They left Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, near Nebo. They left the mountains of Abarim and camped on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. There on the plains of Moab they camped along the Jordan from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim. On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the LORD said to Moses (Numbers 33:45-50).

Notice the detail. We are told specifically where the nation camped on their way to Jericho. This route was once considered to be unhistorical. Yet the discovery of three ancient Egyptian maps, dating from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century B.C., shows that this was the same route that was taken in those days. The cities mentioned in Numbers were also mentioned in the Egyptian maps. It was a heavily traveled road in those days. Again, the historical details of the Scripture prove to be true.

4. The Correct Titles Were Used To Describe People

In every nation, the titles given to people are different. In addition, these titles can actually change throughout history. In the Old Testament, we find a number of different people to whom specific titles are given. When compared with the known evidence we find that the biblical writers used the exact title for the people in the time period when the narrative took place.

For example, in the story of Joseph, there are a number of titles that are mentioned. We are told that Joseph was put in prison with the “chief” or “royal” baker.

Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker (Genesis 40:1-2).

While this was once considered to be an incorrect reference, an ancient Egyptian picture recorded acknowledgment of wheat by the royal baker of the Temple of Amun. Thus, the title “royal baker,” or “chief baker,” was accurately used. This gives credence to the story as literally occurring instead of being some type of parable or myth.

5. The List Of Pagan Kings Is Amazingly Accurate

The Bible lists a number of kings who ruled countries other than Israel. Although they were not the main characters in the story, they are *always* recorded in an accurate manner. Indeed, the writers of Scripture placed these kings in the exact chronological order in which they ruled. This is in

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contrast to some of the historians from these same countries who did not have the correct chronology.

This has been documented in the work of the great Old Testament scholar Robert Dick Wilson. In examining the Old Testament Scripture, Wilson noted that there are twenty-six pagan kings of various nations that are mentioned. The names of these rulers are also found on the monuments of these kings as well as in documents of their own times. Wilson found that all of these names of the pagan kings are spelled correctly in the Hebrew text. In contrast to the accuracy of the Bible, in the secular literature of the same period, the names of those rulers are frequently garbled. Indeed, there are times when it is hard to identify the person.

An example of this is Ptolemy; an ancient writer who drew up a list of eighteen Babylonian kings. However, on his list none of the names of these eighteen kings is spelled correctly.

On the other hand, the biblical writers were always precise in the spelling of the names of their enemies. So we ask the question, "If the Old Testament writers took this much concern to spell the names of the pagan kings correctly, how much more effort would they have given to spell the names of their own people correctly as well as to accurately record the events connected with their rule?" The answer seems obvious. This is a further testimony of the basic reliability of the Old Testament.

6. The Existence Of A Jewish Temple On The Temple Mount

Today in our world there is a growing problem of denying the Jews their ancient heritage with respect to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. It is claimed that there has *never* been a Jewish Temple in the city of Jerusalem. While this is a relatively recent development it is gaining more and more adherents; particularly in the Islamic world. Muslims fear that the Jews are working toward building another Temple in Jerusalem and thus will regain their control over the Temple Mount. Thus, they continue to deny that the Jews ever had a visible presence on the Mount.

The Continual Destruction On The Temple Mount

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This type denial of any Jewish presence has led to the purposeful destruction of parts of the Mount by the Muslim Waqf; the caretakers of the site. For example, In November, 1999, they asked permission from the Israeli government to open an emergency exit leading from the one of their mosques on the Temple Mount. After receiving permission, the Waqf, rather than digging an emergency exit, constructed a huge entrance to the building.

To create that entrance they dug a pit approximately forty yards long and twelve yards deep. To make matters worse they did it in the most destructive manner possible; with bulldozers. Tons of rubble from the Temple Mount was then dumped in a landfill in Jerusalem. Countless thousands of priceless archaeological artifacts are now in this landfill.

The motivation behind this destruction is to sever any possible connection between the Temple Mount and the Jews. Yet this destruction of the areas of the Temple Mount by Muslims is not something new. Indeed, there were visible remains of the Jewish Temples on the Mount as late as the 1960's and 70's. Photographic evidence makes it clear that these remains were once there. However, they have either been removed or covered up by a garden. The idea is to remove any visible artifact which would confirm the fact that a Jewish temple did exist on the Mount. Yet the Muslim denials cannot hide the evidence.

The Existence Of The Temple Is Confirmed By Archaeological Artifacts

However, no matter what Muslims attempt to do, they cannot stop the truth about the Jews and their relationship to the Temple Mount from being known.

Indeed, in a part of the Old City of Jerusalem where the "City of David" stood an amazing discovery was made. In 2006, a fragment of a lump of clay with a seal impression, known as a bulla, was found. The bulla is about 2,600 years of age and it dates back to the time when Solomon's Temple still existed. The inscription on it bears the name of an official; Gedaliah son of Pashur.

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What is amazing is that these people, Gedaliah and Pashur, are actually mentioned in Book of Jeremiah! We read.

Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, "This is what the LORD says: 'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live.' And this is what the LORD says: 'This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.' " Then the officials said to the king, "This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin" (Jeremiah 38:1-4).

This is truly astonishing. Notice what we discover from this passage that Gedaliah and Pashur, along with some others, wanted to put the prophet Jeremiah to death.

What is even more amazing is that three years earlier, in 2003, another bulla was found in the city of David that contained the name of *another* person mentioned in this verse; Jehukal son of Shelemiah.

Thus, we have on two separate artifacts the names of the individuals who were officials in the court of King Zedekiah. The archeological evidence has finally caught up to the Bible!

Earlier in the Book of Jeremiah we are told that Pashur had Jeremiah beaten and thrown into the stocks.

When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the official in charge of the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple. The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD's name for you is not Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. For this is what the LORD says: 'I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by

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the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. I will deliver all the wealth of this city into the hands of their enemies—all its products, all its valuables and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. They will take it away as plunder and carry it off to Babylon. And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies (Jeremiah 20:1-6)

We are told that Pashur was “an official in the Temple of the Lord.” He was somehow related to Gedaliah who is called “son of Pashur” in Jeremiah 38:1.

We are also told that Pashur had the prophet Jeremiah beaten and thrown in the stocks because of his prophesying against Jerusalem and the Temple. As we have just read, at a later time, Pashur and Gedaliah along with others asked King Zedekiah to put Jeremiah to death.

The Prediction Of The Prophet Jeremiah

There is something else we must note. Jeremiah predicted that the Pashur and the Immer family, which includes Gedaliah, will be carried off into captivity to Babylon. The reason for this: denial of God’s truth concerning the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple! Note also that Jeremiah renamed him “Terror on Every Side” for this man Pashur would be a terror not only to himself but also to his friends. Why? Because he denied that Jeremiah was the Lord’s prophet thus causing people to reject Jeremiah’s message.

The outcome: History reveals that Jeremiah was indeed God’s prophet. All the specific things he predicted came to pass exactly as he had stated.

And here is the irony. Two members of this family have their names unearthed some 2,600 years after they denied what the Lord had to say, through His prophet about the Jews, Jerusalem, and the Temple.

Furthermore, we also note that this recent discover confirms the historical accuracy of Scripture that the Immer family was in charge of duties at the Temple. It seems that the Lord wants to make it very plain

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to the world that His words regarding the Jews, Jerusalem, and the Temple cannot be denied; no matter what anyone attempts to do. Moreover, those who do so, like the Immer family, will be severely judged.

More Confirmation Of The Existence Of The Temple

Finally, there is an ironic result of the Muslims desecration of the Temple Mount in 1999. From the landfill containing the dirt discarded from the Mount, arrowheads of the Babylonian army of King Nebuchadnezzar which destroyed the First Temple in 587 B.C. have been discovered.

Moreover, another arrowhead which has been found had the marks of being shot by a catapult. This type of war instruments was only used by the armies of Titus the Roman; the man who destroyed the Second Temple.

Therefore, we now have some of the actual weapons from the armies which destroyed both the First and Second Temple. The historical evidence is clear. The Temples did exist and they were destroyed; just like the Bible says. Again we see that God's Word is confirmed beyond any doubt from the physical evidence.

Conclusion: The Details Of The Biblical Accounts Are Confirmed By Archaeology

Many more examples could be given. The point is that the writers of the Old Testament showed intimate knowledge of the times.

These examples demonstrate that the writers of Scripture were living at the time of the events they recorded and knew the local laws, customs, geography, titles, and names of the pagan kings. Consequently, it gives strong evidence to the reliability of what was written.

Observations On The Historical Accuracy Of The Old Testament

The fact that the main outline, as well as many of the incidental historical details, of the Old Testament has been confirmed by archaeological and historical sources is important for a number of reasons.

1. We Are Not Dealing With Mythology

First, it tells us that we are dealing with genuine history, not mythology. The stories recorded actually took place in the ancient world. The nations were real nations, the individuals were real people, the cities existed in the exact location that the Bible said they existed, and the customs and laws were those which we practiced at that time in history.

2. The Writings Should Be Dated To The Time Of The Events Recorded

Second, the authors are not only accurate, they are meticulously accurate. In other words, the writers of the Old Testament must have been eyewitnesses to the events they recorded. Consequently, there is every reason to believe in the traditional authorship of the biblical books. Instead of dating much of the Old Testament writings to the time of Ezra, as liberal critics do, they should be dated hundreds of years earlier to the time when the events were claimed to have literally occurred. Therefore, the trustworthiness of the Old Testament record is borne out by the evidence.

In sum, while not every detail from the Old Testament has been confirmed, or even can be confirmed, we do find that a remarkable amount of information has come to light that has demonstrated the basic reliability of the historical statements. The verdict is that the Old Testament can be trusted.

3. The Key: Jesus Trusted The Old Testament

By far the most important testimony to the trustworthiness of the Old Testament comes from Jesus Christ. When we examine the way Jesus viewed Scripture we can see that He trusted it totally. He said the Word of God was true.

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

Jesus also said the Old Testament Scriptures were a unity. He said.

Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).

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It is clear from Jesus' statements that He believed the Bible to be historically accurate and without error.

Jesus Confirmed Some Of The Most Controversial Stories Found In The Old Testament

In addition, Jesus confirmed some of the most ridiculed stories in the Old Testament. It is almost as though He went out of His way to put His stamp of approval on them. We can cite the following examples.

Example 1 Adam And Eve

Jesus believed in the Genesis account of creation - which includes the direct creation of Adam and Eve. Matthew records Him saying,

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? (Matthew 19:4-5).

He used Adam and Eve as an example of God’s purpose in marriage.

Example 2 Cain And Abel

The account of Cain killing Abel is rejected today in many circles, but Jesus believed it occurred. We read of this in Luke’s gospel.

From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible (Luke 11:51).

According to Jesus, this early story, recorded in the Book of Genesis, is historically accurate.

Example 3 The Flood In Noah’s Day

Was there really a Flood, in the days of Noah, which God sent to destroy the earth? Jesus assumed there was. He said.

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As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus compared the circumstances surrounding Noah's Flood as similar to those at His Second Coming.

Example 4 Jonah And The Great Sea Creature

Jesus also believed the story of Jonah and the great sea creature as having literally occurred. In fact, He used it as a sign of His resurrection.

He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:39-41).

Contrary to the view of many modern skeptics, Jonah actually existed. Jesus testified to this fact.

Example 5 Daniel

Though the authorship of Daniel is often rejected today, Jesus believed that he was a true prophet. He said.

So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation' spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand (Matthew 24:15).

All of these disputed and ridiculed accounts of the Old Testament were confirmed by Jesus as actually occurring. Furthermore, He used certain of them as illustrating some of the most important events in His own

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ministry - including His resurrection and Second Coming. Since He demonstrated Himself to be God's Son, His testimony settles the matter - these stories did occur.

Example 6 Jesus Spoke Of Prophecy Being Fulfilled

Jesus also said that certain predictions, recorded in the Old Testament, were fulfilled in His life and ministry. We read the following in the Gospel of Luke.

He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

Jesus spoke of John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Matthew records Jesus saying.

This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you" (Matthew 11:10).

Jesus also said that what was written about Him must be fulfilled. Mark records Jesus saying.

Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him" (Mark 9:12,13).

In another example, when predicting judgment on the city of Jerusalem, Jesus said the following.

For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written (Luke 21:22).

Jesus considered the predictions of the Old Testament as being authoritative - He assumed they needed to be fulfilled.

The Christian Church ultimately believes the Old Testament is historically reliable because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Jesus claimed to be God

in human flesh. These claims were later validated by His resurrection from the dead. By coming back from the dead, as He predicted He would, Jesus demonstrated that He spoke with final authority on all matters. Since Jesus taught that the Old Testament was the Word of God, totally accurate in all that it said, His testimony settles the issue. Indeed, there can be no stronger confirmation than the testimony of Jesus.

Conclusion On The Old Testament: It Is Trustworthy

From the evidence that is available to us, we conclude there is every reason to believe the Old Testament is historically accurate.

The Historical Reliability Of The New Testament

The claim of the New Testament is that God the Son became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead at a certain time in history. Therefore, it is essential that the New Testament be historically accurate if these claims are to be believed.

When the New Testament addresses historical issues, we will find that it is accurate and reliable. Three important points need to be made.

1. The New Testament Books Are Primary Source Testimony: The Writers Were There

As we investigate the New Testament text, we observe that the writers of the various books claimed to be either eyewitnesses to the events they recorded, or they gathered eyewitness testimony. For example, John testified to things the believers saw, heard, and touched. He wrote.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us (1 John 1:1,2).

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John knew what he was writing was true because he was there to witness the events.

Luke, the writer of the third gospel, penned these words about his gospel.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

This statement of Luke tells us, at least, the following things.

1. Luke was not an eyewitness to the events he recorded.
2. But he, like those before him, made careful use of eyewitness accounts.
3. Luke had access to other narratives, written documents like his own.
4. Luke felt the need for a further account.
5. His account is orderly.
6. His ultimate aim is truth.

The fact that the New Testament writers claimed such objective, complete, and firsthand evidence concerning Jesus Christ is of the utmost importance. Their evidence they provide is not hearsay or imaginary. Instead it is direct and reliable; the testimony of witnesses.

2. They Saw The Resurrected Jesus

Time and time again we find the writers of the New Testament appealing to eyewitness testimony. On the Day of Pentecost, about fifty days after Jesus' death, Peter told the crowd that had gathered that he and the other disciples had seen the risen Christ. He said.

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God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact (Acts 2:32).

The disciples of Jesus were eyewitness of the resurrected Christ. This was their consistent claim.

Peter would later write about his own eyewitness testimony. He put it this way.

For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Notice the emphasis that Jesus' disciples were "eyewitnesses" to the events which took place.

3. The New Testament Records Eyewitnesses Details

We also find the gospels filled with details that an eyewitness would remember. For example, we read in the Gospel of John.

Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume (John 12:3).

The fact that the writer John mentioned vividly how the fragrance filled the house is an indication that he was there when this event took place. He remembered the scent.

The New Testament is filled with many references such as these. The point is that those who reported these accounts which took place in the life of Jesus were there when the events happened. They were eyewitnesses!

4. The New Testament Was Written At An Early Date

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The New Testament writers claim to be eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In addition, the facts lead us to believe that their writings were composed soon after the events took place.

The exact year that Jesus died and rose again is in dispute. The most likely candidates are the years A.D. 30 and A.D. 33. There is strong evidence that the four gospels were composed *before* the year A.D. 70. The evidence for an early date to the gospels is as follows.

The City Of Jerusalem And The Temple Were Still Standing When The Gospels Were Written

Each of the first three Gospels contains predictions by Jesus concerning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). The Lord made it clear that the city and the temple would soon be destroyed because of their rejection of Him as the Messiah.

We know that Titus the Roman destroyed the city and temple in the year A.D. 70. This is an historical fact.

However, none of the four gospels records the fulfillment of Jesus' predictions. It is hard to imagine that the fulfillment of these predictions would not have been recorded if the gospels were written *after* these events took place. Since the gospels do not record their fulfillment it gives us a strong indication that these documents were written *before* Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

To sum up, since Jesus died and rose again in either A.D. 30 or A.D. 33 the gospels would have been composed within forty years of the events if the gospels were written before Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

However, this is not the only indication that the gospels were written at an early date.

The Book Of Acts Gives A Clue To The Date Of The Gospels

The Book of Acts also provides us with a clue as to when the four gospels were written. Acts records the highlights in the life and ministry

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of the Apostle Paul. It concludes with Paul at Rome awaiting trial before Caesar. We read.

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ--with all boldness and without hindrance! (Acts 28:30-31).

The two years which Paul spent in Rome were probably A.D. 60 and 61. Yet the death of Paul is not recorded in the Book of Acts. The inference, therefore, is that Acts was written while Paul was still alive. Since there is good evidence that Paul died in the Neronian persecution about A.D. 66, the Book of Acts can most likely be dated sometime after A.D. 61 and before A.D. 66.

Luke's Gospel Was Written Earlier Than Acts

If Acts were written between A.D. 61 and A.D. 66 then this helps us date the four gospels. Why is this so? The Book of Acts is the second half of a treatise written by Luke to a man named Theophilus. Since we know that the gospel of Luke was written *before* the Book of Acts, we can then date the Gospel of Luke sometime around A.D. 60 or possibly even earlier.

The Brother Who Was Well-Known May Have Been Luke

There may be additional evidence for an early date for Luke's Gospel. Paul wrote of a brother who was well-known among the churches for the gospel. He said.

And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel (2 Corinthians 8:18).

There is ancient testimony that this refers to Luke and his "written" gospel. If this is speaking of Luke and the gospel he composed, then we have it well-known in the mid-fifties of the first century since Second Corinthians was likely written in the year A.D. 56 or A.D. 57. This would make Luke's composition within twenty-five years of the events in the life of Christ.

Matthew, Or Mark, May Have Been A Source For Luke

There is more evidence. In his prologue, Luke tells us that he used sources to compose his gospel. This could include written sources.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

This may also be a specific reference of Luke using the Gospel of Mark as a written source. In verse two Luke says he derived the information for his gospel from those who were “eyewitnesses” and “ministers” of the word. The term translated “minister” is the Greek word *huparetas*.

Interestingly, John Mark, the writer of the second gospel, is called a “minister” by Luke in Acts 13:5 (the same Greek word *huparetas*). Therefore, it is possible that this could be a reference to Mark as one of his written sources.

If Luke used Mark as a source then the Gospel of Mark had to have been written before Luke. This brings us even closer to the time when the events took place.

Matthew Was Always Believed To Have Been Written First

This brings us to our next point. According to the unanimous testimony of the early church Matthew was the *first* gospel written. The church father Eusebius places the date of Matthew’s gospel in A.D. 41. If the ancient testimony is true, and there is no reason to doubt it, then we have a third independent source about the life of Christ written during the eyewitness period.

John Was An Eyewitness To The Events

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The Gospel of John is usually assumed to have been the last of the four gospels composed. John testified that he was an eyewitness to the events that he recorded. He said.

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30:31).

John also wrote.

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true (John 21:24).

It is clear that John claimed to have been in attendance when the events in the life of Jesus transpired.

There Is Internal Evidence Of An Early Date For John

There is also internal evidence that John himself wrote before A.D. 70. We read the following description of Jerusalem in the fifth chapter of John.

Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades (John 5:2).

John describes the sheep gate as still standing at the time he wrote. He could not have made this statement after A.D. 70 because there was no sheep gate. The sheep gate was destroyed in the year A.D. 70, along with the rest of the city of Jerusalem. The logical implication is that John wrote his gospel before the city of Jerusalem was destroyed.

Conclusion: There Is Evidence For An Early Date For The Four Gospels

When all the historical and textual evidence is amassed, it becomes clear that the four gospels were composed at a very early date either by

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eyewitnesses, or those who recorded eyewitness testimony. Therefore, we have every reason to trust what they wrote.

5. The Writers Were Historically Accurate

With the above points in mind we should not be surprised to learn that the New Testament is historically accurate. The accounts of the New Testament writers match up, as far as we can tell, with secular history. The following points need to be made about the reliability of the New Testament.

The People Actually Existed

There are numerous lines of evidence which demonstrate that the people mentioned in the New Testament were historical figures.

Names Or Likenesses Of New Testament Characters Have Been Found On Statues Or Coins

There are a number of individuals who are mentioned in the New Testament whose likeness has been found on either statues or coins. Others have their names on a coin but with no likeness of them. They are as follows.

1. The Caesars

Four different Caesar's are mentioned in the New Testament; though only three of them by name.

Augustus, the Roman Emperor who ruled from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14, was the Emperor at the time Jesus was born (Luke 2:1). His image is found on coins and statues.

The Roman Emperor Tiberius, A.D. 14-37, ruled during the time of Jesus' public ministry (Matthew 22:17; Mark 12:14-17 Luke 3:1: 20:22-25; 23:2; John 19:12,15). His likeness is also found on statues and coins.

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The Roman Emperor Claudius ruled from A.D. 41-54. He is the one who ordered the Jews to leave Rome (Acts 11:28; 17:7; 18:2). Coins and statues also bear his likeness.

Nero, while he is not named, is the Caesar to whom Paul appealed. His is referred to in the following places: Acts 25:11,12, 21; 26:32 28:19 Philippians 4:22. He reigned from A.D. 54-68. His likeness has been found on coins.

2. The Herod's

There are a number of Herod's mentioned in the New Testament. The evidence shows that they too were historical characters.

Herod the Great was ruling Judea at the time Jesus was born (Matthew 2:1) He was the evil ruler who ordered the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem. His name has been found on coins.

Herod Antipas was called Herod the Tetrarch in the New Testament (Luke 3:1). Coins carry the inscription "Herod the Tetrarch." There are also inscriptions on bronze coins which read "Herod the Tetrarch To Gaius Caesar Germanicus."

Herod Agrippa I was ruler of Judea from A.D. 27-44. He is the one who persecuted members of the early church (Acts 12:1-23; Acts 23:35). Coins have been found with the inscription, "The Great King Agrippa, Friend of the Caesar."

Herod Agrippa II, the son of Herod Agrippa, ruled the area of Galilee from A.D. 56-93. Paul appealed to him before going to Rome (Acts 25:13-26:32). His likeness is found on coins.

3. Other New Testament Figures

Aretas IV was the King of the Nabateans from 9 B.C.-A.D. 40. He was the governor in Damascus who attempted to arrest Paul (2 Corinthians 11:32). Coins have been found with his likeness

Thus, the coins from the New Testament era show that the leaders mentioned were actual historical figures. We are not dealing with mythology!

Pontius Pilate Was Prefect Of Judea

For many years there were questions about the existence and the actual title of Pontius Pilate – the Roman governor who presided over the trial of Jesus. In later Roman writers, as well as almost all Bible reference works, Pilate is referred to as the “procurator” of Judea. According to the New Testament, he is called a “governor;” not a procurator.

In 1961, on the coast of Israel in the town of Caesarea, the discovery was made of a two by three-foot stone that had a Latin inscription written upon it. The translation of the inscription reads as follows:

Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea, has presented the Tiberieum to the Caesareans

This is the first archaeological evidence for the existence of Pilate. What is interesting about the inscription is the title that he is given – Prefect of Judea. We now know that the title “Procurator” was not used at the time for the Roman governors. This title only came into usage at a later time.

During the reign of the emperor Claudius, A.D. 41-54 the title of the Roman governors shifted from Prefect to Procurator. Although the later Roman writers gave Pilate the incorrect title, the New Testament did not. It calls him a governor – not a procurator. To sum up, the New Testament was not in error in describing his official position while some of the later Roman writers were mistaken.

The Burial Box Of The High Priest Caiaphas Has Been Found

A seemingly stunning example of extra-biblical confirmation of the existence of a New Testament character is found in the discovery of the bones of the High Priest Caiaphas. The New Testament says that Caiaphas is the one who presided over one of the trials of Jesus. Matthew writes.

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Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled (Matthew 26:57).

In 1990, the bones of Caiaphas were apparently discovered in a limestone ossuary, or burial box that was found in the old city of Jerusalem. The inscription on the ornate burial box read, “Joseph son of (or, of the family of) Caiaphas.” We know from first-century Jewish writer Flavius Josephus that this was the full name of Caiaphas. This was the first physical remains that have been discovered of a person mentioned in Scripture.

We should note that not everyone agrees that this was the actual burial box of Caiaphas. However, the evidence has compelled many scholars to accept the identification.

These are a few of the many examples that could be given of extra biblical confirmation of New Testament characters. Again, we emphasize that the New Testament is dealing with actual historical people not mythological characters.

B. The Geographical References Are Correct

Not only do we find that the people mentioned in the New Testament actually existed, we also discover that the geographical references are accurate.

The Cities Were Genuine Cities

As we examine the New Testament we find that it contains a number of specific geographical references. Indeed, the four gospels record various places where the ministry of Jesus took place. The evidence shows that the cities that are mentioned in the four gospels are known to have existed in the first century. In fact, the exact location of almost all of them has been firmly established. This includes such cities as Nazareth, Cana, Bethlehem, Capernaum, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Tiberius. In other words, we are dealing with real places.

The Physical Structures Existed

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In addition, there were certain physical structures that are mentioned in the gospels that are now known to exist. For example, we have a number of references to synagogues where Jesus taught.

However, for a long time there were no physical remains of any first century synagogue that was discovered. This led critics to deny that Jesus actually taught in synagogues. Yet this is no longer the case. A number of first-century synagogues have now been discovered. Scholar Craig Evans notes.

Most archaeologists now speak of eight or nine synagogues that date to the pre-70 era (Craig Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence*, Westminster, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2012, p. 45).

In the city of Capernaum ruins have been found that may have been the very house of Simon Peter. A fifth century church was built over the remains of a first century house. If these are the ruins of Simon Peter's house, then this is the place where Jesus stayed while in the city of Capernaum.

Thus, when it comes to geographical references the New Testament proves to be accurate.

The Writers Knew The Local Customs Of The Times

The customs that were practiced in the first-century are consistent with that which is recorded in the New Testament. In fact, we find that these customs are related in a way that is minutely accurate. For example, in the Gospel of Luke we read the following account.

Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I

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say to you, get up!” The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother (Luke 7:11-15).

At the time of Christ, there were different customs with respect to women walking in a funeral procession. In Judea, the area around Jerusalem, the custom was for the women to walk behind the funeral procession. The casket led the way with the women following behind.

However, in the Galilee region, the custom was reversed. The women walked in front of the funeral procession with the casket trailing behind. The description given by Luke demonstrates the minute accuracy of his account.

Luke says that Jesus began to talk to the mother of the dead child, and then touched the coffin of the dead man. At that time the funeral procession stopped – because it was following behind her and the coffin. This would have only been true in the Galilee region. If this story would have been placed in Judea, then it would not have happened this way – the women would have followed the procession.

The fact that Luke incidentally notes that the procession stopped when Jesus touched the coffin shows the minute accuracy of his account.

Summary: The New Testament Fits The Historical Evidence

Therefore, when all the evidence is considered, we find that the New Testament matches up with the known history of that time. The people were real people, the cities existed, the customs were exactly as stated, and the events actually occurred. Scholar Craig Evans offers a fitting summary.

There is also a very important argument in favor of the general reliability of the New Testament Gospels, and that concerns what is called verisimilitude; that is, what the gospels describe matches the way things really were in the early first-century Jewish Palestine. The New Testament gospels and Acts exhibit a great deal of verisimilitude. They speak of real people (such as Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Annas, Caiaphas, Herod Agrippa I and II, Felix and Festus) and real events (deaths of John the Baptist and Agrippa I).

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They speak of real places (villages, cities, roads, lakes and mountains) that are clarified and corroborated by other historical sources and by archaeology. They speak of real customs (Passover, purity, Sabbath, divorce law), institutions (synagogue, temple), offices/officers (priests, tax collectors Roman governors, Roman centurions) and beliefs (of Pharisees and Sadducees; interpretation of Scripture). Jesus' engagement with his contemporaries, both supporters and opponents, reflects an understanding of Scripture and theology that we now know, thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls and related literature, to have been current in pre-70 Jewish Palestine (Craig Evans, *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence*, Westminster, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2012, p. 9)

In other words, every historical reference we find matches up to the known reality of the world in which Jesus lived. We are not dealing with fairy tales!

They Were Minutely Accurate

There is a final point that needs to be stressed. One of the marks of truthfulness is the accuracy in small, insignificant details. As we noted, we find the New Testament writers are accurate in areas that had no real significance. Passing references to insignificant details turn out to be historically accurate. This is another indication of the trustworthiness of their entire account. If they were so meticulous as to record accurately the insignificant details, how much more concerned would they be with the main facts?

Conclusion On The New Testament: It Is Trustworthy

As was true with the Old Testament, we find that the New Testament can also be trusted in all that it says. Everything that we know about it leads us to conclude that it is totally reliable. The writers claimed to be eyewitnesses, the testimony indicates they wrote soon after the events took place and the archaeological and literary evidence shows they were historically accurate. This means that we can trust the events it records, as well as the divine explanation of the meaning of these events.

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To sum up, the Bible is a historically accurate document. This is the verdict that the evidence demands.

Summary To Reason 4: The Bible's Historical Precision

Although the Bible relates events to us that occurred thousands of years ago, the evidence clearly demonstrates that it is an accurate historical document, and can be trusted as an authoritative source. Both testaments are found to be historically accurate in the details they give of the persons, places, and events they record.

A number of important points need to be made about this “wonder of the Bible.”

First, the historical accuracy of Scripture is an important issue. Indeed, the claims of Scripture are that God has acted many times in our history. This being the case, the historical references to His mighty deeds must be accurate; they must match up with known reality.

Second, we find that the people, places and events recorded in Scripture do match up with what we know of the ancient world. As far as we can tell, these people actually existed when the Bible said they existed and these events occurred as the Scripture testified. Not only are the writers of Scripture accurate, there are many examples where we find that they are minutely accurate. Incidental details are recorded with exact precision.

While this fact, in and of itself, does not make the Bible the Word of God, to be God's Word it must match up to what we know of the ancient world. The evidence says that it does.

This is what we should expect from the Scripture. For example, the books of the New Testament were written soon after the events took place. They were recorded by either eyewitnesses or those who recorded eyewitness testimony. Consequently, it is not surprising that their accounts of what took place are historically accurate.

In sum, we can confidently say that the historical precision of the Scripture is a true wonder.

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Reason 5

The Bible's Scientific Respectability

The Lord said to Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding” (Job 38:4)

Reason 5

The Bible's Scientific Respectability

The Bible was written in what is termed the pre-scientific era (before the rise of modern science). Even though it is not a scientific book, one of the wonders of the Bible is its remarkable scientific respectability. A number of introductory observations need to be made.

1. Is Science A Friend Or Enemy Of The Bible?

How should the Christian view science? Is science a friend or foe of the Bible? Cardinal Barberini, a friend of the astronomer Galileo, once said to him, "You teach how the heavens go; we teach how to go to heaven." The Cardinal was implying that science is neither a friend nor a foe of the Christian faith because each has different goals.

The Bible and science, however, are closely related. Scripture teaches that God created the natural order. This means that God created the very subject matter that the scientist examines. The Bible and science may have different goals in mind, but one cannot ignore the other.

2. Science And Scripture Are Not Saying Two Different Things

Today many people believe that the Bible and science are mutually exclusive, completely contradictory to each other. Once the facts are examined, however, we will discover this is not true.

Indeed, if the God of creation is also the God of salvation, then such conflict is impossible. The same God will not create one testimony in the material record of the universe, and then create a completely contradictory testimony in the written record of the Bible.

3. Science Is Not An Enemy Of Scripture; Scientism Is

Though true science is not in conflict with the Bible, some scientific conclusions are. The term 'scientism' is often employed by writers to

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describe the mindset of certain scientists who interpret their data by a particular philosophical outlook that eliminates the possibility of anything miraculous or supernatural.

The job of the scientist is to test, repeat, observe, and record the data. Scientism, which goes beyond the realm of science, accepts things only on a natural order and interprets all the data in that context. However, this is not science. The scientist should construct a theory that best fits all the facts no matter what the conclusion may be. While some scientists may disagree with the Bible, the facts of science do not. Hence, science is not an enemy of Christianity.

4. Science And Miracles

When the subject of the Bible and science is addressed, the question of miracles usually arises. Since we live in a scientific age, no longer bound by many of the superstitions of the past, some people assume that modern science has ruled out the miraculous because we now have a better understanding of how the universe functions. Unlike people of the past, we are able to explain why things happen because of our understanding of natural law.

However, natural law does not explain away the miracles recorded in the Bible. The laws that modern science have formulated do not rule out the possibility, or probability, of miracles. In fact, scientific laws are not laws at all, but theories that are being modified from time to time as new evidence or explanations are found.

5. The Terminology About Miracles Is Important

With regard to miracles and the laws of science, many of the misconceptions have to do with terminology. A miracle may be defined simply as an event disrupting the normal order of things. We must be careful when we talk about the “laws of science.” People use phrases such as “breaking the laws of science” and “unalterable scientific laws.” To the non-scientist this seems as if it is something impossible to do. But this is not the case. Scientific laws are generalizations made by human observation concerning cause and effect relationships.

For example, we have observed throughout history that a person who dies from crucifixion stays dead. They do not get up three days later and walk around. From this observation we formulate a law of science, namely—crucified people do not get up and wander around. The thought behind this and other scientific laws is that it will happen everywhere, and in every case.

6. Scientific Laws Describe Normal Occurrences

But a scientific law neither dictates an event, nor does it explain an event. It generalizes and describes what normally occurs. Yet, the law does not determine what will always occur. If there is overwhelming evidence that on one particular occasion a crucified person did rise after three days, one cannot appeal to scientific law to deny the facts of the case.

Consequently, we need to be careful about using such phrases as “breaking the laws of science” when it comes to explaining certain unusual or miraculous events. The so-called laws are only observations of what we, as human beings, normally see happen. They do not tell us why any event happens, or that any event will always happen.

Therefore, one cannot point to the laws of science to rule out miracles. Miracles, by definition, are events that are not in the normal order of things. Scientific law does not, in any way, rule out the miraculous.

Science Is Limited: It Cannot Answer Many Crucial Questions

Why did life on earth begin? Why are we here on this planet? What is our purpose for existence? Is there an Intelligence who designed the universe, or is everything the result of chance? If an Intelligence did create the universe who is He?

Unfortunately, science can never really answer the above questions. It can only describe our universe and the way in which it regularly operates. Science, as we shall see, is limited in what it can tell us. The following points need to be made about the limitations of science.

1. Scientists Cannot Directly Observe The Past

One limitation of science is that it cannot directly observe the past. Scientists study the earth as it exists today. Scientists who make observations through a microscope or a telescope record our universe as it presently stands. Science can gather evidence about the past but it cannot prove what happened. This is because science relies on repeatable verification.

The scientific method requires multiple, direct or indirect observations of repeatable events. The scientist in the laboratory does his experiment today and expects to be able to do it again tomorrow with the same results.

Since any conclusion regarding past events or circumstances cannot be made as a result of direct observation or experimentation, it places them outside the realm of “scientific proof.”

2. Certain Things Are Beyond Scientific Inquiry

Since no human being can directly observe the past, no question about our origins can be answered scientifically because first origin questions involve events that are forever in the past. The very beginnings of the universe, and of life on earth, cannot be repeated. Neither was there any human being alive to observe and record them. Hence, questions about the origin of life and the universe are unable to be considered by the scientific method of experimentation and repetition. Therefore, any conclusion made on these subjects is ultimately based upon faith, not upon scientific proof.

3. There Is A Difference Between Operational And Origin Science

Sometimes people confuse “experimental science,” or “operational science,” things that can be tested and repeated, with “origin science,” things which can neither be repeated nor tested. Since this is a common mistake it is important that we understand the distinction.

“Origin science” or “historical science” is concerned with things that are neither testable nor repeatable; the beginning of the universe. Since the

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beginning of the universe has already taken place, and can never be repeated, there is no scientific test can give us the answer as to what exactly happened. Indeed, we cannot reproduce our beginnings.

Therefore, we must make the distinction between experimental science, which gives reproducible results in the present, and “historical,” or “origin” science, which attempts to make educated inferences about what may have happened once in an unseen past. Unfortunately, experimental or operational science is often confused with origin or historical science. We must be careful not to do this.

4. Scientists Also Exercise Faith

This brings us to our next point; scientists exercise faith. Though the perception is often given that the evolutionary scientist deals with facts while the person who trusts the Bible operates solely on faith, this is not the case. The unbelieving scientist is just as much a person of faith as a believing scientist or a theologian when it comes to questions of origin.

In fact, there are only two alternatives a person has with respect to our origins: (1) to believe in a Creator or (2) to believe that everything happened by blind chance. There are no other choices. Furthermore, whatever a person assumes about our origins, he or she does so by faith. Indeed, the explanation from both the creationist and evolutionist positions requires a person to exercise faith. This is crucial to understand.

Though the theory of evolution is the backbone of modern science, modern science is in an odd position because the theory of chance evolution is an unproved and an unprovable theory. Belief in the theory of evolution is basically the same as belief in special creation—both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, by definition, is capable of proof.

The naturalistic explanation to our origins rejects the idea of the miraculous; the mechanism for bringing order out of disorder is said to be blind random chance. On the other hand, the biblical explanation recognizes that nature is ordered and highly complex. Biblical creationism openly concludes that an intelligent Creator God was responsible for our universe and that miracles were involved in the process.

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In either case, each view is based upon faith. There were no human witnesses to our origins neither can what occurred be repeated in a laboratory. Therefore, each of these theories is essentially unknowable and unprovable as far as the scientific method is concerned.

Whether one believes life was supernaturally designed by the God of the Bible or evolved by blind chance, the belief is based upon faith, not repeatable scientific evidence or the testimony of a human observer.

5. Everyone, Including Scientists Have Limited Knowledge

One other thing that must be appreciated is our lack, or shortage, of knowledge about the universe in which we live. Indeed, human beings have only gathered a tiny fraction of the knowledge that is possible for us to know. In other words, we know hardly anything in comparison to the facts that are out there.

To make matters worse, our understanding of this limited knowledge is itself limited. Therefore, we have a limited understand, of limited facts, concerning the truths of our universe. All of our assumptions are based upon incomplete knowledge. This certainly does not inspire great confidence in any conclusions that human beings come to.

6. Scientific Theories Constantly Change

It should also be noted that the history of science consists of one new theory after another. Sometimes theories are abandoned entirely. Other theories have been changed so often that they lose their original identity. They become like the proverbial pair of pants that ended up more patch than pants. There are times that a theory seems so factual that it is unchallenged for generations, only to be later overturned by the uncovering of new facts. Thus, a scientific hypothesis, theory, or law is not in the same realm as absolute truth.

Dr. Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb, described the progress of science since the Second World War in the following way:

Practically everything that for years we believed to be true has been proven false or incorrect by subsequent discovery. In fact there is only one statement that I would now dare to make positively: There is absolutely nothing faster than the speed of light—maybe (Readers Digest, September 1970, p. 20).

This statement speaks for itself!

7. Scientific Statements Must Be Challenged

It is important that statements made by in the name of science should be challenged. Yet this does not often happen. In fact, over and over again we read and hear such phrases such as “scientists have proved that such and such happened” or “science has shown this to be true.” The way these phrases are stated seemingly prevents them from begin criticized. Indeed, if a person can begin a discussion with the phrase “science has shown” or “science has proved that” then basically they can say almost anything and get away with it.

However, no scientific statement is indisputable and no theory should be regarded as final. Yet we often find scientific theories stated as though they are fact and that there should be no further discussion on the issue. This is not the way we should address this issue.

8. Scientists Are Not Always Objective

There is also the matter that scientists are human beings. The usual picture of a scientist is a person who is open-minded, willing to explore all areas and to study all the data. It is important to understand that there are some scientists who are not always detached, dispassionate observers. These scientists are not very quick to abandon their own particular theory even though they may find contradictory evidence.

Only if all efforts fail and additional facts incompatible with the accepted theory are uncovered will they begin to consider other explanations. Scientists, like the rest of us, are sinful, fallible, human beings. This must always be remembered.

9. Some Scientists Admit Their Prejudice

Some scientists have even admitted that they wanted to get rid of the idea of God as Creator. Aldous Huxley, one of the early advocates of the theory of evolution, wrote about his prejudices:

I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for that assumption . . . The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize political power and govern in the way they find advantageous to themselves For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. The supporters of these systems claimed that in some way they embodied the meaning (a Christian meaning, they insisted) of the world. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt; we could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever (Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937, pp. 312,315, 316).

The theory of mindless evolution is not always believed because people are convinced that it has the better evidence to support it. Rather it is often accepted as true because people do not want to believe in God's special creation and be responsible to the Creator for their behavior.

In fact, when speaking of human behavior, the Bible says that people love the darkness rather than the light. We read the following words in John's gospel.

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who

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does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed (John 3:19-20).

We must always remember this; our motives are not always what we think they may be.

10. The Majority Of Scientists Can Be Wrong

Because the majority of scientists believe something it does not make that thing true. The majority can be wrong. For example, the majority of people reject the Bible as God's Word—they are wrong. Jesus emphasized that the majority of people would be lost. Jesus said.

Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matthew 7:13,14).

Therefore, we must be careful to accept as true what the “majority of scientists” might say upon a particular subject. This is especially true when it deals with areas that the Bible speaks about; the supernatural creation of our universe.

11. Science Cannot Give Ultimate Answers

We cannot, therefore, look to science to provide us with any ultimate answers about our origin, purpose or destiny. Indeed, the purpose of science is to describe the universe in which we live, but science can do no more than describe.

Science can help us answer questions about what exists in our universe but it cannot answer questions of why they exist or how they came into existence.

It is the job of science to observe the natural world and seek to understand it through that observation. Science can often say, “This happens,” or “This is how such-and-such happens,” but it is usually outside scientific jurisdiction to say, “This is why such-and-such happens.” Unfortunately, scientists often overstep their domain and

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attempt to deliver declarations on subjects with which science, by definition, is unable to deal.

While science may unravel some of the mysteries of physical life, it cannot address the question of right or wrong. The same science that can unlock the power of the atom cannot help us choose between good or evil ways of using that power.

Therefore, terms such as good and evil, right and wrong, meaning and purpose, do not belong to the vocabulary of science. Ultimate answers must come from some other source.

Fortunately, we have that source; the Bible, the Word of the living God.

The Bible Is Scientifically Unique And Ahead Of Its Time

With regard to the Bible and science, three important points need to be emphasized. (1) Every ancient religion had certain unscientific views of astronomy, medicine, hygiene, etc. Ignorance and superstition were the order of the day. (2) The one notable exception is the Bible which does not contain any of the scientific absurdities that were common among their contemporaries. (3) The Scriptures were far ahead of their time in many scientific areas with which they dealt.

1. There Are Scientific Absurdities In Ancient Religions

As one might suppose, scientific beliefs in the ancient world showed a high degree of superstition. Scientific teaching in ancient religions fared no better. The Hindu Scriptures, for example, taught that the earth was riding on the back of four elephants which stood on top of a giant sea turtle swimming in a sea of milk. Other religions had similar superstitions. With one notable exception, the Bible, scientific errors and absurdities were found in all of the religious writings of the ancient world.

Furthermore, the teachings concerning humanity and nature in many ancient religions actually hindered the development of scientific progress. When various cultures made progress in the sciences it was not reflected in their sacred books.

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For example, in many sacred writings medical references are non-existent. The reason for this is that these religions taught that human life was of little or no value. Consequently, there were no real medical advances made in the society.

The religious writings of the ancient world reflected the common thought of the day. The authors of the sacred writings of ancient religions reveal themselves to be imperfect humans searching for answers. There is *no* difference between their writings and the secular writings of the time. They all made the same mistakes. It is important that we understand this!

2. There Is Nothing Scientifically Absurd In Scripture

In dramatic contrast to primitive and mythological religious writings, the Bible is faithful to scientific evidence. Indeed, whenever a scientific statement is attributed to the God of the Bible we discover that when properly interpreted it matches up with the known facts of our world. In other words, statements by God or by His spokesmen would always correctly reflect the world as we know it. It is truly amazing that we don't find Scripture making unscientific statements.

Even today, no scientific observation in the Bible contradicts known scientific evidence. However, we must emphasize that the Bible is not a scientific textbook; it is not meant to be understood only by the scientific elite.

The Bible primarily is a book about God's revelation of Himself and His dealings with humankind. Consequently, the language of Scripture is neither scientific nor unscientific, it is *nonscientific*. The language of Scripture is the language of common communication.

Yet, in the ancient world, the Bible is the only religious book that has scientific credibility.

Although errors were made by the hundreds in other religions, there are none found in Scripture. Among all the Holy Books of the world's religions, the only document that reveals an accurate understanding of science and nature is the Bible.

3. The Bible Is Scientifically Far Ahead Of Its Time

The Bible is not only scientifically correct in its understanding of the world; in a number of areas it was far ahead of its time. When we consider the times in which the Scriptures were written, and the common beliefs of the day, the fact that the Bible makes no outlandish scientific statements is even more incredible.

Indeed, the writings of Moses did not reflect the widespread ignorance of Egypt in which he was raised. He did not repeat the errors that he had been schooled in since childhood.

An Example Of The Bible Being Ahead Of Its Time: The Laws Of Sanitation

An illustration of the Bible being far ahead of the scientific knowledge of the times would be in the laws of sanitation. It was not until modern times that medical science learned the value of sanitation. The man credited with this discovery was Ignaz Semmelweis. The story is as follows.

Semmelweis was in charge of one of the maternity wards at the famous Vienna hospital Allgemeines Krankenhaus, in the mid-1800s. In the hospital, there was a very high mortality rate for mothers who had just given birth. No one could understand why and Semmelweis decided to investigate the problem. He noticed that more deaths were occurring from the section where the student doctors examined the mothers, than from the section where midwives worked.

Semmelweis observed that the student doctors examined their patients immediately after performing autopsies on those who recently had died. The students went directly from performing the autopsies to examining the mothers without any sanitary precautions. Semmelweis instituted the rule that all doctors must first wash their hands thoroughly before going to the maternity ward. Once this new rule was instituted, the mortality rate dramatically decreased. It took some time to convince his fellow doctors that the solution to this problem was a simple matter of sanitation. Eventually, he was recognized for making this important contribution.

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Semmelweis actually rediscovered the laws of sanitation that were put down over three thousand years earlier in the Bible. Moses had commanded the people not to come into contact with anyone who had just died or who was diseased. They were considered unclean. Anyone who did come in contact was commanded to wash themselves repeatedly in running water (Leviticus 13-15, Numbers 19). It is sad to think how many people needlessly died by not observing the simple sanitation procedures that are laid down in the Bible. The command, given over three thousand years ago by Moses, is just as valid today.

How Were The Writers Of Scripture Able To Know These Things?

We have discovered that when the Scriptures record the God of the Bible speaking, we learn that it is scientifically correct in all that it states. In addition, some statements are found to be ahead of their time in many areas pertaining to science and nature.

We also know that the Bible was written by about forty different authors. Furthermore, we realize that many of them addressed areas of science and nature and, when they did so, they were scientifically correct. Now this is even more impressive since their view of these issues went against the common scientific beliefs of the day. So here's the question, "How are we to explain their accuracy?" We have a few possible options.

Option 1 They Have Superior Intelligence

One may argue that the Israelites were of superior intelligence to all their contemporaries. This argument falls to the ground when we examine their non-sacred writings. We find they contain the same misconceptions, the same errors and the same limited perception of their contemporaries. It is only their sacred Scriptures that are free from absurdities, not their secular writings. One cannot appeal, therefore, to their superior intellect as an answer to this question.

Option 2 They Were Lucky

Another possibility is that the biblical writers were just plain lucky, but this argument cannot be taken seriously. When we consider the fact that every biblical writer who wrote about the natural world was *always* correct

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when he spoke of this subject, and that the Bible deals with many different authors separated by hundreds of years of time, the idea that they all could be lucky in every scientific statement is not very plausible. We need to find a better explanation.

Option 3 The Bible Is God-Breathed Scripture

Neither of the above solutions explains the facts. The best explanation is that God supernaturally inspired the writers to avoid the common superstitions of their day. No single human author could have compiled this scientific information without the intervention of the supernatural. The Bible itself claims to be a God-breathed book. Paul wrote to Timothy.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

This is where the evidence leads us; to a Bible that is divinely inspired.

Why The Apparent Conflict Between Scripture And Science?

If there are no genuine conflicts between science and Scripture, why do we have apparent conflicts? Shouldn't everyone acknowledge that science and the Bible are always in agreement? Why do we have such problems?

Same Data, Different Interpretations

It must be emphasized that all scientists work with the same data. The facts are the same; the difference lies in the interpretation of the facts. We need to make several points.

1. There Are Different Assumptions, Or Presuppositions, That Are Held

The interpretations are different, in many cases, because the presuppositions are different. For example, if an individual already has presupposed the world came into being through organic evolution, they will interpret data within the framework of their theory.

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Therefore, the evidence will be made to fit the theory they have already accepted to be true.

Consider the following admission about this subject by scientist J.W.N. Sullivan.

It became an accepted doctrine that life never arises except from life. So far as actual evidence goes, this is still the only possible conclusion. But since it is a conclusion that seems to lead back to some supernatural creative act, it is a conclusion that scientific men find very difficult of acceptance (J. W. N. Sullivan, *The Limitations of Science*. New York; New American Library, 1933, p. 94).

This shows that it is not so much the evidence that guides some people, as it is what they presuppose, or assume to be true.

2. People Have The Same Facts, But Come To Different Conclusions

It is important to note that that two people who look at the same facts with different assumptions will come to different conclusions. We find an example of this in the New Testament when Jesus was speaking to the multitude. He said.

Father, glorify your name! Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him (John 12:28,29).

From this account, we find that all of the people had the same facts (hearing the voice of God the Father). Yet some would not believe what they clearly heard. They attributed it to thunder. Why? It was because of their assumptions. Since, these people did not believe that Jesus was the promised Messiah, they therefore assumed God the Father would not approve of His ministry.

When the Father spoke His approval of Jesus and His ministry certain people *chose* not to believe what they clearly heard. The voice was not rejected because of the evidence; it was rejected because of their previous

assumptions. This illustrates how people can have the same facts before them and come up with different interpretations of those facts based upon their assumptions.

Scientific theories fit into the same category. The assumptions the scientist brings to the data he discovers will influence the way the data is interpreted. *The difference lies not in the facts, but in the interpretation of the facts.*

3. There Is An Incorrect Understanding Of What The Bible And Science Are Saying

A further cause of the apparent conflict between the Bible and science lies with believers and their incorrect interpretation of the Bible. The mistake is not with the Bible. Rather, it is without our wrong interpretation of it.

Indeed, we often find that the so-called contradictions between faith in the Bible and the data of science are *not* conflicts between the Scripture and assured scientific knowledge.

Instead they are incorrect interpretations of the Bible and certain scientific theories. Therefore, Christians must be careful not to assign blame to a scientific theory that contradicts Scripture until they are assured that their interpretation of Scripture is what the Bible actually says on the issue.

On the other hand, the scientific theory is only a theory which may be refuted by later evidence. This possibility must also be kept in mind.

4. Jesus Showed What Was The Source Of All Error: Ignorance Of The Scripture, Ignorance Of God's Power

The main reason for the seeming conflict between the Bible and science was pointed out long ago by Jesus. He told the religious leaders they were ignorant of two basic things. He said.

Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God" (Matthew 22:29).

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A correct understanding of what the Scriptures truly say, and the power of the God of the Bible, would go a long way to solve the apparent conflicts between science and the Bible.

When the relationship between the Bible and science is properly understood, there is no conflict. To sum up, for such an ancient book to earn scientific respectability is a true wonder.

Summary To Reason 5: The Bible's Scientific Respectability

While science and the Bible are often seen as enemies, a proper understanding of what each of them is saying will find that they are indeed friends. The God who made the universe is the same God who divinely inspired the Bible. Therefore, the facts of science and the teachings of the Bible will not ultimately be in conflict.

The scientific descriptions found in the Bible are accurate in the way they were written. Moreover, Scripture has also anticipated some of the findings of modern science.

Consequently, one does not have to be scientifically embarrassed by the things written in Scripture. The reasons for the apparent conflict between science and Scripture are due to either a misunderstanding of the scientific evidence or a wrong interpretation of the Bible. When the Bible and science are properly understood we find that there is no conflict between them.

It is indeed amazing that this ancient Book, the Bible, is scientifically respectable in the twenty-first century.

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Reason 6

The Bible's Ability To Predict The Future

I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass . . . I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them for you, so you could never say, 'My image did these things, my idol, my cast image, decreed them.' You have heard; now look at all the evidence! Will you not admit that what I say is true? (Isaiah 48:3,5,6 New English Translation)

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Reason 6

The Bible's Ability To Predict The Future

One major feature that separates the Bible from any other book that has ever been written is its ability to correctly predict the future. Indeed, Scripture contains a wealth of prophecies that were made years before they were accurately fulfilled.

Predictive Prophecy Shows That God Does Exist And Is In Control Of All Things

Predictive prophecy demonstrates three central truths. First, it shows us that the God of the Bible exists. In fact, God Himself uses the evidence from predictive prophecy to demonstrate His existence.

Second, God also knows what will take place in the future. He has “all knowledge.” Scripture says that everything which has happened in the past, is happening in the present, and will happen in the future is known to Him. In other words, nothing will ever take Him by surprise.

Third, God not only knows what will happen, He is also in control of all events. This includes events that have yet to take place. Thus, He controls the events; they do not control Him.

The Claim Of The God Of The Bible

Scripture records God Himself citing predicting prophecy as evidence of His existence and control over all things. We read Him saying the following.

Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please’ (Isaiah 46:9,10).

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In this passage, the Lord stresses the point that there is no being like Him. Why is this so? For one thing, He alone is able to predict future events. No other being is capable to do this. Nobody!

Isaiah also records the Lord saying,

I announced events beforehand, I issued the decrees and made the predictions; suddenly I acted and they came to pass . . . I announced them to you beforehand; before they happened, I predicted them so you could never say, 'My image did these things, my idol, my cast image, decreed them.' You have heard; now look at all the evidence! Will you not admit that what I say is true? (Isaiah 48:3, 5-6 New English Translation)

Notice that the Lord says that numerous times He warned the people about what would take place in the future. Furthermore, He says that the reason He did this is so they would not falsely credit their idols. However, despite accurately predicting future events the people still refused to believe!

Then note well His challenge. They have heard His predictions now they were to examine the evidence. In doing so, the people would have to admit that what the Lord had said was indeed true.

To sum up, these two passages claim a number of things. First, the God of the Bible is the only God who exists. Furthermore, this God, who has all knowledge, has told us what is going to take place in the future. In addition, He alone is ultimately in control of all future events. These truths set Him apart from all other so-called gods.

God Knows Everything Past, Present, And Future

As noted, the Bible records many events that were accurately predicted in advance by God. These fulfilled prophecies are evidence of God's knowledge of all things, for only God, who is outside of our time-space existence and of our limited knowledge, could accurately and consistently reveal the future.

The New Testament also explains the importance of predictive prophecy.

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We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:18-21).

Ultimately, the ability to predict the future is limited to God alone. It does not derive from the human heart. Indeed, only God can do this sort of thing.

The Biblical Tests Of A Prophet: 100% Accuracy 100% Of The Time

Since the biblical prophet was sent by the true and living God to the people, that prophet could never make an incorrect prediction. Indeed, he or she had to be 100% right 100% of the time. We read the Lord saying the following to Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their people, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death. You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. No one should be alarmed (Deuteronomy 18:18-22).

A genuine prophet of God does not make any mistakes.

What Tests Are Needed To Demonstrate Genuine Prophecy?

For any prediction to be considered valid, it must pass a number of tests. They include the following.

1. The Prophecy Must Be Given Before The Fulfillment Takes Place

The prophecy must be given before the fulfillment takes place. This is primary. For any prophecy to be considered valid it must be delivered before the events take place, not after the fact. Otherwise we are not dealing with prophecy.

2. The Prophecy Must Be Explicit

There is something else which is essential. The prophecy must be of an explicit nature. In other words, it cannot be so general and vague that it can mean anything and everything. It must predict something specific that is going to happen at some time in the future.

3. In Theory, The Prophecy Must Be Able To Be Proven False

This brings us to our next point. The prophecy must be of such a nature that it can theoretically be proven to be false. In other words, it must contain specific elements that can be either proven to be true or untrue. Unless a prophecy can potentially be falsified it is meaningless.

For example, Jeremiah prophesied the following about the false prophet Hananiah.

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.'" In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died (Jeremiah 28:15-17)

Notice the specific prediction; Hananiah was to die within a year of Jeremiah's prediction. If Hananiah lived longer than one year than Jeremiah's prophecy could have been proven false making him a false prophet. However, as the Bible informs us, Hananiah did die that year. Therefore, the specific prediction of Jeremiah was proven to be true although it had the possibility of being proven false had it not come true.

4. The Prophet Cannot Have Any Part In The Fulfillment

Another essential ingredient is that those who gave the prophecies, the biblical prophets, cannot have any part in the fulfillment. The prediction must be completely fulfilled apart from the one giving it. The prophet can have absolutely nothing to do with it coming to pass.

5. The Fulfillment Must Correspond Exactly To The Prediction

In addition, for a prophecy to be considered valid, the fulfillment must correspond exactly, and in all points, to the predictions that were given. Partial fulfillment is not enough. Fulfillment must be exact.

The predictions recorded in Scripture pass all of these tests.

An Example Of Fulfilled Prophecy: The Promises To Abraham And His Descendants (The Jews)

One of the greatest examples of fulfilled prophecy concerns the Jew. About 4,000 years ago, God called a man named Abram (later called Abraham) out from a sinful culture into a land which he had been promised. The Bible records God making the following promises to Abraham and his descendants.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:1-3).

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God calls Abram out of his country and promises to create a great nation from him and his descendants. The Lord said that Abram shall be blessed and his name shall be made great. Furthermore, those that bless Abram's descendants shall be blessed but those who curse them will themselves be cursed. Through his offspring the entire world will be blessed.

Later, God added further things to His promises to Abram and his descendants. He said.

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you" (Genesis 13:14-17).

The Lord now says that Abram and his offspring are going to inherit a land with specific borders. This land will be their permanent possession. He also tells Abram that his descendants are going to be innumerable.

There is more. The Lord also promised Abram that their agreement, or covenant, would be everlasting. He said.

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God (Genesis 17:7-8).

The agreement which the Lord made with Abram is irrevocable. In other words, it can never be broken.

The Promise Made To Isaac

Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. The Lord made it clear that the promises to Abraham would be fulfilled in his son, Isaac. God made the following promise to Isaac.

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Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed (Genesis 26:3,4).

God said that the descendants of Abraham and Isaac would be as numerous as the stars. Their offspring would inherit the Promised Land.

The Promise Made To Jacob

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. God later promised Isaac's son Jacob that he would be the heir to the promises. The Bible says.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you" (Genesis 35:11,12).

Many nations will come from Jacob's descendants. His descendants will also include kings.

There Are Many Specific Promises Made To These People

These passages to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob contain a number of very specific promises. They include the following.

- Promise 1** A great nation will come from the man Abraham.
- Promise 2** Abraham's name shall be blessed.
- Promise 3** He shall be a blessing to all nations.
- Promise 4** Those that bless Abraham's people will be blessed.
- Promise 5** Those that curse Abraham's people will be cursed.

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- Promise 6** His descendants, through his son Isaac, will inherit a land with specific boundaries.
- Promise 7** This land will be theirs forever.
- Promise 8** His descendants will be countless.
- Promise 9** Among their descendants would be kings.

There Are Further Predictions And Promises

As God had promised, Abraham's descendants multiplied. Four hundred years later, the people were about to enter the land of promise. Before the nation went into the Promised Land, God reconfirmed the covenant with them. The Bible says.

See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers--to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--and to their descendants after them (Deuteronomy 1:8).

This land was to belong to them. This is what the Lord promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

There Will Be Blessings For Obedience

God also told them about the blessings of obedience.

The Lord said.

If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).

If they obeyed Him, they would be blessed.

There Will Be Consequences For Disobedience

The Lord also warned them of the consequences of disobedience. He said the following.

However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you: . . . Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods--gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known (Deuteronomy 28:15,64).

While the ownership of the land was theirs forever their occupancy was linked with their obedience. They would remain in the land as long as they obeyed the Lord. Disobedience to the commandments of the Lord would cause the people to be removed from the land.

However, God promised to bring back the scattered people. We read the following promises in the Book of Deuteronomy.

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you (Deuteronomy 30:1-3).

From these verses we can observe three further predictions.

Promise 10 If the people would remain faithful to God, He would bless them and give them victory over their enemies.

Promise 11 Yet God would remove them from the land if they were unfaithful to Him. They would eventually be scattered across the whole earth as strangers in unfamiliar lands and they would find no rest for their wanderings.

Promise 12 However, God in His faithfulness did promise to bring them back into the land.

From these promises God made to Abraham and his descendants, we find at least twelve specific things that were predicted for him and his offspring.

The Fulfillment Of These Promises

As we look at the verdict of history, we find that each of these promises has been wonderfully and marvelously fulfilled. We can make the following observations.

Fulfillment One: A Great Nation Did Come From Abraham

A great nation did come from Abraham. By the time they were about to enter the Promised Land, his descendants in the nation Israel were numerous. This is especially remarkable when we consider that Abraham and his wife Sarah were beyond the age of child bearing when their first son, Isaac, was born. Therefore, the nation that sprang from Abraham started with a supernatural beginning.

Fulfillment Two: Abraham's Name Has Been Blessed

Abraham was promised that his name should be blessed among the nations. This too has been literally fulfilled. Three of the great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all look to Abraham as their human founder. His name is still revered around the world.

Fulfillment Three: Abraham And His Descendants Have Been A Blessing

The promise was that the descendants of Abraham shall bless the entire world. This has been literally fulfilled, both nationally and individually.

Indeed, one particular descendant of Abraham who fulfills this promise was Jesus Christ. The first verse of the New Testament reads as follows.

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This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

The New Testament proclaims Jesus was Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world. The coming of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of a specific promise that God made to Abraham. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16).

Paul says that the prediction to Abraham concerned one particular descendant; that descendant was Jesus Christ. Again, the specific prediction given to Abraham has been fulfilled.

Fulfillment Four: Those Who Have Blessed Abraham's People Have Been Blessed

The Bible, as well as secular history, records examples of individuals and nations who have helped Israel and found themselves blessed of God.

For example, Scripture records that God spared the woman Rahab because she hid Israel's spies from the people of Jericho. When the city was destroyed her family members were the only ones not killed. Rahab eventually married one of the Israelites. Among their descendants included King David, and the Lord Jesus Christ. She was indeed blessed by God.

Fulfillment Five: Those Who Have Cursed Abraham's People Have Been Cursed

There also is a curse on those peoples who have attempted to destroy Israel. Not only has Israel survived, but the nations that have persecuted them—Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia and many others—either have been destroyed, or completely lost their individual identity.

Have you ever heard of an Austrian Amorite? A Swedish Edomite? A French Jebusite? No! These people have been totally absorbed into other

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cultures and races. The Jews, however, have not lost their national identity.

As the Bible predicted, all the nations that attempted to destroy Israel have been judged, while those who have befriended Israel have prospered.

Fulfillment Six: His Descendants Inherited The Promised Land

The descendants of Abraham, through his son Isaac, did inherit the land of promise. Four hundred years after God spoke to Abraham, a large nation entered into the Promised Land.

Fulfillment Seven: This Land Is Still Occupied By Them

Today, they still are there, thousands of years after the initial promise. This is another remarkable fulfillment of the promise especially given the history of the nation and the fact that it has been exiled twice from their land only to later return.

Fulfillment Eight: Countless Numbers Of Descendants Did Come From Abraham

The number of Abraham's descendants has become countless as predicted in Scripture. They have numbered in the tens of millions and are continuing to this day. This is remarkable when we consider again that Abraham and Sarah's first child, Isaac, was born after both of them were beyond the child-bearing age.

Fulfillment Nine: The Descendants Of Abraham Did Include Kings

As predicted, Abraham's descendants were royalty. We find that kings such as David and Solomon ruled the nation.

Fulfillment Ten: They Were Blessed When They Obeyed God

God had promised blessings for His people as long as they remained obedient to Him. The Old Testament records times of great prosperity when Israel was faithful to the Lord. During the reign of David and

Solomon, for example, the borders increased and the people were mightily blessed of God.

**Fulfillment Eleven: God Removed Them
Twice For Disobeying Him**

If they were unfaithful, God promised to remove them from the land. This has been literally fulfilled. In 721 B.C., the Assyrians took the Northern kingdom of Israel into captivity. In 606 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar took the remainder of the people captive to Babylon. In 588-586 B.C., after a long siege, he burned the city and the temple.

The children of Israel also were scattered in A.D. 70 when Titus the Roman surrounded the city of Jerusalem and burned the rebuilt city and the temple. For almost 1900 years, the Jews wandered about the earth as strangers being persecuted from every side. The culmination of their persecution occurred in the holocaust of World War II, when six million Jews were put to death in concentration camps. The predictions again were literally fulfilled.

Fulfillment Twelve: God Has Brought Them Back Twice

However, as God promised, He allowed all those who desired to return to the land. In 537-536 B.C., or after seventy years, those who had been taken captive to Babylon were allowed to return (Ezra chapter 1).

Though removed from their homeland a second time in A.D. 70, once again the people returned. Against all odds, the state of Israel was reborn on May 14, 1948, and the Jews began to return to their homeland from all points of the compass. This is the second time in their history they have come back into their land after being forcibly removed.

Since 1948, they have survived some terrible conflicts, including the Six-Day War in 1967 and the 1973 Holy Day War. Conflicts continue to this day, yet they still survive.

Through all of this, the nation neither perished nor lost its national identity. History has demonstrated that any people who leave their

homeland will, after about five generations, lose their national identity by being absorbed into a new culture, but the Jews remained a distinct entity.

Conclusion

From the above evidence, we can make a number of conclusions.

1. The Jews Are Unique

Middle East expert Lance Lambert noted the unique experiences of the Jews. He wrote.

God has dealt with no nation as he has dealt with the Jewish people. In their 4,000-year-long history, they have been exiled from their land twice, and have been restored to it twice . . .

No other nation in the history of mankind has twice been uprooted from its land, scattered to the ends of the earth and then brought back again to that same territory. If the first exile and restoration were remarkable, the second is miraculous. Israel has twice lost its statehood and its national sovereignty, twice had its capital and hub of religious life destroyed, its towns and cities razed to the ground, its people deported and dispersed, and then twice had it restored again.

Furthermore, no other nation or ethnic group has been scattered to the four corners of the earth, and yet survived as an easily identifiable and recognizable group . . . From the Far East to the Far West there is hardly a nation that has not had Jewish citizens within it. The remarkable fact is that the Jewish people have been able to survive as a people, instead of being absorbed and assimilated into the larger Gentile majorities among whom it was scattered. We must remember that we are not considering a period of one generation, or even one century, but nearly two thousand years (Lance Lambert, *Israel*, Wheaton, Illinois, Tyndale, 1981, pp. 55,56).

The Jewish nation has had experiences like no other nation on the earth.

2. They Are A Living Miracle

The author once attended a debate at a California college concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. Among the participants was a rabbi. During the

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question period the rabbi was asked why he didn't believe in Jesus. He replied, "I don't believe in the New Testament miracles."

A student immediately asked him why he rejected the New Testament miracles but accepted the Old Testament miracles. The rabbi said, "I don't believe in the Old Testament miracles either, I believe they are all myths." It was incredible to hear that particular person make such a statement. The mere fact that he, as a Jew, had survived is one of the greatest miracles of all history.

Mark Twain wrote the following insightful comment about the Jew.

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one per cent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of; but he is heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine . . . are also way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendour, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality? (Mark Twain, *Concerning the Jews*, 1899).

The Jew is indeed a living testimony to the God of Scripture.

3. God Is Faithful To His Promises!

The God of Scripture is faithful. He has demonstrated His existence and faithfulness by dealing with the nation Israel as a living sign to the world that He keeps His promises. Fulfilled biblical prophecy is convincing evidence of God's knowledge of all things—past, present, and future. It is indeed one of the reasons to trust the Bible and a true wonder!

Summary To Reason 6: The Bible's Ability To Predict The Future

The Bible claims the ability to accurately predict events before they occur. Indeed, Scripture says that we can know that God exists and that He is in control of history by the fact that He can tell us what will take place in the future.

In addition, the predictions in Scripture are specific, not vague. Furthermore, many of the predictions were fulfilled beyond the lifetime of the human prophet.

The evidence bears this out. The record shows that whenever the Scripture does predict the future it always occurs as predicted. Never do we find the biblical writers making a mistake in their predictions of what will take place.

An example of this can be seen in the predictions made about the descendants of Abraham – the Jew. God has marvelously fulfilled a number of specific prophecies that were made to Abraham and his descendants. Each and every one of them has been literally fulfilled exactly as Scripture predicted. In some cases, these prophecies were fulfilled thousands of years after they were given.

The testimony of the Jew clearly shows that the God of Scripture not only exists, He is also controlling history. It is not possible that these fulfillments could have been a product of chance or lucky guesses. To the contrary, it makes it clear that a supernatural God exists. Predictive prophecy is a true wonder of the Bible. In fact, there is nothing like it anywhere else.

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Reason 7

The Bible's Honesty

God . . . cannot lie (Titus 1:2)

Reason 7

The Bible's Honesty

As one examines the Bible, it becomes apparent that it is different than other ancient religious literature in that it gives an honest portrayal of all its characters. It tells the truth about who they are and what they did.

The Bible Is Honest About The Faults Of Its Characters

Scripture honestly deals with the frailties of the people of God, and even with the shortcomings of its own authors. The Bible paints a realistic portrait of its characters, resisting any temptation to mythologize, deify, or perfect them. We can give the following examples.

Example 1 Noah Was A Drunkard

The Bible lists Noah as a man of great faith. He believed God's promise and helped save a small part of humanity from the Great Flood. However, after the Flood, Noah was once found in a drunken stupor.

The Bible says.

Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked (Genesis 9:20-23).

Noah was the same man who trusted the Lord to save his family through the ark which, in faith, he built. However, after the Flood, he allowed himself to drink to excess and make a fool of himself.

Rather than omitting this episode, Scripture shows that Noah was a person of like passions as you and I, a sinner.

Example 2 Abraham Lied About The Identity Of His Wife

Though Abraham was called the “father of the faithful,” he had his lapses of faith. On one occasion he told a king named Abimelech that his wife Sarah was actually his sister. The Bible puts it this way.

Now Abraham moved on from there into the region of the Negev and lived between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he stayed in Gerar, and there Abraham said of his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” Then Abimelek king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her. But God came to Abimelek in a dream one night and said to him, “You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman” . . . Then Abimelek called Abraham in and said, “What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done.” And Abimelek asked Abraham, “What was your reason for doing this?” (Genesis 20:1-3, 9-10).

While many righteous deeds of Abraham are recorded in Scripture so are his sins.

Example 3 Moses Disobeyed God

In the history of Israel, Moses was a leader like no other. The Bible says of him.

Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt--to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel (Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

However, the Bible also records the lack of obedience from Moses. On one occasion, Moses disobeyed God and hit a rock instead of speaking to it. The Bible says that this incident kept Moses from entering the Promised Land.

On that same day the LORD told Moses, “Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel” (Deuteronomy 32:48-52)

This act of disobedience kept Moses from entering the Promised Land. While Moses was probably the greatest leader in the Old Testament period, his shortcomings are not hidden from us.

Example 4 The Nation Israel Was Unfaithful To God

One of the remarkable things we find in the Scripture is the description of the behavior of God’s chosen people – Israel. They were specially called by God to be His witnesses to the world. While the Old Testament was written entirely by people that came from this chosen nation, there is no attempt to portray them as better than the nations around them. To the contrary, Israel is often spoken of as an unfaithful wife.

For example, when Israel won a battle the credit was given to the Lord – not their own military genius. On the other hand, when battles were lost it was attributed to disobedience to the Lord.

We also find that Israel traces its history to one of slavery. From this slavery they were delivered to the freedom of the Promised Land. No nation, making up its own history, would depict themselves as slaves. Instead, as we find with other nations, they are descendants of rulers, or of the gods.

In fact, the history of Israel reveals their weaknesses, lack of faith, losses in battles, captivity, and slavery. This is not the kind of reporting that we would expect from a biased source. It is, however, what we would expect from an honest, truthful, report of the history of the nation.

To sum up, the Old Testament reads like a truthful, believable account of the history of a nation that had its victories and its defeats.

Example 5 David Was A Murderer And An Adulterer

The Bible says that King David was a man after God's own heart. The prophet Samuel, in speaking to King Saul, described David in the following manner.

But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command (1 Samuel 13:14).

Yet, the Scripture also testifies that David was also a murderer and adulterer. The Bible records the following account.

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba . . . the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her . . . Then she went back home . . . The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant" (2 Samuel 11:1-5).

David then compounded his sin by ordering the death of Uriah. We read.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die" (2 Samuel 11: 14-15).

David was punished severely for his deeds. His murder and adultery were not whitewashed for the record.

Example 6 John The Baptist Had A Lapse Of Faith

John the Baptist was the specially chosen forerunner of Jesus. The Bible said that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. To John's father, Zachariah, the angel Gabriel said the following to before him before the conception of John.

For he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born (Luke 1:15).

Notice the angel said that John would be "great in the sight of the Lord." Jesus said of him.

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he (Matthew 11:11).

However, John was not perfect. In fact, he had a lapse of faith in Jesus. Specifically, it was concerning the way Jesus was proclaiming the message of the coming kingdom. Although John publicly acknowledged that Jesus was the Promised Messiah he began to have some questions about Jesus. The Bible records what happened.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matthew 11:2-3).

John's sin was not overlooked.

Example 7 The Rejection Of Jesus By His Own People

The Bible records that Jesus came into the world and presented Himself to His people, the Jews, as the promised Messiah. Yet it also tells us that the nation rejected Him. The Bible says.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him (John 1:10-11).

His own people, the Jews, did not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah.

Example 8 The Disciples Of Jesus Only Thought About Themselves During His Last Hours On Earth

Though the disciples of Jesus Christ helped turn the world upside down by proclaiming the message of the risen Savior, they often fell into sin. The Bible does not overlook their faults. When Jesus was about to die, the Bible says His disciples argued with one another.

A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest (Luke 22:24).

At Jesus' most troubling hour, His disciples were insensitive to the events that were transpiring. They are certainly not portrayed as spiritual giants.

Example 9 When Jesus Was Betrayed All His Disciples Deserted Him

To make matters worse, when Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot in the Garden of Gethsemane all of His disciples fled. We read what took place when Jesus was arrested.

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled (Matthew 26:56).

Instead of standing by him, they left Him alone.

Peter Denied Knowing Jesus

The Apostle Peter was a leading disciple among the Twelve. He was the first disciple who publicly acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah. Matthew writes.

“But what about you?” he [Jesus] asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15, 16).

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Though Peter rightly acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, he denied even knowing Jesus on the night of His betrayal. Scripture says the following occurred on the night Jesus was arrested.

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly (Matthew 26:69-75).

The same man, who was the first disciple to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, was also the first to deny Him after He had been betrayed.

Example 10 The Apostle Paul Parted Company With Barnabas Over John Mark

The Apostle Paul, the man who wrote many of the New Testament books, had a huge argument with his traveling companion, Barnabas. We are told they had a sharp disagreement over whether to take John Mark with them. The Bible says.

Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus (Acts 15:36-39).

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This disagreement caused them to minister separately. Among other reasons, this account is recorded to illustrate their frail humanity.

These Ten Examples Show The Bible Tells The Truth

The fact that the characters in the Bible fell into sin does not detract from the biblical message. On the contrary, the clear message of Scripture is that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the perfect standard of God. Paul wrote to the Romans.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

The Bible proclaims the holiness of the Lord God, not the perfection of His followers and prophets. The fact that the sins of the believers are recorded shows that the Bible tells it like it is.

Jesus Did Not Have Any Faults

There is one notable exception. The same authors who honestly depicted their own sin testified there was one among them who was sinless—Jesus Christ our Lord. Scripture makes it clear that Jesus was without sin.

1. Jesus Believed He Was Sinless

As we examine the account of the life of Jesus, as recorded in the New Testament, we observe that He believed Himself to be without sin. When He came to be baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus was momentarily stopped because John realized it was unnecessary. John's baptism was for the confession of sin, and he realized that this one had no sin. But Jesus insisted upon being baptized. Matthew writes.

Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus submitted to the baptism but did not confess any sin. Immediately after His baptism He was tempted by Satan. Yet Jesus refused to give in to the temptation and told the devil to leave Him. He said.

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Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only’” (Matthew 4:10).

In the great spiritual battle with the devil, Jesus did not succumb to sin.

Throughout His entire ministry, Jesus challenged those with Him to find sin in His life. He asked the following question to His disciples.

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? (John 8:46)

The response from those surrounding Him was silence. They had never seen Him sin, for He had not sinned.

At the end of His life, while proceeding to the Garden of Gethsemane to be betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father and said.

I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do (John 17:4).

Knowing of His impending death, His prayer was not one of confession, but rather one of victory. He had finished the mission given to Him by the Father and had finished it without committing a sin. It is clear that Jesus believed Himself to be sinless.

2. The Testimony Of His Friends That He Was Sinless

Not only did Jesus recognize that He was sinless, those who knew Him were aware of this fact. The Scripture records the attitude of the disciples toward Jesus. They make it clear that He was sinless. Simon Peter wrote the following.

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:21-22).

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Peter, a man who was constantly with Jesus for three years, day and night, could testify that he never saw Jesus sin. He claimed Jesus never did anything wrong, never deceived anyone.

The Apostle John, another person who was with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry, also claimed that Jesus was without sin. He wrote the following to the believers.

But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin (1 John 3:5).

John agrees with Peter: Jesus never sinned.

We again emphasize that this testimony is especially significant because it was given by people who were constantly with Jesus. They saw Him when He was tired, they saw Him when He was hungry, and when the multitudes pressed around Him.

Yet they testified that in all this they never once had seen Him sin. Their testimony, that He was without sin, carries considerable weight because they honestly reported their own faults and shortcomings. Indeed, they had faults but Jesus did not.

The Apostle Paul agreed with John and Peter. He reported the following about the character of Jesus.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Paul's claims are consistent with those who personally knew Jesus during His earthly ministry; Jesus was sinless.

3. The Testimony Of His Enemies That Jesus Was Without Sin

We have heard the testimony of Jesus Himself along with the testimony of His friends with regard to His sinlessness. Yet there is another factor to be considered—His enemies. Those who did not believe in Him also

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gave testimony to the fact that He was sinless. As Jesus was casting an evil spirit out of a man this spirit gave testimony to Him. The Bible says.

Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:23-24).

Here we have evil spirits, or demons, testifying to the holiness of Jesus. They knew who He was.

When the traitor Judas Iscariot realized the awful deed which he had done in betraying Jesus, he returned to the chief priests and elders and made the following confession.

"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4).

The man who betrayed Jesus also recognized His sinlessness.

At Jesus' trial those intimately involved in the proceedings admitted they could find no fault in Him. Matthew wrote.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward (Matthew 26:59-60).

The religious leaders were looking for something specific in which to accuse Jesus but they could not find anything. Nobody had ever seen Him sin.

Pontius Pilate, upon examining Jesus, also testified he could find no fault with Him. John records the following.

"What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 18:38).

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Though Pilate publicly stated that Jesus was innocent of all charges he still ordered His crucifixion.

When Jesus died upon the cross, the Roman centurion who was watching the proceedings realized that Jesus was righteous.

The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

To the very end, those who were acquainted with Jesus recognized His sinless nature.

It is one thing that Jesus' friends recognized His sinlessness; it is quite another thing that His enemies also acknowledged that He was without sin.

4. The Testimony Of God The Father That The Son Was Sinless

The final and by far the most significant testimony that Jesus was sinless came from God the Father; He certainly would have known whether or not Jesus had sinned.

At Jesus' baptism, the Father voiced His pleasure of the Son. The Bible says.

The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22).

The Father testified that he was "well pleased" with the Son before He began His public ministry.

Later in His ministry, at the Transfiguration, the Father again voiced audibly that the Son had pleased Him.

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" (Matthew 17:5).

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This testimony of God the Father came during the ministry of Jesus. The Father made it clear that the Son was doing those things which pleased the Father.

On another occasion, before the multitude, the Father testified to the ministry of the Son. Jesus said the following.

Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name! Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again” (John 12:27-28).

This event occurred during the latter part of Jesus ministry. Again, the Father testifies that He is pleased with the actions of the Son.

The final act that demonstrated the testimony of God the Father to the sinlessness of Jesus was the acceptance of His sacrifice on the cross. The fact that He received Jesus into heaven showed that His mission was accomplished as the perfect, sinless sacrifice. The Bible says.

Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last (Luke 23:46).

If Jesus had sinned in any manner, then He would not have been able to appear in the presence of His Father. The Father’s unqualified acceptance of Jesus was the final testimony to His sinlessness.

Thus, we know that Jesus Himself, His friends, His enemies, and God the Father all considered Him to be without sin. This being the case we conclude that Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life while here on earth.

Bible teacher Wilbur Smith offers a fitting observation on the character of Jesus.

Fifteen million minutes of life on this earth, in the midst of a wicked and corrupt generation—every thought, every deed, every purpose, every work, privately and publicly, from the time He opened His baby eyes until He expired on the cross, were all approved of God. Never once did our Lord have to confess any sin, for He had no sin

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(Wilbur Smith, *Have You Considered Him?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970, p. 8, 9).

The honesty of the Bible is refreshing. The faults of its characters (except for the sinless Son of God who had no faults) are not overlooked or whitewashed. This honesty is another of the wonders which set the Bible apart from all other religious literature. The writers told the truth!

Summary To Reason 7: The Bible's Honesty

The Bible gives an honest report about the behavior of people. Indeed, there is no attempt to hide the imperfections of the main characters in Scripture. They were not made into superheroes. Like the rest of us, they had their imperfections. We cited ten examples: Noah, Abraham, Moses, the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, David, John the Baptist, the nation's rejection of Jesus, Jesus' own disciples, Peter, and Paul.

In each of these instances these people, as well as an entire nation, were portrayed to be normal human beings who have faults such as you and I have. There is no attempt to make them into spiritual giants or people who were faultless. However, in contrast to them, the main character of the Bible, Jesus Christ, had no faults. He never sinned. This is the record of Scripture.

Not only did Jesus claim this for Himself, His testimony was confirmed by His closest friends, His enemies, and God the Father. While it is clear that everyone else sinned, it is also a fact that Jesus never sinned. The testimony of Jesus' sinlessness came from those who intimately knew Him. In other words, they were in a position to make such a claim. This is an honest report of what took place.

The Bible does not lie. Again, we find that Scripture shows itself to be different from any other book; it tells it like it is! We are all sinners but Jesus Christ was not. This is why He is able to save us from our sins.

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Reason 8

The Bible's Unique Teachings

“But you are my witnesses, O Israel!” says the LORD. “You are my servant. You have been chosen to know me, believe in me, and understand that I alone am God. There is no other God—there never has been, and there never will be (Isaiah 43:10)

Reason 8

The Bible's Unique Teachings

One aspect of the Bible, that separates it from other religious books, is its unique teachings. The teachings of Scripture cannot be explained as a product of the religious environment of its authors, since many of its teachings were contrary to the religious beliefs at that time. When the teachings of Scripture are compared to other ancient religions they are found to be one of a kind, having no like or equal.

The Bible Has Many Unique Teachings

The Bible contains a number of unique teachings. We will examine three of the many special teachings of Scripture that were contrary to the beliefs of *all of the nations* surrounding Israel: the belief in one God; the teaching that the one God is a loving Father and a realistic hope of life beyond the grave.

1. There Is Only One God Who Exists

Against a world that accepted the existence of many gods, the Bible consistently, from beginning to end, proclaims the existence of only one God. The nation Israel was surrounded by cultures that were polytheists (they believed in and worshiped more than one God). Yet, the Old Testament is filled with warnings against idolatry and with condemnation of idolaters.

Isaiah the prophet emphasized that there is only one God. He wrote.

“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior” (Isaiah 43:10,11).

These claims are in contrast to all of the nations around them which worshiped and served many gods.

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The New Testament continues in the proclamation that only one God exists. Paul emphasizes this in his letter to the Corinthians.

So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one. “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

The unified message of Scripture is that there is only one God that exists, all others are only pretenders. This claim is in contrast to all the countries around Israel. Thus, their claim that only one God exists is unique.

Idol Worship Was Forbidden

There is something else that sets the God of the Bible apart from all others. Though idolatry was common in the ancient world, in contrast to the other nations, the Lord, the God of Israel, did not allow the making of images for the purpose of worship. We read in the Ten Commandments.

You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:4-5).

The God of Israel would not permit anyone to make a likeness of Him or anything else to worship.

To sum up, Israel in contrast to all its neighbors, worshiped only one God. In fact, they denied the existence of all other gods. Furthermore, the God of Israel would not allow idols to be made of Him, or any other thing, for the purpose of worship. This was a unique belief and practice in that part of the world.

2. The One God Is A Personal And Loving Father

Not only does the Bible emphasize that only one God exists, the attributes of the God of the Bible also are different from the concept of God, or gods, in other cultures with whom Israel had contact. The Bible reveals a living God who is a personal God; He is One who cares for human beings as a loving Father. We can make the following observations.

He Is The Living God

A person can be defined as someone who is rational, conscious of his own being. This is how the Bible portrays God. He is a person, not an impersonal force. The Bible speaks of Him as the living God. Jeremiah the prophet wrote.

But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath (Jeremiah 10:10).

The God of Scripture is alive! He is not like the idols that the other nations served.

He Is A Loving God

The Scriptures attribute characteristics to God that can be only those of a person. The Bible speaks of God having the capacity to love. Jeremiah recorded the following claim of the Lord.

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness" (Jeremiah 31:3).

The gods of the other nations did not have this attribute. Indeed, they were to be feared, not loved.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans about the love of God. He said.

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But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

God the Father has shown His love toward humanity by sending God the Son, Jesus Christ, to the world. This love that God has for the human race is in contrast to the gods of other nations. Nowhere do we find these gods having this same characteristic.

He Is A God Of Mercy

The Scriptures teach that God has the ability to show mercy to humans. An example of this is found in the Book of Jonah. The Bible says.

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened (Jonah 3:10).

When the people of Nineveh repented of their sin God had mercy on them and did not bring about the promised destruction. Though these people deserved the judgment of God their repentance led to God extending His mercy to them. This attribute was unique to the God of the Bible. The other so-called gods were not merciful.

The God Of The Bible Is Different From Idols

The Bible also contrasts the personal living God to non-existent idols. These idols can neither hear nor can they speak. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, he brought out the distinction between the living God and non-living idols. He said.

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:8,9).

Hence the Bible contrasts the living God who hears, sees, thinks, feels, and acts like a person with idols which are things, and not personal beings.

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The God of Scripture is obeyed and served because we love Him. This is in contrast to the gods of the pagan world who were to be obeyed and served out of fear rather than from loving respect. Jesus Christ reveals an idea of the fatherly attitude of the God of the Bible: He said.

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:9-13).

What a contrast between the God of Scripture and the gods of the other religions! The Bible tells believers to obey God out of their love for Him, Jesus said to His disciples.

If you love me keep my commands (John 14:15).

All of this demonstrates the personal nature of the God of the Bible. Again, this teaching is in complete contrast to the depiction of the gods of the ancient world. They were not personal, loving and forgiving gods. Only the God of Scripture has these characteristics. This is another unique feature which sets Him apart from all other so-called gods.

3. There Is Life Beyond The Grave

A final example of a unique teaching of the Bible is the evidence it provides for life beyond the grave. All of us have to face the fact that we eventually will die. What happens to a person after death? The writer of Ecclesiastes, like the rest of us, wondered about what happens to people when they die. He wrote.

Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20).

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Most religions deal with the question of life beyond the grave. To some, this life is all that there is while other religions teach that there is an afterlife. Is there life after death?

We find that, a study of God's Word, the Bible, reveals that death is not the end of existence; it is just the beginning of eternity. There is hope of eternal life for those who have died "in Christ."

There Is A Realistic Hope For The Dead

From an observational point of view we do not know what happens to a person after they die. We bury their body and it returns to dust.

Someone once observed that, "A person can live forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air . . . but only about one second without hope."

The thing that separates the Bible from other religious books is that it provides a realistic hope for those who have died.

Our Hope Is Based Upon The Resurrection Of Jesus Christ

The basis of this promise is the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter, speaking fifty days after Jesus' death, declared the following to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost.

Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him (Acts 2:22-24).

The unanimous testimony of the New Testament is that Jesus rose from the dead, and He appeared to many people after His death. These individuals provide eyewitness testimony to the fact of His resurrection.

The Dead In Christ Have Hope

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica regarding the state of those who had died. He emphasized there is hope for the dead.

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).

The Apostle Paul says it is proper for people to sorrow for those who have died. But we are not to sorrow as the unbelievers do; for we have a hope beyond the grave.

Believers Will Receive A New Body

The Bible promises a new body for those who have put their faith in Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands (2 Corinthians 5:1).

This new body will be ours forever.

In another place, Paul told the Corinthians they would receive an imperishable body.

For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53).

This is a wonderful promise that the Lord gives to His people.

People Are Able To Prepare For Death

Because the Bible promises eternal life in God's presence for those who trust Christ there are things people can do to prepare for death. The first

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step is obvious. Preparation for death and eternal life requires faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.

The believer can then prepare for death by realizing that God has a purpose and a plan for his life. The psalmist trusted God to be with him through the experience of life as well as death. In the famous 23rd Psalm, we read David saying the following words.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me (Psalm 23:4).

The believer has no ultimate fear of death because the Lord is there for them.

Conclusion The Teachings Of Scripture Are Different From The Teachings Of Other Religions

The belief in one God, the idea of God as a personal, loving Father, and a genuine hope beyond the grave are three of many of the unique beliefs found in the Scripture. The Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, contains teachings that are unique and they are wonderful in comparison to the best teachings offered in any other religious or non-religious writings.

How can we explain these teachings? They certainly did not come from the common beliefs at that time. The best explanation is the one Scripture itself gives; the Bible is God's written Word to the human race.

Thus, these teachings about God set the Bible apart from all other books. The unique teachings of the Bible are indeed a true wonder.

Summary To Reason 8: The Bible's Unique Teachings

An aspect of the Bible that separates it from other religious books is its unique teachings. The teachings of Scripture cannot be explained as a product of the religious environment of its authors, since many of its teachings were contrary to the religious beliefs at that time. When the

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teachings of Scripture are compared to other ancient religions, they are found to be one of a kind, having no like or equal.

This includes teaching that only one God exists; that the one God is personal and loving; and that this personal loving God has provided objective evidence of life after death.

These teachings of the Scripture are not based upon wishful thinking or upon some mythological view of God. Instead, they are based upon the facts. A personal and loving God exists and He has a plan for the human race.

This same God has provided more than sufficient evidence to believe in Him. These unique teachings of Scripture are another feature that makes the Bible distinct from all other religious literature.

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 9

The Bible's Main Character: Jesus Christ

“No man ever spoke like this Man” (John 7:46)

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Reason 9

The Bible's Main Character: Jesus Christ

The ninth reason to trust the Bible concerns the person and work of its main character, Jesus Christ. When one examines the life and teachings of Jesus it becomes clear that He is in a class by Himself. We can make the following observations.

Jesus Is In A Different Class Than The Founders Of Other World Religions

Throughout history many religious leaders have come on the scene and attracted large followings - the Buddha, with his teachings on how to cope with life's suffering, gained millions of adherents. Confucius, with his precepts on how members of society should get along with each other, likewise numbers his followers in the millions.

The same can be said for Muhammad and the religion of Islam. Yet, Jesus has demonstrated that He is in a different class from these, as well as all the other founders of the major religions of the world.

A number of things make Jesus different. We will mention four.

1. The Person Of Jesus Christ Is The Issue: Not His Teachings

First, He made *Himself* the issue while other leaders made *their teachings* the prime concern. Central to religions such as Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Confucianism, etc. are the teachings. What is stressed in these particular religions are the various things which these founders taught; not so much who they were. The teachers, therefore, are secondary to the teachings.

However, in Christianity, the opposite is true. The all-important issue is not so much what Jesus taught, as whom He claimed to be. This is one of the major differences between Jesus and the founders of other religions - He made Himself the issue.

Jesus Acknowledges Himself To Be The Son Of God

The claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God, is one which Jesus accepted. We read the following account.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13).

Jesus wanted to know what was being said about Him by the multitudes. Who did the people think that He was? The disciples responded in this manner.

They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matthew 16:14).

The people at that time had a number of different ideas as to Jesus’ identity. There did not seem to be any consensus among them.

Jesus then personalized the question. We read Jesus’ follow-up question.

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16:15).

The Lord wanted to know what His disciples thought of Him. Who was He to them? We read their reply.

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15).

Peter, speaking for the group, said that they believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God

Note Jesus’ response to this confession by Peter.

Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven” (Matthew 16:16).

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We discover that Jesus acknowledged Peter's confessional statement about Him. He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. Thus, Jesus believed Himself to be the Promised One.

Jesus asked this question to secure a commitment either for Him or against Him. He wanted people to make a clear declaration about Him. Was He a great prophet or a great teacher? Or was He something more, the Christ the Son of God?

Eternal Destinies Are Based Upon How We View Jesus

The identity of Jesus is not merely an academic issue. According to Jesus, eternal destinies are determined by how one responds to Jesus' claims. Jesus told the religious leaders of His day the following.

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins (John 8:24)

We do not find the leaders of the other world religions ever making such claims. Indeed, they never made themselves the issue.

When the Jewish religious leaders brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate, their accusation against Him was as follows.

The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God" (John 19:7).

Therefore, contrary to the founders of all the other major religions, it is the identity of Jesus Christ, not His teachings, that is the major issue.

2. Jesus Backed Up His Claims By Performing Miracles

A second aspect that separates Jesus from other religious leaders is that He demonstrated He had authority to make such monumental claims. While other religious leaders have made great claims, they have given no legitimate evidence to substantiate them.

Jesus, on the other hand, backed up His claims with objective proof.

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The account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man illustrates this point. When this man was brought before Him, Jesus said.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (Mark 2:5).

This claim to forgive sins upset the religious rulers. Mark records the following response.

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” (Mark 2:6-7).

They said it is only God who can forgive sins.

Only God Can Forgive Sins

They were absolutely right in their assertion that only God could forgive sins. The prophet Isaiah records God as saying:

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more (Isaiah 43:25).

But making the claim to forgive sins is something that cannot be publicly verified. How could anyone have known that Jesus had this authority? Realizing this to be the case, Jesus responded.

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk?’ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!” (Mark 2:8-12).

We note how Jesus dealt with the situation. He asked, “Which is easier to *say*, ‘Your sins are forgiven or rise up and walk?’” It is much easier to say,

“Your sins are forgiven” because no one can tell, at that moment, whether or not they have been forgiven. There is no observable sign that accompanies the forgiveness of sin.

Everyone Will Know That Jesus Christ Has The Authority

But, if someone says to a paralyzed man, “Rise up and walk,” it will immediately become apparent to everyone whether or not the person has the ability to supernaturally heal. When Jesus instantly healed the paralytic, He showed the religious rulers He had God's authority - since this miracle occurred where everyone could see it with their own eyes. Jesus, therefore, demonstrated His authority in the observable realm. It illustrated the fact that He also had supernatural authority to forgive sins in the realm we cannot see – the invisible realm.

Therefore, Jesus Christ did not merely make claims about Himself; He backed up those claims with observable miracles, which testified, to His power and authority.

3. Predictive Prophecy Separates Jesus From Other Religious Leaders

A third thing that separates Jesus from other founders of the great religions is that His coming into the world was predicted by the Old Testament prophets. We can make the following observations.

One of the major themes of the Old Testament is that God would send a Deliverer or Messiah (the Christ) to come into the world. He would eventually rule as king over Israel as well as rule over all the nations of the earth. A practical question arises, “How would the people know the identity of this promised Messiah when He arrived?” Theoretically, anyone could claim to be God’s anointed one.

This, however, was not the case. God narrowed it down in such a way that whoever claimed to be the Messiah would have to fulfill some very specific predictions.

We will look at three specific areas that had to be fulfilled by anyone claiming to be the promised Messiah.

The Family Line Of The Messiah Was Predicted

The first set of predictions, which we will consider, has to do with the Messiah's genealogy, or family line. God narrowed down the family line of the Messiah in such a way that eliminated most of the people who have ever been born.

Prediction: He Will Come From The Family Of Shem

The Bible says that the Messiah will be a descendant of one of Noah's sons – Shem. We read about this in the Book of Genesis. It says.

He also said, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem. May God extend Japheth's territory; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth" (Genesis 9:26,27).

Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. God eliminated two thirds of humanity when He said the Messiah would come through the line of Shem.

The Fulfillment Recorded

Luke lists the genealogy of Jesus in which he records Jesus was a descendant of Shem. It says He was . . .

The son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech (Luke 3:36).

Thus, Jesus was a descendant of Shem.

Prediction: The Christ Will Be A Descendant Of Abraham

The Bible says that the Messiah will descend from Abraham. We read in the Book of Genesis the Lord saying the following.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name

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great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:1-3).

Now God eliminates all the families of the earth but one - the family of Abraham. Whoever claims to be the Messiah has to be a descendant of Abraham for God told Abraham that one of his descendants will bless all the earth.

The Fulfillment Recorded

In the first verse of Matthew’s gospel, he states that Jesus descended from Abraham. We read.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

Jesus descended from Abraham. The promise to Abraham was literally fulfilled.

The Testimony Of Paul

The Apostle Paul, in the New Testament, also emphasized that God specified one from Abraham’s line would be the Christ. He wrote to the Galatians.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

The Apostle Paul says that God uses the singular rather than the plural to emphasize it will be one particular descendant of Abraham who will bless the world – this one descendant was Jesus.

Prediction: He Will Be A Descendant Of Isaac

Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. God promised Isaac that the Messiah would be through his family line. We also read about this in Genesis.

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Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed (Genesis 26:3,4).

Therefore, the Messiah would be born through the line of Isaac, not Ishmael, the other son of Abraham.

The Fulfillment Recorded

According to Matthew, Jesus was from Isaac's line. He stated.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father Isaac (Matthew 1:1,2).

The promise to Isaac was fulfilled.

Prediction: The Messiah Will Come From The Family Of Jacob

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. Scripture says that the chosen line was through Jacob. This continues to narrow the possible candidates for the Messiah. It says in the Book of Genesis.

And God said to him, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you" (Genesis 35:11,12).

Jacob, not Esau, would have the Messiah come through his line.

The Fulfillment Recorded

Jesus was also from the line of Jacob. Matthew records it as follows.

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This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers (Matthew 1:1,2).

The promise to Jacob was fulfilled.

Prediction: He Will Come From Tribe Of Judah

Jacob had twelve sons. God eliminated 11/12 of the line of Jacob by saying the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his (Genesis 49:10).

Therefore, the line of the Messiah is narrowed even further.

The Fulfillment Recorded

Jesus descended from the line of Judah. Matthew records the following.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers (Matthew 1:1,2).

The promise that the Lord made to Judah was literally fulfilled.

Prediction: The Messiah Will Be From Family Line Of Jesse

There were many family lines in the tribe of Judah, but only through the family line of Jesse could the Messiah come. He is the Branch that will bear fruit according to the prophet Isaiah. He wrote.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit (Isaiah 11:1).

The Bible says that Jesse would have a descendant who would be the Messiah.

The Fulfillment Recorded

Jesus was a descendant of Jesse. Matthew writes.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham. . . Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse (Matthew 1:1,5).

Again, we find that God's promise is fulfilled.

Prediction: He Will Descend From The House Of David

God told David that the Messiah would be from His line. We read about this promise in Second Samuel. It says.

When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12).

Jesse had at least eight sons. God eliminated 7/8 of the sons of Jesse when He said the Messiah would be through the line of David. Again, the list of potential candidates gets narrower and narrower.

The Fulfillment Recorded

The Bible records the fulfillment as follows.

This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

The very first verse of the New Testament records the fulfillment of this prophecy.

When the angel appeared to Mary announcing Jesus' birth he confirmed that Mary's child would be a descendant of David.

Luke writes.

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He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end (Luke 1:31,32).

The Bible says that Jesus descended from David. Again, the promises of God come true.

Summary To The Genealogy Of The Messiah

Whoever the promised Messiah would be, He would have to be a physical descendant of David the king. All other individuals would not qualify. Therefore, from the predictions with respect to the genealogy of the Messiah, the great majority of the people who have ever been born are eliminated from contention.

Jesus, however, fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the family line of the Messiah by being a descendant of David.

The Place Of The Messiah's Coming Was Predicted

In addition, the exact place of His birth was predicted.

Prediction: He Will Born In Bethlehem

God predicted, through the prophet Micah, the exact city where the Messiah would be born. He said the following.

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times (Micah 5:2).

Every city in the world was eliminated but one – Bethlehem of Judah or Judea. Thus if someone was a descendant of King David, yet was born in any other city than Bethlehem of Judea, he would not qualify as the promised Messiah.

What is interesting is that there was another city named Bethlehem in Israel at that time. However, this Bethlehem was not in the land of Judah. Thus, to fulfill the prophecy, the Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, or Judah, not the other Bethlehem.

The Fulfillment Recorded

Jesus was not only born in the right family, He was also born at the right place; Bethlehem of Judea. Matthew records the following.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem (Matthew 2:1).

Matthew records the fact that Jesus was indeed born in the predicted city; the city of Bethlehem of Judea.

3. The Time Of The Messiah's Coming Was Predicted

Finally, we have the prediction with respect to the time in history of the Messiah's coming.

Prediction: He Will Be Killed Before The Temple And The City Of Jerusalem Are Destroyed

The Old Testament predicts the death of the Messiah. This is found in the Book of Daniel. It reads.

After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed (Daniel 9:26)

We learn three things from this verse.

1. The Messiah will come on the scene of history.
2. He will be killed.

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3. After His death, the city of Jerusalem and the temple will be destroyed.

The Fulfillment Recorded

When Jesus came to the earth, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, had not yet been destroyed. Teaching at the temple was an important part of Jesus' ministry. The temple was destroyed in the year A.D. 70, along with the city of Jerusalem. This was forty years after His death and resurrection. Again, the predictions were literally fulfilled.

Summary To The Prophecies Concerning The Messiah

Therefore, Jesus fulfilled certain prophecies about the coming Messiah. They include.

1. He was born in the right family line - David's.
2. He was born at the right place – Bethlehem of Judea.
3. He was born at the right time in history - before the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed

There Are Two Important Points To Consider

These three areas of prophecy we have looked at reveal two startling things. They are as follows.

First, the prophecies were fulfilled literally - exactly as they were written. Jesus was literally a descendant of King David, He was literally born in the city of Bethlehem, and He literally came upon the scene of history and was killed before the city of Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. In other words, the prophecies were fulfilled exactly as they were written.

There Was No Human Manipulation In The Fulfillment

Second, these three lines of prophecy were all fulfilled without any human manipulation. There is no way Jesus could have deliberately

fulfilled them, seeing they were all fulfilled by His birth. Before He gave any sermons, before He did anything miraculous, Jesus supernaturally fulfilled these prophecies. He was born in the right family, at the right place, and at the right time in history. Humanly speaking, there is no way Jesus could control these factors. Therefore, we find in the birth of Jesus Christ, miraculous fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

4. Jesus Christ Came Back From The Dead

A fourth and final fact, which separates Jesus from all others, is that He conquered the ultimate enemy that everyone faces - death. By coming back from the dead, He provided a solid answer to the question, "What will happen to us when we die?" No other religious figure has returned from the dead to verify his claims except Jesus of Nazareth.

In addition, the bodily resurrection of Jesus can be *tested* by the most rigorous historical methods. While many other religious traditions have an idea of spirit resurrections (an untestable hypothesis), only the New Testament proclaims a bodily resurrection that passes all tests of historical reliability.

The evidence testifies that Jesus Christ has risen! The only rational explanation for these historical facts is that God raised Jesus in bodily form, forever triumphant over sin and death. Lord Darling, the former chief law officer in England, has said it well.

We as Christians are asked to take a very great deal on trust; the teachings, for example, and the miracles of Jesus. If we had to take all on trust, I, for one, should be skeptical. The crux of the problem of whether Jesus was, or was not, what he proclaimed himself to be, must surely depend upon the truth or otherwise of the resurrection. On that greatest point we are not merely asked to have faith. In its favour as a living truth there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world can fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true (Lord Darling cited by Michael Green, *The Day Death Died*, Intervarsity Press, 1982, p. 15).

This provides the believer with a genuine hope of life beyond the grave.

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Thus, the resurrection of Jesus Christ separates Him from all other religious figures, past or present, for He conquered the greatest enemy we all face - death.

Therefore, Jesus is different from the founders of other religions in at least four ways. They include the following.

1. He made Himself the issue instead of His teachings. He claimed our eternal destiny depends upon how we view *Him!*
2. He backed up His claims with observable miracles.
3. He fulfilled Old Testament predictions made about His life and His ministry. These predictions were made hundreds of years before He was born.
4. He conquered death to verify that He was the unique Son of God.

These four things separate Jesus from any other religious leader past or present.

He Is Jesus-The Only

Carnegie Simpson offers a fitting conclusion on the uniqueness of Jesus. He wrote the following.

Instinctively we do not class Him with others. When one reads His name in a list beginning with Confucius and ending with Goethe we feel it is an offense less against orthodoxy than against decency. Jesus is not one of the group of the world's great. Talk about Alexander the Great and Charles the Great and Napoleon the Great if you will . . . Jesus is apart. He is not the Great; He is the Only. He is simply Jesus. Nothing could add to that . . . He is beyond our analyses. He confounds our canons of human nature. He . . . awes our spirits (Quoted by John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1971, p. 36).

The matchless character of Jesus Christ is a true wonder of the Bible.

**Summary To Reason 9:
The Bible's Main Character – Jesus Christ**

While other religious leaders made their teachings the primary issue Jesus Christ was different. Indeed, Jesus made His identity the key issue. He not only claimed to be God the Son Jesus expected people to respond to this claim. Was He whom He claimed to be or was He not? Jesus went on to say that the eternal destiny of each individual will be determined on how they view Him. No other leader of a world religion has made such claims.

Scripture records that Jesus not only made astounding claims about Himself we are also told that He backed up these claims by performing miracles during His earthly ministry.

In addition, Jesus also fulfilled predictions made about Him hundreds of years before He was born.

The ultimate evidence that His claims were true is Jesus came back from the dead.

Consequently, Jesus Christ, the main character of Scripture, is truly unique. He said things that no one else has said and has done things that no one else has done. There is no one to whom we can compare Jesus – He is in a class by Himself.

10 Reasons To Trust The Bible

Reason 10

The Bible's Life-Changing Message

“Therefore if the Son sets you free you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36)

Reason 10

The Bible's Life-Changing Message

Unlike other religions and other religious books, the faith that the Bible calls for is backed up by facts; facts that can be put to the test. Indeed, the Bible is the only sacred book in the world which provides sufficient evidence to believe its claims. This is the verdict we come to after examining the evidence. No other religion has anything like what we find in the Bible.

We now arrive at the last of the ten reasons to trust the Bible. This particular reason personalizes the evidence we have looked at. If the Bible is indeed the Word of God, it should demonstrate an ability to transform the lives of people who trust its promises. We will discover that the message of Scripture does indeed change lives for the better. We can make a number of observations.

1. The Message Of Scripture Answers Our Deepest Questions

The Bible claims that its message can fill the spiritual void that is within all of us. Jesus gave the following invitation to those who are in need of spiritual answers.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus promised rest for weary souls. Once we put our trust in Him our spiritual journey, our search for truth, will be over. Indeed, we will find that rest we have been looking for.

Therefore, Scripture invites us to believe and see for ourselves. The psalmist wrote.

Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him (Psalm 34:8).

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The Lord asks us to personally experience His love and forgiveness. This invitation is still being given to all those who desire to know “the truth.” We are to come to Him by faith and put His claims to the test.

2. We Can Become A New Creation In Christ

When a person believes in Jesus as their Savior, their outlook on life takes on a new perspective—they become a “new creation.” Paul wrote.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Our spiritual life begins the moment we trust Christ. The Bible also speaks about this as being “born again” or “born from above.” Jesus said.

Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again (John 3:3)

According to Jesus, this spiritual rebirth is absolutely necessary. We must be “born again.”

3. Belief In Christ Answers The Three Basic Questions About Life

Life takes on an entire new meaning when a person becomes a Christian. Indeed, if the Christian faith is true, then it gives humanity the answers to the three basic questions about life, “Who am I? Why am I alive? What will happen to me when I die?”

We Now Have An Identity: We Know Who We Are

Jesus Christ solves our identity problem. We no longer need to speculate about who we are. Indeed, we now understand that we have been created in the image of an all-powerful, personal God; we are not some evolutionary accident. We read in the Book of Genesis about the creation of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve.

So God created human beings in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).

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God's image means that we have certain things in common with Him. They include the ability to think, love and communicate. We have the chance to know the one true God because He has given us these abilities. We now know that human beings are special and that we are special to God. This gives us an explanation as to exactly who we are.

We Now Have A Purpose: We Know Why We Are Here

Along with identity comes a genuine purpose for living. Instead of living life without any real purpose, we can now know the reason we have been created. We have been created to love God and to be in His presence forever. Jesus Christ has provided the answer to what our purpose is here upon the earth. We not only know who we are, we know *why* we are here.

Therefore, as His disciples, we should tell others the good news about Jesus. In fact, Jesus commanded us to do this. He said the following.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19,20).

Jesus Christ gives us a purpose for living. This is the message which we are to tell to the world.

There Is A Destiny That Awaits Us: We Know Where We Are Going

Finally, Jesus provides us with an answer about our future, our destiny. We now understand that this life is not all there is. We are beings made for eternity, and belief in Jesus Christ allows us to spend eternity in the presence of God.

Thus, the grave has no ultimate terror for us because we know there is a better existence beyond this life. Belief in Jesus gives us a destiny to which we can look forward. Jesus said.

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live (John 14:19).

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After this life is over those who have believed in Jesus will live again.

In the letter of First John, John also wrote about life after death.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 John 3:2).

We shall be given new bodies. They will be like the body of the resurrected Christ. Among other things, this means that our new bodies will never become sick, never wear out, they will never grow old. There is genuine hope in Jesus Christ.

As we can see, being a Christian makes a big difference. We now have an identity, a purpose and a destiny.

4. There Are Consequences Of Rejecting Jesus Christ

There is something else that must be mentioned. Many have the impression that Jesus only talked about the love of God and never talked about judgment. In no uncertain terms, however, His message included warnings of punishment for those who rejected His claims. Those who reject Christ will spend eternity separated from God.

The toughest words of judgment that are recorded in the Bible actually come from the lips of Jesus. He had this to say to the hypocritical religious rulers.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to (Matthew 23:13).

Notice that Jesus said that these people were *not* going to go to heaven.

Jesus also said these harsh words to the phony religious leaders.

You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? (Matthew 23:33).

Again we find that heaven is limited to the believers; not everyone will end up in God's presence.

Who Will Go To Hell?

Jesus said that those who do not put their faith in Him will suffer the eternal consequences. We read the following.

But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins" (John 8:23,24).

Those who do not believe in Him will die in their sinful state. In other words, they will have no forgiveness from God and thus they will not be allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven.

From these statements we see that Jesus talked about God's punishment for those who do not accept Him as Savior. He said there is a place of judgment where unbelievers will be eternally separated from God. This is in contrast to those who do believe. They will be forever in God's presence and enjoy God's unending blessings. Therefore, every human being who has ever lived will spend eternity in one of two destinations: heaven or hell.

5. Has He Changed Your Life?

The good news is that the Lord has provided a way in which people can escape the judgment of hell. In addition, there is an exciting life that He offers believers right now. In fact, in the last two thousand years, millions of people have been transformed by the life-changing message of Scripture and encounter with the person of Jesus Christ the Savior. Secular psychiatrist J. T. Fisher explains it this way.

If you were to take the sum total of all authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene—if you were to combine them and refine them and cleave out all the excess verbiage . . . and if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge

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concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably through comparison. For nearly two thousand years the Christian world has been holding in its hands the complete answer to its restless and fruitless yearnings. Here . . . rests the blueprint for successful human life with optimism, mental health, and contentment (J. T. Fisher and L. S. Hawley, *A Few Buttons Missing*. Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1951, p. 273).

The wonderful life-changing message of the Bible is an established fact. The question is, “Has it changed your life?”

Summary To Reason 10: The Bible’s Life-Changing Message

God has given us sufficient evidence to trust the Bible as well as to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The facts support the various claims which Scripture makes. However, there is one more thing which must be emphasized. Not only is the Christian faith true, it works! The message of Jesus Christ still changes lives.

While the fact of Christian conversion does not by itself make Christianity true when put together with the other objective evidence, it is a powerful argument for the truthfulness of the Christian faith. Indeed, millions of people can testify to the fact that their lives have been changed through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The wonderful thing is that the changed lives of believers is based upon truth; it is based upon the fact that God exists and that He has revealed Himself to humanity through Jesus Christ.

What Conclusions Can We Make About The Nature Of The Bible?

The Bible is the most unique book that has ever been written. There are at least, ten specific ways in which it is different from all other writings. They are as follows.

The Bible is different from all other books. In fact, there are at least, ten specific ways in which it is special. They are as follows.

1. The Bible Presents An Intelligent Faith

The Bible is not merely a history book to be studied for its teachings, or admired for its wisdom. In the twenty-first century educated men and women still can investigate the Bible in detail and believe in its message without compromising their intellectual integrity.

2. The Bible Has A Unique Design

The Bible contains 66 books which were written, over a period of 1500 years by 40 different authors from different educational backgrounds, in different languages, on different continents, and concerning many different subjects. Yet, it remains a unity—one unfolding story from beginning to end. The reason for this marvelous unity, this unique design, is that ultimate author behind the books of the Bible is God the Holy Spirit.

3. The Bible's Survival Is Miraculous

The Bible has survived, intact, throughout history. The text of the Bible, in both testaments, has been transmitted in an accurate manner so that we can be certain that it reads the same today as when originally written. In addition, the Bible has also survived the many attempts of people to destroy it. Indeed, it has survived time, persecution, and criticism.

4. The Bible's Historical Precision Is Amazing

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The Bible chronicles God's work in history. Although composed from 2000 to 4000 years ago, the Bible demonstrates itself to be historically accurate as to the people, places, and events it records. Thus, it gives us every reason to trust its message.

5. The Bible Speaks Accurately In Matters Of Science

When dealing with areas pertaining to science, the Bible is accurate and restrained. This is in direct contrast to other ancient works that have fanciful ideas about the nature of the universe. A correct interpretation of the facts of science and the teaching of Scripture will find that the two are not in conflict.

6. The Bible Accurately Predicts The Future

Contained within the pages of Scripture are hundreds of predictions about the future; predictions which have been fulfilled! No other book, ancient or modern, has anything like this. Predictive prophecy demonstrates that God exists, and that He is controlling history.

7. The Bible Honestly Portrays Its Characters

The Scriptures deal honestly with the sins of its characters. There is no attempt to whitewash their faults. This also is in contrast to most other ancient works that attempt to place their characters in the best possible light. However, although the characters of Scripture are shown to be sinful human beings Jesus is different. His enemies, as well as His friends, testified that the main character of the Bible, Jesus Christ, is without sin.

8. The Teachings Of The Bible Are Unique

The teachings of Scripture are unique. The pagan and superstitious beliefs of the nations around them have not influenced the Scriptures. These unique teachings include the belief in only one God that this one God is a personal God, and the Bible gives a genuine hope for life beyond the grave. These teachings are unique to the Bible.

9. The Main Character, Jesus Christ, Is Like No One Else

Jesus, the main character of Scripture, is different from any religious leader who ever has lived. An investigation of His life and deeds will show Him to be whom He claimed—the Son of God. Indeed, nobody has ever said the sort of things which Jesus said or did the type of deeds which Jesus did.

10. The Message Of Scripture Still Changes Lives

For the last two thousand years, the message of the Bible has been transforming the lives of countless millions. The good news is that the message of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ is still changing lives today. The reason for these changed lives is that fact that the message of Scripture is true.

To sum up, he claims of a book with the remarkable credentials of the Bible deserve serious consideration. Any sincere seeker after truth should look into this book for answers to the ultimate questions of life.

**The Authority Of Jesus Christ Demonstrates
The Truthfulness Of Scripture**

When it comes to determining whether or not the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God, we can rest confidently on the authority of Jesus Christ. We arrive at this conclusion by the following logical steps.

Step 1: As we have note, the New Testament can be trusted. Its text has been accurately transmitted and its historical references are in line with what we know about known historical events. To sum up, it gives us accurate firsthand information about the life of Jesus Christ.

Step 2: In this accurate, historical document Jesus Christ is presented as having made certain claims about Himself. He claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the only way by which anyone can approach God.

Step 3: Jesus Christ demonstrated that He had the right to make those claims by fulfilling prophecies about the Messiah. He performed miracles,

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showing He had power over nature. The most significant miracle of all was His rising from the dead (John 2:19-21). The resurrection confirmed His claim to Deity.

Step 4 Since Jesus is the Messiah, God in human flesh, He is the last word on all matters. He had the divine authority to endorse all Scripture or only some of it. He universally affirmed all Scripture, in every part, as the Divine Word of God. Therefore, we conclude the Bible, both the Old and New Testament is the Word of God.

God has given us a number of reasons to trust the Bible – His written Word to humanity. The Bible presents an intelligent faith, it has a unique design, it has survived in miraculous ways, it has amazing historical accuracy, it speaks correctly in the areas of science, it accurately predicts the future, it honestly portrays its characters, the teachings are unique, the main character, Jesus Christ, is like none other, and finally, it contains the message that still changes lives.

Consequently, one can read and study the Bible with absolute confidence because it demonstrates itself to be exactly what it claims to be; the Word of the living God.

Have You Trusted Him?

Since the God of the Bible has given us sufficient reasons to believe in Him we must ask the reader one final question: Have you trusted Jesus? Is He your Savior?

If not, Jesus Christ is waiting for you to make a decision for Him. If you would like to become a Christian right now then pray a simple prayer like this:

Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. Thank you for dying for me. Right this moment, the best way that I know how, I trust you as Savior and Lord. Thank you, Lord for saving me. In Jesus' name I ask this, Amen.

If you did pray this prayer, then tell someone else about your decision. Also find a church to go to which preaches, teaches, and believes the Bible. May the Lord bless you as you seek to follow Him!

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What Is Our Personal Responsibility Toward God And His Word?

We have one final question. If the Bible is what it claims to be, God's authoritative Word to humanity, then what is our personal responsibility toward God and His Word? What exactly should believers be doing?

1. We Must Know God's Word In Our Mind

First, and foremost, we must know and understand God's word in our minds. This takes time and study. There are no shortcuts. Unless we intelligently understand what the Bible is saying there is not any way we will understand who God is, or what He wants from us. When asked about the greatest commandment in the Law Jesus said.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (Matthew 22:37).

It is important that we obey this command. We must love God with our mind.

2. We Must Place The Word Of God In Our Hearts

It is not enough to have an intellectual understanding of the Bible. There are many individuals who have an incredible amount of knowledge of the things of Scripture yet none of it has penetrated into their hearts. It is only an academic exercise. It is crucial that the Word of God penetrate our hearts. David wrote.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you (Psalm 119:11).

The truth of the Word of God must become part of our being.

3. We Must Demonstrate God's Word In Our Lives

The Bible calls us to be obedient to the authority of God's Word. However, the obedience is based upon a genuine freedom that belongs to God's children. The psalmist wrote.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14).

We should do those things that are pleasing to the Lord.

4. We Must Proclaim God's Word To Others

Finally, the Word of God must be proclaimed to others. It is not enough that we keep it to ourselves. Jesus said.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).

It is crucial that believers take each of these four steps seriously. In doing so, we can honor the Lord in the manner He so richly deserves.

Summary To:

What Is Our Personal Responsibility God And His Word?

If the Bible is what it claims to be, God's Word to the human race, then we have four basic responses toward it. They are as follows.

First, we should know it. We should learn as much as we can about what it teaches about God, ourselves, as well as His plan for the world. Consequently, it is our job to know learn His Word.

Second, we should place what we learn in our hearts. The truth of Scripture should become part of our thought life. As Scripture emphasizes we should meditate upon His Word day and night. Third, we should live its truth in our lives. What we know and what we think should

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be lived out in our actions. Finally, we should pass this truth along to others. The message of God's Word needs to be shared with a needy world.

These four things are something that all believers should continually practice.

About The Author

Don Stewart is a graduate of Biola University and Talbot Theological Seminary (with the highest honors).

Don is a best-selling and award-winning author having authored, or co-authored, over seventy books. This includes the best-selling *Answers to Tough Questions*, with Josh McDowell, as well as the award-winning book *Family Handbook of Christian Knowledge: The Bible*. His various writings have been translated into over thirty different languages and have sold over a million copies. His available books can be found on his website www.educatingourworld.com.

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Don is now a full-time missionary with GoinChrist Ministries. His website educatingourworld.com provides free resources for those wanting to know what Christians believe, as well as why we believe. Currently there are 59 books on the site in PDF form, totaling about 13,000 pages of material while answering over 1,900 questions. Eventually we hope to record all the books, as well as translating the material in other languages.