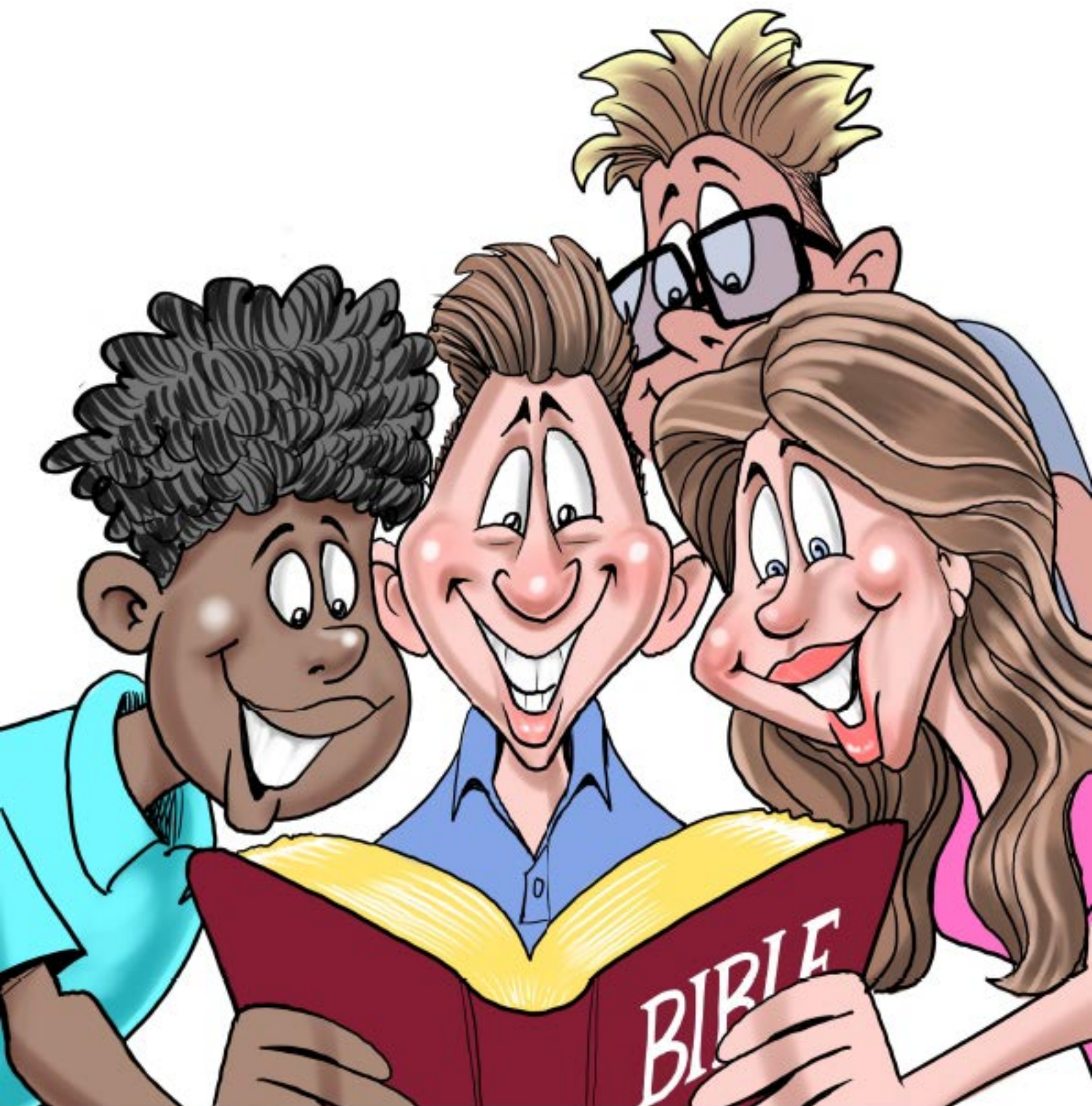


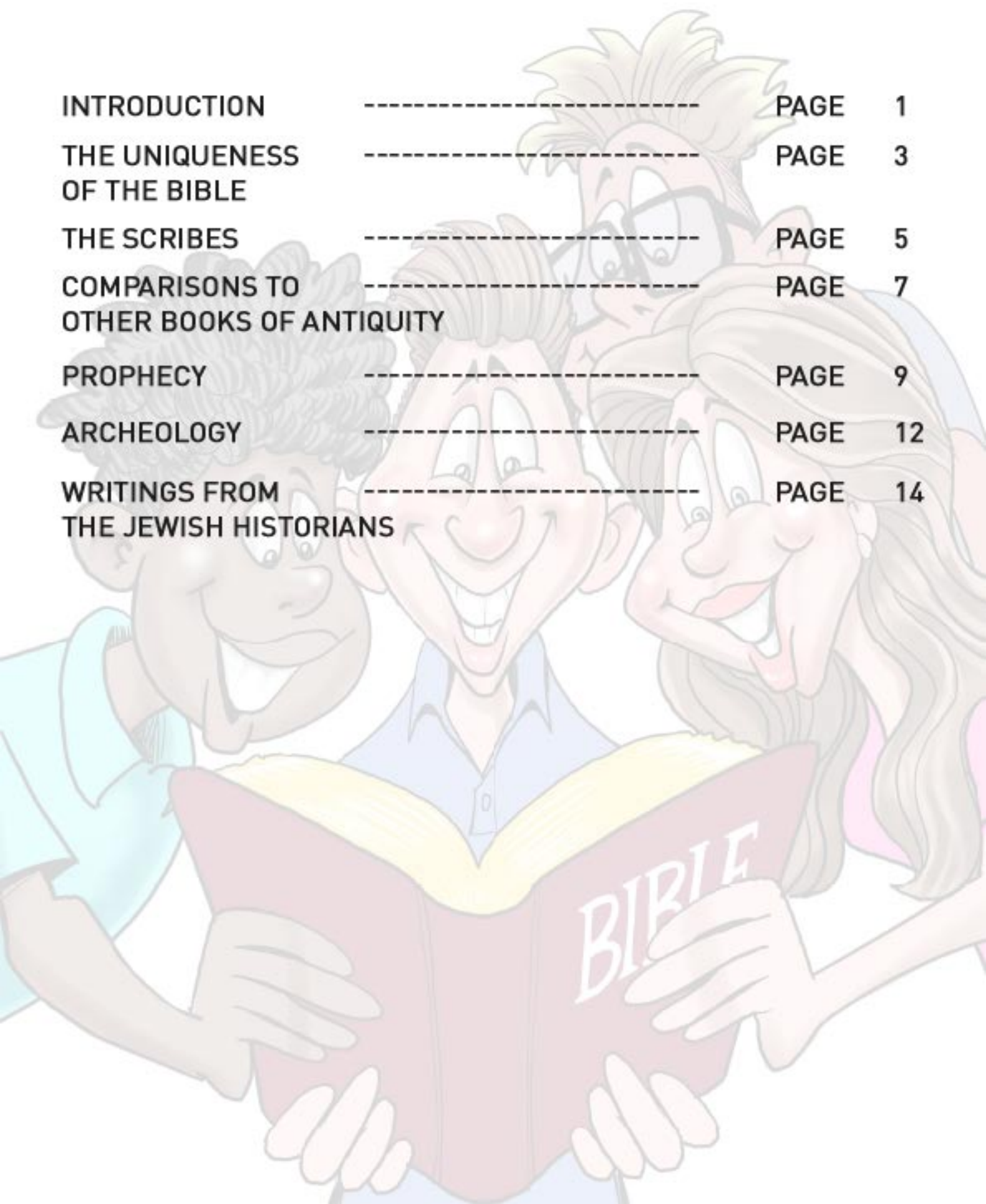
# IS THE BIBLE TRUE?



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## INTRODUCTION

Many people in our world today have embraced the flawed notion that absolute truth does not exist. In doing so, they have chosen to navigate without a moral compass and are left drifting through life, “tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14).

The unchanging authority of God’s Word provides the meaning and direction for which so many are searching. As the psalmist David reminds us, the way of truth is found in God’s Word (Psalm 119:30). Not only does it provide us with a deeper understanding about God and His guidelines for living, but most importantly, we are introduced to Jesus Christ, the means of our eternal salvation.

It is essential then, that we are able to stand firmly on Scripture and defend against the challenges to its reliability, because God’s Word provides the very foundation of Christianity. If we can help others embrace the truth of the Bible, they will discover that it provides the answers to many of their objections concerning the Christian faith. In addition,

a confidence in the reliability of God’s Word will serve as our impetus for living out our faith in this culture. Our thanks to Josh McDowell for his work in, “Evidence that Demands a Verdict” that has helped us greatly in doing our research. Is the Bible true and

is it relevant to us today? The Bible answers the questions of life that both skeptics and believers want and need to know. If the Bible is true, then these questions will not only give us hope and courage to live life to the full but also it will give us a voice to speak truth and hope to those who have yet to know Jesus. What does God have to say about the truth and purpose of the Bible?

1. “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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





## THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BIBLE

The Christian Bible stands apart from any other religious book ever written. As you will see, the evidence of divine inspiration cannot be disputed. The Bible contains 66 books; 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The Jews call the Bible God's love letter to his people. It was written over a span of 1,500 years, over 40 generations and 40 different authors. Keeping in mind that this was before internet, planes and automobiles, it makes the writing of this book all the more amazing and different from any other book of antiquity. It was written about history, real people, real places and the struggles that we all face today.

God showed his love, respect and value for all people as evidenced by the different authors that he chose to write down his words to mankind. From our pragmatic way of thinking, we would tend to choose the brightest of bright and the holy of the holy people whose lives were as close to perfect a humans can get. God however, chose a wonderful mix of broken people that resemble you and me. Moses recorded the first 5 books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch or the Torah. He was highly educated in Egyptian universities and was a political leader and also a murderer. "He looked all around, and when he didn't see anyone, he beat the Egyptian to death and hid the body in the sand" (Exodus 2:12). God looks on the heart of all of us. God forgave Moses and used him in many ways and trusted him to write the most holy part of the Bible to the Jews, the Torah.

Peter was a fisherman and wrote 1 Peter and 2 Peter. Amos (Amos) was a herdsman, Joshua (Joshua) was a military general, Daniel (Daniel) was a prime minister, Solomon (Proverbs and Song of Songs) was a king, Luke (Luke, Acts) a doctor and Matthew was a hated tax collector. It was written in different places like the wilderness, prison, palace, island and while traveling. The range of emotions including fear, anxiety, joy to deep sorrow. It was written on three continents, (Asia, Europe and Africa) in three languages, (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).<sup>1</sup>

If man, without God, had attempted to write such a book, it would no doubt never been completed. It would have been writings that conflicted one another on all fronts. Because the Bible is the Word of God, it was written the way He wanted to write it to reveal Himself to mankind. The central theme of His book: The redemption of man. The central character: the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ!

The amazing uniqueness of the Bible, however, does not make it true. There are three tests to examine the Bible to see if it is true.<sup>2</sup>

**The Bibliographical Test.** The bibliographical test examines the original manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments to see how they have been handed down through the centuries. The accuracy will determine the reliability of biblical writings. These include: *Methods of Scribes and Manuscript comparison*.

**The Internal Evidence Tests:** Are there any discrepancies in the Bible itself? What internal evidences exist that support its authenticity? This includes: Prophecy and Archaeology.

**External Evidence Test:** What works of literature are there apart from the Bible that confirm its accuracy? This includes: Eusebius - Ecclesiastical History (III.39), Flavius Josephus - The Antiquities of the Jews (18.3.3) and Cornelius Tacitus - Annals (15.44).

<sup>1</sup>Stephen D. Schwarz,  
Introduction - Philosophy," *The Intellectuals Speak Out About God*, ed.  
Roy Abraham Varghese (Dallas, TX: Lewis and Stanley, 1984) 98.

<sup>2</sup>Chauncey Sanders,  
Introduction to Research in English Literary History. (Sanders, IRELH, 2143ff)





## THE SCRIBES

The scribes were very bright and leaders in their communities. They were extremely legalistic in the way they lived out their lives and is reflect in their work of copying the Scriptures. The word Scribe means counter. They were meticulous in the way they copied the scriptures and set the most stringent of rules to follow as they could make sure that the manuscripts were as close to identical as possible. Their accountability was in counting the letters that they had written making sure that nothing was left out or nothing was added.<sup>3</sup>

- The scroll was fastened together with strings from a clean animal.
- The skin contained a specified number of columns, equal throughout the entire book.
- The length of each column must extend no less than forty-eight lines and no more than sixty lines.
- The breadth of each column must consist of exactly thirty letters.
- Each scribe must use a specially prepared recipe of black ink.
- An authentic copy of the text must serve as the example for each scribe to follow.

<sup>3</sup> Information adapted from Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 2017; HarperCollins Publishers

- The scribes were to copy nothing from memory.
- The space between every consonant could be no more than the width of a thread.
- The breadth between every section must be the same as that of nine consonants.
- Between every book was the width of three lines.
- The Pentateuch must terminate exactly with a line.
- Copyists were required to sit in full Jewish dress.

The Massoretes edited and standardized the Hebrew text, adding vowel points to insure proper pronunciation. They went to extremes to make sure that the manuscripts were copied without error.

- They meticulously copied the text only one letter at a time and had to say the word out loud, say each letter and then write it down one at a time. (t-t; h-h; ee; etc...).
- They meticulously copied the text only one letter at a time.
- They counted the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in each book.
- If more than three mistakes existed in a manuscript, it was destroyed.

Needless to say, the Bible passed this test with highest standards!





## COMPARISONS TO OTHER BOOKS OF ANTIQUITY

When we look at books of antiquity that many of us have read, it is interesting that few if anyone would question the reliability of such books as Caesar, Plato, Sophocles and Aristotle. The timespan between when a book is written and the earliest copy are determiners as to the accuracy of the book. The number of surviving copies are key to determining the accuracy of a book. A glance of the chart below will show you how these books measure up to being accurately pre-served from the time of its writing. For example, the amount of corruption of the original of Plato would be high because of the timespan being 1,000 years and the number of copies only 7. The works of Julius Caesar included historical accounts of the Gallic wars that contradict with one another. Which one is correct? With only 10 copies, no one knows because there are not enough copies to be able to detect corruption.

Author	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	Copies
Caesar	100-44 BC	AD 900	1,000 Yrs.	10
Plato	427-347 BC	AD 900	1,200 Yrs.	7
Sophocles	496-406 BC	AD 1000	1,400 Yrs.	193
Aristotle	384-322 BC	AD 1100	1,400 Yrs.	49

<sup>4</sup>Returning to Genesis, <http://www.rtgmin.org/2012/06/08/new-testament-copies/>

Bruce Metzger observes: “In the entire range of ancient Greek and Latin literature, the Iliad ranks next to the New Testament in possessing the greatest amount of manuscript testimony.”

Homer (Iliad)	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs,	643
New Testament	40-100 AD	125 AD	25 yrs.	Over 25,000

As Floyd McElveen has observed in, “God’s Word, Final, Infallible and Forever”, that even if someone deliberately or by accident emended or corrupted a manuscript, it would be corrected by the many other manuscripts available. To sum it up: unless we want to throw a blanket over all of history and say that there is nothing knowable about the past, no history that can be trusted, no Grecian or Roman history, no Aristotle or Plato or Socrates, we had better not make any claims against the historicity and accuracy of the New Testament. The New Testament documents are far more numerous, older, demonstrably more accurate historically, and have been examined by a far greater battery of scholars, both friend and foe, than all the other ancient manuscripts put together. They too have met the test impeccably!





## PROPHECY

Prophecy is critical in the search to determine the accuracy of the Bible. The Bible is unique because it is the only religious book of antiquity that has prophecy. If there is one prophecy, prediction of what is to come, that is not true, then the Bible would not pass the test for being accurate.

The Bible has around 2000 prophecies. Once again God is trying to make a huge point in showing us that He must have inspired the writings in the Scriptures! Of those prophecies, 333 +/- are specifically about the Messiah Jesus. Some of those properties overlap so the number of unique prophecies is 48. To prove the reliability of the Biblical prophecies, all of these must come true. What are the odds of all 48 prophecies coming true in one man, Jesus?

**The following are 8 of the 48 prophecies:**

1. **BORN AT BETHLEHEM Prophecy:** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Is-ra-el. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." (Micah 5:2, NAS) 750 BC Fulfillment: Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea. (Matthew 2:1; Jn. 7:42)

2. **PRECEDED BY MESSENGER Prophecy:** A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God." (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1, NAS) 433 BC Fulfillment: John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1-3, 11:9-10; Luke 1:17; John 1:23, NAS)

3.HE WAS TO ENTER JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY Prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salva-tion, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zechariah 9:9, NAS) 520 BC Fulfillment: "And they brought it to Jesus, and they threw their garments on the colt, and put Jesus on it. And as He was going, they were spreading their garments in the road." (Matthew 21:6-11; Luke 19:35-36, NAS)

4.BETRAYED BY A FRIEND Prophecy: "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me." (Psalm 41:9, 55:12-14, NAS) 300 BC Fulfillment: Judas Iscariot was the one who betrayed Him. (Matthew 10:4, 26:49-50, NAS)

5.SOLD FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER Prophe-cy: "And I said to them, 'If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, nev-er mind!' So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages." (Zechariah 11:12, NAS) 520 BC Fulfillment: Judas Iscariot asked the price of betrayal, and "they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver." (Matthew 26:15, 27:3, NAS)

6.MONEY TO BE THROWN IN GOD'S HOUSE Prophecy: "So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord." (Zechariah 11:13b, NAS) 520 BC Fulfillment: "And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed (Matthew 27:5a, NAS). And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's field as a burial place for strangers." (Matthew 27:7, NAS)

7.DUMB BEFORE ACCUSERS Prophecy: "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth." (Isaiah 53:7, NAS) 700 BC Fulfillment: "And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He made no answer." (Matthew 27:12, NAS)

8.HANDS AND FEET PIERCED Prophecy: They pierced my hands and my feet. (Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53:5, NAS) 520 BC Fulfillment: "And when they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified Him." (Luke 23:33, NAS)



## The Mathematical Probabilities of Jesus Fulfilling Prophecy:

Peter Stoner has said in *Science Speaks* that by using the modern science of probability in reference to the eight prophecies listed above: ...we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in  $10^{17}$  (or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000). Let us try to visualize this chance...Suppose we take  $10^{17}$  silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

When Stoner considers forty eight prophecies, he says, "We find the chance that any one man fulfilled all forty-eight prophecies to be 1 in  $10^{157}$ .

Concept Model: None, bigger than we can grasp.

For anyone to fulfill forty eight biblical prophecies is scientifically absurd, and yet, the Bible reveals that Jesus did just that! Anyone who rejects Jesus Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proven more absolutely than any other fact in the world!

<sup>3</sup>*Peter W Stoner, Science Speaks Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible, Moody Press Chicago, 2005*



## ARCHEOLOGY

Another test for the reliability of the Scriptures is how the findings that have been found through the science of archeology. Have the artifacts found support the people and places in the Bible? The archeological evidence is once again is indisputable. The 430,000 square feet Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, houses over 40,000 arti-facts.

Here are some artifact that are in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. It is the repository 6for many discoveries we see in Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and other materials. The following photos are from there.



Widows mites from the time of Jesus Luke 21:1-4



Crucifixion Victim  
1st Century A.D  
Discovered in Jerusalem)



Roman crucifixion nail



From a scroll written on papyrus fragment





Roman gambling dice  
from the Holy land in the 1st. Century



Ossuary of Joseph Caiaphas: High Priest 18-36 A.D. (Discovered 1990)



## WRITINGS FROM THE JEWISH HISTORIANS

What works of literature are there apart from the Bible that confirm its accuracy? There were many Jewish historians during the time of Jesus' life in Israel. These historians were not followers of Jesus but rather were writers of events and people of that time period.

**Eusebius of Caesarea (A.D. 263–339)** – His Ecclesiastical History preserved the writings of Papias, bishop of Hieropolis (A.D. 130). Papias, a friend of the apostle John wrote:

“The Elder (apostle John) used to say this also: ‘Mark, having been the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately all that he (Peter) mentioned, whether sayings or doings of Christ, not, however, in order. For he was neither a hearer nor companion of the Lord; but afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who adapted his teachings as necessity required, not as though he were making compilation of the sayings of the Lord. So then Mark made no mistake, writing down in this way some things as he (Peter) mentioned them; for he paid attention to this one thing, not to omit anything that he had heard, nor to include any false statement among them.’”<sup>7</sup>

**Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100?)** – was a Jewish historian who wrote one of the most comprehensive histories of the Jewish people, primarily for the benefit of the non-Jewish world. In The Antiquities of the Jews, he wrote:

<sup>7</sup>Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History III.39 found in McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict, 63.



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 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 con-demned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he ap-peared 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 to this day. (18.3.3.)<sup>8</sup>

**Cornelius Tacitus** (A.D. 56-117?) – a Roman aristocrat and historian who wrote a de-tailed history of Roman empire under Nero. In his classical work, *The Annals*, he wrote the following excerpts about Christianity: Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the popu-lace. Christus [Christ], 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.... (15.44)<sup>9</sup>

The Bible is an amazing collection of books inspired by God as written by man. We saw how it is unique in the manner in which it was written. God was adamant that His Book be handed down through the ages accurately so that you and I could read, study and trust it as the Truth. He chose the tribe of Jabez to give their lives to meticulously copy-ing the manuscripts. That was just the beginning of God's plan for protecting the Bible. He wanted us to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the words were inspired by Him. We saw this played out through the different tests of reliability for books of antiqui-ty: Bibliographical, Internal and External tests. We looked at the way it was written, the comparison with other works, the prophecies, and multiple examples of how archeology supports the biblical account. Can there be any doubt that the Creator of this vast universe and all that is in it is also the author of the greatest Book ever written? It is a work of love from the Creator to us, His creation. Perhaps the best way to summarize the Bible is to say that God invites each one of us to read, study, and learn from the Truth giver and then, through the Holy Spirit, live out the truths that are found within its covers. He encourages us to give this Book the high-est authority in our personal lives and to use it as our instruction manual for living life to its full and for bringing Christ into our culture.

<sup>8</sup>*Flavius Josephus, The Works of Josephus, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1987) 480.*

<sup>9</sup>*Cornelius Tacitus, The Annals, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins, Great Books of the Western World 15 9(Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952) 168.*