



Tree of Life

The Bible is truly the Word of God – written by men directly inspired by God!

Do you know what that means for your life here and beyond?

This booklet will give you very strong evidence -- beyond a reasonable doubt that the Bible has a supernatural origin outside our earthly time and abilities. This very strong verifiable evidence is supported by science, archeology, history, logic and common sense. Learn about amazing content far beyond even today's human abilities! It is not about Religion - it is about Relationship.

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the *Tree of Life*, which is in the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

God's Watermark of Authenticity

Source: The Living Word website, various books on Ivan Panin, Hidden Treasures -Chuck Missler

The Bible is the Word of God and He gave us undeniable evidence that is beyond human ability as proof. Our website has short video recordings that will show the *number patterns* in the original text of the Bible. Visual explanation is way better than trying to give you written explanation, but here is a brief overview and a simple example. Originally, the Bible text was written in Hebrew and Greek. Each letter in both languages has a number assigned to it. Only these two languages have this letter and corresponding number feature. Most frequently the number 7 appears as the primary number of the pattern as you see below. Some patterns are established by simply counting the letters not the number values of the letters. The example below will give you an idea of what we are talking about.

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"

בְּרֵאשִׁית, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ.

Looking at this same verse *in Hebrew* we find the number 7 repeated many times. Seven Hebrew words: (7), number of letters: (28 = 4 x 7), first three words: (14 letters = 2 x 7), last four words (14 letters = 2 x 7), fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh words have seven letters. Three key words: God, heaven earth have (14 letters = 2 x 7), and the four remaining words have (14 letters = 2 x 7).

Patterns of the number 7, 3, 37, 73 and 50 are most common with 7 being the most prevalent. You will find many examples in our website page title "Video Support." Another form of pattern is created by counting the types of words, i.e. nouns, verbs, names and so on. The first 11 verses of the Gospel of Matthew records the genealogy of Jesus Christ. There are 9 examples of a pattern of 7 types of words (i.e., nouns, male names, verbs, words used only once). You will see this in detail on the website Video Support page. This number pattern example has a one chance in 40 million to have happened without deliberate design. Honestly, can you imagine a first century man creating this design intentionally? Consider the last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark? There are 34 of these patterns in that section and the odds of that happening on accident is 1 in 54,116,956,037,952,111,668,959,660,849.

The Bible is the only book that has a number pattern in the text. Our loving Father has put the pattern in the text just for you to prove He directly inspired the Bible. Using today's technology, we cannot duplicate these number patterns.

There are approximately 2,000 prophecies in the Bible predicting future events. Prophecies about historical events that were written hundreds and even thousands of years before they took place just as predicted and recorded in history. Almost one third of the Bible describes details of future events. Some have been fulfilled and recorded. Some are yet to be fulfilled. Archeology and history record the details of events just as predicted. Some predictions have yet to be verified, but there is not a single prediction that has been proven to be wrong. As a testament to the accuracy of the Bible, it is frequently used as a reliable resource in archeology. We will show you how these predictions are very specific in their wording. The Prophet Daniel predicted an event 483 years in advance that was fulfilled to the exact day.

Most astonishing of all, we will see undeniable physical proof of scientific evidence that can only be explained by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as reported in the Gospels.

Using plain common sense and simple to understand evidence will lead you to the conclusion the Bible is the Word of God *beyond any reasonable doubt*. Consider, if the Bible is true, that means there is *the ultimate and infinite gain or loss* associated with your beliefs. It's not just about you because your belief or non-belief affects your loved ones. You have a responsibility to know the truth and to then share that truth. Eternity is a very long time and spending a few minutes to learn the truth about the Bible is a small investment with unlimited potential payback.

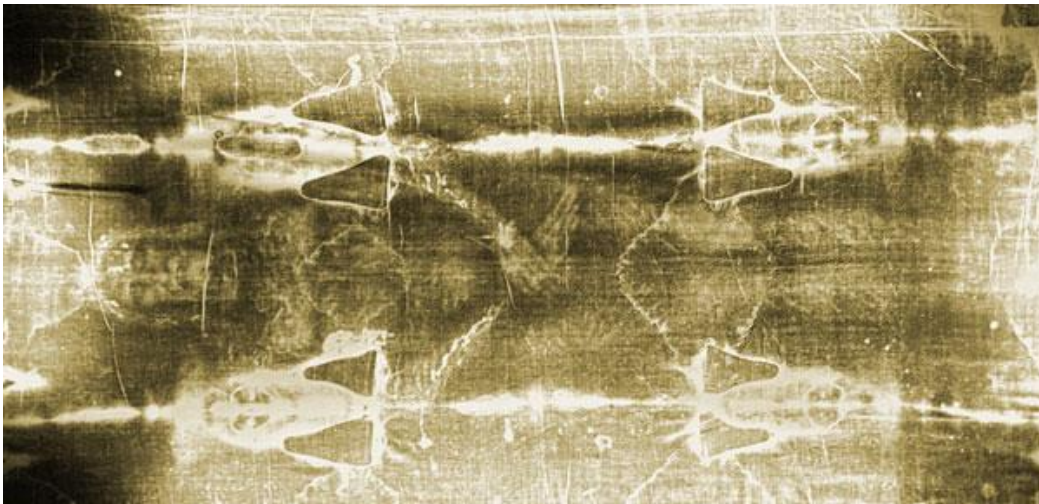
The Bible - A Best Seller of Biblical Proportion

The testament to the importance humanity places on the Bible reflects its massive distribution. No other publication compares to the number of printed copies in ancient times or modern history. It is the first publication printed on the modern day printing press. Gideon Bible society estimates that there are 6 plus billion Bibles and has given away almost 2 billion Bibles. Wikipedia estimates over 100 million Bibles are sold each year. There is an amazing number of ancient copies of the Bible. At last count there are nearly 5,686 original hand-written Greek manuscripts of the New Testament and more than 9,000 manuscripts in other languages. The 15,000 plus manuscripts consist of complete Bibles, books of the New Testament and fragments. Most ancient literary works number fewer than a dozen and the famous Iliad by Homer has only 643 manuscripts. Extensive research by many experts calculate that 98.33 percent of the text are accurate duplications.

Fully Integrated Communication

The Bible was written by 40 different authors, in 3 different languages, on three different continents, for a total of 66 books written over a period of 1,500 years. *As a testimony to accuracy, the different books contained within the Bible all fit together (integration) without discrepancy.* There is a network of cross referenced verses listed within the text. Using these cross referenced verses provides clarification and is a common practice in Bible study. This inter-connectivity between the many pages, authors and time supports the fact the Bible has one author - God.

The Shroud of Turin



Considered to be the Most Convincing Physical Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Source: The Fabric of Time – video

Study by teams of top scientists has resulted in evidence of a miracle printed on a 2,000 year old piece of linen. Over 150,000 hours of scientific investigation has yet to explain how the image was printed

upon the linen. The overwhelming evidence made available to you will lead to the conclusion that *beyond a reasonable doubt*, the burial shroud is the same linen written about in Bible scripture. Clearly by definition, the shroud is a physical example of a miracle as it cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws.

“Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.” (John 20:6, 7)

Named for the town Turin, Italy where the shroud is on display, this centuries old linen cloth bears exact details of crucified Jesus Christ described in the Bible. No other ancient artifact compares to the intense investigation by so many people of various scientific areas of expertise. Investigation began in 1898 when the first photograph of the shroud was taken. Film exposed in all cameras produce a negative image of the subject photographed, which is then developed into a positive image photograph. The 1898 photographic film produced a positive image not the expected negative image. This means the actual shroud image, as printed on the linen, is a negative photographic image. Instead of the shadowy figure displayed on the shroud, a sharply detailed image of a crucified man appeared. In 1978 a five day intensive study resulted in over 150,000 hours of research. Since that time, thousands of additional hours of testing and study have disclosed a large volume of results that will be outlined for you.

In 1931 many more photographs were taken of the shroud with long film exposure time needed to create a more detailed image than previous photos. United States space research (NASA) developed a way to turn 2D photographs of planets into 3D images. This process was used by scientists to analyze these 1931 photographs and discovered they had 3D attributes. Much later, these same photographs were digitized. The resulting data was surprising. Instead of the expected digital file of up to 300 MB, the file was 1GB or 4 times the amount of information. Further investigation disclosed that the shroud displays holographic image qualities. The video, “The Fabric of Time”, provides the same 3D glasses as are worn in movie theaters. There is a segment of the video that shows the shroud’s 3D image.

The image of Jesus appears on one side of the shroud. The reverse side has matching blood and water stains only. Water stains are believed to have originated during storage in a clay pot, a customary method to store valuable items in ancient times. No dyes, ink, stain or paint is present anywhere on the shroud. The image appears to be a scorch, like that created by a hot iron. Ultraviolet shows where heat has distorted fabric by appearing brighter than the rest of the surface. In 1532, fire burned holes in the shroud and under ultraviolet light only that area lights up, not the image of the man. Further investigation discloses that the image is very superficial and only affects the top 1 to 2 microfibers of the threads. Each thread is made up of approximately 200 micro fibers so this image of Jesus resides on about one percent of a single thread. In 2011, experiments were conducted attempting to duplicate the characteristics of the shroud’s image. Duplication was achieved by using an ultraviolet excimer laser in a 40 nanosecond burst directed at similar linen. This burst of energy achieved the exact same effect as is displayed on the shroud.

Fingers on the image appear to be too long which was an aspect previously used to discredit the authenticity. Further investigation disclosed that the image is skeletal, so the length of the fingers are actually bones that appear through the flesh much like an x ray. Other areas of the body discloses the appearance of teeth and bones in the wrist just they would appear in an X-ray.

Highly magnified photos show images of coins placed on the eyes. One of those coins appear to be a “widows mite” similar to our penny. You can see this image for yourself on the video. That coin has images of UCAI and a shepherd crook. Those images are consistent with the design of a coin during the reign of Pontus Pilate 29 to 33 AD. This time period and location coincides with the time and area of Jesus’ Resurrection.

There has always been some confusion about a line and shadowy image below the chin area. Using the highly magnified photos they discovered that this area is a plaque or sign. Printing on the sign is in Hebrew and it is three letters ABA which means ABBA or an affectionate name for Father like “Daddy,” a term used in prayer to God even today.

The shroud is 14' 3" by 3' 7" in size. The body of Jesus was laid length wise so that the shroud covered both the front and back side of His body. As reported in the Gospels, it is a very fine quality linen cloth. The 3 to 1 herringbone weave design is typical for top quality fabric and would have been expensive. Both the front and the back of His body image is printed on the shroud. The appearance of the body is that of a body lying down not standing. Assuming that the image was created when He was lying down, there would have been the effects of gravity where the body touched the surface upon which He was lying. Rounded shapes of muscles would flatten somewhat by the pressure of His weight against the surface, but the image does not display any distortion. There is no distortion on either front or rear view, therefore, only the following physical positions explain this result:

- His body had to be elevated off the surface.
- The shroud stretched tightly above and under His body.
- The image was imprinted upon both the top and bottom surfaces of the folded linen.

You can see an illustration of this positioning on our website YouTube video. The shroud must have been stretched very tightly given the fact that the shroud originally must have been wrinkled, tied, and wrapped around the body.

Forensic science is the scientific study of crime scene evidence. Applying those scientific principles to the image of the body discloses an abundance of evidence supporting the authenticity of the burial shroud of Jesus. The following are documented facts:

- The image is printed *over* human AB blood stains. (AB blood type very rare, less than 4%)
- Investigation of blood particles disclosed a high level of bilirubin which would be consistent with severe beating.
- Critics claim that the shroud is the product of a 14th century forgery. The image of the body displayed on the shroud has numerous unmistakable traits of a corpse that could not be known by any forgery painter prior to the 20th century. The thumbs do not appear in the image. Puncture wounds in the wrists, as shown, would cause the thumbs of the crucified Jesus to rotate inward as a necessary result of median nerve damage.
- Whip marks are consistent with two people of varying height who carried out the whipping. The 100 plus whip marks are consistent with the image created by a Roman whip where there is a metal ball or a piece of bone connected to the individual thongs. These metal or bone pieces would imbed through the skin into the underlying tissue, which is clearly indicated on the shroud.
- Clearly, a side wound is visible consistent with the crucifixion account in scripture.
- Abrasion and compression marks on the wounds of the shoulders indicate a heavy weight being carried following the whipping. One knee was injured in an apparent fall. Jesus was forced to carry His heavy cross the half mile journey to His place of crucifixion. Gospel narratives tell of a great struggle and fall during the journey.
- The shroud fits the exact size of cloths used for burial and the linen is made in the weave pattern of the 1st century Middle East. The cotton used is from a species found in the Middle East and not found in Europe.
- Pollen grains were found on the shroud. They were from 58 species of plants, 17 of European origin where the shroud has been stored and the rest are identified exclusively to the area described in the

Bible as the location of Jesus' burial.

- There are images of flowers imprinted into the shroud that have been identified to exist during the time and place of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. You can see these on the video.

A charge that the shroud was a medieval forgery has been made based upon an obviously flawed radiocarbon test made in 1988 which dated the shroud to the 14th century. Radiocarbon testing of fabric has proven problematic in past studies of Egyptian mummies when the approximate age was well established before testing. Additionally, the sample was taken in close proximity to a patch made in the 14th century. What this test did accomplish was to motivate teams of scientists to make even more intensive studies of the shroud. The overwhelming evidence should convince any *fair minded skeptic* that *beyond a reasonable doubt this is the burial shroud of Jesus Christ.*

Sudarium of Oviedo - the Burial Face Cloth

Source: Mark Guscini B.A. M.Phil. A History and Relationship to the Shroud of Turin

Named for the cathedral in Spain where it is kept, the face cloth is unlike the Shroud of Turin because it does not contain any printed images. It does however, contain a large amount of the same AB blood chemistry and evidence as the shroud. It was placed on Jesus's head while He was still on the cross and wrapped around the head in burial. Jewish tradition that remains today dictates that it is necessary to capture as much blood from the body as possible for burial. It was also a Jewish tradition to cover a face that is disfigured. What makes this cloth so amazing is that when the image of this cloth is overlain on this head portion of the Shroud of Turin they match! Very specifically, the wounds on the neck created by the crown of thorns are an exact match.

The authenticity of the Sudarium cloth has never been challenged and no scientific tests have ever been performed. Video evidence will show you why no testing is necessary, the stains on the shroud and this face cloth match very closely. *It has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.*

A message in the linen face cloth was left for you in the tomb almost 2,000 years ago. The day that the empty tomb of Jesus was discovered, Apostle Peter went inside. Peter noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side. The scripture reads: *"the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself."* (John 20: 7) A folded napkin was a significant and well-known Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin tradition was about a master and his servant. When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it. The table was furnished perfectly. If the master finished eating, he would rise from the table and would wad up the dinner napkin tossing it onto the table thereby signaling that he was finished with the meal. But, if the master got up from the table and folded his napkin then laid it beside his plate, the servant would not touch the table. The folded napkin meant, the master was coming back. *The folded face-cloth in the tomb was left to tell you -- Jesus is coming back!*

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has Documented Historical Evidence

Source: *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler

Non-Christian resources - no affirming bias here.

Flavius Josephus (ca. 37 - ca. 100) became the greatest Jewish historian during his time serving as a historian for the Roman emperor Domitian. One of the most famous works is *Antiquities of the Jews*, finished in AD 93. He was not a believer of Jesus Christ. In book 18, chapter 3, section 3 he writes:

"At this time [the time of Pilate] there was a wise man who was called Jesus. 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 and to die. But those who had become his

disciples did not abandon their discipleship. They reported that He had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.”

Counting Josephus, there are 10 non-Christian sources that mention Jesus and only 9 sources that mention the ruling emperor of that time period. *Including non-Christian and Christian sources, authors mentioning Jesus outnumber 43 to 10 those who mentioning the emperor.*

Anti-Christian sources prove to be very valuable - such as Celsus, Tacitus and the Jewish Talmud (Old Testament). We learn that they admit certain facts about early Christianity that help us piece together a storyline that is surprisingly similar with the New Testament. Piecing together all ten non-Christian references, we see that:

- Jesus lived during the time of Tiberius Caesar.
- He lived a virtuous life.
- He was a wonder-worker (miracles).
- He had a brother named James.
- He was acclaimed to be the Messiah (Son of God).
- He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
- He was crucified on the eve of the Jewish Passover.
- Darkness and an earthquake occurred when He died.
- His disciples believed He rose from the dead.
- His disciples were willing to die for their belief.
- Christianity spread rapidly as far as Rome.

We have more eyewitness documents for the Resurrection than for anything else from the ancient world. Moreover, these documents include more historical details and figures that have been corroborated by more independent and external sources than any other event from the ancient world. And as we've just reviewed we also have much more than a usual amount of circumstantial evidence supporting the Resurrection. This evidence presented to you supports belief in Jesus beyond a reasonable doubt.

Physical Evidence for New Testament Truthfulness

When Jesus Christ died the sky darkened and the earth quaked

“There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.” (Mark 15:33)

Source: *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler

The Gospel of Mark writes of darkness in the daytime for 3 hours during Jesus' crucifixion and the Temple veil being torn in two when Jesus dies. The veil was very large, three inches thick and torn from the top to the bottom. Non-Christian Greek historian Phlegon wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus in the 2nd century AD: “with regard to the eclipse in the time of Tiberius Caesar, in whose reign Jesus appears to have been crucified and the great earthquakes which then took place.” Historian Thallus wrote, “This darkness appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. For the Hebrews celebrate the Passover on the 14th day according to the moon and the passion of our Savior falls on the day before the Passover; but an eclipse of the sun takes place only when the moon comes under the sun.” A solar eclipse concurrent with a full moon is a scientific impossibility. Christian apologist Tertullian wrote “In the same hour, too, the light of day was withdrawn, when the sun at the very time was in his meridian blaze.” Those who were not aware that this event had been predicted about Christ, no doubt thought it an eclipse. The darkened sun was experienced as far away as Rome, Italy.

The earthquake was detected in a study of earth core samples and seismic activity near the Dead Sea (Israel) that provided scientific data relating to the earthquake described in Matthew 27. Geologists examined disturbances in sediment deposits to identify two earthquakes: one large earthquake in 31 BC and another smaller quake between 26 and 36 AD. Those discoveries were reported in the International Geology Review.

The Future Written in Advance

(Isaiah 46:10) – “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.”

Over 25% of the Bible is prophecy that predicts future events, many which have been confirmed. Archeology has never disproved a single prediction in the Bible. Investigations confirm, not disprove, accuracy of these prophecies. The Biblical historical record is routinely used as a resource in the study of ancient times.

The book of Daniel makes so many very specific predictions proven by historical events that critics were certain that the Bible records were changed at a later date to fit the recorded details. This widely held suspicion was disproved in 1957 with the discovery of manuscripts called the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls matched the original complete text therefore proving that the original texts were not changed to fit recorded history.

Prophecy Predictions With 100% Accuracy

Source: Grant Jefferies. This detail taken from Chuck Missler’s book *Hidden Treasures* pg. 45

The following verse predicts to the day when Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday” 483 years prior to that widely acclaimed event of Jesus entering the city just before His crucifixion.

Daniel (605 BC) (Daniel 9:25) - “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be **seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.**” Translates into -- **7 weeks and 62 weeks = 69 weeks (a week is 7 years)** --Common in Jewish tradition is to identify time in weeks of days and weeks as a number of 7 years. This verse refers to weeks of Hebrew calendar year which is 360 days.

Here is the overview proof of this prophecy:

Commandment to	< 69 (62+7) Weeks (verse 25) >	Jesus acclaimed as King
Restore Jerusalem	69 x 7 (7 day weeks) x *360 = 173,880 days	when entering Jerusalem
Decree of Artaxerxes		April 6, 32 AD
Longimanus on Mar 14, 445 BC		

Calculation explained: Hebrew calendar is *360 day years. To convert our calendar we add the following: 445 BC - 32 AD: 173,740

March 14 - April 6: 24

Leap years: 116

173,880 days

Further clarification:

The Decree of Artaxerxes is taken from Sir Robert Anderson’s 1894 book titled *The Coming Prince* which is a landmark study regarded as historically documented and accurate. This book is still readily available. The date for Jesus’ entry is calculated using the Gospel Luke’s eyewitness account recorded in Luke 3:1. It identifies the time as *during* the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius which began in 14 AD. (14 AD + 14 years of reign = 28 AD) This event is the 4th Passover in the ministry of Jesus.

Following: 28 AD plus 4th Passover or 4 years = 32 AD. Passover is well documented in Jewish history and the day is confirmed by 3 verses in the New Testament.

Destruction of Israel and People Exiled

Moses (2,600 years ago) (Deuteronomy 28:64) - Moses in 7 BC predicted *“the Lord will scatter you among all the people from one end of the earth to the other.”* The destruction of Israel and the people scattered among the nations by Rome happened in 70 AD. The verse goes on to describe a quality of life that unfortunately became true for most Jews throughout and up to recent history.

Jesus predicts the destruction of Solomon’s Temple (Matthew 21:2) - Jesus Christ predicted the destruction 40 years before it happened in 70 AD. When shown the temple buildings Jesus responded by saying *“Do you see all these? Truly I tell you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”* All that remains of Solomon’s temple today is one wall known as the “wailing wall.” The Roman attack set fire to the temple and it burned to the ground. There were many gold pieces in the temple and they melted under the extreme heat. To retrieve the gold the army took the building apart removing “stone upon stone” – just as foretold by Jesus *“there will not be left here one stone upon another.”*

The Jews’ Return to Their Land Israel

Prophet Isaiah (740 BC - 2,700 years ago) (Isaiah 11:10-12) - *“In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to bring back the remnant of his people”* The verse goes to list geographic locations and the order in which they will return. As foretold, the Jews returned in that same order. Various governments like Russia and Ethiopia dictated the release of the Jews which created the order of their return.

Prophet Ezekiel (593 BC - 2,600 years ago) (Ezekiel 36:24) - *“For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of countries and bring you into your own land”*. Ezekiel 36 describes the difficult life that the Jews have experienced.

The most repeated Old Testament prophecy predicts the re-gathering of the Jewish people from the "four corners of the earth" in the last days.

Establish the Nation State of Israel – A “First” in Human History

(Isaiah 66:7-8) - *“Has a nation ever been born in a single day? Has a country ever come forth in a mere moment?” “He (God) will raise a flag among the nations and assemble the exiles of Israel.”* After almost 2,000 years Israel became a Nation in a single day on May 14, 1948. Never has a race of people returned to the land of origin or have re-constituted a national identity. The fact that the Jewish national identity survived hundreds of years of scattering among many nations is a first in human history. Although they comprise much less than 1% of the world population, the Jewish people hold about 25% of the Nobel Prize awards.

The Jews Will Completely Restore the Land Israel

(Isaiah 35) - *“Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom.”*

(Ezekiel 36:35) – *“And when I bring you back, people will say, this former wasteland is now like the Garden of Eden! The abandoned and ruined cities now have strong walls and are filled with people!”* Upon return of the Jews, the land would experience a miracle of reclamation. The desert would bloom again, which is remarkable as in 1948 the land was a wasteland without any trees. Israel leads the world in the production of flowers and is the number one producer of citrus for all of Europe. It’s about the size of New Jersey.

Revival of the Hebrew Language -- A “First” in Human History

Zephaniah (640BC) (Zephaniah 3:9) *“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language that all may call on the name of the Lord.”* After the Jews were exiled in 70 AD to distant countries they adopted

the languages of their new country. Hebrew was not spoken by anyone and was considered to be a dead language. In November 29, 1922 the Hebrew language was restored and taught and now it's the official language of Israel once again. *No dead language has ever been restored to use before or since this time.*

Prophecy Fulfilled by Jesus Christ

There over 300 Bible prophecies regarding Jesus Christ's time on earth. One such prophecy is from the Old Testament Micah 5:2.

(Micah 5:2) *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child... And He will arise and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God. And they will remain, because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth. This One will be our peace."*

Micah recorded what God spoke to him 750 years before Jesus was born. This is like someone in the year 982 writing down that in 1732 George Washington would be born and come from Mr. Vernon, VA and become president of the United States of America.

Bethlehem means "House of Bread". Ephrathah means fruitfulness, fruit fields, vineyards which produced wine for the most part in that day. Today this area remains an abundant wine producing area. Symbols of bread and wine are elements worshipping Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem which was where His earthly adopted father Joseph was born. The mandatory Roman census required people to return to their birthplace. The census was recorded by Rome, but no reason was ever recorded for this census, no census was ever conducted before or after by the Romans.

Born in that very little city was the Bread of Life and the Cup of Wine of our Salvation as Christians celebrate in worship to our risen Christ Jesus. God comes in Person to return His children to their original intended human condition as sons and daughters of God.

(Psalms 22:16) (Matthew 27:31) In reference to the prophecy of the coming Messiah (Jesus) *"They pierced My hands and My feet."* These details were witnessed and recorded in Matthew as predicted in Psalms written 1,000 years before the crucifixion. It would be another 500 years before there was the practice of crucifixion.

(Isaiah 53:12) *"Because He poured out His soul unto death and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors"* Jesus was crucified with thieves (transgressors) as recorded in Matthew 27:38. Crucifixion was invented 150 years after Isaiah wrote this verse.

New Testament -- Accurate and Truthful

Source: *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler

Standards used by historians to determine truthfulness and accuracy of historical documents indicate that the New Testament is a true and accurate testimony by the followers of Jesus. The New Testament was written very early after the Resurrection of Jesus. This statement is *established by what is not reported in the text*. The Jewish temple was the center of that culture and the Roman army destroyed it in AD 70. The New Testament would certainly report the destruction of the temple but the reason it does not can only be attributed to the fact – *it was written before the destruction*. Most of the New Testament was written before AD 62 (less than 30 years after the Resurrection of Jesus). We know that because non-Christian historian Josephus recorded that apostle James, who was also the half-brother of Jesus, was killed in AD 62. *Again, there is no mention of that key event*. Most of the content of the New Testament was

written between the years 30 AD and 50 AD, a very brief time period considering Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven was in AD 33. Most scholars believe that the testimony of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 was part of an early creed that dates back to within months of the Resurrection itself. There are over 40 other creeds in the New Testament written at the approximate time of these events.

Eye\witness accounts of seeing Jesus Christ *after* His Resurrection are reported in the Bible verses 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, which states He appeared to fourteen eyewitnesses whose names are known and more than 500 eyewitnesses at one time. The statement of "over 500 eyewitnesses" is more like over 1,000 because during that time period only men were counted. No doubt, women and children were also in attendance to this *miracle of all miracles*. The 500 plus witnesses statement must be given special authority because of the wording "the majority of whom are still alive." This means you could verify the truth of this statement directly with the witnesses themselves. Some skeptics point to the fact that we have not heard anything from the 500 witnesses. Perhaps there are documents still missing. This was an oral culture meaning most of those witnesses were illiterate. Even so how many people today with our abilities to communicate take the time to write a book or article on any subject? Not many, if any out of a group of 500 people. Also, in this group of witnesses were skeptics: Jesus' brother James and a fierce religious enemy Saul of Tarsus. Saul of Tarsus later became known as Apostle Paul. Apostle Paul wrote more than one third of the New Testament.

A key objection raised about the New Testament is that it is legend and myth because it was written so many years after the fact. No legend or myth can take place within the same generation, and the New Testament was written well within a generation. Take note, if there was ever a place that a legendary resurrection *could not* occur it was Jerusalem, because the Jews and the Romans were all eager to destroy Christianity. If they could they would have shown Jesus' body around the city.

Why was there a time delay in the written record and the events? We have shown that some of the text content was created very close to the time of the resurrection. But, the delay was due to:

- The vast majority of people were illiterate and so there was no initial need to write it down. By necessity the people developed strong memories in order to remember and pass on information. This ability was a highly valued skill practiced from an early age and a key element in sacred tradition for more than a thousand years. Additionally, this skill was broad based in the culture so the audience would immediately correct any error in a presentation.
- It is reasonable to think that the writers may have had high hopes that Jesus was going to come back in their lifetime so there was no reason to write it down. As they aged perhaps they thought it wise to record their observations.
- As Christianity spread all over the ancient world, writing became the most efficient means to communicate with the rapidly expanding church. Time and distance required New Testament writers to record their testimony.

Many scholars believe that there were written sources that predate the Gospels. Consider the fact that Apostle Matthew was skilled at writing short hand which was required for someone in his profession as a tax official. No doubt he put this skill to use in recording Jesus' words found in the Gospels.

Apostle Luke was a doctor and is considered a valuable ancient historical resource by today's researchers. While Luke was not an eyewitness to the Resurrection events he did record testimony by those who were. He personally witnessed many New Testament events. Luke reports a total of 35 miracles in the same book in which he records 84 historically and archaeologically confirmed details. The miracle accounts show no signs of embellishment or extravagance, they are told with the same level-headed efficiency as the rest of the historical narrative. Luke's history is unsurpassed in respect to its trustworthiness which places him as a historian of the first rank. In light of the fact that Luke has proven accurate with so many trivial

details, it is nothing but pure anti-supernatural bias to say he's not telling the truth about the miracles he records. *It is reasonable to think that if Luke is telling the truth, then so are Mark and Matthew because their Gospels tell the same basic story.*

Apostle John's Gospel follows a different path than the first three Gospels when telling of the same events. He was an eyewitness to every major event in the three year ministry of Jesus Christ. When we couple John's knowledge of Jesus' personal conversations with nearly sixty historically confirmed and probable details, there is no doubt that John was an eyewitness.

In summary: *No error can be tied to time delay or means of communication.* We can dismiss the objection of the New Testament error due to oral communications as it was not transmitted verbally. Numerous people independently witnessed the New Testament events and nine of those eyewitnesses put their observations *in writing*.

There is no Indication That the New Testament Writers Lied

Research confirms over 140-plus eyewitness details, and 30-plus references to real people. Independent non-Christian writers collectively reveal a storyline similar to the New Testament. Why would those sources lie? Even the harshest critics agree, Jesus Christ set the standard for moral conduct and therefore His followers would never lie. Followers of Jesus suddenly abandoned their livelihoods and treasured religious tradition for these new beliefs. Their lives were in jeopardy for the same reasons Jesus was killed, plus, by their religious tradition, they were condemned to hell. Indeed, their conversion may have driven them to be more accurate and certainly not to lie or distort when doing so would be against the very principals they gave their life to promote. There was no incentive for these dedicated followers to lie. Every one of them was beaten, tortured and eventually killed for their faith. Apostle John was imprisoned and exiled and believed to have died of natural causes. Power, money and wealth was never an outcome or a motivation of the early church members.

The New Testament is a collection of independent eyewitness testimony and writings from the pens of nine different authors. It was not written or edited by one person or by any religious organization. New Testament writers describe many of the same events and may have drawn material from the same earlier sources. There are many independent eyewitness testimonies. We know it is eyewitness because 1) each major author includes early and unique material that only eyewitnesses would know, and 2) their writings describe the same basic events but include different details. Differing details are important. If the writings were all from one source or a single editor there would be little difference in the details between them. Multiple, independent eyewitnesses confirm that the events really occurred and provide additional details that a single source might miss. Historians call this "coherence with dissimilarity."

There are six sane, sober eyewitnesses for the Resurrection, who refused to deny their testimony even under the threat of death. *Such testimony would yield a verdict that is certain beyond a reasonable doubt.* Unless you saw the event yourself, you can't be any more certain that those historical events actually happened.

Further Evidence for New Testament Truthfulness

Source: *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler

The only motivation for omitting a fact or telling a lie is that the writers seek to gain a positive public opinion. The following elements would not be included if broad public acceptance was your goal:

Embarrassing details regarding follower conduct would not be included

You would not include a portrayal of His followers as frequently slow to understand what Jesus was saying even when the meaning was obvious. Uncaring when Jesus was under His greatest trials, when asked to stay with Him, they slept. *They abandoned Him during His arrest, trial and execution* (John and the women followers were at the crucifixion). *All the followers, except John and the women, went into*

hiding before and after the crucifixion and made no effort at providing a proper burial. The disciples were doubtful when Mary first told them of the Resurrection. Jesus told them about all these crucifixion events before they happened, yet they seemed unable to comprehend.

Embarrassing details regarding Jesus would not be included

There are statements that seem to place Jesus in a bad light. For example, Jesus was considered “out of His mind” by His family (mother and step-brothers) and they sought to bring him home (Mark 3:21, 31). Jesus was not believed by His own step-brothers (John 7:5). He was thought to be a deceiver (John 7:12). Jesus was deserted by many of His followers (John 6:66). Jesus was called a “drunkard” (Matt. 11:19). Jesus was called “demon-possessed” (Mark 3:22; John 7:20, 8:48). Jesus was called a “madman” (John 10:20).

Difficult Statements made by Jesus would not be included

The following are a few examples of statements made by Jesus that would not be included if the intent was to win converts: “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Matt. 5:39). “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44) “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Matt. 7:1-2). Simply, the writers were duty bound to a high standard of “truth” as demonstrated by their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Events recorded about the Resurrection that would not have been invented

Events such as: 1) Jesus was buried by a member of the Jewish religious authority. Christians had bitterness toward the Jewish authorities. 2) The place of the tomb was very well known by the general population, and the burial story and subsequent “empty tomb” was never disputed. 3) The first witnesses to the empty tomb were women. Women in general were not considered reliable witnesses in that first-century culture. One of those women was reported in to have been demon-possessed (Luke 8:2).

Skeptics question why the risen Jesus didn’t appear to the religious leaders. He probably did when He appeared to over 500 eyewitnesses. Many Jewish priests in Jerusalem became believers right after the Resurrection (Acts 6:7).

Then there is the explanation of the Jewish leaders regarding the empty tomb recorded in Matthew 28:11-15. Matthew makes it very clear that his readers already knew about the chief priests’ explanation for the empty tomb by stating “this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.” The story goes that the guards fell asleep and the disciples took the body. This act would be completely out of character for the cowardly disciples. They all were fearful and in hiding! Matthew reports that the chief priests paid the soldiers and governor large sums of money to support this story. *The undeniable fact is: the tomb was empty and caused religious authorities to promote an explanation of the empty tomb.* Writing in AD 150 and 200 respectively, historians Justin Martyr and Tertullian claim that the Jewish authorities continued to offer this theft story throughout the second century. Certainly, you must know that if the Roman and Jewish leaders could have, they would have displayed Jesus’ body to disprove the Resurrection and end Christianity once and forever.

Different details about the same events reported in the Gospels

Critics are quick to cite contradictory Gospel accounts as evidence that they can’t be trusted for accurate information. Just the opposite is true: different details strengthen the case that these are eyewitness accounts. In a court of law when a judge hears two witnesses giving exactly the same word-for-word testimony, what does that judge rightly assume? Collusion – the witnesses got together beforehand to make their stories agree. These differences in the New Testament are typical for eyewitness accounts. The differences are based upon decisions regarding what was more or less important in their description. None of these differences have any bearing on faith in Jesus Christ. These details are just elements in the event

that they witnessed, i.e., one angel (that was noticed) and two angels present (reported) in the tomb by two disciples.

Critics also complain that the Gospels are too much the same or uniform to be independent sources. Actually, they are a perfect blend of both. They are both sufficiently uniform and sufficiently different precisely because they are independent eyewitness account of the same events. They are complementary not contradictory, all agreeing on the same major event sequence – Jesus rose from the dead, appeared to them for 40 days then ascended into heaven right before their eyes.

Miracle events presented with simple wording

The Gospels give matter-of-fact, almost bland descriptions of the Resurrection and other miracles. The Resurrection is the central event in Christianity. If the Resurrection were a made-up story designed to convince skeptics, then the New Testament writers certainly would have made their accounts longer with more detail.

Consider that these writers challenge their readers to check out verifiable facts - even about miracles. Examples: Apostle Paul's bold declaration to King Agrippa about the Resurrected Christ (Acts 26). Paul's early church creed, still used today, welcomes verification by speaking with any of the more than *500 eyewitnesses* of the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15). Paul's letter to the Corinthian church where he talks about previously performed miracles could have been challenged. His credibility would have been destroyed by such a claim, but quite the contrary, every one of the many churches that Paul established held him in high esteem.

Today, born-again believers everywhere experience the presence of the Risen Christ Jesus. In worship services believers frequently experience the Joy of the Lord's presence. You can know the undeniable presence of the Lord Jesus and it starts with a desire to know Him.

New Testament writers abandoned their long-held sacred beliefs and practices, adopted new ones and did not deny their testimony under persecution or threat of death

Right after the Resurrection events – thousands of Jerusalem Jews, including many Jewish priests, converted to Christianity. Well over 10,000 plus people abandoned treasured beliefs and practices virtually overnight, forming an emerging church of Christ followers. Over 3,000 new members were gained in a single prayer meeting. This large number of converted Jews explains why the Jewish religious authority could not punish or kill the disciples of Jesus.

It's important to consider how important the Jewish beliefs and practices were during that time period. Picture a big circle with a small dot in the middle. In America, that dot would symbolize the faith of people and the circle represents the rest of their life. In Israel, during this time in history, the circle would symbolize people's religious practices and the dot represents the rest of their life. Jesus Christ's death, burial and Resurrection created a radical transformation that changed core beliefs and religious practices – just as it does today.

Why would they die for a lie?

All of the New Testament writers suffered persecution and all but one was killed for their faith when denial of that faith could have saved them. Not one abandoned their faith and only John died of natural causes. Followers of Jesus needed no faith to believe in the Resurrection. They experienced it and reported that experience for you to read in the New Testament of the Bible.

Extraordinary Evidence

Extraordinary, more than usual, evidence describes exactly what supports the statement that the Bible is the Word of God:

- Number patterns that exist only in Hebrew and Greek Bible text.
- Physical evidence clearly identifies the Shroud of Turin as the burial shroud of Jesus.

- The Bible makes 1,817 predictions on 737 separate matters, representing 26.8% of the Bible and none have been proven to be false. These predictions about the future events are made with 100% accuracy.
- More eyewitness documents for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ than for any other event from the ancient world.
- Documents record more historical details and identify more individuals that have been corroborated by more independent and external sources than any other documents from ancient history.

For over 2,000 years the Bible has been studied in detail. No matter how you examine it, historically, prophetically or archaeologically it remains without error. *The Bible is the Word of God beyond any reasonable doubt.*

Do Not Be Deceived

Each major religion claims their exclusive path to God, and therefore the popular notion that all religions lead to God is false. The practice of religion has a great effect on the quality of life. Compare results honestly and clearly Christianity has the best result in every way. Consider all other religions of the world have founders who show the way to God. Christianity claims the creator God - Jesus Himself - comes to earth to reclaim His lost family: “*For by Jesus all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth*” (Colossians 1:16) and “*I and My Father are one*” (John 10:30). We have demonstrated that the Bible is the Word of God beyond a reasonable doubt. If you deny Jesus as Son of God as He claimed the only other explanation is that He is a liar or a lunatic. We pray that this cannot be your choice!

All people have a fundamental sense of right and wrong, a Moral Law written on our hearts by our creator that enables us to identify the difference between good and evil. There is no denying that evil exists in this world. Not just evil but an evil *one* and he is a liar and the father of all lies - satan. The greatest lie satan ever told is that he does not exist. This lie has broad popular acceptance lately. Sin entered the world through satan. God takes sin very seriously. Only love is greater than sin. God’s love overcomes and defeats sin every time. “*The Ten Commandments were given so that all could see the extent of their failure to obey God’s laws. But the more we see our sinfulness, the more we see God’s loving favor for us.*” (Romans 5:20) It follows in law that good is rewarded and bad punished. The Moral Law giver-God cannot violate His own Law delivering the ultimate justice to reward and punish. In the end, sinfulness is separated from His eternal presence and the family of believers. But God in His loving kindness made a way for us: “*God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become blameless before God*” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus took the punishment for the sins great and small of the entire world. He became the mass murderer, child rapist, liar, thief and worst of the worst. There is nothing you can do to earn forgiveness. You cannot commit any sin that cannot be forgiven. All sin is overpowered by love. Only by accepting the full payment of your sin debt made by Jesus Christ on the cross can you be forgiven of your sins past, present and future. But wait, you not only have your sins removed you receive the righteousness of Jesus. That means you have the “right standing” with God just as Jesus has – amazing! It is so simple - confess your sins and accept the forgiveness already provided. Jesus plus nothing equals salvation. *Christianity of the Bible knows no other way.*

The Way the Truth and the Life

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most miraculous event in the universe. It split time, creating BC and AD, short for Before Christ and After Death. Jesus is living proof that our Father God loves you. He is not angry with you and He offers His best through Jesus so you can be in a loving relationship with Him as daughters and sons through eternity. Jesus came to redeem us from sin yes, but also to show us how to connect to Holy Spirit power. Everything Jesus did He did as a man, laying aside

His divinity, in order to be a model for us. *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father”.* (John 14:12) He tells us in His Word that we will do the Signs and wonders as seen in the Bible. Today in the Christian community of believers radical healing is taking place both in church and in personal interaction. Experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit is for everyone who seeks that inner connection with the Divine. Jesus set us free in so many ways it is like being “born again.” Free from the fear of man because we know that we are called to love, not to be loved. Set free from self-centered pride because we know it is the root cause of sin. No longer does anger grip emotions because we are called not to hate. No fear of death because we are confident in a loving Savior Jesus who is waiting for us with open arms just on the other side of this life. Being born again changes everything because nothing compares to the love of Jesus. Love, peace, joy, goodness, kindness, gentleness, patience, faithfulness and self-control are all gifts you receive from the Holy Spirit. **It is not about religion but a loving Relationship with Jesus.** *“So you see, our love for Him comes as a result of His loving us first”* (1 John 4:19).

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your heart and mind as you live in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6).

You don’t need to clean up your life, just come as you are. Faith is the result of surrender, not determination. Faith is the normal response of a believer toward the One who is perfectly faithful, Jesus Christ. That being said, obedience then becomes the most practical way to discover the faith in your life. Learning about Jesus by reading the Bible, through prayer and by just having desire to know Him is a good start. Share your desire to know Jesus with someone who is a follower of Jesus. Be sure to find a Bible centered church that celebrates the presence of Holy Spirit and go there. The Assembly of God Church has Holy Spirit centered worship.

In light of the evidence you have just read you should have a lot more doubts about every other non-Christian belief. *It takes too much faith to believe in anything else!* There is more than enough proof that *beyond a reasonable doubt the Bible is the Word of God* and you need to know what that means for your life here and beyond.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But desire fulfilled is the Tree of Life
(Proverbs 3:19)

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Please contact us, we would love to hear from you ArtEvangelical@gmail.com



Check out: www.Biblegateway.com an online Bible in many versions.

Written by Robert Zerwick - Source content is listed in section titles. Shalom!