

“Is Daniel Reliable and Authentic?”

OBJECTIONS FOR DANIEL WRITING HIS BOOK.



“Nothing is gained by a mere answer to objections, so long as the original prejudice, ‘there cannot be supernatural prophecy,’ remains.” So, their prejudice blinds them. But that is their choice—and their loss.” (professor, Oxford University)

Once “generally considered to be true history, containing genuine prophecy...[however] was written in a later time of national crisis —when the Jews were suffering severe persecution under [Syrian King] **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**” does not prophesy the future but simply presents “events that are past history to him as prophecies of future happenings” dates book between 167 and 164 B.C.E. (**The New Encyclopedia Britannica**)

“Many historical details of the earlier periods [such as that of the Babylonian exile] have been badly garbled” (**The Encyclopedia Americana**)

Let’s look at the evidence—

THE CASE OF THE MISSING MONARCH

Daniel wrote that Belshazzar, a “**son**” of Nebuchadnezzar, was ruling as king in Babylon when the city was overthrown. (**Daniel 5:1, 11, 18, 22, 30**) Critics long assailed this point, for Belshazzar’s name was nowhere to be found outside the Bible instead, ancient historians identified Nabonidus, a successor to Nebuchadnezzar, as the last of the Babylonian kings. In 1854 some small clay cylinders were unearthed in the ruins of the ancient Babylonian city of Ur, southern Iraq, these cuneiform documents from King Nabonidus included a prayer for “**Bel-sar-ussur, my eldest son**”, other tablets reported that Nabonidus was away from Babylon for years at a time, he “**entrusted the kingship**”

of Babylon to his eldest son (Belshazzar) at such times, Belshazzar was, in effect, king—a coregent with his father.

Cylinder of Nabonidus

This mid 6th century BC cuneiform cylinder was discovered in the temple of Shamash at Sippar (Iraq). It tells of Babylonian King Nabonidus' reconstruction of pagan temples and the discovery of ancient inscriptions of former kings. More importantly, however, it offers historical **confirmation of Belshazzar**, who was previously either considered legendary or the Bible was mistaken to identify him as "king" (Daniel 5:1) since he was absent from any official kings list.

- Confirms historical figure of **Belshazzar** (Daniel 5)
- Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son and **co-regent** (King, Daniel 5:1)
- Explains why Daniel could rise no higher than **3rd ruler** in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29)



Still unsatisfied, some critics complain that the Bible calls Belshazzar, not the son of Nabonidus, but the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus, it seems, married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar that would make Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar neither Hebrew nor Aramaic language has words for "**grandfather**" or "**grandson**" "**son of**" can mean "**grandson of**" or even "**descendant of**" (Compare **Matthew 1:1**) further, the Bible account does allow for Belshazzar to be identified as the son of Nabonidus when terrified by the ominous handwriting on the wall, the desperate Belshazzar offers the third place in the kingdom to anyone who can decipher the words (**Daniel 5:7 see also Daniel 5:29**) why third and not second? This offer implies that the first and second places were already occupied — by Nabonidus and by his son, Belshazzar.

WHO WAS DARIUS THE MEDE?

Daniel reports that when Babylon was overthrown, a king named “**Darius the Mede**” began to rule (**Daniel 5:31**) Darius the Mede has not yet been found by name in secular or archaeological sources, “**a fictitious character**”. (**The New Encyclopedia Britannica**) However, cuneiform tablets have revealed that Cyrus the Persian did not assume the title “**King of Babylon**” immediately after the conquest “**whoever bore the title of ‘King of Babylon’ was a vassal king under Cyrus, not Cyrus himself.**” Could Darius have been the ruling name, or title, of a powerful Median official left in charge of Babylon? Some suggest that Darius may have been a man named Gubaru. Cyrus installed Gubaru as governor in Babylon, and secular records confirm that he ruled with considerable power. One cuneiform tablet says that he appointed sub governors over Babylon. Daniel notes that Darius appointed 120 satraps to govern the kingdom of Babylon. (**Daniel 6:1**) In time, more direct evidence of the precise identity of this king may come to light. In any case, the seeming silence of archaeology in this regard is hardly grounds to label Darius “fictitious” much less to dismiss the entire book of Daniel as fraudulent. It is far more reasonable to see Daniel’s account as eyewitness testimony that is more detailed than surviving secular records.

THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM

“**In the third year of the kingship of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and proceeded to lay siege to it.**” (**Daniel 1:1**) Critics have found fault with this scripture because it does not seem to agree with Jeremiah, who says that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. (**Jeremiah 25:1; 46:2**) When first made king in 628 B.C.E. by Pharaoh Necho, Jehoiakim became a mere puppet of that Egyptian ruler. This was about three years before Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father to the throne of Babylon, in 624 B.C.E. Soon thereafter (in 620 B.C.E.), Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and made Jehoiakim a vassal king under Babylon. (**2 Kings 23:34; 24:1**) To a Jew living in Babylon, Jehoiakim’s “third year” would have been the third year of that king’s vassal service to Babylon, Daniel wrote from that perspective. Jeremiah, however, wrote from the perspective of the Jews living right in Jerusalem. So, he referred to Jehoiakim’s kingship as starting when Pharaoh Necho made him king, really, then, this alleged discrepancy only bolsters the evidence that Daniel wrote his book in Babylon while among Jewish exiles recall, too, the writer of Daniel clearly had the book of Jeremiah available and even referred to it (**Daniel 9:2**). If the writer of Daniel were a clever forger, as the critics claim, would he risk contradicting so respected a source as Jeremiah—and in the very first verse of his book at that?

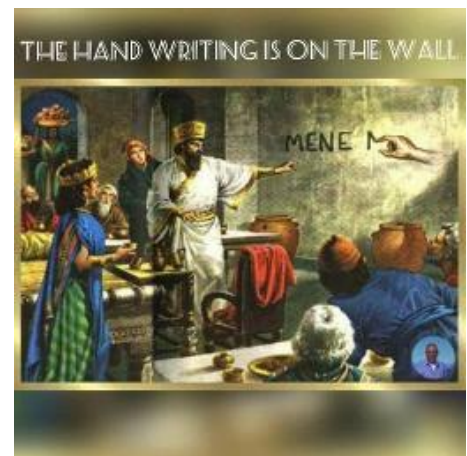
TELLING DETAILS

Daniel's familiarity with subtle details about ancient Babylon is compelling evidence of the authenticity of his account for instance; **Daniel 3:1-6** reports that Nebuchadnezzar set up a giant image for all the people to worship archaeologists have found other evidence that this monarch sought to get his people more involved in nationalistic and religious practices. Daniel records Nebuchadnezzar's boastful attitude about his many construction projects (**Daniel 4:30**), not until modern times have archaeologists confirmed that Nebuchadnezzar was indeed behind a great deal of the building done in Babylon. Critics cannot explain how their supposed forger of Maccabean times (**167- 63 B.C.E.**) could have known of such construction projects—some four centuries after the fact and long before archaeologists brought them to light.

The book of Daniel also reveals some key differences between Babylonian and Medo-Persian law, for example, under Babylonian law Daniel's three companions were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to obey the king's command, decades later, Daniel was thrown into a pit of lions for refusing to obey a Persian law that violated his conscience (**Daniel 3:6; 6:7-9**) Some have tried to dismiss the fiery furnace account as legend, but archaeologists have found an actual letter from ancient Babylon that specifically mentions this form of punishment, to the Medes and the Persians, however, fire was sacred. So, they turned to other vicious forms of punishment hence, the pit of lions comes as no surprise.

Another contrast emerges, Daniel shows that Nebuchadnezzar could enact and change laws on a whim. Darius could do nothing to change 'the laws of the Medes and the Persians'—even those he himself had enacted (**Daniel 2:5, 6, 24, 46-49; 3:10, 11, 29; 6:12-16**) “Ancient history substantiates this difference between Babylon, where the law was subject to the king, and Medo-Persia, where the king was subject to the law.” (John C. Whitcomb, historian)

The account of Belshazzar's feast, recorded in **Daniel chapter 5**, is rich in detail. It apparently began with lighthearted eating and plenty of drinking, for there are several references to wine. (**Daniel 5:1, 2, 4**) Relief carvings of similar feasts show only wine being consumed, wine was extremely important at such festivities. Daniel also mentions that women were present at this banquet—the king's secondary wives and his concubines. (**Daniel 5:3, 23**) Archaeology supports this detail of Babylonian custom, the notion of wives joining men at a feast was objectionable to Jews and Greeks in the Maccabean era. Perhaps that is why early versions of the Greek Septuagint translation of Daniel omit the mention of these women, yet, the alleged forger of Daniel would have lived in the same Hellenized (Greek) culture, and perhaps even during the same general era, that produced the



Septuagint. Hebrew scholar **C. F. Keil** writes of **Daniel 5:3**: “**The LXX. have here, and also at ver. 23, omitted mention of the women, according to the custom of the Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans.**” In view of such details, it seems almost incredible that Britannica could describe the author of the book of Daniel as having only a “**sketchy and inaccurate**” knowledge of the exilic times. How could any forger of later centuries have been so intimately familiar with ancient Babylonian and Persian customs? Remember, too, that both empires had gone into decline long before the second century B.C.E.

There were evidently no archaeologists back then; nor did the Jews of that time pride themselves on knowledge of foreign cultures and history, only Daniel the prophet, an eyewitness of the times and events he described, could have written the Bible book bearing his name.

DO EXTERNAL FACTORS PROVE DANIEL A FORGERY?

One of the most common arguments against the book of Daniel involves its place in the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures. The ancient rabbis arranged the books of the Hebrew Scriptures in three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. They listed Daniel, not among the Prophets, but among the Writings. This means, the critics argue, that the book must have been unknown at the time when the works of the other prophets were collected, it is grouped among the Writings supposedly because these were collected later not all Bible researchers agree that the ancient rabbis divided the canon in such a rigid manner or that they excluded Daniel from the Prophets. Even if the rabbis did list Daniel among the Writings, would this prove that it was written at a later date? No reputable scholars have suggested a number of reasons why the rabbis might have excluded Daniel from the Prophets. For instance, they may have done so because the book offended them or because they viewed Daniel himself as distinct from other prophets in that he held secular office in a foreign land. In any case, what really matters is this: The ancient Jews had deep regard for the book of Daniel and held it to be canonical the evidence suggests that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was closed long before the second century B.C.E. Later additions were simply not allowed, including some books written during the second century B.C.E. Ironically, one of these rejected later works has been used as an argument against the book of Daniel. The apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, by Jesus Ben Sirach, was evidently composed about 180 B.C.E., critics like to point out that Daniel is omitted from the book’s long list of righteous men. They reason that Daniel must have been unknown at the time, this argument is widely accepted among scholars the same list omits Ezra and Mordecai (both of whom were great heroes in the eyes of postexilic Jews), good King Jehoshaphat, and the upright man Job; of all the judges, it names only Samuel. Because such men are omitted from a list that makes no claim to be exhaustive, occurring in a noncanonical book, must we dismiss all of them as fictitious?

OUTSIDE TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF DANIEL

Josephus attests to its authenticity;

He says that Alexander the Great, during his war against Persia in the fourth century B.C.E., came to Jerusalem, where the priests showed him a copy of the book of Daniel. Alexander himself concluded that the words of Daniel's prophecy that were pointed out to him referred to his own military campaign involving Persia. Some historians have noted that this would explain why Alexander was so kind to the Jews, who were long-standing friends of the Persians. At the time, Alexander was on a campaign to destroy all friends of Persia. It would have been about a century and a half before the “**forgery**” as proposed by critics. This is what Josephus wrote, “**Whereupon the Kings of Syria, and the rest were surprized at what Alexander had done; and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him, “How it came to pass, that when all others adored him, he should adore the High Priest of the Jews?” ...I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians; and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.” ...And when the book of Daniel was shewed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended.”** (Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, XI, 337 [viii, 5])

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The caves of Qumran, Israel, numerous among the finds discovered in 1952 are scrolls and fragments from the book of Daniel, the oldest has been dated to the late second century B.C.E. At that early date, therefore, the book of Daniel was already well-known and widely respected. “**A Maccabean dating for Daniel has now to be abandoned, if only because there could not possibly be a sufficient interval between the composition of Daniel and its appearance in the form of copies in the library of a Maccabean religious sect.**” (The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible)



EZEKIEL

He too served as a prophet during the Babylonian exile. Several times, the book of Ezekiel mentions Daniel by name. (**Ezekiel 14:14, 20; 28:3**) These references show that even during his own lifetime, in the sixth century B.C.E., Daniel was already well-known as a righteous and a wise man, worthy of being mentioned alongside God-fearing Noah and Job.

THE GREATEST WITNESS

In his discussion of the last days, Jesus refers to “**Daniel the prophet**” and to one of Daniel’s prophecies (**Matthew 24:15; Daniel 11:31; 12:11**), now if the Maccabean theory of the critics were correct, one of two things would have to be true: Jesus was duped by this forgery or he never said what Matthew quotes him as saying, neither option is viable. If we cannot rely on Matthew’s Gospel account, how can we rely on other parts of the Bible? If we remove those sentences, what words will we next pluck from the pages of the Holy Scriptures?

“All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, . . . for setting things straight.” 2 Timothy 3:16

THE PROPHECY OF THE 70 WEEKS OF YEARS

Jesus further authenticated the book of Daniel. His triumphal entry became the public proclamation as the Messiah, fulfilling a prophecy in Daniel regarding the 69 weeks of years. (**Daniel 9:25, 26**)

“Is the Bible Reliable as Evidence”



The Bible is unarguably an incredible book. It is the best-selling, most quoted, most published, most circulated, most translated, most influential book in the history of mankind. There is no close second.

- How can we know that the Bible isn’t just an ancient book of fiction and folklore?
- Haven’t the contents of the Bible been tampered with down through the centuries?
- Isn’t the Bible out-of-sync with scientific discoveries?
- What makes the Bible any different than other religious books like the Quran or the Book of Mormon?

Those are questions that intelligent, critical thinking people are asking today and those are questions they have a right to ask. I think they should be asking those questions.

1 Peter 3:15, “Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.”

Jude 3, “Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share. But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.”

1. FULFILLED PROPHECY

Of course, sports analysts, political experts, and astrologers seem to enjoy making predictions about the future, but their failure rate quickly reveals how inept humans are at foretelling events even just a year in advance. My goodness, a day or two before the recent 2016 Presidential election most experts were telling us that Hillary Clinton was going to be our next president. Well we see how that turned out. We can't even speak accurately about events a day or two in advance. This is one of the reasons the Bible's fulfilled prophecies are so astounding!

Over and over again, the authors of the Bible rightly foretold future events (often times, hundreds of years in advance). The Bible is literally filled with hundreds of specific, detailed prophecies about persons, places, and events—many of which have already come to pass.

Consider a few of the prophecies made regarding Jesus. Of course, long before Jesus was born, the Old Testament prophets told us a Savior was coming who would make a way for mankind to be forgiven of our sins and reconciled to God.

The Old Testament prophesied this Savior would be:

- born of the seed of Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3, 22:18**)
- of the tribe of Judah (**Genesis 49:10**)
- and in the lineage of David (**2 Samuel 7:12f**)
- **Micah 5:2** said that He would be born in Bethlehem
- that He'd come while the temple was still standing (**Malachi 3:1**)
- that He would be born of a virgin (**Isaiah 7:14**)
- that He would open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and cause the lame to walk (**Isaiah 35:5-6**)
- that He'd be rejected by His own people (**Psalms 118:22; 1 Peter 2:7**)
- The Scriptures foretold the precise time in history when He would die (**Daniel 9:24-26**)
- how He would die (**Psalms 22:16-18, Isaiah 53; Zechariah 12:10**)
- and that He would rise from the dead (**Psalms 16:10; Acts 2:27-32**)

This is just a tiny sampling of the prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' life. The Old Testament (completed 400 years before Jesus' birth) contains more than 300 references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus' life. Calculations using the science of probability on just 8 of these prophecies, have shown that the chance someone could have fulfilled even just 8 of these prophecies is:

1 in 10^{17}

Or put another way, that is...

1 in 100 Quadrillion!

[Fritz Ridenour, So What's the Difference? 28.]

And there are hundreds of other prophecies in the Bible that have been fulfilled concerning the rise and fall of nations, and other matters. Well, the fulfillment of these prophecies is compelling evidence that these men spoke with the aid of the all-knowing, all-powerful God written about in the Bible—the God who declared:

Isaiah 46:9-10, "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done."

In other words, God says here, 'There's no one else who can do this!' And that is certainly the case. No other book in the world is able to substantiate its claims with this kind of supernatural ability to rightly foretell future events. **There are no fulfilled prophecies in the Quran, the Hindu Vedas, the Book of Mormon, or any other sacred religious writings. Not one.**

Fulfilled prophecy is something that sets the Bible apart from every other religious book.

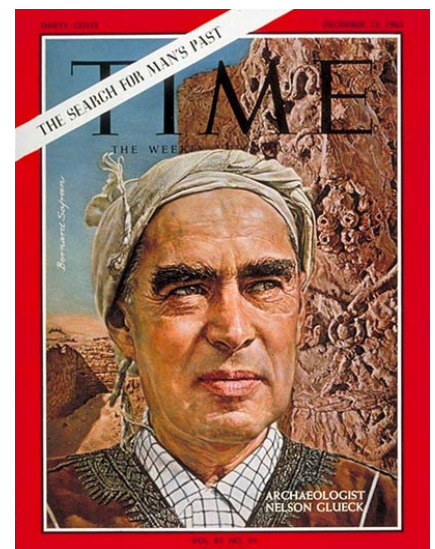
Excellent book, "Every Prophecy of the Bible" by Dr. John Walvoord.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Many critics who brush off the Bible as a compilation of folklore and legends, do so overlooking the fact that thousands of archaeological discoveries over the past century have verified the historical reliability of the Bible.

Nelson Glueck, who appeared on the cover of Time magazine and who is considered one of the greatest archaeologists ever, wrote:

"No archeological discovery has ever controverted [overturned] a Biblical reference. Scores of archeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has



often led to amazing discoveries.” [Nelson Glueck, Rivers in the Desert, p. 31.] These are the words of a man who has been credited with uncovering more than fifteen hundred ancient sites in the Middle East. [“Archaeology: The Shards of History,” Time, December 13, 1963.]

James Mann of U. S. News and World Report said:

"A wave of archaeological discoveries is altering old ideas about the roots of Christianity and Judaism—and affirming that the Bible is more historically accurate than many scholars thought." [James Mann, “New Finds Cast Fresh Light on the Bible,” U. S. News and World Report, August 24, 1981, 34.]

Dr. Clifford Wilson, the former Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, stated: "It is remarkable that where confirmation is possible and has come to light, the Bible withstands investigation in ways that are unique in all literature. Its superiority to attack, its capacity to withstand criticism, its amazing facility to be proved right after all, are all staggering by any standards of scholarship. Seemingly assured results “disproving” the Bible have a habit of backfiring. Over and over again the Bible has been vindicated." [Clifford Wilson, Archaeology—the Bible and Christ, volume 17, (Victoria, Australia: Pacific Christian Ministries), no page number available. Cited in John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Handbook of Biblical Evidences (1997), 288–289]



Here are a few examples of discoveries that have helped to shed light on the Bible’s reliability.

A. DAVID

Until 1993, not a shred of evidence could be found anywhere outside the Bible that David, the king of Israel, ever existed and so it had become fashionable in some academic circles to dismiss the David stories as mere invention. The critics’ verdict was that David was “nothing more than a figure of religious and political mythology.” [Jeffrey Sheler, Is the Bible True? (1999), 95–96]

Well, their skepticism regarding David collapsed overnight in 1993 when a nearly 3000-year-old inscription was unearthed in Israel mentioning David the king of Israel. This was a tremendous discovery and helped to verify for the first time outside the Bible that David was an actual historical figure. In light of this discovery, Time magazine stated:



“The skeptics’ claim that King David never existed is now hard to defend.” [Michael D. Lemonick, “Are the Bible’s Stories True? Archaeology’s Evidence,” *Time magazine*, December 18, 1995]

B. PONTIUS PILATE

Another fascinating discovery concerns Pontius Pilate. The New Testament authors tell us he was the Roman governor of Judea at the time of Jesus who oversaw Jesus’ trial and then sentenced Him to death by crucifixion (**Matthew 27:2; Luke 3:1**). Was Pilate a legendary figure? No.

In 1961, a team of Italian archaeologists was digging in Caesarea, on the shore of the beautiful Mediterranean Sea in Israel. While clearing away the sand and overgrowth from the jumbled ruins of a Roman theater, these archaeologists made an astonishing find. They uncovered a limestone block that bore an inscription in Latin dating to the early part of the first century that mentioned “Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea.” This inscription verifies that Pontius Pilate was an actual historical person, that he reigned in the very position ascribed to him by the Gospels, and as prefect he would have had the authority to condemn or pardon Jesus, just as the Gospel accounts report.



C. FIRST CENTURY CRUCIFIXION

Another discovery helped to verify the reality of crucifixion in Israel in the first century. According to the Bible, Jesus hands or wrists were nailed to the cross (**John 20:25**). But at one time, critics said crucifixions with nails never took place in Israel in the first century. No evidence of any crucified victim had ever been uncovered in Israel—so skeptics and scholars dismissed the Gospels’ accounts as either imagined or inaccurate. Well, critics of the Bible were shown to be wrong again in 1968. It was then that a crew of builders from the Israel Ministry of Housing working in Jerusalem accidentally discovered an ancient Jewish cemetery that contained the remains of several men who were killed during the Jewish revolt against Rome in approximately AD 70. One of the bone ossuaries contained the skeleton of a young man and an inscription of the man’s name (Yohanan Ben Ha’galgol).

What stunned the archaeologists most though was how this man died. He was put to death by crucifixion with nails. How was that determined? He still had an iron spike driven through his heel bone. The Romans typically removed the nails from their victims—iron was expensive—but apparently this nail was too difficult to remove. The



tip of the nail had been bent back toward the head, likely the result of hitting a knot in the wood. And so, the soldiers left it there. And now we have solid archaeological evidence that the Romans did crucify people in Israel, in the first century, with nails—just as the Bible said.

Other discoveries include:

- Ancient extrabiblical accounts of a catastrophic flood (**Genesis 6–8**)
- The palace of Sennacherib the king of Assyria (**2 Chronicles 32:1f**) and a wall relief depicting the Assyrian siege on Lachish (**2 Kings 18:13–17; Isaiah 36:1–2**)
- The ruins of Jericho (**Joshua 6**) along with evidence the city wall “fell down flat” (**6:20**) at the very time the Old Testament dates the crossing of the Hebrew people into Canaan (c. 1400 BC)
- Hezekiah’s tunnel (**2 Kings 20:20**) built to secretly channel water into the city of Jerusalem c. 700 BC
- The ancient ruins of Babylon (**Book of Daniel**), including the ruins of king Nebuchadnezzar’s palaces, temples, city walls, houses, inscriptions mentioning “Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon”
- The Babylonian Chronicle. These ancient historical records verify that the Babylonians invaded the land of Judah, besieged the city of Jerusalem, and took the Jews captive back to Babylon...just as the Bible said they did (**2 Kings 24; Daniel 1**).
- The “**Pool of Siloam**” (**John 9:1–12**) where Jesus sent the blind man with mud on his eyes to wash and receive healing
- The well called “Jacob’s Well” (**John 4:6**) where Jesus met the Samaritan woman
- The pool called “**Bethesda**” (**John 5:2**) where Jesus told the man who had been lame for 38 years to take up his bed and walk
- Herod’s palace (**Mark 6:14–29**) where John the Baptist was imprisoned and killed; the historian Josephus mentions this palace and John the Baptist’s imprisonment and murder there
- A bone ossuary mentioning Caiaphas the Jewish high priest (**Matthew 26:3**) who presided over Jesus’s late night trial (**Matthew 26:57–68**)
- The synagogue in Capernaum (**Mark 1:21**) on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus often taught
- Mosaic tile floor of an early Christian church in Megiddo, Israel, that says the church was built in the memory of “**the God Jesus Christ**”—evidence the early Christians believed Jesus was God

Archaeology has not proven so helpful for other religious writings. Consider the Book of Mormon.

“Not one piece of evidence has ever been found to support the Book of Mormon -- not a trace of the large cities it names, no ruins, no coins, no letters or documents or monuments, nothing in writing. Not even one of the rivers or mountains or any of the

topography it mentions has ever been identified.” [Dave Hunt, p.156, In Defense of the Faith; also see p. 107 in The Case for Christ, by Lee Strobel].

Nothing which demonstrates that the Book of Mormon is anything other than an early nineteenth century piece of American fiction, invented by Joseph Smith has ever been found.

3. THE BIBLE’S INTERNAL CONSISTENCY

What do I mean when I speak of the Bible’s internal consistency? I am talking about the Bible’s internal harmony. From the first book of the Bible, Genesis, to the last book, Revelation, the Bible is absolutely consistent in what it teaches.

Let me share with you a few reasons the internal harmony of the Bible is an amazing evidence of its divine origin.

A. The Bible addresses life’s most controversial questions.

From beginning to end they tackled the big questions of life. Questions like:

- How did the universe come into existence?
- Does God exist? And if so, what is He like?
- Why does man exist?
- What is our purpose for being here?
- Why is there evil and suffering in the world?
- What happens to us after we die?



These are the big controversial questions of life. These are the kinds of questions that people tend to disagree about (ask your neighbors!) and yet these are the very questions the authors of the Bible tackle head on, chapter after chapter, book after book, and they do so absolutely consistently.

B. The Bible is a collection of 66 different documents.

It might be easy to have internal harmony if the Bible was a single document, but it’s not. It’s a compilation of more than five-dozen different books.

C. The Bible was written by approximately 40 different authors.

It would be easy to have internal harmony in the Quran. It contains the teachings of just one man—Muhammad, born about 570 years after Jesus. The Bible is completely different than the Quran in this regard; it contains the teachings, the writings, of approximately 40 different people.

D. Many of the Bible’s authors came from different educational and cultural backgrounds.

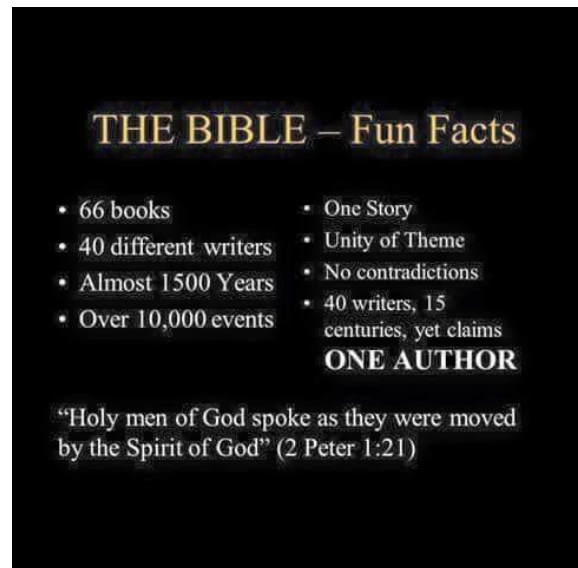
Peter was a fisherman. Paul was a scholar. Daniel was a prime minister. Asaph was a musician. Matthew was a tax collector. David was a shepherd, then a king. Luke was a historian and medical doctor.

E. The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1500+ years (1446 BC – AD 95)

Many of the authors did not even know one another.

F. Many of the authors were separated by hundreds of miles geographically.

The Bible was written in a variety of places on three different continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. For example, Paul wrote four letters imprisoned in Rome. The apostle John wrote while a prisoner banished to the Isle of Patmos in the Mediterranean Sea. The prophet Ezekiel wrote his work while held captive in Babylon.



G. The Bible was written in three different languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I think of pulling together forty different people (spread out over fifteen centuries, on three different continents, who speak three different languages) and having them write sixty-six different documents regarding life's most controversial questions—I'm thinking we are going to have some serious problems. That book is going to be confusing and difficult read!

Yet, in spite of all these factors, the Bible is a perfectly harmonious, consistent account of how God is seeking to reconcile sinners like you and me back into relationship with Himself. This internal consistency is powerful evidence the authors of the Bible were being guided by the Holy Spirit when they wrote the different books of the Bible.

4. EXTRABIBLICAL WRITINGS

What am I talking about? I'm talking about the fact that there are dozens of writings that survive outside of the Bible (in the records of the Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans) that verify the historical accuracy of the Bible's records of different persons, places, and events.

As far as persons are concerned, external sources verify that more than 50 persons mentioned in the Old Testament and 30 persons written about in the New Testament were actual historical figures (see list of names and sources on p. 270 in *I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist* by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek). Because of

engravings and statues, we even know what 18 of them looked like (12 from the Old Testament and 6 from the New Testament)! So, we are not reading about mythological characters when we read the Bible. We're reading about real people.

As for Biblical events that have extrabiblical corroboration, the examples are plentiful.

Here are a **couple examples**;

We are told in the Bible that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians came against the southern kingdom of Judah (605 BC), besieged the city of Jerusalem and took many of the Jews (including Daniel) captive back to the city of Babylon in modern day Iraq (**2 Kings 24:1ff, Dan. 1**). Well, this has been confirmed outside the Bible. Where so? In ancient Babylonian records.

Thousands of ancient Babylonian clay tablets containing a treasure trove of information about Babylon's history were unearthed in Babylon in the mid-nineteenth century. They are known as the Babylonian Chronicle tablets. They tell us of the very siege against Jerusalem written about in 2 Kings 24 and Daniel 1 and the fact that the Babylonians took the Jews captive back to Babylon. Of course, this just goes to show that the authors of the Bible were telling us the truth about this matter.

The New Testament tells us that Herod the Great's son, Herod Antipas, cast John the Baptist into prison for condemning Antipas's adulterous relationship with his brother's wife (**Matt. 14:1-5**). Sometime later an executioner came, and John was beheaded (**Matt. 14:10**). You're familiar with that. Well, this too has been confirmed outside of the Bible. The first century historian, **Flavius Josephus**, talks about:

- Herod Antipas
- Herod's adulterous wife
- and the murder of John the Baptist in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.

Here is a short excerpt from Josephus:

"John, that was called the Baptist...was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism...Herod, who feared the great influence John had over the people...sent [John] a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death." (**Antiquities, 18:116-119**).

So, Josephus verifies for us that John the Baptist was an actual person and that he was put to death by Herod, just as the Bible says.

Josephus mentions more than a dozen individuals talked about in the Bible, including: Herod the Great, Caiaphas, Pontius Pilate, James "the brother of Jesus," Felix, Festus, and even Jesus. Listen to one of Josephus' statements about Jesus:

“At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive...”
(Antiquities of the Jews, 18:63-64, from a surviving manuscript in Arabic)

These are not the words of the Bible or a Christian, but a historian writing outside of the pages of Scripture. He verifies for us that Jesus lived and was crucified under the reign of Pontius Pilate.

There are more than 30 sources outside of the Bible, written within 150 years of Jesus' life that attest to more than 100 facts regarding Jesus' life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection. (See: **The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ by Gary R. Habermas**). Some of these other sources include:

- A. Cornelius Tacitus (ca. A.D. 55 –120) a Roman Historian
- B. Gaius Suetonius (the chief secretary of Emperor Hadrian) (A.D. 117 –138)
- C. The Jewish Talmud (Sanhedrin 43A)

Other historical sources outside of the Bible corroborate details surrounding:

- The Flood
- Long life spans prior to the Flood
- Details surrounding the Exodus
- The Assyrian invasion of Israel
- Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Judah
- Cyrus's freeing of Jews from Babylon
- The prolonged darkness on the day Jesus died
- Herod Agrippa's sudden death after being hailed as a god
- The expulsion of the Jews from Rome

These are just a few examples—all written about and outside the Bible. Critics of the Bible who brush off the Biblical accounts as mere legends or “ancient fiction” only reveal their ignorance of these discoveries.

5. THE BIBLE'S AMAZING SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY AND FORESIGHT

Of course, many critics of the Bible would disagree that the Bible is scientifically accurate. They point to verses that say things like “**the sun stood still**” in **Joshua 10:13** or John's reference to “**the four corners of the Earth**” (**Rev. 7:1**). And they conclude that the Bible teaches that the Sun revolves around a flat, four-cornered Earth.

Well, they are overlooking the fact that the writers of the Bible were not writing a technical textbook on astronomy. They were describing things as they appeared to the

eye (as was the case in **Joshua 10**) or employing normal figures of speech, as was the case with John's reference to the "**four corners of the Earth**."

And we, living in this scientifically advanced age, still do the same thing! We don't wake up early in the morning, throw open the Eastern window and say, "What a beautiful Earth revolve!" No. We say, "What a beautiful sunrise!" Technically speaking, that is unscientific terminology. Meteorologists tell us on the nightly news what time the "sunset" will be. We don't accuse them of being unscientific. They're using simple, straightforward language to describe the way things appear.

When the apostle John referred to the "**four corners of the Earth**" in **Revelation 7:1** he was using a figure of speech to describe the extremities of the land in the four cardinal directions: North, South, East and West. And we still use this figure of speech today. News agencies boast about how they have sent out their reporters to the four corners of the Earth to track down their stories.



So, keeping in mind that the writers of the Bible described things in simple terms as they appeared to the eye, and that they employed figures of speech (metaphors, personifications and such) that does away with many of the alleged scientific inaccuracies in the Bible.

Now, granted, Scripture is out-of-sync with some of the philosophies and theories some scientists hold to. The most obvious being atheistic naturalism and the theory of biological macro-evolution. If a scientist believes everything that exists came into being from nothing and by nothing and then evolved to its current state via a mindless series of unguided natural causes, then yes!—the Bible is out-of-sync with that. That goes without saying. But when it comes to known, testable, verifiable facts, the Bible has been found to be in perfect harmony with the way things really are, which is incredible when you think about it, because as you know the Bible was written two to four thousand years ago—long before the invention of microscopes, telescopes, satellites, and other technologies that have allowed us to investigate our Earth and the universe.

The fact that the Bible was written so long ago, touches on a myriad of topics, and yet does not contain any scientific errors, might be considered evidence for divine inspiration all on its own. Why? Without exception, every ancient religious writing has certain unscientific views of astronomy, medicine, hygiene, and so on.

For example, the Hindu Vedas teach that the Earth is flat and triangular. They also teach that earthquakes are the result of elephants shaking their bodies underneath the ground.

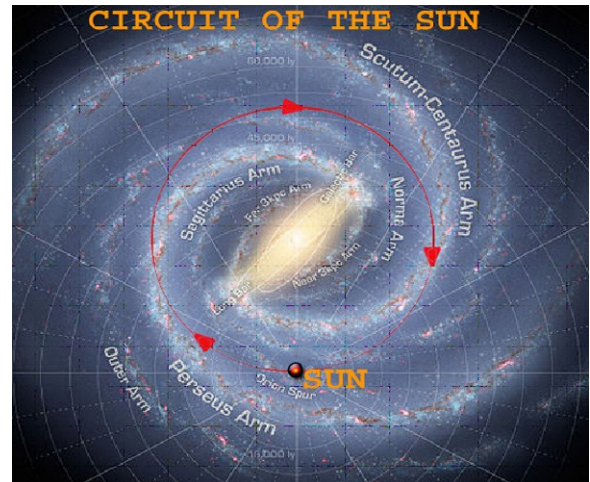
The Quran 18:86 says that the Sun sets in a muddy spring. The Quran says, "when he reached the setting-place of the Sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring." You could

get away with an unscientific statement like that in certain parts of the world in the seventh century.

The Bible steers free of these kinds of errors. But not only that, it makes known amazing facts about our world and the universe thousands of years before scientists discovered that they were actually true. Allow me to share with you a few examples:

A. The Sun

In contrast to the Quran, the Bible teaches that the Sun is actually on a circuit through space. Writing of the Sun in **Psalm 19:6**, David said, **“Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end.”** For many years’ critics scoffed at this verse, claiming that it taught that the Sun revolves around the Earth. Scientists at that time thought the Sun was stationary. However, it has been discovered in recent years that the Sun is in fact on a circuit through space, just like the Bible says. Astronomers have estimated the sun would take 226 million years to complete one revolution around the center of the Milky Way. The sun is 26,000 light years away from the center of the Milky Way, traveling at a speed of 782,000 km/ hr in its circular orbit. Which means the sun does not stand still, it too moves throughout the universe and has a circle to complete, like the earth does around the sun, but the sun’s circle or circuit is around the milky way.



B. The Shape of the Earth

Long before the Greeks figured out that the world was round, the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Chinese believed the world was flat. Amazingly, the Bible went against the grain and gave indications that the Earth was a sphere. In a book thought to be written about 2000 BC, **Job 26:10** tells us that God **“has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness.”** That’s interesting. Stay with me on this. Job says God has drawn **“a circle on the surface of the waters at the boundary of light and darkness.”** This boundary between light and darkness is where evening and morning occur. Notice that the boundary is not a square or a triangle. It’s a circle. Why? Because the Earth is round. Another verse that speaks of the circular shape of the Earth is found in **Isaiah 40:22**, written about 700 BC: **“It is He [God] who sits above the circle of the Earth.”**

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C. The Suspension of the Earth

Before Isaac Newton discovered gravity, Hindus believed the Earth rested on the backs of elephants who stood on the back of a turtle that was swimming in a great endless sea. That's some turtle! There were all kinds of theories in the ancient world. People thought something has to support the Earth. What did the Bible say? In one of the oldest books in the Bible, Job said: “**He [God] hangs the Earth on nothing**” (Job 26:7). Nothing! In other words, the Earth hangs completely unattached in space. This is astounding. Scientists were still trying to figure this out thousands of years later.



D. The Stars

Before the invention of the telescope, people believed the stars could all be numbered. People were so confident of this, they drew up star charts, with all the stars named and numbered. The Greek astronomer and mathematician Hipparchus (190-120 BC) claimed there were 1,026 stars. The astronomer and mathematician Ptolemy (AD c. 85-165) said there were 1,056 stars. The German astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) counted 1,006.

When Galileo (a devout Christian) pointed his telescope to the heavens in 1608, he discovered these previous counts were way off and that the Bible was actually right. What had the Bible said?

Jeremiah 33:22, “The host of heaven [a reference to the stars] cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured.”

God says the stars cannot be numbered. In fact, trying to do so would be about as futile as trying to count the grains of sand floating around in the sea, obviously an impossible task. Jeremiah wrote that more than 2,000 years before Galileo made his discovery.

Today, with the help of powerful telescopes, astronomers tell us that the universe contains somewhere between 100 billion and a trillion galaxies containing anywhere between 100 billion and 10 trillion stars each. [Source: AP/Washington Times]

This all adds up to a lot of stars! Astronomers have to keep revising their estimates of how many stars have been discovered. A new study, published in the journal Nature, suggests there are a mind-blowing 300 sextillion stars. That is a 3 followed by 23 zeros, or take 3 trillion and multiply it by 100 billion. [Source: AP/Washington Times]

Surely the host of heaven cannot be numbered! (**Jeremiah 33:22**).

Now all of these statements in the Bible about the stars, the universe, and the Earth raise a question: How did the authors of the Bible know these kinds of things? Were they taking wild guesses?

I don't think so. I think their perfect accuracy rules that out, especially when you consider the fact that there are dozens of statements like these in the Bible.

Well, the Bible tells us how they knew these things in **2 Peter 1:21**. It says there that **"Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."** That is to say, God, who knows all there is to know about the universe He created, superintended (came along side) the writing of the Bible to make sure that what He wanted written, was written.

6. THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

Critics of the Bible, like Bart Ehrman, Muslims, and Mormons commonly say the Bible has been translated and copied so many times down through the centuries we can't trust what it says today—even if the Bible was once trustworthy. Well, as popular as this belief may be, it's a mistaken one. And the manuscript evidence actually proves this to be the case.

What is a manuscript? A manuscript is any surviving hand-written copy of an ancient document that predates the invention of the printing press in 1455.

Today there survives more some 25,000 partial and complete, ancient handwritten manuscript copies of the New Testament, as well as thousands of copies of the Old Testament...many of them predating the time of Christ. Did you know that? There are handwritten copies of the Old Testament, copied by scribes prior to Jesus' birth, that survive to this day! Let me tell you how they were found (a fascinating story!).



In 1947 a shepherd boy tending his father's sheep in Qumran, north and to the west of the Dead Sea in Israel, made an amazing discovery while looking for a lost goat. There in Qumran, in a hillside cave that had laid untouched for nearly two thousand years, this twelve-year-old Muslim boy discovered a collection of large clay jars containing carefully wrapped leather manuscripts. What this boy stumbled upon was an ancient collection of handwritten copies of the Old Testament that dated as far back as the third century before Christ. This was truly an amazing discovery!

Archaeologists spent years searching the surrounding caves. By the time they were done, copies of every book of the Old Testament had been discovered (with the exception of Esther). In some cases there were multiple copies of the same book. For

example, there were nineteen copies of the Book of Isaiah, twenty-five copies of Deuteronomy and thirty copies of the Psalms.

Now, why do I mention the Dead Sea Scrolls? The Dead Sea Scrolls and hundreds of other manuscripts dating back to the time of the early church, have allowed Biblical scholars, translators, and textual experts to recover (with a very high degree of certainty) the text of the Bible that Jesus quoted and the early Christians used 2000 years ago.

Now, even if we did not have any manuscript copies of the Bible, there is another way of verifying that we have accurate copies of the Bible, and that is by examining the writings of the church fathers. By church fathers I am referring to those leaders in the church, of the first three centuries A.D., following the original disciples. I'm talking about men like Justin Martyr, Eusebius, Tertullian, Polycarp. These men, in their writings and correspondence with one another, and in their letters to different churches, quote the Old and New Testament over and over again. In fact, the early church fathers quote the New Testament alone more than 86,000 times. And here is something most people don't realize. Their writings survive to this day! You can go to Amazon.com right now and buy an encyclopedic size set of the writings of the church fathers and see with your own eyes their numerous quotations of both the Old and New Testaments.

There are enough quotations from the early church fathers that even if we did not have a single manuscript copy of the Bible, scholars could still reconstruct most of the New Testament today just from their writings [Norman Geisler and William Nix, General Introduction to the Bible, 430]. This shouldn't come as a surprise to us. **Isaiah 40:8** says, **"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."** Jesus said in **Matthew 24:35**, **"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."**

For more on the manuscript evidence, I recommend:

- Norman Geisler: From God to Us: How We Got the Bible
- F. F. Bruce: The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?
- Walter C. Kaiser: The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?

7. THE BIBLE'S FORTHRIGHTNESS ABOUT ITS AUTHORS' AND CHARACTERS' FAILURES

I'm talking about the Bible's transparency when it comes to its authors' and leading figures' failures, weaknesses, and sins. Over and over, the authors of the Bible avoid the temptation to cast themselves, the fathers of the faith (e.g., Abraham or Moses), or their own people (the Israelites) in good light. This is surprising to first time readers of the Bible.

Have you ever gone to a website, maybe for a company or charity, and clicked the “About Us” button? There's nearly always a carefully-crafted, glowing overview of what that company, political organization, or religious group is about. If they have an “Our History” button or “Our Founder” button, again you nearly always get a favorable overview of the founder. You never read that the founder is an adulterer or has a criminal record—for obvious reasons. Well, not so with the Bible! Again and again, the Biblical writers are very transparent, very forthright, about the failures, weaknesses, and sins of its leading characters and even its authors. Does this prove the Bible is trustworthy? No. But I think this transparency helps strengthen the case that the Bible appears to be an honest work. Allow me to remind you of some transparent details we read about in the Bible. We read of...

- Noah getting drunk shortly after getting off the ark (**Genesis 9:21**)
- Abraham lying (on more than one occasion) about Sarah being his sister (**Genesis 12:13, 20:2**)
- Moses's murder of a man in Egypt (**Exodus 2:11–12**), his outburst of anger in the wilderness, how he misrepresented God and as a result wasn't allowed to enter into the Promised Land (**Numbers 20:10-12**). Who wrote the books of Exodus and Numbers where these matters are explained? Moses. He tells us about his failures and sins in his own writings. These sound like the words of someone who was committed to communicating the truth.
- The nation of Israel rejecting God on numerous occasions to worship other false gods (e.g., the Book of Judges). What nation did God use to write down the Scriptures? Israel (the Jews). Is this the kind of thing they would make up about themselves? How unfaithful they were to the very God who saved them from their slavery in Egypt? I don't think so.
- David's adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband Uriah (**2 Samuel 11**)
- Jesus called Peter "Satan" (**Mark 8:33**)
- Peter denying he knew Jesus, after promising he would never do such a thing (**Matthew 26:33ff**)
- The time Paul had to rebuke Peter for his fear of being seen eating with Gentiles (**Galatians 2:11-12**)
- The disciples' prideful argument over which one of them was the greatest (**Luke 22:24**)
- The disciples falling asleep when Jesus asked them to pray (**Mark 14:32-41**)
- The disciples running away to save their own necks when Jesus was arrested (**Mark 14:50**)...not to mention Peter cutting off the ear of the priest's servant a short time earlier, swiftly drawing a rebuke from Jesus (**John 18:10**)
- Paul's confession that he was “a wretched man” (**Romans 7:24**) and the “chief” of sinners (**1 Timothy 1:15**)
- Paul and Barnabas argument over Mark being allowed to travel with them (**Acts 15:37-39**)

I could go on. Do these sound like the words of men who were lying?

I have a hard time believing that. The fact that the authors of the Bible include these details leads me to conclude that these men were more interested in telling the truth than making themselves look good.

8. THE WILLINGNESS OF THE DISCIPLES TO DIE FOR JESUS

A skeptic raised a legitimate concern when it came to the prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. He said, "Maybe the disciples just made up all of these things that Jesus supposedly did. Perhaps they read all of those prophecies in the Old Testament and decided to make up an elaborate story about Jesus fulfilling them!"

Well, in addition to their forthrightness about their sins and failures, there's another reason why I don't think the disciples were lying. **Flavius Josephus, Eusebius, Tertullian**, and other independent extrabiblical sources* record for us that many of Jesus' earliest followers, including the apostles, suffered intense persecution and even death for their on-going belief and preaching that Jesus was Lord and was risen from the dead.

[***Hegesippus, Polycarp, Ignatius, Cornelius Tacitus, Dionysius, Clement of Alexandria, Clement of Rome, Origen**. For a good overview of these sources and what they said regarding this matter, see [**Gary Habermas and Michael Licona, The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus, 56–62.**]

We are told in these extrabiblical sources that:

- Matthew was slain with an axe in a city of Ethiopia
- Mark died in Alexandria, in Northern Egypt after having been cruelly dragged through the streets of that city.
- Luke was hung to death in Greece
- John was tortured and then banished to the island of Patmos (**Rev. 1:9**)
- James, the brother of John, was beheaded in Jerusalem (see **Acts 12:2**)
- James the Less (as he's called in **Mark 15:40**) was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple and then stoned
- Philip was hung up against a pillar in Heiropolis and then stoned
- Bartholomew was flayed alive
- Andrew was bound to a cross and left to die
- Jude was shot to death with arrows
- Matthias (the apostle chosen to replace Judas) was first stoned, and then beheaded
- Barnabas was stoned to death
- Paul, after a variety of tortures and imprisonments, was beheaded in Rome
- Thomas was run through the body with a spear in southeast India
- Peter was crucified upside down in Rome

Question for you: Were these men lying?

I find it hard to believe that men willing to die excruciatingly painful deaths for telling people about Jesus were just “making up a story about Him.” Nobody willingly endures persecution and these kinds of deaths for something they are just making up. But don’t misunderstand me, just because someone is willing to die for something doesn’t prove that what he says is true. Some Muslim terrorists are willing to die for Allah today. The disciples deaths are just compelling evidence that:

- **They really believed Jesus existed**
- **They really believed He was the Messiah**
- **They really believed He died on a cross and rose from the grave three days later.**

And I believe them! If the disciples were just lying (just inventing Jesus), do you think they’d really be willing to endure years of persecution, imprisonments, torture, and then these painful deaths for someone who didn’t do the things they said He did? I have a hard time believing that!

Perhaps you've heard of Charles Colson. He served in President Richard Nixon’s administration back in the 1970s before it was brought down by the Watergate scandal. Colson was a godless man at the time. Well, he became a Christian after spending time in prison for obstruction of justice in a case related to the Watergate scandal. One of the evidences for the New Testament account of Jesus’ resurrection that he found compelling was the persecution the disciples endured telling people about the resurrection. Colson said this:

“I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified, they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world—and they couldn’t keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”

9. THE BIBLE’S TRANSFORMING POWER FOR GOOD

The Bible claims to be living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12; Psalm 19:7-10). And that has indeed proven to be the case. No other book in the world has had the transforming effect upon lives and societies for good, than that of the Bible. Now, of course, this alone does not prove that the Bible is the Word of God, but I do think that this fits into the case I've been building.

God didn't have the Bible written down to entertain us. The Bible was given to us so that we might know God, be reconciled to Him, and live our lives for Him in a way that is pleasing to Him. Do we see that happening in the lives of those who read it? Absolutely!

Wherever the gospel has gone and been received—from prisons to remote villages deep inside third world countries—it has had a transforming effect on people's lives for good. Down through the centuries, its words have converted millions of unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Countless people (including myself!) who would testify that they were immoral, godless sinners, drowning in a cesspool of sins (harmful to themselves and others), have been transformed into men and women who reflect Jesus as they have prayerfully read the Bible. I have seen it over and over!

In addition to changing lives, the Bible has inspired people to:

- build countless hospitals and orphanages
- start many of the world's greatest universities (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, were started by Christians for Christian purposes)
- launch innumerable humanitarian efforts to the poor
- work for the equality of men and women and those of different skin colors
- investigate the world and universe scientifically
- further the development of great art and music
- abolish slavery (William Wilberforce, an evangelical Christian and member of the British Parliament in the early 19th century, was the one largely responsible for the abolition of the slave trade)

The historian **Philip Schaff** summarized the enormous impact the Bible has had on people when he wrote this about Jesus:

"Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times." [Schaff, *The Person of Christ*, 29]

No other book in the world has had the kind of far-reaching, culture-crossing, multi-generational transforming effect on human lives and societies for good, then the Bible has.

