

**What's On Your Mind?  
Questions You Always Wanted to Ask  
Why Should I Believe the Bible?**

**Sunday, July 13, 2014**

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**Internal Evidence**

- Harmony of the Message
- Reveals Man's True Character (Rom 3:10-18)
- Scientific Accuracy  
(Psalm 19:6; Job 26:7,10; Isa 40:22; Jer 33:22)

**External Evidence**

- Archaeology
- Manuscript Record
- Corroborating Accounts

**Predictive/Fulfilled Prophecy**

(Isa 48:3-6; Dan 2, 7-8; Mic 5:2; Psalm 22; Isa 53)

**The Testimony of Jesus Christ**

(Matt 12:40; 19:4; 24:37-39; 5:18; John 6:63; 10:35; 17:17)

**It is declared to be God's Word**

(Isa 40:8; 55:8-11; 2 Tim 3:16-17)

The Bible has proven itself to be *true and reliable* concerning its content (*message*), knowledge (*science*), the past (*history*), and the future (*prophecy*)... Could it be that it is true and reliable concerning what it says about you and me today (*present*)?

**Resources for your own study:**

F.F. Bruce: **The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?**

Walter Kaiser: **The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant?**

Gary R. Habermas: **The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ**

John Walvoord: **Every Prophecy of the Bible**

Craig Blomberg: **Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith**

Josh McDowell and Bill Wilson: **A Ready Defense**

Josh McDowell: **Evidence That Demands a Verdict**

Norman L. Geisler: **Christian Apologetics**

## Manuscript Evidence for Ancient Writings

Author	Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# Mss.
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,000 yrs	10
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,200 yrs	7
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1,300 yrs	8
Tacitus	100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	1,000 yrs	20
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	950 A.D.	800 yrs	8
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	643
New Testament	40-100 A.D.	125 A.D.	25-50 yrs	24,000

## Early Non-Christian References to Jesus

Writer	Date	Writing	Relevance
1 Thallus	52 A.D.	Chronicle	Solar eclipse at the crucifixion
2 Josephus	93 A.D.	Antiquities	Referenced John the Baptist, James, and Jesus
3 Pliny the Younger	112 A.D.	Letter to Trajan	Information about early Christianity
4 Cornelius Tacitus	116 A.D.	Annals	Information on the origin and spread of Christianity
5 Serenius Granianus	117-38 A.D.	Letter to Hadrian	Discusses charges brought against Christians
6 Suetonius	120 A.D.	Life of Nero	Reports punishment inflicted on Christians
7 Phlegon	140 A.D.	Olympiads	Solar eclipse at the crucifixion
8 Lucian of Somosata	170 A.D.	The Death of Peregrine	Hostile testimony about early Christians

## Other secular writers who refer to Christ and Christianity

9 Epictetus	15 Libanius
10 Aristides	16 Ammianus
11 Galenus	17 Marcellinus
12 Lampridius	18 Eunapius
13 Dio Cassius	19 Zosimus
14 Hinnerius	20 Jewish Rabbis

## Evidence for the Reliability of the Bible

### SCIENCE (only a partial list)

- **Limitless number of stars (Jer 33:22)**  
Not until 1600's and telescope did people believe this
- **Air has weight (Job 28:25)**  
It was believed that air was weightless
- **Light is in motion (Job 28:25)**  
Previous belief was that light was fixed in place
- **Blood is the source of life and healing (Lev 17:11)**  
Was believed the sick must be bled to rid the body of contaminants
- **Effect of emotions on physical health (Prov 16:24; 17:22)**
- **Control of contagious diseases (Lev 13:45-46)**

### HISTORY (only a partial list)

**Mari Tablets/ Nuzi Tablets:** Excavations at these two cities in Mesopotamia verify that the customs of Abraham were consistent with the culture of 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**The Moabite Stone (c 1850 A.D.)** corroborates the information from the Bible concerning the reign of King Omri and King Mesha of Moab's revolt as described in 2 Kings 3:4-27

**The Black Obelisk:** depicts the Israelite King Jehu paying tribute to Shalmaneser III, king of Assyria after Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel.

**The Pool of Bethesda/Bethesda:** Site where one of Jesus' healings of the crippled man occurred (John 5). Outside of the NT no evidence for the existence of the pool existed so skeptics said John was inaccurate. However, in 1888, sections of the pool were discovered in Jerusalem.

## **PROPHECY** (only a partial list)

**Isaiah 45:13** – After Judah’s captivity in Babylon, Isaiah predicts that the Persian ruler Cyrus would allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city. This happened about 150 years later when history verifies that Cyrus, King of Persia (559-530 BC) issued a decree in 538 BC to allow Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild.

**Ezekiel 26** – prophesied the destruction of Tyre (northern coast above Israel). The Jewish historian Josephus tells us that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged the coastal, mainland city for 13 years (585-572 BC) and finally captured it.

Many of its citizens escaped to an island about a mile off shore where they were safe since Babylon had not ships or navy.

Two hundred and fifty years later (c 332 BC), Alexander the Great (Greek Empire) was on a campaign to another region when he was refused the honor to worship a mutual “god” in Tyre. He was ticked so he stopped his campaign and went after the island.

Using the rubble that still remained on the mainland from Babylon’s attack; he spent several years building a causeway out to the island. He literally “scraped away her rubble and made her a bare rock (Ezek 26:4). He also commandeered ally ships from Crete, Sidon and Byblos (places he already conquered) and attacked Tyre from the sea as well as the causeway. Over 8,000 in Tyre lost their lives and another 30,000 were taken as slave.

The city has never been rebuilt. Fishermen from a small village there now spread their nets and cast them from barren rocks.

Here are just a few of the hundreds of prophecies Jesus fulfilled:

Subject	Prophecy	Fulfillment
Place of birth: Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1-6
Lineage: Seed of David	Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 11:1	Acts 13:22,23
Virgin Birth	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18-25
Prophet, priest, and king	Deut. 18:17-19; Psalm 110:1-4	Acts 3:20-23; Hebrews 7:17; 8:1
Fore-runner: John Baptist	Isaiah 40:3,4	Luke 3:2-5
Triumphal entry	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-9
Death by crucifixion	Psalm 22:16-18; 34:20	John 19:18-37
Died for others' guilt	Isaiah 53:4-12	1 Peter 2:21-25
Buried in rich man's tomb	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
Resurrection	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:24-32

Although a man might be able to fulfill one or two of these prophecies **by coincidence**, to fulfill all of them would be **impossible except by the plan of God**. In fact....

*Mathematician, Peter Stoner calculated that for one person to fulfill even EIGHT of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, it would be 1 times 10 to the 17<sup>th</sup> power. That is just 1 chance in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000!*

**Josh McDowell** illustrates the probability in this way:

*Fill the state of Texas two feet deep with silver dollars and on only one of those silver dollars, place a mark, and then throw it in. Then mix the silver dollars and have a blindfolded person start walking across Texas until they decide to stop and pick up just one silver dollar. The chances that they would pick up the silver dollar with the mark on it on the first try would be greater than one person fulfilling even eight of the OT prophecies concerning the Messiah.*

**But there aren't just eight prophecies about Messiah that Jesus fulfilled, but over 300!**