

PROOF of the Bible

The Bible can be PROVED to be God's inspired Word! Fulfilled Biblical prophecy proves beyond human doubt that the Bible had to be divinely authored and inspired! Who but God Himself could foretell in advance, thousands of years ahead of time, events to occur in the future, and bring them to pass unerringly!

William F. Dankenbring

The God of the Bible thunders: “Now, the Eternal cries, bring your case forward, now, Jacob’s King cries, *state your PROOFS*. Let us hear what happened in the past, that we may ponder it, or show me what is yet to be, that we may watch how it turns out; yes, let us hear what is coming, that we may be sure you are gods; come, do something or other that we may marvel at the sight!—why, you are things of naught, you can do nothing at all!” (Isaiah 41:21-23, Moffatt).

The God of Israel states: “Here is the word of the Eternal, King of Israel, Israel’s deliverer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, there is no god beside me, who is like me? Let him come forward with his claim, let him set out his case before me, who foretold the future long ago? Pray let us hear what is still to be!’” (Isa.44:6-7).

Almighty God declares, “Fear nothing, dread not in the days to come; *have I not foretold it and announced it long ago?* You are my witnesses whether there is any god, any Power, any, besides me. Remember this, O Jacob, O Israel, my witness” (Isa.44:8).

God says further in Isaiah, “Tell and bring forth your case; yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me” (Isaiah 45:21).

God adds through the prophet, “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*, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure’” (Isa.46:9-10).

Again, we read in Isaiah, in the Moffatt translation, God says to His people Israel, “God is among you only, besides him there is no god at all. Yours is indeed the God of mystery, a God who saves. Shamed and disgraced are all his rivals; and they depart disgraced, who fashion idols; while Israel is saved by the Eternal in a lasting triumph” (Isa.45:14-17).

No other God controls the future, predicts it with uncanny accuracy, and brings it about according to His plan. No other “god” has that kind of power and control. No other “god” is in charge of the destiny of man or controls the future of the world.

The God of Israel says, “I predict honestly” (Isa.45:19). He says of His people Israel, “Jacob wins victory and power by the Eternal only; all who were enraged at him shall be defeated and disgraced, but all the sons of Israel shall triumph and exult in the Eternal” (Isa.45:24-25).

Fulfilled Bible prophecy proves the God of Israel to be the true God. Write for our free articles, “The Astonishing Case for Christ,” “Daniel 9 Proves Jesus Is the Messiah,” and “Daniel 11 – the Longest Prophecy.”

There are over 300 specific prophecies in the Old Testament that are fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. “The very dimension of the sheer fulfillment of prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures should be enough to convince anyone that we are dealing with a supernatural piece of literature....God has himself planted within the scriptures an internal consistency that bears witness that this is his Word.” R.C. Sproul, *Now That’s a Good Question*.

Proving whether something is true or not is called apologetics. This word is derived from the Greek word “apologia,” which means “to defend.” The entire “Clarifying Christianity” website is filled with apologetics—proofs and explanations for many Christian-related issues. The focus of this page is the proof supporting the accuracy of the Bible. After all, if the Bible is not true or if it is filled with errors, Christianity would only be a “blind faith”—something people believe without any evidence to support it.

However, Christianity is *not* a blind faith. It is the *only* religion that can prove itself, and a main source of that proof is the Bible.

Fulfilled Prophecy Proves the Bible Inspired!

Fulfilled prophecy is the fourth proof of the inspiration of the Bible—accurately foretelling what will happen ahead of time. The Bible is unique in boldly proclaiming many specific events to come. No other religious book dares to lay out the future in this way.

As the book *A General Introduction to the Bible* says: “No unconditional prophecy of the Bible about events to the present day has gone unfulfilled . . . Other books claim divine inspiration, such as the Koran, the Book of Mormon, and parts of the [Hindu] Veda. But none of those books contains predictive prophecy.

As a result, fulfilled prophecy is a strong indication of the unique, divine authority of the Bible.” So say Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* 1986, p. 13).

Fall of Ancient Babylon

Isaiah was a prophet who began to prophesy the year that King Uzziah of Judah died, which was around 740 B.C. (Isaiah 6:1, 8). One of his predictions was about the city Babylon.

In the Bible, Isaiah 13:1 says, “The burden against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.” At the time of Isaiah’s prediction, Babylon was one of the largest and most important cities in the world. This is what God told Isaiah would happen to Babylon:

Isaiah claimed that God told him that Babylon would be completely destroyed.

“Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it. Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans’ pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there” (Isaiah 13:17-20).

Isaiah claimed that God told him that Babylon would be completely destroyed.

The Assyrians Destroy Babylon

During Isaiah’s lifetime, the Assyrian Empire ruled most of the Middle East. The Assyrians controlled many foreign cities, including Babylon. After Isaiah made his prediction, Babylon rebelled against the Assyrians several times. When Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, captured the city in 689 B.C., he decided to destroy the city forever so that it could never rebel again. Sennacherib made this inscription about his victory:

“I made its destruction more complete than by a flood. That in days to come the site of that city, and (its) temples and gods, might not be remembered, I completely blotted it out with (floods) of water and made it like a meadow” (Daniel D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, 1926-1927, Vol. 2, p. 152).

Isaiah’s prophecy was not fulfilled when Sennacherib destroyed Babylon. Isaiah predicted that the Medes would attack Babylon. But it was the Assyrians who attacked and destroyed the city first.

When Isaiah wrote his prediction, the Medes were weak. Most of the Medes were ruled by other nations, and the remaining Medes were not unified (The Cambridge History of Iran, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 80). It would have been impossible for them to capture or destroy the strong city of Babylon. Isaiah’s prediction appeared to be wrong. When the Assyrians destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C., Isaiah’s prediction appeared to be completely impossible. The Medes could not fight against a city that was gone!

Babylon Rebuilt

Sennacherib thought that he had destroyed Babylon forever. But after Sennacherib died, his son Esarhaddon began to rebuild Babylon. Soon Babylon became an important city in the Assyrian Empire like it had been before.

In 626 B.C., Babylon rebelled against Assyria again. This time the Babylonians were successful. A local leader, Nabopolassar, became the king. He was able to establish Babylonia as a separate kingdom and Babylon began to grow in strength.

The Medes were also growing in strength at this time. Media managed to become independent from Assyria and expel the armies of the Scythians that had invaded their country (Herodotus 1.95, 106). In 612 B.C. the king of Media and the king of Babylon formed an alliance and fought together against Nineveh, the last capital city of Assyria. They captured the city and burned it. Within a few years the Babylonians and Medes had completely destroyed the Assyrian Empire. The Babylonians took most of the former Assyrian lands, and the Medes took what remained.

By 605 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, the Babylonian Empire had become the leading empire in the world. Nebuchadnezzar focused on expanding his empire and on expanding Babylon to become the greatest city in the world. He built a beautiful palace, rebuilt and repaired the walls, improved the city streets and embellished the temples.

When Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C., Babylon was truly one of the most magnificent cities in the world. Isaiah had predicted that God would destroy Babylon—but now Babylon was greater than it had been in Isaiah's lifetime. However, Babylon's greatness would not last forever.

Enter the Medes

A few years later, in 559 B.C., Cyrus the Great became king over Persia, a region under the rule of Media. The Persians were a tribe of people closely related to the Medes. Cyrus' father was a Persian prince, and his mother was the daughter of the king of Media (Herodotus 1.107, 122). In about 550 B.C. Cyrus overthrew his grandfather, the king of Media, and became the king of both Media and Persia. Cyrus quickly began to build an empire. In 546 B.C. he conquered the Greek kingdom of Lydia (in western Turkey). In 539 B.C., Cyrus' army came to fight against Babylon.

Babylon was a very strong city. Two thick walls and a large moat protected the city, making it extremely difficult for an enemy to attack. However, Babylon was divided into two parts. The larger part of the city was built on the east bank of the Euphrates River, and a smaller part of the city was on the west bank of the river. Babylon had strong walls, but it also relied on the Euphrates River and the moat around the city to protect it.

The Greek historian Herodotus, who wrote about Babylon about 100 years later, described how Cyrus' army captured the city. Part of the army went north of Babylon and dug a trench from the Euphrates River to a nearby marsh. When the army connected the trench to the Euphrates River, much of the water in the river flowed toward the marsh, while only a little water continued to flow toward Babylon. While the Babylonians were confidently celebrating a feast, the strong river and moat protecting the city became very shallow, and the Medes and Persians were able to enter the city (Herodotus 1.191). They captured the city without a battle, and Darius the Mede was put in charge (Daniel 5:31).

Isaiah's Predictions Fulfilled

Today, Babylon is still an empty city. In times of peace tourists can go see the partially rebuilt ruins of Babylon that have remained empty for almost 2,000 years.

Finally, nearly 200 years after Isaiah wrote about Babylon, part of his prophecy was fulfilled. God told Isaiah, "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who will not regard silver; and as for gold, they will not delight in it" (Isaiah 13:17). The Medes captured Babylon, just as Isaiah predicted. They captured the city without a battle and did not plunder the city. However, the other details of the prophecy had not happened yet.

Isaiah said that the Medes would kill many people: "Also their bows will dash the young men to pieces, and they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye will not spare children" (Isaiah 13:18). This prediction was fulfilled several years later.

An inscription written on a rock cliff in Bisotun, Iran—made by Darius, king of the Medes and Persians—describes the event. In 521 B.C. the Babylonians appointed their own king and the city rebelled. Darius' army defeated the rebel army and captured Babylon. Then the rebel king and his main followers were impaled inside the city.

In about 482 B.C. Babylon rebelled against their Persian and Median rulers again. Xerxes the king sent his army to capture the city. The army destroyed the temples and took away the idol of the Babylonian god Marduk (Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, 7.17.2; Herodotus 1.183). Xerxes may have also destroyed the outer walls of Babylon.

After this punishment the city began to decline in importance. When Alexander the Great defeated the Persians 150 years later, much of Babylon was still destroyed (Arrian 3.16.4). However, many people still lived in Babylon. Alexander decided to rebuild Babylon's temples and make Babylon a marvelous city again, but he died before he could accomplish his plan.

After Alexander's death, Seleucus I gained control of a large part of the Middle East, including Babylonia. He did not share Alexander's grand vision for Babylon. Instead he built a new city called Seleucia, nearby on the Tigris River. An ancient clay tablet shows that Seleucus' son ordered most of the population of Babylon to move to this new city in 275 B.C. (M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World From Alexander to the Roman Conquest*, 1981, p. 241).

After that time Babylon wasn't a major city anymore. About 250 years later the Roman writer Strabo wrote, "Seleucia at the present time has become larger than Babylon, whereas the greater part of Babylon is so deserted that one would not hesitate to say... 'The Great City is a desert'" (Geography, 16.1.5, Loeb Classical Library).

Before long Babylon was completely empty.

In 1899, German archaeologists went to the area in Iraq called Tell Babil, and they began to dig and uncover parts of ancient Babylon. In 1978, the president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, began to rebuild some of the ancient buildings of Babylon. Some of the temples have been built again and also a palace, some walls and an amphitheater (Amatzia Baram, Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-89, 1991, p. 47).

But today, Babylon is still an empty city. In times of peace tourists can go see the partially rebuilt ruins of Babylon that have remained empty for almost 2,000 years. The city is exactly like Isaiah predicted: "It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation" (Isaiah 13:20).

How could Isaiah know that the Medes, a weak tribe, would grow in strength and conquer the strong city of Babylon almost 200 years later? How could he know that one of the greatest cities in the world would be abandoned and remain empty for thousands of years? No one can make accurate predictions like these. The events in history show that the prophecies in the Bible really did come from God.

Ancient Tyre Destroyed

At the time Ezekiel wrote this prophecy (roughly between 592-586 BC), Tyre was divided into two locations. There was the island of Tyre, which was a well-fortified city located about a half-mile off shore from modern Lebanon, and the mainland city, once called [Ushu](#), which became a suburb of Tyre. The city of Tyre still exists today, but the island and mainland are now connected by an artificial causeway (or land bridge) first constructed by Alexander the Great in 332 BC.

The Biblical "proof of divine inspiration" begins in Ezekiel 26; let's take it verse by verse.

"In the eleventh month of the twelfth year, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, 'Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper,' therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am against you, Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves" (v.1-3).

Tyre was rejoicing over Jerusalem's fall to Babylon, which God apparently found distasteful, so he curses Tyre saying, "I will bring many nations against you."

God goes on, “They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock.⁵ Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord. She will become plunder for the nations, and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword. Then they will know that I am the Lord” (v.4-6).

The island of Tyre was famous for her impressive and impregnable “walls” and “towers.” On the side facing the shore, they were said to be 20' thick at the base and 150' high.

It’s crucial to note that the Tyre “out in the sea” refers to the island of Tyre, which was to become “a place to spread fishnets.” In order to accommodate those fishnets, the previous sentence tells us the island would be made bare rock by the pulling down of walls and towers. If there’s any doubt that these two sentences belong together, verse 14 links the “bare rock” in verse 4 with the “place to spread fishnets” in verse 5, saying, “I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets.”

Almost as a footnote, Ezekiel then turns his attention toward the mainland, saying “...and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword.” Also notice how Ezekiel refers to the island as Tyre, and the mainland as “settlements.”

“For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army.”

Ezekiel accurately predicts that Nebuchadnezzar will come against Tyre, though an attempt on Tyre was highly probable. At the time of Ezekiel’s writing, he’d been exiled to Babylon and may have known about the king’s interest in Tyre (the attack happened soon after Ezekiel’s prediction). Ezekiel knew that Babylon had already conquered the Assyrians (612 BC), and was about to deal a final blow to Jerusalem (587 BC). He also knew Babylon was in the process of incorporating most of the Eastern Mediterranean. Tyre, with its wealth and strategic ports, would’ve been an obvious target, and Ezekiel’s promise of victory may have inspired Nebuchadnezzar (as we’ll see in a moment).

Ezekiel continues: “He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you. He will direct the blows of his battering rams against your walls and demolish your towers with his weapons” (v.8-9).

Here, God plainly states, “I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar ... He will direct the blows of his battering rams against your walls and demolish your towers with his weapons.”

We've already established that it is the *island's* walls and towers that are to be destroyed. But if that's the case, then this prophecy fails, because Nebuchadnezzar never breached the island walls.

The only option is to assume God has suddenly stopped talking about Nebuchadnezzar, and is now referring to the attack by Alexander the Great that would happen some 250 years later.

Continuing: "They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea.¹³ I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more.¹⁴ I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. **You will never be rebuilt, for I the Lord have spoken, declares the Sovereign Lord**" (v.12-14).

The final prophecy is that Tyre would never be rebuilt. Tyre was rebuilt, and still exists today. In fact, Tyre was even visited by Jesus himself.

So what happened?

Tyre was first destroyed on the mainland by Nebuchadnezzar, but the inhabitants simply retreated to the island offshore which they had prepared as a refuge when besieged. Alexander the Great would not put up with the taunting of the inhabitants of Tyre in their offshore refuge, and used the ruins of the mainland city that Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed to create a landbridge so the Greek army could besiege and destroy it, which they did. The final residue of the city of Tyre were completely destroyed by the Muslim invasion in the 7th century leaving the city completely uninhabitable. Today it is just a place that fishermen dry their nets as prophesied by Ezekiel 26:5 "*It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations.*"

The fulfilling of this prophecy occurred in several phases. First, Babylon's Nebuchadnezzar warred against Tyre's mainland piece for 13 years (Ezekiel 26:7-11; 29:18). He was, however, robbed of the spoils of war when he overtook the city and found its riches and people had moved to Tyre's occupied island. Eventually the city made a peace agreement with Babylon. Babylon's king, however, fulfilled part of the prophecies of Ezekiel by destroying Tyre's mainland presence.

The prophecies against Tyre are remarkable in their fulfillment through centuries of invasions and conquest!

Cyrus and Jerusalem

Another incredible example of fulfilled prophecy is found in the book of Isaiah. The date of the book is fixed by its first verse: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and

Hezekiah, kings of Judah.” Through history and archaeology, the dates of these kings are well known—from 767 to 686 B.C. Yet, in Isaiah 44, God revealed to Isaiah a coming conqueror who would permit Jerusalem to be rebuilt after its destruction—although in Isaiah’s day Jerusalem was still standing! So here is a prophecy so ahead of its time that only future generations in Jerusalem would first witness the city’s destruction and then its rebuilding!

Jerusalem was destroyed around 587 B.C. by the Babylonians some 100 years after Isaiah’s day. And work was not begun to reconstruct it until 539 B.C., when the prophesied king conquered Babylon and decreed that the captive Jews be freed and allowed to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple.

In Isaiah 44, God reveals to Isaiah the actual name of the coming conqueror who would allow Jerusalem to be rebuilt—Cyrus, known in history as Cyrus the Great. “Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer . . . : ‘I am the Lord, who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens all alone . . . who frustrates the signs of the babblers, and drives diviners mad . . . who says to Jerusalem, “You shall be inhabited,” . . . who says of Cyrus, “He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built,’ and to the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid’”” (Isaiah 44:24-28).

This is only one of the hundreds of Bible prophecies that have been confirmed. Dozens of specific prophecies deal with Jesus Christ and were fulfilled in precise detail. Again, no other ancient and supposedly sacred book even dares to present predictive prophecy—making the Bible unique. Its prophetic foretelling proves it is not the work of mere men.

Prophecy is the authentication given by God of his authorship of Scripture. No other holy book in the world has prophecy as the Bible. One out of every three verses is prophecy, some fulfilled and some future.

Daniel’s Prophecies

Daniel, in the period around 605-536 B.C., prophesied Greece would overtake the mighty Persians. Persia's empire is considered the largest and most powerful of all ancient empires. Employing a goat to represent Greece, and a ram to symbolize Persia, Daniel wrote the following.

“I kept on watching and saw a goat come from the west and charge across the entire earth, without even touching the ground. Between his eyes was a powerful horn, and with tremendous anger the goat started toward the ram that I had seen beside the river. The goat was so fierce that its attack broke both horns of the ram, leaving him powerless. Then the goat stomped on the ram, and no one could do anything to help. After this, the goat became even more powerful. But at the peak of his power, his mighty horn was broken, and four other mighty horns took its place — one pointing to the north and one to the east, one to the south and one to the west” (Dan.8:5-8)..

Daniel is told, “The two horns of the ram are the kings of Media and Persia, the goat is the kingdom of Greece, and the powerful horn between his eyes is the first of its kings” (Daniel 8:20-21).

Some 200 years after the death of Daniel his God-inspired predictions proved correct. The undefeated Greek general Alexander the Great took the Persian empire around 334 - 330 B.C.

Messianic Prophecies

Of the many Biblical prophecies, the most striking examples are the predictions about an “anointed one” (“Messiah” in Hebrew) who was to arrive in the future. About 4 BC, a miraculous event occurred—a boy named Jesus was born to a *virgin* named Mary. You can read His story in the book of Luke.

Starting at age 30, Jesus fulfilled more and more of these prophecies written about the Messiah. His fulfillment of these prophecies was very spectacular: Jesus gave sight to the blind, made the lame walk, cured those who had leprosy, gave the deaf hearing, and raised people from the dead! These miracles and others were done many times in front of thousands of witnesses for three years.

About 30 AD, Jesus was crucified (a prophecy) and died (a prophecy). Three days later he rose from the dead (another prophecy), after which He was seen by over 500 witnesses. Since these prophecies were written down at least 400 years before they happened, there is no doubt that the Bible’s writers were inspired supernaturally—by God. To examine these prophecies yourself, read our articles, “The Astonishing Proof Jesus Is the Messiah” and “Daniel’s Prophecy Proves Christ Is the Messiah.”

Proof of Archaeology

Paul L. Maier wrote in *Christian Research Journal*, volume 27, number 2 (2004), that archaeological finds contradict the contentions of biblical minimalists and other revisionists. Among those that corroborate biblical evidence, and which provide the most significant discoveries are the following facts.

A Common Flood Story

Not just the Hebrews (Gen. 6–8), but Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and Greeks all report a flood in primordial times. A Sumerian king list from c. 2100 BC divides itself into two categories: those kings who ruled before a great flood and those who ruled after it. One of the earliest examples of Sumero-Akkadian-Babylonian literature, the Gilgamesh Epic, describes a great flood sent as punishment by the gods, with humanity saved only when the pious Utnapishtim (AKA, “the Mesopotamian Noah”) builds a ship and saves the animal world thereon. A later Greek counterpart, the story of Deucalion and Phyrra, tells of a couple who survived a great flood sent by an angry Zeus. Taking refuge

atop Mount Parnassus (AKA, “the Greek Ararat”), they supposedly repopulated the earth by heaving stones behind them that sprang into human beings.

The Code of Hammurabi

This seven-foot black diorite stele, discovered at Susa and presently located in the Louvre museum, contains 282 engraved laws of Babylonian King Hammurabi (fl. 1750 BC). The common basis for this law code is the *lex talionis* (“the law of the tooth”), showing that there was a common Semitic law of retribution in the ancient Near East, which is clearly reflected in the Pentateuch. Exodus 21:23–25, for example, reads: “But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot...” (NIV).

The Nuzi Tablets

The some 20,000 cuneiform clay tablets discovered at the ruins of Nuzi, east of the Tigris River and datable to c. 1500 BC, reveal institutions, practices, and customs remarkably congruent to those found in Genesis. These tablets include treaties, marriage arrangements, rules regarding inheritance, adoption, and the like.

The Existence of Hittites

Genesis 23 reports that Abraham buried Sarah in the Cave of Machpelah, which he purchased from Ephron the Hittite. Second Samuel 11 tells of David’s adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. A century ago the Hittites were unknown outside of the Old Testament, and critics claimed that they were a figment of biblical imagination. In 1906, however, archaeologists digging east of Ankara, Turkey, discovered the ruins of Hattusas, the ancient Hittite capital at what is today called Boghazkoy, as well as its vast collection of Hittite historical records, which showed an empire flourishing in the mid-second millennium BC. This critical challenge, among many others, was immediately proved worthless — a pattern that would often be repeated in the decades to come.

The Merneptah Stele

A seven-foot slab engraved with hieroglyphics, also called the Israel Stele, boasts of the Egyptian pharaoh’s conquest of Libyans and peoples in Palestine, including the Israelites: “Israel — his seed is not.” This is the earliest reference to Israel in nonbiblical sources and demonstrates that, as of c. 1230 BC, the Hebrews were already living in the Promised Land.

Biblical Cities Attested Archaeologically

In addition to Jericho, places such as Haran, Hazor, Dan, Megiddo, Shechem, Samaria, Shiloh, Gezer, Gibeah, Beth Shemesh, Beth Shean, Beersheba, Lachish, and many other urban sites have been excavated, quite apart from such larger and obvious

locations as Jerusalem or Babylon. Such geographical markers are extremely significant in demonstrating that *fact*, not *fantasy*, is intended in the Old Testament historical narratives; otherwise, the specificity regarding these urban sites would have been replaced by “Once upon a time” narratives with only hazy geographical parameters, if any.

Israel’s enemies in the Hebrew Bible likewise are not contrived but solidly historical. Among the most dangerous of these were the Philistines, the people after whom Palestine itself would be named. Their earliest depiction is on the Temple of Rameses III at Thebes, c. 1150 BC, as “peoples of the sea” who invaded the Delta area and later the coastal plain of Canaan. The Pentapolis (five cities) they established — namely Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza, Gath, and Ekron — have all been excavated, at least in part, and some remain cities to this day. Such precise urban evidence measures favorably when compared with the geographical sites *claimed* in the holy books of other religious systems, which often have no basis whatever in reality.¹⁰

Shishak’s Invasion of Judah

First Kings 14 and 2 Chronicles 12 tell of Pharaoh Shishak’s conquest of Judah in the fifth year of the reign of King Rehoboam, the brainless son of Solomon, and how Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem was robbed of its treasures on that occasion. This victory is also commemorated in hieroglyphic wall carvings on the Temple of Amon at Thebes.

The Moabite Stone

Second Kings 3 reports that Mesha, the king of Moab, rebelled against the king of Israel following the death of Ahab. A three-foot stone slab, also called the Mesha Stele, confirms the revolt by claiming triumph over Ahab’s family, c. 850 BC, and that Israel had “perished forever.”

Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

In 2 Kings 9–10, Jehu is mentioned as King of Israel (841–814 BC). That the growing power of Assyria was already encroaching on the northern kings prior to their ultimate conquest in 722 BC is demonstrated by a six-and-a-half-foot black obelisk discovered in the ruins of the palace at Nimrud in 1846. On it, Jehu is shown kneeling before Shalmaneser III and offering tribute to the Assyrian king, the only relief we have to date of a Hebrew monarch.

Burial Plaque of King Uzziah

Down in Judah, King Uzziah ruled from 792 to 740 BC, a contemporary of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Like Solomon, he began well and ended badly. In 2 Chronicles 26 his sin is recorded, which resulted in his being struck with leprosy later in life. When Uzziah died, he was interred in a “field of burial that belonged to the kings.” His stone burial

plaque has been discovered on the Mount of Olives, and it reads: “Here, the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah, were brought. Do not open.”

Hezekiah’s Siloam Tunnel Inscription

King Hezekiah of Judah ruled from 721 to 686 BC. Fearing a siege by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, Hezekiah preserved Jerusalem’s water supply by cutting a tunnel through 1,750 feet of solid rock from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam inside the city walls (2 Kings 20; 2 Chron. 32). At the Siloam end of the tunnel, an inscription, presently in the archaeological museum at Istanbul, Turkey, celebrates this remarkable accomplishment. The tunnel is probably the only biblical site that has not changed its appearance in 2,700 years.

The Sennacherib Prism

After having conquered the 10 northern tribes of Israel, the Assyrians moved southward to do the same to Judah (2 Kings 18–19). The prophet Isaiah, however, told Hezekiah that God would protect Judah and Jerusalem against Sennacherib (2 Chron. 32; Isa. 36–37). Assyrian records virtually confirm this. The cuneiform on a hexagonal, 15-inch baked clay prism found at the Assyrian capital of Nineveh describes Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 701 BC in which it claims that the Assyrian king shut Hezekiah inside Jerusalem “like a caged bird.” Like the biblical record, however, it does *not* state that he conquered Jerusalem, which the prism certainly would have done had this been the case. The Assyrians, in fact, bypassed Jerusalem on their way to Egypt, and the city would not fall until the time of Nebuchadnezzar and the Neo-Babylonians in 586 BC. Sennacherib himself returned to Nineveh where his own sons murdered him.

The Cylinder of Cyrus the Great

Second Chronicles 36:23 and Ezra 1 report that Cyrus the Great of Persia, after conquering Babylon, permitted Jews in the Babylonian Captivity to return to their homeland. Isaiah had even prophesied this (Isa. 44:28). This tolerant policy of the founder of the Persian Empire is borne out by the discovery of a nine-inch clay cylinder found at Babylon from the time of its conquest, 539 BC, which reports Cyrus’s victory and his subsequent policy of permitting Babylonian captives to return to their homes and even rebuild their temples.

Maier concludes: “So it goes. This list of correlations between Old Testament texts and the hard evidence of Near Eastern archaeology could easily be tripled in length. When it comes to the intertestamental and New Testament eras, as we might expect, the needle on the gauge of positive correlations simply goes off the scale.”

The Proof of Textual Evidence

Both the Old and New Testaments are strongly supported by manuscript evidence (the evidence of early hand written copies). The famous Dead Sea Scrolls are one

example of the Old Testament evidence. These documents came from the “library” of a settlement founded at Qumran before 150 B.C. and abandoned about 68 A.D. Some of the manuscript copies were made during that period, and some were written earlier (third century BC) and brought to the settlement. Ignoring spelling-oriented (orthographic) changes and similar small differences, the Dead Sea Scrolls match the Hebrew text behind today’s Old Testament, in spite of the passage of over 2,000 years (where one would expect errors to creep in).

Over 20,000 known manuscripts document the New Testament text. This makes the New Testament the most reliable document of antiquity (a document written before the printing press). These manuscripts vary in size from a part of a page to an entire Bible (Old and New Testaments). The earliest New Testament manuscripts date from the second century (100-199) AD. These manuscript copies were written in different languages by people of different nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds. In spite of all those differences between them, the New Testament texts all agree. (That is, those differences that we do observe between these hand written documents are occasional changes in the spelling of names or isolated cases of missing or changed words. Still, since we have so many copies, it is obvious to anyone but the hardened skeptic that they all represent the same text.)

Note: Those minor differences that do exist between the Old and New Testament manuscripts are interesting for academic reasons. They are the topic of a future in depth “Clarifying Christianity” study.

Evidence of Jesus Christ

Secular history supports the Bible and the historicity of Christ. For example, in *The Antiquities of the Jews*, book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3 the famous historian Flavius Josephus writes:

“Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works – a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

In 115 AD, P. Cornelius Tacitus wrote the following passage that refers to Jesus (called “Christus,” which means “The Messiah”) in book 15, chapter 44 of *The Annals*:

“Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a

most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

“Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.”

Tacitus’s terse statement about “Christus” clearly corroborates the New Testament on certain historical details of Jesus’ death. Tacitus presents four pieces of accurate knowledge about Jesus: (1) *Christus*, used by Tacitus to refer to Jesus, was one distinctive way by which some referred to him, even though Tacitus mistakenly took it for a personal name rather than an epithet or title; (2) this *Christus* was associated with the beginning of the movement of Christians, whose name originated from his; (3) he was executed by the Roman governor of Judea; and (4) the time of his death was during Pontius Pilate’s governorship of Judea, during the reign of Tiberius.

Other strong evidence that speaks directly about Jesus as a real person comes from Josephus, a Jewish priest who grew up as an aristocrat in first-century Palestine and ended up living in Rome, supported by the patronage of three successive emperors. In the early days of the first Jewish Revolt against Rome (66–70 C.E.),

Josephus was a commander in Galilee but soon surrendered and became a prisoner of war. He then prophesied that his conqueror, the Roman commander Vespasian, would become emperor, and when this actually happened, Vespasian freed him. From then on Josephus lived in Rome under the protection of the Flavians and there composed his historical writings.

In his two great works, *The Jewish War* and *Jewish Antiquities*, both written in Greek for educated people, Josephus tried to appeal to aristocrats in the Roman world, presenting Judaism as a religion to be admired for its moral and philosophical depth. *The Jewish War* doesn’t mention Jesus except in some versions in likely later additions by others, but *Jewish Antiquities* does mention Jesus—twice.

The shorter of these two references to Jesus (in Book 20)¹¹ is incidental to identifying Jesus’ brother James,¹² the leader of the church in Jerusalem. In the temporary absence of a Roman governor between Festus’s death and governor Albinus’s arrival in 62 C.E., the high priest Ananus instigated James’s execution. Josephus described it: “Being therefore this kind of person [i.e., a heartless Sadducee], Ananus, thinking that he had a favorable opportunity because Festus had died and Albinus was still on his way, called a meeting [literally, “sanhedrin”] of judges and brought into it the brother of Jesus-

who-is-called-Messiah ... James by name, and some others. He made the accusation that they had transgressed the law, and he handed them over to be stoned."

James is otherwise a barely noticed, minor figure in Josephus's lengthy tome. The sole reason for referring to James at all was that his death resulted in Ananus losing his position as high priest. James (Jacob) was a common Jewish name at this time. Many men named James are mentioned in Josephus's works, so Josephus needed to specify which one he meant. The common custom of simply giving the father's name (James, son of Joseph) would not work here, because James's father's name was also very common. Therefore Josephus identified this James by reference to his famous brother Jesus.

But James's brother Jesus (Yehoshua) also had a very common name. Josephus mentions at least 12 other men named Jesus.⁵ Therefore Josephus specified *which* Jesus he was referring to by adding the phrase "who is called Messiah," or, since he was writing in Greek, *Christos*. This phrase was necessary to identify clearly first Jesus and, via Jesus, James, the subject of the discussion. This extraneous reference to Jesus would have made no sense if Jesus had not been a real person.

Is the Bible Inspired by God?

For many centuries agnostics, skeptics and scoffers have called the Bible a collection of ancient primitive myths, fables, stories, and superstition. One religious leader calmly claimed, "We know now that every idea in the Bible started from primitive and childlike origins . . ."

Even Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, who translated the Bible into English, declared that the book of Joshua "is the legendary story of the conquest of Canaan" and claimed that the book of Ruth "belongs to Israel's fiction, rather than to its history, and should be among its tales and stories."

Why so much disrespect for the Bible? Why have so-many men of high education, scholars, and scientists and even ministers REJECTED the Bible as reliable historical truth?

Surprisingly enough, even many modern ministers publicly declare the Bible is not inspired by a Creator God. Harry Emerson Fosdick, a noted American minister, wrote, "We know now that every idea in the Bible started from *primitive* and childlike origins . . ." (*The Modern Use of the Bible*, p.11). He spoke of certain "crudities" in the earlier writings in the Bible and said, "Their lack is a lack of maturity."

Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed, who translated the Bible into English, said of the first twelve books in the Bible, "It is man's first attempt to organize his knowledge of his past into what we would call an outline of history. Genesis," he wrote, "is a great encyclopedia of Hebrew thought . . ." -- NOT divine revelation from Almighty GOD!

The book of Joshua, he says, "is the *legendary story* of the conquest of Canaan."

The book of Ruth, he believes, "belongs to Israel's *fiction*, rather than to its history, and should be among its *tales and stories*" (*How to Read the Bible*, p. 39, 51).

THESE are the words of ministers translators, and Bible scholars! They should not be taken lightly. They are the opinions of the vast, overwhelming majority of Biblical scholars and critics. Why do such people generally believe the Bible is merely a grouping of stories, legends and myths?

There is a REASON!

Most professors and scholars are unwilling to admit the divine inspiration of the Bible because *they are BLINDED to the truth!* Human nature tends to resist "authority" of any kind. For a human being to admit to the authority of a God, and His divinely inspired Word, they would then be in a very awkward position if they continued to criticize His Word and its contents.

If they accepted its divine origin as to contents and inspiration, then they would have to recognize its **AUTHORITY** over their lives – they would be obligated to *OBEY it!*

How many men do you know who really want to obey the Ten Commandments? Who deep down really desire to obey ALL the laws and commandments of the God of the Bible?

However, the Bible speaks with AUTHORITY and it was divinely inspired. Jesus Christ said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). The apostle Paul wrote, "ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim.3:16-17). Christ also said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jon 8:32).

Isn't it about time we re-open the Bible, blow the dust off its pages, and read it with renewed respect and serious, sober-minded attention?

The day is coming when we shall all be JUDGED by its contents.

"And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books [biblia] were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were *judged* out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Re.20:12-13).

Again, God says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the *word of truth*" (II Tim.2:15).