

# Can I Trust



# The Bible?

# Table of Contents

---

<b>1. Is the Bible ‘For Real’ or Just a Hoax?.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Copies • Translations • Versions • Fakes .....	2
<b>2. Is My Copy of the Bible ‘Authentic’? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Is the Bible Reliable?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
The Structure of the Bible .....	5
<b>The Old Testament</b> (From Creation to Christ)] .....	5
Structure of the Old Testament.....	5
Historical Events Surrounding the Old Testament .....	6
Is The Old Testament Authentic and Reliable? .....	6
<b>The New Testament</b> (From Christ to the End of Days) .....	9
Structure of the New Testament.....	9
Historical Events Surrounding the New Testament .....	10
Is the New Testament Authentic – Is It Real and Not a Fake or a Hoax? .....	10
Is The New Testament Reliable – Does it Accurately Report What Actually Took Place? .....	11
Eyewitnesses – The Disciples.....	11
Eyewitnesses – The Crowds.....	12
Eyewitnesses – The Religious Leaders.....	12
People and Places .....	12
Fulfilled Prophecies .....	12
Consistency and Common Themes .....	13
Rejection by the Jews .....	14
Did The Resurrection of Jesus Actually Happen? .....	14
Jesus Quoted Old Testament Scriptures .....	15
Sayings We Continue to Quote Today.....	16
Can the Supernatural Be Real? .....	16
Summary.....	16
<b>4. Is the Bible Believable and Credible? .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Biblical Concepts That Are Believable .....	17
<b>5. What Does the Bible Teach that Requires Pure Faith? .....</b>	<b>22</b>
What Biblical Concepts Require Faith .....	23
So Where Are Heaven and Hell? .....	34
<b>6. Does the Bible Say What I Think it Says?.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Suggestions for Beginners on How to Read the Bible.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# Can I Trust the Bible?

*Note: When Bible verses are quoted, they are taken from the Life Application Study Bible, New American Standard Bible, copyright 2000 by Zondervan. When quoted, Scripture verses are presented in **bold blue italics**; if either God or Jesus is speaking, the text is presented in **bold red italics**. Also, please note: this document is not meant to be a scholarly explanation of the trustworthiness of the Bible, as there have been volumes written that cover this subject in great detail.<sup>1</sup> Our goal is to simply provide enough solid information for the reader who is considering believing in Christ to judge whether they can trust what the Bible says.*

In our endeavor to answer the important question, “Can I Trust the Bible?”, we have chosen to evaluate the trustworthiness of the Bible using six focus areas:

1. Is the Bible “for real” – as opposed to being a fraud or a hoax or a conspiracy?
2. Is the copy of the Bible I am reading authentic – does it closely match what was originally written?
3. Is the Bible reliable – does it accurately describe what happened as to the people, places, events, and conversations it says existed and/or took place?
4. Is the Bible believable/credible – how much of the Bible makes sense beyond a reasonable doubt, and if so, why?
5. What parts of the Bible must I simply have to take on faith because those parts cannot be “proven” beyond a reasonable doubt?
6. Does the Bible always say what I, or others, think it says, or are there parts that may need special interpretation to make sense?

## **1. Is the Bible ‘For Real’ or Just a Hoax?**

Well, you can buy one on Amazon, so does that make it real? Just kidding. But you would be surprised how many people think that if it is in print, or on the internet, it must be real – that is, for everything except the Bible. Believe it or not, many people think the Bible is either a hoax or a conspiracy; or that none of it is true; or that the Bible is just a bunch of stories verbally handed down from generation to generation. Some even say the Bible wasn’t “written” down until a thousand or more years after its recorded events actually occurred. Many argue there have been so many versions of the Bible that it has lost all its credibility. They would be wrong on every account, and we are about to show you why. But first, let’s tackle explaining why you can trust the Bible to be “real” and not a hoax.

Here are some statistics that we believe will confirm the Bible is, in fact, “for real”:

1. The Bible is acknowledged and followed, at least in part, by over two billion people of various self-professed Christian faiths. You would think that at least some of the over two *billion* Christians would have sensed a fraud or a hoax or a conspiracy if that were indeed the case.
2. In 1455 AD, when the first printing press with moveable metal type was invented (this was the Gutenberg Press), the first book Guttenberg chose to be mass produced was, you guessed it, the Bible. A fake document would most likely not have garnered such an honor.
3. It has been suggested that some of the Bible’s writings may be close to 4,000 years old.<sup>2</sup> And yet, those same writings are still being taught in theological schools to this day. You would think, given all the brilliant biblical scholars who have studied the Bible over the centuries, that if it were an overall fake, fraud, hoax or conspiracy, someone would have figured it out by now.
4. The Bible, at least parts of it, is the book *most translated into other languages* in history. According to many sources, if you consider the Bible as a whole (both Old and New Testaments together), the complete Bible has been translated into 670 different languages. The New Testament portion of the Bible has been translated into almost 2,200 different languages, and at least one book of the Bible has been translated into nearly 3,300 languages. [Source: Translation Rules]. Frauds, hoaxes, and conspiracies don’t usually garner this much widespread attention. We discuss the difference between a “copy”, a “translation into another language”, a “different version”, and “fakes” of the Bible below.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of the Bible’s trustworthiness, we highly recommend the book *Cold Case Christianity* by J. Warner Wallace. Mr. Wallace is a cold case homicide detective in Southern California. He was a confirmed atheist and decided to use his 30+ years of experience in solving cold case homicides to prove the murder and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a fake. What he found proved just the opposite.

<sup>2</sup> We are referring to the Book of Job which some scholars claim dates back to 1900 BC.

5. Hoaxes and conspiracies are everywhere, and they almost always share a few common characteristics. Typically, only a few people (usually fewer than five) are involved in creating the hoax or conspiracy because the more people involved, the harder it is to keep the hoax or conspiracy a “secret” – at least for any length of time. For this reason, hoaxes and conspiracies typically have a short life span. The fact that the Bible is thousands of years old and has involved hundreds of key people would suggest it is not a hoax or a conspiracy.

Hopefully, the above credentials and comments will lead you to conclude the Bible is, indeed, “for real”, and clearly not a fraud, hoax, or part of a conspiracy. But, while impressive, none of these credentials or comments actually prove (1) that the Bible you are reading is an accurate copy of the original documents; or (2) that your copy is an accurate and reliable representation of what actually happened; or even (3) that what the Bible teaches is both credible and believable. To successfully address these potential concerns, we will need a completely different set of verification standards which we will explore shortly. But first, let’s explain the difference between Bible copies, translations, versions and fakes.

## Copies • Translations • Versions • Fakes

**Copies:** Yes, it is true that no one has a complete set of the “original” books of the Bible. This is true for many reasons. First, the Bible consists of 66 separate “books” written individually over a span of approximately 1,500 to 2,000 years (if, indeed, the book of Job was recorded in 1900 BC as some claim). Second, while pen, ink and paper existed when the first book of the Bible (Genesis) was written<sup>3</sup>, most books “written” in the early days of the Bible’s creation were produced on stone tablets, dried animal skins, or pottery. However, over time, meticulous copies began to be made on papyrus scrolls by scribes whose job was to make perfect copies. Formulas for counting letters and words were used to validate copies, and it has been reported that if there was even one mistake found, it would have to be corrected before the manuscript could be used.<sup>4</sup>

**Translations:** When the Bible is translated into a different language, years are spent to make sure an authentic translation is produced, i.e., one that maintains the original content, just in a different language. Notable variations are easily identified.

**Versions:** Unlike verbatim scribed (handwritten) copies or language translations, most Bible *versions* neither change the language nor the content or meaning, but rather simply change the “style” of the writing. If you compare the NASB (New American Standard Bible) version with, say, the KJV (King James Version), you’d almost swear they were different Bibles. But they are the same Bible in the same language; the language is simply styled differently. An example of the different styles might look something like “Our Father Who art in heaven” vs “Our Father Who is in heaven”. Clearly different styles, but the same message.

Another reason for the differences, especially between the KJV and NASB versions, is that the English language itself has changed over time and the modern translations reflect those changes.

And yes, mistakes are occasionally made. An example would be a grammatical correction that, while appropriately made, might distort the original intent of a verse. Another example would be when, for intended clarification, a word is either occasionally inserted or removed. Clarification is helpful, but not if it distorts the original meaning. These mistakes are extremely rare and are usually corrected at the next printing.

**Fakes:** Yes, there are Bible “fakes” that clearly stray from the original manuscripts. The Jefferson Bible is a perfect example. Thomas Jefferson took the New Testament of the KJV Bible and cut out any reference to Jesus’ healings and other supernatural events. No scholar would give such a version much credibility and neither should you. You should also be aware that many religions profess to use “the Bible”, but in fact have created their own teaching texts that either change, add to, or leave out critical components of the Bible. We cover this important topic in our PDF document [“Why Are Some Religions Potentially Dangerous?”](#).

## 2. Is My Copy of the Bible ‘Authentic’?

Another way to phrase this question is to ask, “Does my copy closely match the original set of documents?” To answer this question, we must first understand just how the Bible was actually “constructed”. While it is generally accepted that in roughly 1450 BC, Moses wrote Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – the first five books of the Bible (also known in Hebrew as the TORAH or in Greek as the Pentateuch) – Moses did not set out to write “the Bible” as we know it today. After Moses, there came numerous other authors – roughly 39 in total – who wrote their own books (see our PDF document [“Structure of the Bible”](#)). None of these other authors set out to write “the Bible” either. Say what?

---

<sup>3</sup> Ink and papyrus existed as early as 2500 BC and Genesis, the first book of the Bible, was authored in roughly 1,450 BC.

<sup>4</sup> See HaSoferet.com *When A Scribe Makes A Mistake*.

You see, the “Bible” as we know it today was not so much “written” as it was “compiled”. The following, taken from *How and When Was the Canon of the Bible Put Together?* explains this process:<sup>5</sup>

*“The term “canon” is used to describe the books that are divinely inspired and therefore belong in the Bible. The difficulty in determining the biblical canon is that the Bible does not give us a list of the books that belong in the Bible. Determining the canon was a process conducted first by Jewish rabbis and scholars and later by early Christians. Ultimately, it was God who decided what books belonged in the biblical canon. A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing. It was simply a matter of God’s convincing His human followers which books should be included in the Bible.*

*Compared to the New Testament, there was much less controversy over the canon of the Old Testament. Hebrew believers recognized God’s messengers and accepted their writings as inspired of God. While there was undeniably some debate in regards to the Old Testament canon, by A.D. 250 there was nearly universal agreement on the canon of Hebrew Scripture [the Old Testament]. The only issue that remained was the Apocrypha, with some debate and discussion continuing today. The vast majority of Hebrew scholars considered the Apocrypha to be good historical and religious documents, but not on the same level as the Hebrew Scriptures.*

*For the New Testament [written in Greek], the process of the recognition and collection began in the first centuries of the Christian church. Very early on, some of the New Testament books were being recognized. Paul considered Luke’s writings to be as authoritative as the Old Testament ([1 Timothy 5:18](#); see also [Deuteronomy 25:4](#) and [Luke 10:7](#)). Peter recognized Paul’s writings as Scripture ([2 Peter 3:15-16](#)). Some of the books of the New Testament were being circulated among the churches ([Colossians 4:16](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:27](#)). Clement of Rome mentioned at least eight New Testament books (A.D. 95). Ignatius of Antioch acknowledged about seven books (A.D. 115). Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, acknowledged 15 books (A.D. 108). Later, Irenaeus mentioned 21 books (A.D. 185). Hippolytus recognized 22 books (A.D. 170-235). The New Testament books receiving the most controversy were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John.*

*The first Biblical “canon” was the [Muratorian Canon](#), which was compiled in AD 170. The Muratorian Canon included all of the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and 3 John. In AD 363, the Council of Laodicea stated that only the Old Testament (along with one book of the Apocrypha) and 26 books of the New Testament (everything but Revelation) were canonical and to be read in the churches. The Council of Hippo (AD 393) and the Council of Carthage (AD 397) also affirmed the same 27 books as authoritative.*

*The councils followed something similar to the following principles to determine whether a New Testament book was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit: 1) Was the author an apostle or have a close connection with an apostle?<sup>6</sup> 2) Is the book being accepted by the body of Christ at large? 3) Did the book contain consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching? 4) Did the book bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit? Again, it is crucial to remember that the church did not determine the canon. No early church council decided on the canon. It was God, and God alone, who determined which books belonged in the Bible. It was simply a matter of God’s imparting to His followers what He had already decided. The human process of collecting the books of the Bible was flawed, but God, in His sovereignty, and despite our ignorance and stubbornness, brought the early church to the recognition of the books He had inspired.}*

As you can see, starting as early as 95 AD, Biblical scholars began reviewing the biblical documents, and they began selecting those they truly felt represented God’s word into one “canon” as early as 170 AD. Except for the later addition of the book of Revelation, the final compilation – which we now call “the Bible” – was completed by the Council of Laodicea in 363 AD.

You can see from the above explanation of how the Bible was put together, there are two “parts” to a full version of the Bible: The Old Testament and the New Testament. When we speak of the Bible, we mean both parts taken together.

The first part of the Bible, the Old Testament, was originally written predominately in Hebrew with a portion written in Aramaic. While we do not have full originals of the Old Testament - after all, some of the books were written close to or potentially more than, in the case of Job - 3,500 years ago - we do have physical examples of *partial* scribed copies that were written between 408 BC and 318 BC <sup>7</sup>. These are the Dead Sea Scrolls that were discovered between 1946 and 1956, and which confirm not only what was chosen by the Council of Laodicea, but also much of the Old Testament text in use today. Finally, the Old Testament was translated into Greek in 200 BC. This tells us the Old Testament not only existed but was believed to be authentic enough to translate.

The second part of the Bible, the New Testament, was originally written in Greek. In the case of the New Testament, we do have physical, scribed complete copies of the New Testament texts that are believed to have been codexed (assembled into book form) within decades of their origination and well before they were compiled into the Bible as we know it today.

---

<sup>5</sup> Taken from [[www.gotquestions.org/canon-Bible.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/canon-Bible.html)]. Recommended resource: *The Canon of Scripture* by F.F Bruce

<sup>6</sup> An Apostle was a person sent by Christ Himself to spread His Gospel throughout the known world. There are only twelve Apostles.

<sup>7</sup> Taken from *The Digital Dead Seas Scrolls: Nature and Significance from the Israel Museum Jerusalem and The Digital Library: Introduction* from the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library. See also *Dead Sea Scrolls* by Philip R. Davies [[www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com)].



### 3. Is the Bible Reliable?

Even with all the hard evidence out there to support the Bible's authenticity, there are many who just don't want to believe the events of the Bible ever happened or the people mentioned ever existed. We suspect their doubt has something to do with skepticism of supernatural events and/or dislike for *what* the Bible teaches, not whether the Bible itself is reliable in its reporting of people, places, and events.

We believe the following nine validation criteria should be used to verify the reliability of the Bible and to help you determine if the Bible you are reading accurately reflects what was *originally* written regarding the people and locations involved and the events and conversations that occurred. Note: Reliability (accuracy) and believability (credibility) are not the same thing. Here we address reliability. We address believability/credibility in the next section of this document.

Here are the nine validation criteria we use to address the question, "Is the Bible reliable?":

1. Is there a consistency to the material and are common themes present?
2. Were there any eyewitnesses?
3. Is there any physical evidence or archeological support?
4. Are there verifiable locations?
5. Are there any original documents or authentic scribed copies?
6. Are there prophetic statements or predictions that later proved to be true?
7. Does it pass the "Smell Test", i.e., does it make common sense?
8. Are the names, descriptions, and phrases culturally consistent with the applicable timeframe?
9. Is there credibility in its totality, i.e., like in a painting, some sections may appear strange when viewed separately, but when looked at as a whole – wow, what a great work of art.

Fortunately, most of the Bible can, in fact, be verified using all these validation criteria. However, there are some parts – notably Creation and Noah and the Flood (described early in Genesis) – that cannot be confirmed by all the above validation criteria. However, if a significant majority of the people, places, or events can be validated by these nine criteria, it is arguable, using the doctrine of totality, that those that cannot are likely to be reliable as well.

The explanation of Creation, which occurs in the very first part of Genesis, is a perfect example of where all validation criteria mentioned above cannot be met. However, we still believe the Creation account to be reliable (remember-believability is another issue). Since the Bible goes all the way back to the beginning of everything (and who knows when that actually was), there will be parts to which some of our validation criteria simply won't apply. For example: were there any "eyewitnesses" to the creation of the beginning of everything? Well, there of course was the Creator (whom we call God), and the Spirit of God. Based on the Apostle John's Gospel, Jesus also existed at the beginning, in spirit, as the Word of God. But since we would be relying on the Bible itself to verify their existence and their presence at Creation, that would be a circular reference and thus unusable as "proof" of eyewitnesses to the Creation.

But what about physical evidence of the Creation? Well, Genesis, the first book in the Bible, does mention the earth, seas, stars, and by inference the sun and the moon. Vegetation, creatures, and male and female genders are also mentioned as part of the Creation. We obviously have plenty of physical evidence of all these things.

And what about the "Smell Test" of common sense when it comes to Creation? Well, since we have all of the physical evidence mentioned as part of the Creation, and that physical evidence still exists today, common sense tells us that Creation, as described in Genesis, did actually take place. Now, while there may not be enough evidence to fully believe Creation took place exactly as described in Genesis as to the source of Creation (God), there is certainly enough evidence to know that Creation obviously occurred. The rest simply requires either more forensic digging and/or simple faith.<sup>8</sup> Note: Some have claimed, most notably Stephen Hawking, that the other option is that Creation never occurred—that the universe has simply always existed. This was a common default position among unbelievers until science recently demonstrated that the Universe had to have a beginning.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> We provide a more thorough explanation of the believability of Creation in our PDF document, "[Scripture and Science – How Well Do They Relate?](#)"

<sup>9</sup> See Natalie Wolchover's article, "[Physicists Debate Hawking's Idea That the Universe Had No Beginning](#)" in the 6/6/19 edition of Quantum magazine.

Also, with respect to Creation, how does the validation criteria of totality apply? Well, if 90% of the Bible's explanation of Creation is proven to be accurate, and 10% requires belief, then we hold that there is a strong likelihood that what the Bible asks you to believe is most likely accurate as well. And yes, there will be some things we just have to take on faith.

*Note: Faith is required when we cannot prove something is a fact. But it is important to know that just because something cannot be proven as fact does not automatically mean it is fiction. This is especially true if one insists on scientific proof. Why? Because scientific proof requires validation through replication. History itself cannot be replicated. Does this mean history is invalid? Of course not.*

*Take, for example, your birthday. There is no "scientific" evidence that you were born on a given day because scientists cannot replicate the event of your birth. However, there may be "historical evidence" – like pictures, eyewitnesses, and a birth certificate. But what if there were no pictures, eyewitnesses, or a birth certificate? Does that mean you were not born on the date you thought you were born? No, it really doesn't prove that at all. Just because we can't prove that it did happen isn't proof that it didn't. Stated differently, the absence of proof is not proof of absence. It may just mean we haven't found the evidence yet. The same may be true with parts of Creation.*

## The Structure of the Bible

As previously mentioned, the Bible consists of two "groups" of books: the Old Testament (39 books) and the New Testament (27 books). The Old Testament focuses on Creation, the birth of a Nation (Israel), the early history of the Jewish people, the Law handed down by God as to how people should behave. The Old Testament also includes books of poetry and wisdom, and the writings of the Prophets predicting the coming of a Messiah. The New Testament focuses on the birth of Jesus Christ (the promised Messiah of the Old Testament), His ministry, His teachings, His miracles, and the fulfillment of His initial mission on earth.

The Old and New Testaments were written in entirely different timeframes, separated in some cases by thousands of years. But we find that some of the Old Testament is quoted or referred to in the New Testament, and some of the New Testament was prophesied in the Old Testament. We will detail some of this so you can conclude that the Bible's content meets our first evaluation criteria – it is extremely consistent and contains repetitive themes.<sup>10</sup>

Our goal in this section is to give you enough information so you can trust that the Bible is reliable. We will start with a brief explanation of how the Old Testament is structured and then provide some historical timelines for reference. Then we will narrow our focus and look closely at the New Testament, specifically the Gospels. Why the Gospels? Because they detail the ministry of Jesus Christ, and in two cases (the Gospels of Matthew and John), they represent eyewitness accounts of His ministry. The other two Gospel writers (Mark and Luke) did not actually accompany Jesus throughout His ministry, but they were closely associated with Apostles who did. Mark was a close associate of the Apostle Peter, who was with Jesus from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and who many believe may have dictated his Gospel to Mark. Luke was a first-century physician/historian who carefully compiled his information from other first-century sources, including eyewitnesses. One of Luke's eyewitnesses was the Apostle Paul, to whom the resurrected Jesus presented Himself while Paul was traveling to Damascus.

### The Old Testament (From Creation to Christ)]

As mentioned, the Old Testament consists of 39 separate books. Due to the importance of the first five books, we will discuss their reliability in detail. The remaining 34 books of the Old Testament are primarily about people and events which history has already well documented (for example, former Kings of Israel); or they contain artistic expressions and words of wisdom that need no verification (they just are what they are); or they are the writings of Prophets history has already shown to have, to a large degree, come true. Some of these prophesies, which are over 2,500 years old and which have come true, are absolutely remarkable.

#### **Structure of the Old Testament**

The first five books of the Old Testament, called the Torah (Hebrew) or Pentateuch (Greek), are assumed to be written by Moses [or at least he is attributed as the writer]. The five books of the Torah are:

1. **Genesis:** the Book of Beginnings – Creation, the Fall (of Adam and Eve), the Flood, and the selection of a chosen people are explained.

---

<sup>10</sup> See also our PDF document, "[Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus](#)".

2. **Exodus:** the Birth of a Nation and the Moral Law – Moses leads the Jewish people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land (Israel) and is given the Ten Commandments by God that explain how to worship Him spiritually.
3. **Leviticus:** the Ceremonial Laws of the Nation – God explains how to worship Him ceremonially.
4. **Numbers:** Wandering Through the Wilderness – God punishes the faithless Jews by delaying their settlement into the Promised Land. The title Numbers comes from a census that was taken.
5. **Deuteronomy:** Reviewing God’s Laws – Moses reminds the Israelites of their history and God’s laws.

### ***Historical Events Surrounding the Old Testament***

It is believed that most of these books were recorded around 1445 BC. Here are some important historical references that will help you place the origination of these first five books of the Old Testament and start the examination of their accuracy:

- ~ 3000 BC – Paper (papyrus) was invented, and 500 years later ink was invented, and the first “public” libraries were built. So, it is not completely out of the realm of possibility that these five books were, in some form, “written” down. Note: Please don’t view things through the lens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century because in the timeframe we are examining, animal skins (leather), stone tablets and pottery were mostly used to record things.
- 2,000 BC – Native Americans migrated from Asia to North America.
- 1,750 BC – the Code of Hammurabi was created which became foundational for Roman – and later, European, and American law. A partial copy of the Code of Hammurabi, written in stone, still exists.
- **1,450 to 1400 BC: The first five books of the Old Testament are written/scribed.**
- 1,358 BC – King Tutankhamen dies. Artifacts from his tomb are still being displayed throughout the world today.
- 1,250 BC – Silk fabrics are manufactured in China.

See our PDF: [“Historical Timeline with Key Biblical Events”](#) for additional examples.

### ***Is The Old Testament Authentic and Reliable?***

Is there *archeological* evidence to prove the existence of the Old Testament documents? Yes, there is some, but unfortunately, very little. The Tel Dan Stela inscription, dating back to 1,200 BC, would be the most scientific as it includes a reference to Israel, which was first mentioned in the Old Testament – but that is not a lot to base the history of Creation, the Laws of God, or the birth and history of a Jewish nation on. Truth be told, nothing in the first five books of the Old Testament can be proven using archeologically preserved, original “texts” from the time they were actually “written”; but we do have copies that were scribed over the following centuries with the earliest partial copy of the Old Testament dating back to roughly 350 BC and the oldest *full* copy (excepting the Book of Esther) dating back to roughly 100 BC (both from the Dead Sea Scrolls). It sure would be nice to have a well preserved, original of the Old Testament, but the science of preservation 3,500 years ago was not quite what it is today.

*NOTE: While we have no extant copies of the Old Testament dating from when they were actually created, there is far more evidence that supports the reliability of the Old Testament documents than most other documents dating from that time. Josh McDowell’s books on the reliability of the Old Testament documents—Evidence that Demands a Verdict—provides significant information on their authenticity.*

In addition to scribed copies of the Old Testament documents, we do have significant archeological evidence supporting many of the events and locations described in the Old Testament. Just a few of these would include:

1. Ancient descriptions of the Red Sea separating are written on stone.
1. There is the Land of Israel itself, as well as the cities of Jerusalem, Galilee, and Bethlehem.
2. The cave in which David hid from Saul is a preserved archeological site.
3. The valley in which David slew Goliath is a public archeological site and you can gather smooth stones from the same brook where David found his.
4. The tomb of the prophet Samuel is a public archeological site.
5. Abraham’s well in Beersheba is a public archeological site.
6. The Tel at Lachish is a public archeological site.
7. There are photos of what’s left of what is probably the Tower of Babel.
8. Archeologists believe they may have discovered the site of both Abraham’s and the Apostle Peter’s homes.

Archeologists often use the Bible’s descriptions of locations of ancient cities when deciding where to dig, and they often find remnants of the cities at those locations! We recommend reviewing the excellent works of William F. Albright, a noted biblical archeologist, for more information on this subject.



So, before moving on to more recent – well, relatively more recent – books of the Old Testament, is there anything else besides the Tel Dan Stela inscription and the scribed copies from 350 - 100 BC that we can rely on to validate the existence and accuracy or reliability of the first five books of the Old Testament? We can think of five:

1. The New Testament books, for which there is more forensic evidence supporting their authenticity than the Old Testament books, reference historical events of the Old Testament some 165 times. When we combine these historical references along with the Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in the New Testament, the two Testaments form a very integrated message, thus meeting the important validation criteria of consistency and common themes.
2. Jesus quotes the Old Testament frequently, so it would be a stretch to think that Jesus would have quoted something that did not exist. If the Scriptures Jesus referred to did not exist, some quick questions come to mind – for example, how did Matthew and Mark know about Jesus' lines of ancestry dating back to Abraham and then back to Adam?

Jesus quoted the Old Testament before dozens, hundreds and even thousands of people and apparently none of them disputed His quotes of the Old Testament as having been from the Old Testament. Rather, they confirmed them, as the Old Testament was general knowledge in Israel at the time. If Jesus had wrongly quoted or incorrectly referred to the Old Testament, He would have immediately lost credibility even with His disciples.

A modern-day cynic would simply argue that the scribed copies of the Old Testament that Jesus, Matthew, and Mark had access to could have been fake. True, that is certainly a possibility. But unlike today, where so much is fake and manufactured real-time, that was simply not the case thousands of years ago. Scribing (making exact copies of documents) was a very learned and highly honored skill back in the Old Testament days. It was a very time consuming and methodical process and mistakes were simply not allowed. As previously pointed out, special formulas were used to count the number of words and letters, and if a mistake was found, it had to be corrected before the document could be released.

Even Jesus, in Matthew 5:18-20, has harsh words to say about changing the Law that had been written: ***“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”***

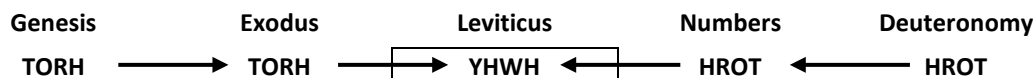
Note: Jesus was not referring to context or interpretation but rather to actual letters and strokes (jots and tittles in Hebrew).

Given such scrutiny of the scribes, it is hard to believe that the New Testament references to the Old Testament events and people would be inaccurate or unreliable.

3. As noted above, the newer books of the Old Testament contain numerous prophecies of events that would occur in the future. In his book, *Science Speaks*, Dr. Peter Stoner identifies 48 Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. He and his team picked just eight prophecies – examples like the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, would have a forerunner to announce His arrival, and would be betrayed for exactly 30 pieces of silver, and they calculated that the probability of any one man fulfilling these eight prophecies – as Jesus did – would approximate 1 chance in 10<sup>17</sup>. Dr. Stoner compared those odds to filling the entire state of Texas three feet deep with silver dollars, painting one of the silver dollars red, and sending someone in the pile blindfolded to find the one red silver dollar on the first try. That all 48 of the prophecies would be fulfilled by Jesus makes it virtually impossible to believe that the Old Testament writings are not reliable (and that Jesus is not the promised Messiah.) Please see our PDF document [\*“Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus”\*](#) where we identify 78 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus.
4. Old Testament books also contained numerous prophecies that were fulfilled later in history. For example: Deuteronomy 18:15-17, Genesis 49:8-10 and Genesis 3:15 all speak of the Messiah. Genesis chapter 49 gives the future of the various tribes of Israel. Leviticus chapter 26 and Deuteronomy chapters 28 through 30 predict Israel's future—they were disobedient to God's word and so have experienced the curses described therein.

5. Chuck Missler, the late theologian, Naval Academy graduate engineer, and rocket scientist <sup>11</sup>, presents a very interesting analysis about the TORAH using a scientific validation criterion called Equidistant Letter Sequencing. According to scholars, the number seven is an important number in Christian theology as it represents completion. When you square seven (7 to the 2<sup>nd</sup> power), you get 49. If you examine the original Hebrew Scripture of the first two books of the Torah (Genesis and Exodus), every successive 49<sup>th</sup> letter spells TORH (aka TORAH). The middle of the five books of the Torah (Leviticus) has another “code”. In Leviticus, every successive seventh letter spells YHWH (short for the Jewish God, YAHWEY). In the last two books of the TORAH (Numbers and Deuteronomy), every successive 49<sup>th</sup> letter spells HROT (TORH spelled backwards).

This Equidistant Letter Sequencing validation looks like this:



What makes this diagram most interesting, aside from the fact that every successive 49<sup>th</sup> letter of the first two and last two books of the TORAH create the word TORH or HROT, and that both point towards YHWY (God), is that in the early days of Jerusalem, the site of God’s temple, the city was considered the center of the universe and all things pointed towards it. Many skeptics would then argue that since HROT does not spell TORH, this analysis must be invalid. However, back in the days of Moses, anything written from an area that was to the left (West) of Jerusalem (the Temple) was read left to right, and anything written from an area to the right (East) of Jerusalem was read right to left. That said, HROT, since it appeared to have been written from a place to the right of the Temple of God, would then actually be read TORH, because it would be read right to left, i.e., towards Jerusalem and God’s temple.

Granted, this analysis is not scientific proof of the accuracy of the events and people recorded in the first five books of the Old Testament. In fact, science has no explanation for it at all. We would argue, though, that it is way beyond coincidental for these sequences to occur throughout all five of the books, written over 3,500 years ago, if the scribed copies of those books weren’t accurate. You might even begin to think that these first five books were divine by design.

6. The Quran (or Koran), which is the equivalent of the Bible for people of the Islamic faith, was written in the early 600s AD – some 2,000 years after the Torah was written. The Quran references a number of things that were also part of the first five books of the Old Testament – most notably Abraham and the angel Gabriel. For example, both the Bible and the Quran trace the ancestry of Jesus and Mohammad back to Abraham/Ibrahim (see below).



Now, Islam and Christianity have the two largest followings of any faith. Islam began approximately 1,300 years ago and Christianity began 2,000 years ago. Yet both trace the ancestry of their most important person, Jesus or Muhammad, to the same person, Abraham (Ibrahim), who existed some 4,000 years ago; and in the Christian (and Jewish) faith, Abraham can be traced all the way back to Adam. Coincidence? Maybe, but probably not. That this ancestry would appear in both books of entirely different faiths, written roughly 2,100 years apart, leads one to think these people actually did exist, and that the Old Testament is, indeed, trustworthy.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Missler died on May 1, 2018

Yes, we are still on the Old Testament. The good news is the remaining 34 books of the Old Testament can be grouped into four categories – History, Poetry and Wisdom, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets – and they need very little explanation:

**History:** (Joshua through Esther) – these expand on the history of the Jewish people. The way to test the accuracy of these histories is to determine if the names, events, and locations were also mentioned in texts other than the Old Testament. The answer is yes, especially regarding these later books of the Old Testament. In addition, the names of people mentioned in these Old Testament texts match the names commonly used in their applicable time periods, thus demonstrating the Bible’s cultural consistency.

**Poetry and Wisdom:** (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon) – most presumably written by King Solomon, reported to have been the wisest man in history, and by King David, one of the greatest Kings of ancient Israel. They offer words of God’s wisdom and grace. Since these are mostly artistic expressions and words of wisdom, their accuracy is measured by the quality of their message and whether they reflect the personality of the authors as recorded elsewhere in other historical documents. Both King Solomon and King David were revered Kings of Israel and King David was a devout follower of God. Their writings do, in fact, reflect this. As to the wisdom of their writings, only the reader can judge.

**Major Prophets:** [Isaiah thru Daniel] -

**Minor Prophets:** [Hosea thru Malachi]

Since many of the prophecies found in the books of these prophets actually came true, as recorded in both the New Testament and in later history – even up to the end of World War II\*. We think it is safe to assume that these prophets did exist and their events actually took place.<sup>11</sup>

\* Some 2,500 years ago, the prophet Ezekiel, speaking on behalf of God, prophesied the following regarding the future of a Jewish nation: **“I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.”** (Ezekiel 36:24). The official nation state of Israel was established on May 14, 1948.<sup>12</sup>

## The New Testament (From Christ to the End of Days)

For authenticating the New Testament accuracy, we will use the same approach taken with the Old Testament:

- We’ll provide a quick review of the structure of the New Testament.
- We’ll offer a timeline of relevant events for reference.
- We’ll use the same validation criteria to demonstrate that the New Testament is authentic and reliable.

Books of the New Testament were written between 50 AD and 100 AD. Fortunately, there is much more hard evidence to support their accuracy and reliability.

### **Structure of the New Testament**

The New Testament consists of 27 books, most of which are authored by Jesus’ core group of disciples (and later Apostles) and can be divided into five groups:

1. **The Gospels:** These are biographies of Jesus Christ’s life and ministry, two of which (Matthew and John) are eyewitness accounts, as the authors actually walked with Jesus throughout His three plus- year ministry. The other two Gospels are written by Mark and Luke who were close associates of two of Christ’s Apostles (Peter and Paul).
2. **Acts (of the Apostles):** These chronicle the activities of the Apostles as they began expanding the body of believers<sup>13</sup> by spreading the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the known world. Acts was written by Luke.
3. **Paul’s Letters:** These are letters (which the Bible refers to as Epistles) that the Apostle Paul wrote to various congregations of believers as they established their faith in Jesus, and in some cases, wandered from their faith). Paul is extremely unique because he was a very learned man, a Roman citizen and also Jewish, and was originally a major persecutor of the Christians. Paul came to a committed faith in Jesus as he was traveling from Jerusalem to Damascus, when Jesus confronted him and struck him blind. Why is this unique? Because the encounter came after Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Prior to Paul’s return to Jerusalem, his eyesight was restored by Ananias of Damascus, a disciple of Christ.

<sup>12</sup> See also our PDF document [“Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus”](#).

<sup>13</sup> To Jesus, His Church was not to be an institutional or heavily organized religion. He wanted it to simply consist of the body of believers who were committed to following His teachings.

4. **Other Letters:** These are similar in nature to Paul's letters/epistles but were mostly written by three of Jesus' other 12 Apostles (John, Peter, and James). Jude was written most likely by Jude, possibly Jesus' half-brother, and the author of Hebrews is not definitively known.
5. **The Book of Revelation:** This book describes the trials and tribulations that will wreak havoc on the world prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus' judgement of believers as to their rewards in heaven and of non-believers as to their eternal fate, and the establishment of His kingdom on Earth. The Book of Revelation was written by the Apostle John and was dictated to him by the resurrected Jesus.

We believe the Gospels are the most important part of the New Testament as they chronicle, by the day in a few instances – and even by the hour in some cases – the approximate three plus years of Jesus Christ's ministry. They also provide us with quoted versions of Jesus' teachings. As previously mentioned, two of the Gospels (Matthew and John) represent actual eyewitness testimony from two of Jesus' original twelve disciples as they physically walked with Jesus from the very early days of His ministry. The other two Gospels were written by Mark and Luke who were not among Jesus' original disciples but who were close companions of the Apostles Peter and Paul respectively. Many believe that Mark's Gospel was dictated to him by Peter and really represents Peter's three plus years of daily travels with Jesus.

*Note: It should be mentioned that the Apostle Paul was not one of the original disciples of Christ in a chronological sense. This is because Jesus came to Paul after His resurrection and called upon Paul to become an Apostle. Before his conversion, Paul was a well-known Pharisee (religious leader) and a Roman citizen who despised Christianity and actively sought out and fiercely persecuted the Christians without mercy. After his encounter with the resurrected Christ, Paul became one of the most ardent supporters of Jesus Christ and Christianity. Paul had three major missionary travels and spread Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. Both Gospel-writers Mark and Luke traveled with Paul, and Mark traveled with Peter as Peter set out to spread the Gospel of Christ.*

### **Historical Events Surrounding the New Testament**

#### **Before the Birth of Christ**

800 BC **Homer writes the Iliad and the Odyssey**  
 776 BC **First Olympic games in Greece**  
 753 BC **City of Rome officially founded**  
 660 BC **Japan established as a nation**  
 563 BC **Buddha born in India**  
 551 BC **Confucius born**  
 448 BC **Greek Parthenon built on Mt. Acropolis**  
 370 BC **Plato writes famous book - The Republic**  
 225 BC **Old Testament translated from Hebrew into Greek**  
 215 BC **Great Wall of China Built**  
 100 BC **Julius Caesar was born**  
 30 BC **Cleopatra and Marc Antony die**

#### **After the Birth of Christ – The New Testament**

6/5 BC **Jesus Christ born**  
 26/27 AD **Jesus begins His ministry**  
 30 AD **Jesus was crucified and rose on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day**  
 35 AD **Paul visited by Jesus on road to Damascus**  
 46 AD **Paul begins his first missionary journey**  
 57 AD **Paul writes the book of Romans**  
 64 AD **Rome burns (while Nero fiddles)**  
 70 AD **Romans destroy Jerusalem and the Temple as prophesied by both the Prophet Daniel and Christ**

### ***Is the New Testament Authentic – Is It Real and Not a Fake or a Hoax?***

When you see the New Testament in its historical context of surrounding events, it is hard to imagine you would believe all of the other texts but not the New Testament. The Olympics are still held today and the first Olympic games were held over 700 years before the birth of Christ. People have little trouble believing in Buddha and Confucius who were born 500 years before Christ – so why not Christ? The *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and Plato's *The Republic* were written well before the New Testament, and yet no one has any issue with their authenticity. Better yet, with regard to these other documents, there is far less evidence for their authenticity and reliability in terms of the number and dates of their ancient manuscripts. (See Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*.)

The existence of historical figures mentioned in the New Testament – people like Herod, John the Baptist, Nicodemus, Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate – is well documented. You can even find some historical information on Joseph of Arimathea, who was only mentioned briefly in the New Testament but in whose tomb, Jesus was buried.

The existence of prominent locations mentioned in the New Testament – places like Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, Bethany, the Mount of Olives, and the Garden of Gethsemane – still exist today. Even Jacob's well, where Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman and reveals to her that yes, He is the Messiah, still exists to this day. ***"The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'"*** (John 4:25-26)

The good news is that we do have originals of virtually the complete New Testament scrolls that were compiled around 170 AD, or within 75 years following the completion of the actual New Testament itself. We also have the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus<sup>14</sup> which presumably were used by the Council of Laodicea in compiling the full Bible Canon in 363 AD. We also have a copy of about two-thirds of John's Gospel that was dated to have been penned on papyrus around 150 AD or only about 60-70 years after John wrote it. So yes, if you are reading one of the more common and accepted versions of the Bible, we think you can feel comfortable that you are reading an accurate replication of the original New Testament. Rest assured, Biblical scholars are quick to call out fakes and many have concluded that the New Testament is over 99% accurate when compared to its earliest originally obtained manuscripts.<sup>15</sup>

Some might argue that because only two of the 12 disciples who followed Jesus wrote "direct" eyewitness accounts of Jesus' ministry, it would possibly imply a close-knit conspiracy. Nonsense. One of the disciples who walked with Jesus – Judas – betrayed Jesus and hung himself before Christ's crucifixion. So, he wasn't about to write a Gospel. It is widely believed that Mark's Gospel may have been dictated to him by Peter, one of Jesus' original and well-known disciples. We should also not forget that it is entirely possible that some of Jesus' disciples may not have known how to write as a few were simple fishermen.

Yes, without a doubt, the New Testament that you read today is authentic. It is not a fake, or a hoax, or part of a conspiracy.

### ***Is The New Testament Reliable – Does it Accurately Report What Actually Took Place?***

How do we know the New Testament is an accurate report of what really took place with respect to events, people, places, and conversations? Did Jesus really exist? Did He really give the Sermon on the Mount? Did He really cure all of those people and raise people from the dead? Was He really crucified? Was He really resurrected on the third day? As we said earlier, just because you can read it, doesn't mean it's true. Right? Well, here are some observations that we think strongly support that yes, what the New Testament says happened, really happened – especially as it relates to Jesus and His ministry.

#### **Eyewitnesses – The Disciples**

They say that there is nothing better than an eyewitness.<sup>16</sup> It is even better when you have two – especially if they are from completely different backgrounds and provide their testimony at different times and from different locations. Well, the New Testament has two such eyewitnesses to the events, locations, people, and conversations of Jesus during His ministry, and those would be John and Matthew. We call them eyewitnesses because they were with Jesus, in person, as Jesus gave His sermons and performed His healings and other miracles during His three plus year ministry – and they both recorded His actions, His teachings, His crucifixion and His resurrection.

John, son of Zebedee, was with Jesus from virtually the first day of Jesus' ministry, having been introduced to Jesus by John the Baptist shortly after John the Baptist had baptized Jesus and after Jesus had spent His 40 days in the wilderness. Matthew joined Jesus a bit later (presumably after Jesus had selected Peter [Simon], Andrew, James, Phillip, and Bartholomew).

There are two other Gospel writers, Mark and Luke, who wrote what other key Apostles of Jesus (Peter and Paul) had told them, so they should not be considered "direct" eyewitnesses. However, their versions of the events of Christ's ministry match closely with Matthew and John's.

It should be noted that until the advent of DNA analysis, eyewitness testimony was considered the most reliable form of evidence in a court of law and has been used to convict people of crimes – even crimes warranting the death penalty. The Old Testament itself, in Deuteronomy, indicates that no one should be convicted of any crime unless there are at least two eyewitnesses. So, eyewitness testimony has long been considered to be a very reliable means of determining historical truth – even to the point of deciding whether a person should be put to death or not.

And let us not forget, many of the other books (epistles) of the New Testament were also written by these two eyewitnesses. They include 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John and 3 John and the book of Revelation.

---

<sup>14</sup> Both also contain much of the Old Testament as well. A Codex is a loose leaf (unbound) manuscript as opposed to a scroll.

<sup>15</sup> See *A Note on The Percent Of Accuracy Of The New Testament Text* by Norman L. Geisler

<sup>16</sup> Detectives might argue with this statement as they often will have multiple "eyewitnesses", all of whom often describe a crime differently. But those witnesses were not guided by the Holy Spirit as John and Matthew were, and these two disciples/Apostles were chronicling history over time and not unexpected crimes of the moment. And, as expected, you will see definite variations in their Gospel writings.



## Eyewitnesses – The Crowds

As we read from the Gospels, Jesus was rarely alone during His ministry. Not only was He often surrounded by His originally handpicked twelve disciples, but there were also many others who followed Jesus around. Large crowds would gather around Jesus to hear His sermons and also witnessed His many miracles. While these eyewitnesses never gave “written” testimony as to what they witnessed, they certainly did “spread the word” about what they witnessed. This is especially true later in Jesus’ ministry when people would know to bring their sick to be healed whenever and wherever Jesus appeared. This happened far too frequently to be made up.

## Eyewitnesses – The Religious Leaders

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the exalted religious leaders of the Jewish people and had quasi-strained relationships with the local Roman political and military establishments who counted on the Pharisees and Sadducees to help “keep the peace” with the Jewish people. These religious leaders had spies throughout their communities who kept tabs on what was going on. Those spies witnessed many of the things Jesus was doing and preaching and reported back to the Pharisees and Sadducees who became quite fearful of, and felt threatened by, this new “miracle worker” who was preaching strange things and drawing large crowds. The Pharisees eventually hired Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus’ disciples, and paid him 30 pieces of silver to betray Jesus’ whereabouts. These Pharisees and Sadducees arranged for Jesus to be arrested and were primarily responsible for His conviction and crucifixion. This has been verified by historical writings about Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect (governor) of Judea under the emperor Tiberius. Pilate presided at the trial of Jesus and allowed His crucifixion. We say “allowed” because Pilate thought Jesus was innocent; but he was all too aware of the fear and animosity the religious leaders had towards Jesus, as well as their power and control over the people.

So, why is this important? Well, if Jesus wasn’t performing miracles, and wasn’t drawing large crowds with His new teachings, then the Pharisees and Sadducees would have had nothing to be afraid of, would they? But afraid they were, and they felt so threatened they knowingly had an innocent man crucified. As recorded in John 18:37-38, Pontius Pilate said as much:

*“Therefore Pilate said to Him, ‘So You are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, ‘I find no guilt in Him.’”*

And when Judas Iscariot tried to give the Pharisees back their 30 pieces of silver because he felt he had condemned an innocent man, they refused to take it claiming it was “blood money”.

*“Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ But they said, ‘What is that to us? See to that yourself!’ And he [Judas] threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.’ And they conferred together and with the money bought the Potter’s Field as a burial place for strangers. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.” (Matthew 27:3 – 8)*

The religious leaders were indeed fearful of Jesus, and it was because of His large crowds, healings, and teachings. And yes, even to this day, we still have Potter’s fields where people with no known relatives who can claim a body are buried.

## People and Places

As previously mentioned, most of the people who were part of Jesus’ ministry as reported in the Gospels – and in the Epistles – are well-documented historical figures of the applicable time period (examples include Herod, John The Baptist, Tiberius, Caesar, Pontius Pilate and Nicodemus), and many of the locations mentioned in the New Testament still exist to this day (examples include Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, and Jacob’s Well). There are also numerous archaeological finds that support what was written in the New Testament Gospels. One of the more recent findings (2005) is the Pool of Siloam, where Jesus reportedly healed a blind man (John 9:1-7). There is also the Bethesda Pool mentioned in the Gospel of John (John 5:2-9) where Jesus reportedly healed a paralytic. This pool was discovered in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it took over 100 years to validate its authenticity. Folklore and coincidence? The totality of the evidence would certainly suggest otherwise.

## Fulfilled Prophecies

When something is prophesied hundreds of years before it happens, it could easily be chalked up as a good guess. When it happens two or three times, you might start to think it’s more than luck. When it happens over and over again, we should consider that something other than luck is at play. We have already discussed the odds of only eight of the Old Testament fulfilled prophecies actually happening by chance, and yet we can identify 78 fulfilled prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in our PDF document *“Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus”*. Hopefully you can get a sense of, well, just how miraculous these prophecies were.

## **Consistency and Common Themes**

When evaluating testimony, we put a lot of emphasis on the consistency of the testimony, and if a person's testimony changes all the time, it loses much of its credibility. The same is true for teachers. If a math teacher says one day that two plus two equals four, and then on another day says that two plus two equals three, and then on another day says that two plus two equals five – well you might have reason to doubt that teacher's credibility.

So, how does the New Testament stack up with respect to consistency? Rather well, actually. The four Gospels detail 248 separate incidents in Jesus's life. Excluding all the separate references to His Sermon on the Mount (which only Matthew records in its totality, roughly 110 of the episodes are documented by at least two Gospel writers; and in quite a number of instances, all four of the gospel writers document the same incidents – and their versions are extremely consistent.

*Note: There are numerous explanations why not all four Gospel writers wrote about all 248 incidents. First, Matthew did not join Jesus' ministry at the very beginning – only John, Andrew and Peter were there from the beginning.*

*Second, the focus of each Gospel writer was different. Matthew writes primarily to show that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, giving more and special attention to fulfilled Old Testament prophecies in the life of Jesus. Matthew also appears to have been writing to Jews. John's focus emphasizes Jesus' deity, and that Jesus is truly the Son of God, and the only source of eternal life – with a purpose of leading people to faith in Jesus. Naturally, with different motives and different audiences, they would often choose to highlight different things about Jesus' ministry. This is particularly true of John who writes about 52 separate incidents that are not included in the other Gospels. Third, the four Gospels were not all written at the same time from the same location. For example, Mark wrote his Gospel from Rome circa AD 50. Matthew wrote his in Judea circa AD 60. Luke wrote his in Caesarea circa AD 60-62. John wrote his in Asia Minor between 85 AD and 95 AD. Yet the consistency among the four Gospels is remarkable.*

Another way to measure consistency is evaluating whether there are the same, or similar, repetitive themes present throughout the material; and the New Testament Gospels are full of them. Aside from what you would expect, i.e., Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus is the Son of God, and Jesus performed many miracles, here are five themes that we find repeated frequently in the Gospels:

- **Knowing The Future:** Jesus frequently expresses His ability to know what people are thinking, and He has a supernatural ability to know what the future holds in store for people. For example, when Jesus comes upon two fishermen, Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew, and suggests to them that if they follow Him, He will make them “fishers of men”, how does He know they will start a movement that ultimately brings over two billion people into the faith? Or when Jesus suggests something should not be done because He knows the time for His crucifixion has not yet come. And then there are the three distinct times when Jesus predicts His own death, and its circumstances, almost to the day. Jesus also tells His disciples that the Temple of Jerusalem will be destroyed, and it was when the Romans sacked Jerusalem in 70 AD – almost 40 years after Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus knowing the future and what others are thinking are common themes throughout the Gospels.
- **Least Is Most:** There are numerous times in the Gospels, from His Sermon on the Mount to the Last Supper, where Jesus preaches the concept that those who are least in this world will be considered most in the kingdom of heaven; and those who serve will be honored more than those who rule.
- **Love Of Children:** Throughout His ministry, and recorded often in the Gospels, Jesus frequently marvels at the wonder of children. He knows that the innocence of children, and their innate ability to believe and obey without being forced, is what God wants to see in adults as they express their faith in His Son.
- **Contempt For Religious Leaders:** Jesus has little regard for the many exalted religious leaders of the day (the Pharisees and Sadducees) because of their hypocritical and unrighteous behavior as expressed clearly in all four Gospels.
- **Having Faith:** Whether it is with respect to His healings, breaking bread to feed thousands, or calming storms, Jesus quite often speaks of needing to have faith.
- **Love:** Christ's entire ministry, as recorded in the Gospels, centers around love. His primary two commandments: **“and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”** **The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’** **There is no other commandment greater than these”** (Mark 12:30-31) are all about love. His healings demonstrate His love for the afflicted.

It is important to recognize that the mere fact that one would expect to find these themes in the New Testament Gospels does not denote consistency; but rather it is the fact that these themes are presented repeatedly in all books of the New Testament that supports the consistency inherent in the New Testament. Our PDF document, [“Major Themes in Christianity”](#) documents this.

## **Rejection by the Jews**

We believe the fact that the Jewish people rejected Jesus at the time – and still do to this day – lends reliability to the New Testament. Say again? For centuries, the Jewish people had been promised, through numerous prophecies, that a Messiah was coming who would create for them a kingdom, who would be their King, and who would deliver them from the oppression of the Roman rule, and before that the Egyptian rule, and before that the Persian rule, etc. Obviously, to accomplish these great things, they were expecting a great warrior King who would lead them to victory on battlefield after battlefield.

Well, they received their Messiah, they received their King, their Kingdom was laid out for them, and they were delivered from oppression. But the Scriptures promised both a warrior King and a servant King. And in Jesus was a Messiah who would save them from the oppression of their sins and deliver a kingdom comprised of believers – people He would save and serve. We suspect it would have given scholars of the Bible great concern had the Jewish people *not* rejected this Jesus. But apparently, what the Jews of the time did not comprehend, and many still don't, is that the servant King and the warrior King would be one person who would come at two different times. We have already witnessed the arrival of the servant King, and at Christ's Second Coming, those alive at the time will witness the warrior King (see the Book of Revelation).

## **Did The Resurrection of Jesus Actually Happen?**

One could reasonably argue that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the more “hard to believe” and “hard to prove” aspects of the New Testament – especially for those with a bias against anything supernatural being real. We will cover whether the supernatural should be believed or not in the next section of this document. Here, we are simply examining the reliability of whether the Resurrection actually happened as it is, of course, a major component of the New Testament.

So, the first evidentiary question we will ask is “Were there any eyewitnesses?” The answer is yes, there were many. It is reported in the Gospels that Jesus appeared to His disciples on at least three different occasions after His resurrection. It is further recorded in the Gospels that Jesus appeared to over 500 believers after His resurrection, appeared at different times to three women (one of whom was Mary Magdalene), and visited and had dinner with two followers He found walking down a road.

On the first of these occasions where the resurrected Jesus presented Himself to His disciples, one of the disciples, Thomas, was missing. In his Gospel, John writes, in John 20:24 - 20:31, the following:

*“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, ‘We have seen the Lord!’ But he [Thomas] said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’*

*Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’*

*Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have [eternal] life in His name.”*

Now, relying just on the Gospels for proof of the resurrection would be nothing more than a circular reference. So, we would suggest you look for additional reasons to believe the resurrection actually occurred. We can think of two big ones:

1. No one who was there during the time argued over or disputed its occurrence. The first Gospel that records the Resurrection is Mark's, written circa 50 AD, or only approximately 20 years after it happened.<sup>17</sup> There would have been many survivors who would have attacked Mark's work if, indeed, the Resurrection had never occurred. Matthew and Luke report Jesus' resurrection in their Gospels written circa 60 AD, only 30 years after it happened. Also, as Acts chapters 2 and 4 clearly indicate, prior to writing their Gospels, the disciples included the Resurrection of Jesus in their “spreading of the word” which began shortly after Jesus' resurrection.

*NOTE: It was widely circulated at the time of Jesus resurrection that Jesus wasn't resurrected but that His body was stolen by the disciples. However, Matthew's Gospel reports that the chief priests and the Pharisees had paid the Roman guards to claim that Jesus' body was stolen. Remember, Matthew was once a tax collector and thus may have been friends with the Roman guards who had been assigned to protect Jesus' tomb.*

2. Perhaps the most telling proof that Jesus was raised from the dead is how such an event dramatically changed the disciples. Prior to His crucifixion, the disciples swore their total loyalty to their teacher. As quoted in John 13:36-38:

---

<sup>17</sup> Remember, the Gospel books were written long before the first Bible was compiled.

***“Simon Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, where are You going?’ Jesus answered, ‘Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.’ Jesus answered, ‘Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times.’”***

And yes, during Jesus’ trials, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times to three different people, and upon the third denial, a rooster crowed. As recorded in Luke’s Gospel (Luke 22:58 – 62):

***“After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, ‘Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.’ But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are talking about.’ Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, ‘Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.”***

In fact, upon learning that Jesus was to be crucified, all eleven<sup>18</sup> of the disciples – every single one of them – went into hiding as they feared for their own lives. Not one of them defended Jesus at His trials. Not one of them tried to help Jesus as He was abused by the Roman guards. None of them offered any solace while Jesus agonized on the cross. But a resurrected Jesus came back to His disciples not once, but three separate times shortly after His crucifixion.

And then, all eleven of the disciples ended up risking the rest of their lives to eagerly spread His message, and all but one of them (John) were martyred (murdered) for it – and even John was once boiled in oil. Enduring incredible hardship, persecution, incarceration, and in some cases their own crucifixion, they took Jesus’ message and spread it throughout the known world. Twelve men (now including the Apostle Matthias, who replaced Judas) started a movement 2,000 years ago that now has over two billion followers. What so dramatically changed their minds and their behaviors that they would end up sacrificing their own lives committed to spreading His message?

Do you think it might have been seeing, in the flesh, someone who had been raised from the dead? Would that perhaps have changed your mind too?

And, of course, perhaps the most famous (at least to date) of Jesus’ post resurrection appearances is recorded in Acts 9, when Jesus meets His future Apostle Paul (formerly Saul) on the road to Damascus. The resurrected Jesus struck Saul blind and asked him:

***“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’. And He said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.’”*** (Acts 9:4b – 9:6)

Prior to meeting the resurrected Jesus, Paul (then known as Saul), was an avid anti-Christian and persecutor of Christians. Saul was a Jewish Roman citizen, and as a Pharisee, was a bitter antagonist to what Jesus Christ stood for. Saul absolutely hated Christians and obviously more than likely knew that Jesus had been crucified.

But, after having spent time with the resurrected Jesus and being taught by Him (and having his sight restored), Paul completely changed his ways. He not only became a major protagonist of the Christian faith, but he also ended up writing many of the Epistles included in the New Testament. Paul, too, endured the same hardships, persecutions and fate as all the other disciples (except John, who, while he endured many of the same hardships as the others, was not martyred); and yet Paul never stopped preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, even until the day he was beheaded outside a Roman prison.

### **Jesus Quoted Old Testament Scriptures**

Throughout the Gospels, we find Jesus quoting – word for word – Scriptures from the Old Testament. If we consider original text from the Old Testament discoveries and find Jesus quoting the same exact text in the New Testament – some hundreds, if not over a thousand years later – we think that confirms, at least in some respect, the reliability of the New Testament documents. Coincidence? Maybe, if it only happens once or twice. But it happens repeatedly in the New Testament. And another thing to consider on this point is that written scrolls of the Old Testament documents were not available to just anyone. So how did Jesus know exactly what was written in the Old Testament documents well enough to quote verbatim and with authority? His family was most likely not particularly wealthy or sufficiently privileged to have had access to the Old Testament scrolls. It is true that many young men of the day were schooled in Old Testament Scripture and the Jewish Law – and Jesus could have been one of them. But there is even a more compelling reason why Jesus knew the Old Testament intimately. We encourage you to read the first chapter of John to find out.

---

<sup>18</sup> Judas had committed suicide over his betrayal of Jesus, leaving only 11 of the original disciples at this point.

## Sayings We Continue to Quote Today

Some say imitation is the highest form of flattery. If so, there are millions who flatter the New Testament every day as we have taken some of our most often quoted sayings from it. Here are just a few that you may have used yourself:

- Seek and ye shall find
- Doubting Thomas (yep, same disciple who was mentioned above)
- Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's
- Money is the root of all evil (actually, it is the *love* of money)
- Beware of false prophets
- Heal the sick and raise the dead
- Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing
- Let not your heart be troubled
- Man shall not live by bread alone
- You are the salt of the earth
- Turn the other cheek
- He who is without sin, cast the first stone
- Oh, ye of little faith
- Live by the sword, die by the sword
- Go the extra mile
- Peace be with you

Not exactly scientific proof that the New Testament accurately reflects what took place during its time, but we would argue that when a world frequently quotes its text – some 2000 years later – that adds at least something to the credibility of the New Testament.

## Can the Supernatural Be Real?

Many people believe that what the Bible teaches is certainly worthy, but they just cannot endorse the “supernatural” occurrences that are claimed to have happened throughout it; and because they cannot endorse the supernatural, they claim the Bible itself isn't credible. Most of these people are “scientific naturalists” and tend to believe that “mother nature” is in charge of everything, and that if we do not have an answer for something, it is only because science hasn't figured it out yet. There are obviously mountains of both historical and current evidence supporting this scientific naturalist outlook which is why many have a bias against the supernatural. Simply put, some feel that if it doesn't exist in nature, and science cannot explain and replicate it, then it doesn't exist. It's fake, it didn't happen, it's not true, it's unreal – and the list goes on.

That is all well and good, and it is also very comforting; but it is also very limiting. For example, “scientific naturalism” does not explain how “mother nature” came about. Some will cite evolution, but evolution only explains the process of something, not the start of something. And what about miracles? They do happen. Surviving what should have been fatal accidents are common examples we all know about. Some of you may have even survived one. We cannot deny them or explain them. Most people just attribute such things to luck – but who invented luck? Oh, that's just what we call something we cannot explain. Hmmm? Sounds like the supernatural only called by a different name.

And this brings us to you, specifically. Have you ever, personally, had those moments when something terrible should have happened, but didn't? Those moments where you might have said, “Thank God I took a left instead of a right?” or “My God, I was supposed to be on that plane that crashed but at the last minute ....”. Or have you ever had good things happen to you that you just totally didn't expect? We are not talking about winning a lottery as that is just by chance. But winning two or three? Well, that is more than chance at play. Or being stuck in a problem and suddenly, out of nowhere, getting an inspiration that allows you to solve your problem? You really can't deny it can you?

And we would argue, saying “*But for the grace of God ...*” simply makes more sense than saying “*But for the role of scientific naturalism ...*”. Or, in the face of obvious miracles, simply saying “Thank you God” has more validity than saying “Thank you science”. Yes, miracles do happen,<sup>19</sup> and the supernatural does exist. The mere fact that one may not want to accept them does not invalidate them. Whether you believe in the occurrence of supernatural events is up to you, but we ask you to also consider that just maybe, the truly unexplainable is often God's best work. It is frequently on display in the Bible, and we contend, in most peoples lives even today.

## **Summary**

Consider – more than two billion self-professed followers, preserved scribed copies thousands of years old, supporting archeological findings, most often translated book, many fulfilled prophecies, consistent themes throughout, eyewitness testimony, first book ever printed using metal moveable type, and still being quoted 2,000 years later. Yes, we think the Bible is for real, and that your current version – if it is one of the mainstream versions – authentically represents what was originally written; and yes, the Bible represents what took place during its time, i.e., you can rely on the accuracy of the information presented. The Bible is not a hoax, it is not a conspiracy of old men collaborating to fool the world, and the printed copy you are reading today most assuredly reflects what was actually written centuries ago, and records what actually happened.

---

<sup>19</sup> We highly recommend Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for Miracles* and Craig S. Keener's voluminous work, *Miracles* for more information on just how prolific miracles are.



So, now the big question is, can you *believe* what it says; is it credible – or does it all have to be taken on faith? Or, as we will discover, are there parts or concepts that are definitely believable, and are there some parts or concepts which simply must be taken on faith? And, if the latter is true – and we think it is – what parts/concepts are reasonably believable, and which require faith?

#### 4. Is the Bible Believable and Credible?

We tell you right up front that not everything we read in the Bible is supported by direct scientific or forensic evidence. However, even without such support, some of those Bible parts will strike you as believable anyway simply because they either make sense or it just seems reasonable and logical to accept them. Nevertheless, there are parts of the Bible that we simply must accept on faith. As we explore the believability of the Bible, please keep this distinction in mind; and know, just because something cannot be proven with scientific or forensic evidence, doesn't mean it is fiction. It may just mean we either don't have enough information yet, or that it is truly something we simply have to accept on faith.

As you bear in mind these distinctions (what is fact, what is common sense, what is believable, and what requires faith), we also ask that you understand the inherent fallacy of trying to view the Creator of the universe through the eyes of humanity. Yes, there is no doubt that some of the Bible is "supernatural"; but when viewing the supernatural, we ask you to consider that while humanity is limited by language, and by its known dimensions, and by its current level of knowledge, God has no such limits. Jesus makes this quite clear in Matthew 19:26: **"And looking at them [His disciples] Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'"** The Prophet Isaiah also makes this clear in Isaiah 55:8-10:

***"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.'"***

There's one last thing to mention before we jump into what we think are key Biblical concepts that are believable and credible based on reasonableness, logic, and common sense, and then comparing them to those Biblical concepts we think need to be accepted on faith alone:

*Many Biblical Christians hold that one should accept the Bible on faith alone and not be concerned with its believability. If you are already knowledgeable about the Bible and have truly studied it, that is a reasonable position to take because once you know the Bible, all things become amazingly clear. But we presume our immediate audience is not comprised of those who already know the Bible, but rather those who are checking out whether to start a relationship with Jesus Christ and who most likely have had little previous connection with the Bible. If you are in this last group, we think you deserve as much supporting information as possible before jumping in to take everything on faith. Hopefully, the day will come when you know the Bible well enough that for you, your faith becomes more powerful than fact.*

Having acknowledged the Bible is "real" and not a fake, is "authentic" and not an inaccurate knock-off and is "reliable" so that what it says happened actually did happen, let's now look at some of the Biblical concepts that are foundational to having a right relationship with Christ. We will divide these essential Biblical concepts into two categories:

1. **Category One:** Those key Biblical concepts we can probably label as either factual, based on evidence, make sense, and/or appear to be reasonable, logical, and credible, and
2. **Category Two:** Expanded Biblical concepts that most likely need to be accepted on pure faith.

#### Biblical Concepts That Are Believable

**Category One: Essential Biblical concepts that we believe are factual, based on evidence, make sense, and/or appear to be reasonable, logical, and credible.**

1.	There is an unimaginable and incomprehensible power that created the universe as we know it
2.	Miracles happen that current science cannot explain
3.	The Jewish Law was based on roughly 600+ laws, including the Ten Commandments
4.	Prophets could predict the future
5.	Jesus Christ was a real person
6.	Jesus performed miracles
7.	Jesus selected 12 Disciples who became His Apostles
8.	Jesus was crucified on a cross

9.	Jesus was resurrected from the dead
10.	Humanity does bad things, and we have all been guilty of doing bad things
11.	There are behaviors that lead to problems and humanity is tempted by them
12.	There is a Christ-like lifestyle that when followed, results in positive things
13.	Jesus and His Apostles created a large following of believers here on earth
14.	We will all physically die

Let's begin with explaining why we think the 14 items listed above can be considered either factual, credible, reasonable, or logical enough to believe, or that they just make common sense.

1. **There is an unimaginable and incomprehensible power that created the universe as we know it:** That the universe exists (Creation) is a rather moot point – the evidence of a Creation is obviously undeniable.

However, with respect to Creation, the big question is who, not what. Even with all our current knowledge, thousands of years later, we still do not have evidentiary, “scientific” or “forensic” proof that explains the source of Creation. In fact, the only evidence we do have is the Bible. True, many scientists adhere to the “Big Bang” theory of creation, but this theory only postulates a “how”, not a “from whom”. Yes, we have scientific theories that get us close, but, unlike the Bible, these scientific theories still leave a lot of unanswered questions; and they change and often become obsolete over time (think Galileo and Copernicus). Here is an article excerpt from a story written by the brilliant scientist Stephen Hawking that proves our point on the subject that science still leaves us with mysteries:

*With Roger Penrose of Oxford University, I showed that if Albert Einstein's general theory of relativity is correct, then there would be a singularity, a point of infinite density and space-time curvature, where time has a beginning. The universe started off in the Big Bang and expanded quickly. This is called "inflation" and it was extremely rapid: the universe doubled in size many times in a tiny fraction of a second. Inflation made the universe very large, very smooth and very flat. However, it was not completely smooth: there were tiny variations from place to place. These variations eventually gave rise to galaxies, stars and solar systems. We owe our existence to these variations. If the early universe had been completely smooth, there would be no stars and so life could not have developed. We are the product of primordial quantum fluctuations. As will become clear, many huge mysteries remain. Still, we are steadily edging closer to answering the age-old questions: Where did we come from? And are we the only beings in the universe who can ask these questions? <sup>20</sup>*

This analysis is all well and good but notice two things: (1) the reliance on a “point of infinite density and space-time curvature”, and (2) the words “where time has a beginning”. Great. But who created this point of infinite density and space-time curvature in the first place? Who created time and why is it the only thing that has a beginning – what about everything else? Everything had to come from, or be caused by, a source, and this is the problem with scientific analysis – it theorizes a post-creation outcome but never a creation or causation behind that outcome. And even the great Stephen Hawking admits, many mysteries remain; unless, of course, you trust the Bible.

Some argue that well, the universe just started from “nothing”. However, as we will discover a bit later in this document, it was Sir Penrose himself, the associate Hawking mentioned above, who proved that such a beginning of the universe coming from nothing or just by chance is impossible (see page 26).

So, what would be a reasonable, believable and credible answer as to who, what, when and how? Given the sheer immensity and ultra-complex nature of the universe as it exists today, we think a rational person would easily conclude that there is a power or force of some kind out there that is just plain more powerful than we are. Something like, for example, mother nature. That would truly be a unimaginable force. Why unimaginable? Well, we can tell you that mother nature causes hurricanes, but we certainly cannot tell you exactly when or where. That's up to mother nature. So, we think believing in an unimaginable and incomprehensible power, call it what you will, is in fact a reasonable and common-sense belief. We may not be able to fully imagine God's power, or comprehend it, but we can certainly witness it. The Bible explains this in Romans 1:20 when the Apostle Paul explains why people should naturally believe in God: ***“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”*** The Apostle Paul was talking about the world around us, including the night skies filled with stars.

<sup>20</sup> This story by Stephen Hawking was originally published as the introduction of the New Scientist book, *The Origin of (Almost) Everything*. Read more: <https://www.newscientist.com/question/how-did-the-universe-begin/#ixzz6kOsbN1Fz>.

Psalm 19:1 also gives us a clear picture of God’s power and His works: *“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.”* On a dark night without the interference of city light, just look up at our Milky Way galaxy if you want a glimpse of God’s unimaginable and incomprehensible power. Now multiply our galaxy by two trillion (yes, trillion)<sup>21</sup> and you will arrive at how many galaxies are estimated to be in the universe – and you will have a good idea of God’s truly amazing, unimaginable, and incomprehensible power.

And we suggest that you not be taken in by science. Science is great, but it can only explain, measure, or assemble things. Even when armed with science, humanity cannot create from nothing – only God can. Take gravity for example. Science can explain it, but science did not create it. Newton may have discovered it, but he did not cause it. Also, as we have witnessed over the centuries, science can only explain things for the time being. The flat earth and the sun revolving around the earth are ancient and debunked scientific examples. Penrose proved the universe as we know it could not have started with a “Big Bang”, so there goes Hubble’s theory. And now, with molecular biology and our understanding of DNA and the nature of amino acid proteins, even Darwin’s theory of evolution has recently been debunked by Dr. Stephen Meyer and others.<sup>22</sup>

*With all due respect to Sir Penrose, he actually theorizes (1) that since it could not start from nothing, the universe is really a perpetually oscillating (repetitive) process of Big Bangs, expansions, and contractions that never had an actual beginning, and (2) each oscillation cycle lasts an ‘aeon’ (a term created by Sir Penrose to denote “however long it takes”). A truly interesting hypothesis. When asked by fellow mathematician and Christian apologist William Lane Craig, who commented that it sounded a bit like God’s work, Sir Penrose replied something to the effect of, “I won’t say you are wrong, it is just that as a scientist, I can’t prove God is behind it.” The thing to remember here is that God created science, science did not create God.*

*Still respectful of Sir Roger Penrose’s obvious brilliance, we have at least three issues with his theory of a perpetually oscillating universe: (1) His theory cannot tell us what aeon we happen to be in at the moment – is it the first aeon, the second, the fifth, etc., (2) His theory cannot tell us where we are even within our current aeon – are we in the beginning, the middle, close to the end, etc., [both implying that his theory is neither measurable nor predictable] and most importantly, (3) His theory completely ignores our earth and the source and development of the molecular complexity inherent in organizational mutations inhabiting our earth as identified by Meyer.*

Yes, we think it is reasonable to conclude that there is a force/power out there that is more powerful than we are.

2. **Miracles happen that current science cannot explain:** The fact that we cannot explain them doesn’t mean that miracles don’t happen. In reality, the fact that we cannot explain them is why we call them miracles. Some would argue that miracles are just accidents, but the big difference is that accidents almost always have an explanation whereas true miracles almost always do not.

But does it make common sense, or is it reasonable to believe, that miracles happen? We all have heard about people who have done heroic acts in an effort to save someone – like lifting cars to rescue someone trapped underneath. True, adrenalin may have helped, but picking up a car? Really? Or we all have undoubtedly heard of people surviving things they shouldn’t have; and if they happened and could not be explained, what we call them is not really important, is it?

So, is it reasonable and credible to believe that things do happen that are just inexplicable? We think so, and the overwhelming evidence for miracles presented in *The Case for Miracles* by Strobel and *Miracles* by Keener confirms this. We call them miracles, but you shouldn’t let labels get in the way of believing in what is possible.

3. **The Jewish Law was based on roughly 600+ laws, including the Ten Commandments:** Not only do archeological findings support the Old Testament writings about the Jewish “Law” as expressed in the first five books of the Bible written by Moses, but when we include the fact that some semblance of these laws is still being taught and practiced today by people of the Jewish faith, thousands of years later, we think it is quite reasonable to believe that these laws were, and are, in fact, what they claim to be.

---

<sup>21</sup> See the 2016 paper, “*THE EVOLUTION OF GALAXY NUMBER DENSITY AT  $Z < 8$  AND ITS IMPLICATIONS*” by Christopher J. Conselice, et. al., from the University of Nottingham, School of Physics and Astronomy.

<sup>22</sup> In an Uncommon Knowledge [Hoover Institution] presentation, Dr. Stephen Meyer, Director of the Center For Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute, points out that the odds of “useful” DNA proteins evolving on their own to make up the organizational mutations inherent in the history of the planet are 1 to the 10 trillion, trillion<sup>th</sup>. See Stephen Meyer’s theory of combinatorial inflation as outlined in his books *Darwin’s Doubt* and *Signature in the Cell*.

4. **Prophets could predict the future:** Declaring a prophesy, and then having it actually fulfilled, is a pretty amazing talent. Some would call it luck, and if it only happened once, we might agree. But if it happens often, we think it is safe to assume something more than luck is involved. And if it is a prophesy that is declared and then fulfilled hundreds or even thousands of years later, we might start to envision something supernatural at work. If it happens often, involves prophesies hundreds of years in the future – all of which come true, and one even perhaps to the day it was prophesied hundreds of years prior - well, we think we can reasonably conclude something supernatural is involved. Does the Bible have any of these? You bet it does, and we have an entire PDF document, *“Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus”*, dedicated to listing and describing 78 of them.

While Isaiah is probably the most prolific prophet of the Bible, we are going to share a prophesy from the prophet Daniel that we think may best illustrate the supernatural nature of Biblical prophesies. It comes from Daniel 9:25-26 when the Archangel Gabriel speaks to Daniel and tells him:

*“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it [Jerusalem] will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”* Note: In prophesies, the concept of “sevens” is often used to denote time and a weekday is often considered a year. So, seven weeks would be 49 (seven times seven) years, 62 weeks would equate to 434 (seven times 62) years, and their total would be 483 years. And note, we are dealing with the Hebrew calendar, not the Julian or Gregorian calendars.

Here are the historical events supporting this prophesy:

- Daniel made his prophecy in approximately 536 BC, some 79 years before the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued.
- The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued by the Persian King Artaxerxes on 3/26/457 BC.
- 483 years later, when Daniel’s prophesy predicts “until Messiah the Prince”, would be 26 AD. Jesus started His ministry in 26 AD and sometime shortly after the Passover in 26 AD, Jesus announced to the Samaritan woman at the well that the Messiah whom she seeks is He. *“The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am He.”* John 4:25-26.
- In his prophesy, Daniel also tells us that *after* the 483 years, thus *after* the Messiah arrives, He (the Messiah) will be *“cut off and have nothing”*. Christ was crucified approximately three and a half years after declaring Himself to be the Messiah.

In just one prophesy, issued over half a century earlier, Daniel, having been spoken to by the Archangel Gabriel, predicts to the year and almost to the month, the arrival of Jesus Christ as the Messiah and His subsequent crucifixion.

5. **Jesus Christ was a real person:** Are there any reliable documents outside the Bible that provide evidence that Jesus Christ existed? Yes, there are many. Flavius Josephus, a Palestinian aristocrat and military leader, wrote *Antiquities of the Jews*, which contains two references to Jesus. Also, Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman Senator and historian, wrote of the existence of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion in his book *Annals of Imperial Rome* (~93 AD). The Roman Governor Pliny the Younger also wrote about Jesus, as did the Roman historian Suetonius. Jesus is also mentioned in the *Babylonian Talmud*, as part of a collection of Jewish rabbinical writings compiled between approximately A.D. 175-475 by Abba Arika, Rav Ashi and Ravina II. In his history of the world (AD 221), Sextus Julius Africanus quotes historian Thallus (5 – 60AD) describing the crucifixion of Jesus and the unnatural events (the darkness and earthquake) that accompanied the crucifixion. Mara Bar-Serapion (after AD 70) and Phlegon (AD 140) are two other historian philosophers who wrote about Jesus and His crucifixion.

And it should be noted that in the early days of the 12 Apostles spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ (30 AD – 95 AD), no one is recorded to have argued against His existence, His Crucifixion or His resurrection. Specifically, in Peter’s sermon to the thousands attending the Feast of Pentecost (see Acts 2), no one disputes anything Peter says about Jesus being a man attested to by God through miracles and signs. It is clear that Jesus’ life, ministry, and miracles were well-known and accepted as historical fact by His contemporaries.

6. **Jesus performed miracles:** Aside from the eyewitness testimony of two of the Gospel writers (Matthew and John), we also have the historical document *Jewish Antiquities* mentioning Christ’s “surprising deeds” and the *Babylonian Talmud* describing Christ as performing deeds of “sorcery”. We think it is reasonable to conclude that these authors were actually referring to Jesus’ miracles.

One can also find corroborating “circumstantial” evidence in the fact that the religious leaders of the day feared Jesus enough to have Him crucified. Why the fear, as these were extremely powerful people? Yes, Jesus was teaching the masses a doctrine the religious leaders did not want spread, but why did the masses listen so intently to Jesus’ teachings? We think it is reasonable to believe it is because the masses had heard about, and sometimes actually witnessed, Jesus’ miracle healings and other supernatural feats.

And why did His 12 disciples follow Jesus for the three and a half years of His ministry, walking from town to town, which was not necessarily an easy feat back in those times? We think it was their belief that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, supported by the miracles they witnessed Him perform along with the wisdom and authority behind His teachings.

- 7. Jesus selected 12 disciples who became Apostles:** There are validated historical documents and other accountings of their travels, persecutions, imprisonments, and deaths that substantiate the existence of Christ’s twelve disciples all of whom, technically, became Apostles. We know them by name, we know roughly when they were born, and when and where they died and are buried. In some cases, we even know their spouses’ and their children’s names. Note: The term “Apostle” in ancient Greek means “one sent forth” – in this case, sent forth by Christ to spread His message to the nations. We use the term “technically” because there is some controversy over who the disciples turned Apostles were. While Judas Iscariot was certainly chosen by Jesus as a disciple, he certainly did not make a career of spreading Jesus’ teachings, and thus many are reluctant to think of Judas as an Apostle. Some want to include Paul as an Apostle as he was certainly chosen and sent by Jesus to spread the Gospel, but he was not one of the original twelve disciples. Also, while Matthias took the place of Judas Iscariot as a disciple, he was not officially chosen by Jesus so many do not regard him as an official Apostle.

All of Jesus’ Apostles have been given sainthood by the Catholic Church. Jesus’ lead Apostle, Peter, is buried under St. Peter’s Basilica, located at the foot of St. Peter’s Square in the Vatican. It is believed by some that Peter was the first Pope. Yes, we are talking about the same Peter, formerly named Simon, who was just a young fisherman when Jesus picked him to become a disciple.

- 8. Christ was crucified on a cross:** Many of the historical writings mentioned in #5 above also describe Christ’s crucifixion on a cross. In addition, we have the testimony of Christ’s disciples in their various writings that He was crucified on a cross, and we have the history of Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor for Judea, who oversaw Jesus’ trial and who sentenced Him to crucifixion. Lastly, given that the symbol of Christianity is, itself, a cross, we think it most reasonable to conclude that Christ was, in fact, crucified on a cross. Note: Some historical writers say that Christ was “hung”, but in the time of Christ, the term “hung” was synonymous with ‘crucified’.
- 9. Christ was resurrected from the dead:** Again, many of the historical writings noted in #5 above also mention Christ’s resurrection. These historical writings, along with the abrupt behavioral changes of the Apostles that led them to spend the remainder of their lives enduring incredible hardships – and in all but one instance, martyrdom in service to Christ – plus the fact that no one around at the time disputed Christ’s resurrection (except, of course, those religious leaders who felt threatened by Christ’s message and who sought His murder), make it reasonable to conclude that Christ was, indeed, resurrected from the dead. This reality is best summarized in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 by the Apostle Paul who was personally confronted by, and converted to spreading the Gospel by the resurrected Jesus Himself:

*“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep [died]; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”*

It should be noted that the Apostle Paul’s meeting with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus was also witnessed by others in Paul’s entourage.

- 10. Humanity does bad things, and we have all been guilty of doing bad things:** The Bible’s definition of sin goes well beyond such acts as murder, adultery, and theft, which are acts most people in non-violent communities who are raised with Christian values simply don’t do. But, unfortunately, sin (doing bad things) doesn’t stop with just these obviously horrific acts. The Bible tells us that lying and bearing false witness (accusing someone of something you



know they did not do) are also sins, as are some forms of anger, coveting another's property, and lust. Given that the Bible also defines these often-common acts as sinful behavior we think it is reasonable and credible to believe that, by and large, humanity does do "bad things" more frequently than we care to admit.

11. **There are behaviors that lead to problems and humanity is tempted by them:** Rare would be the adult person who has never been at least tempted to do something they know they should not do. Perhaps lying on social media, or skipping work or school to do something exciting, experimenting with drugs, etc. So yes, we think it is reasonable to believe that we are tempted to pursue certain behaviors that are not in our best interest.
12. **There is a Christ-like lifestyle, that when led, results in positive things:** Jesus summarized many of these positive lifestyles in His Sermon on the Mount and they include:
  - Being loving
  - Being pure of heart
  - Being gracious
  - Being grateful
  - Being forgiving
  - Be giving without notice
  - Being truthful
  - Being kind
  - Being a peacemaker
  - Being merciful
  - Being compassionate
  - Being generous
  - Being humble
  - Being gentle
  - Being faithful
  - Being of service

We hope that most people would not dispute the fact that some lifestyles, like those listed above, lead to better outcomes than other lifestyles.

13. **Jesus created an earthly kingdom of believers:** There are over two billion self-professed Christians in the world today, so we think this is hard evidence that Jesus and His Apostles were successful in creating a kingdom of believers.
14. **We will all physically die:** This is a fact beyond dispute.

Based on the information provided so far, we hope that we have succeeded in convincing you that the general concepts put forth in the Bible, like creation, a power greater than man, the existence of Jesus and His disciples, humanity's capacity for bad behavior, the notion that good behavior probably begets more desirable rewards than does bad behavior, the reality of miracles, and the large following of believers in Christ, are all valid concepts; and where not backed up by direct physical or forensic evidence, they either pass the common sense "smell test", or are at least reasonable and logical concepts to believe in.

## **5. What Does the Bible Teach that Requires Pure Faith?**

In the Category One table back on pages 17 and 18, we presented 14 essential Biblical concepts that we think are key to evaluating the credibility of the Bible. One by one, we presented the factual and/or highly credible evidence that we believe should allow you to feel comfortable believing in them. In the table below, we add Category Two which expands on the original 14 essential Biblical concepts. Because these expansions have no direct physical or forensic evidence to support them, other than what is written in the Bible, we suspect you will find they can most likely be believed only through faith.

We present these expansions of Biblical concepts this way so that you will have a better idea of exactly what the Bible requires you to accept on faith if, indeed, you want to have a genuine relationship with Christ. Please note: Because there may not be any direct external, physical or forensic evidence to support these expanded Biblical concepts does not make them any less essential.

We make a distinction between fact and faith because the need to have faith in one or more of the essential biblical concepts is often what drives people away from Christianity. Their thinking appears to be, if there isn't any factual evidence to prove it (other than what's written in the Bible), or it isn't something they find makes sense or is reasonable to believe in, then why should they have faith in it? If you have this mindset, you will need to overcome it if you want to have a faithful (true) life in Christ. Our whole goal in developing this website is to show you why your faith, when placed in Christ, is well warranted.

There is also something very important to know about faith – it rarely comes all at once. Faith often starts out as curiosity, and then, as questions get answered and curiosities get resolved, the *willingness* to have faith begins to grow. But know this: faith itself only happens when you let go of information as the reason for your belief.

Another thing to know about faith is that if you want it, you'll find it; if you don't, you won't. It's not up to knowledge, it's up to you. The Bible even makes this clear to us in numerous passages:

*"Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord -- for we walk [with Jesus] by faith, not by sight -- we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."* 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

*"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not see."* Hebrews 11:1

*"Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'" John 20:29*

What the Apostle Paul is trying to tell us in this passage is that it takes courage to have faith, and that we, as biblical Christians, would rather be at home with the Lord through our faith in Him, than be stuck with certainty in our own physical body. The value of what we have to know with certainty pales in comparison to what we can gain with faith. Proverbs 3:5 sums it up this way:

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."*

Even with this guidance and because we are exploring having a relationship with Christ, we still think it is wise to briefly explore the faith-based biblical concepts outlined below to discover why you might find it reasonable to have faith in them – because it isn't always "blind faith" the Bible asks for. Quite often, common sense just tells us it is reasonable to have the belief necessary to support our faith. The fact that we walk by faith and not by sight does not mean we are blind – it simply means we are willing to believe, even if we haven't yet seen the proof. Christ explains this in John 20:27-29 when appearing before His disciples the second time after His resurrection. He asks Thomas to examine His wounds. (Remember, Thomas was not there when the resurrected Jesus first appeared to His disciples, and Thomas told his fellow disciples that he would not believe they saw the resurrected Jesus until he could see the wounds himself.)

*"Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.'"*

## What Biblical Concepts Require Faith

Category One: Essential Biblical concepts that we believe are factual, based on evidence, make sense, and/or appear to be reasonable, logical & credible		Category Two: Expanded Biblical concepts that most likely will need to be accepted on pure faith
1.	There is an unimaginable and incomprehensible power that created the universe as we know it	There is one triune God: God the Father/Creator, and God the Son/Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit/Helper are the only manifestations of an unimaginable power and are one Deity
2.	Miracles happen that current science cannot explain	The Holy Spirit sources miracles
3.	The Jewish Law was based on roughly 600+ laws, including the Ten Commandments	Jesus summarized the Old Testament's Jewish Laws into two primary Commandments: Love your Lord God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. These form the foundation of a Christ-like life
4.	Prophets could predict the future	God has a plan for everyone and everything (Divine Design)
5.	Jesus Christ was a real person	Jesus Christ was conceived through the Holy Spirit, is the only begotten Son of God, and was God in the flesh
6.	Jesus performed miracles	Jesus had the Holy Spirit, could read people's minds and hearts and perform other miracles
7.	Jesus selected 12 disciples who became His Apostles	Jesus gave His Apostles the Holy Spirit to help them communicate His teachings to others; several of them wrote much of the New Testament
8.	Jesus was crucified on a cross	Christ's death, and His sinless blood sacrifice, was sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity once and forever

9.	Jesus was resurrected from the dead	<b>Christ's resurrection from the dead on the third day was a victory over death and proved eternal life is possible</b>
		<b>NOTE: #8 and #9 form the Gospel of Jesus Christ.</b>
10.	Humanity does bad things, and we are all guilty of doing bad things	<b>Adam and Eve, the origin of humanity, disobeyed God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and as a result, committed the "original sin". The wages of sin is spiritual as well as physical death and thus the forfeit of eternal life. As a result of their sin, Adam and Eve had to depart the Garden of Eden and later died physical deaths.</b>
11.	There are behaviors that lead to problems and humanity is tempted by them	<b>The temptation towards sin is a result of our sin nature and is encouraged by the physical world's sinful influences and by the devil and his demons.</b>
12.	There is a Christ-like lifestyle, that when followed, results in positive things	<b>Believing in Christ with a repentant, abiding, and enduring faith and following His teachings and keeping His commandments, brings us Fruit of the Holy Spirit</b>
13.	Jesus and His Apostles created a large following of believers here on earth	<b>Jesus will come to earth again and upon His second coming, He will establish His Kingdom</b>
14.	We will all physically die	<b>There is a heaven (God's kingdom) where those who believe in Jesus will spend eternity living a life that is sinless &amp; perfect. There is also an eternal existence in hell for those who don't trust in Jesus.</b>

We will go down the list of these faith-based essential biblical concepts outlined in the table above one by one, presenting first the factual/highly believable concept and then showing how the Bible expands on the concept to reveal something deeper or more abstract that we will probably need to accept on faith. We separate the two (fact and faith) with a “|” sign, and we highlight in bold green text what we need to have faith in. We then explain why we believe having such faith is warranted.

**1. There is an unimaginable and incomprehensible power that created the universe as we know it | That Creator is God. God the Father/Creator, and God the Son/Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit/Helper are the only manifestations of this unimaginable power and are one Deity.**

First, let's just talk about the use of the name God for describing the Creator. Later we'll discuss whether a divine being actually created the universe. Unfortunately, we have no proof, other than the Bible, that the Hebrew name for the Creator is YHWY (pronounced Yahweh). Muslims call the Creator Allah. They have no proof that this name is correct either. Just know that as Biblical Christians, we call the Creator God. If you are evaluating a relationship with Christ, we think it is wise not to let labels interfere with your willingness to believe. But here are some reasons why the name God would appropriately apply to the Creator.

Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, was written by Moses in Hebrew, and the name God used to describe Himself to Moses (in Hebrew) was YHWY, (which many scholars believe means “He Brings into Existence Whatever Exists” [Yahweh-Asher-Yahweh]). YHWY, in English, is translated as God. Allah, in English, means “the God”. So, this is why we, as Biblical Christians, are comfortable with *calling* the Creator God. If you have a problem with the name God, you might ask yourself what's really behind your discomfort. It probably is something other than an unwillingness to have faith.

Note: Yahweh is how the Hebrew letters for God (YHWY) is typically pronounced, and the English translation of those Hebrew letters produce “I AM”, or “I AM WHO I AM” or “I AM THAT I AM”. In the English translation of Exodus 3:13-15, God confirms this and tells Moses the name He is to be called:

*“Then Moses said to God, ‘Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you.” Now they may say to me, “What is His name?” What shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, “I AM has sent me to you.” God, furthermore, said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, “The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.” This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.’”*

The verb tense here is critical in defining the unimaginable “eternal” nature of God. God will never be an “I WAS” or an “I WILL BE”. Regardless of the timeframe, God is always in the present tense. Using the first- person present Hebrew verb for “to be” also explains how He is distinct from all other beings. He is the only self-existent eternal being. His existence is not dependent on anyone else's existence or causation.

The Bible also tells us that God has three forms which Biblical Christians call the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. God (as the Father/Creator) is introduced in the very first sentence of the Bible, the book of Genesis.

***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1***

God’s Spirit is introduced in the second sentence of the Bible.

***“The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” Genesis 1:2***

Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary and spoken of as the Son of God, is formally introduced by name in Matthew 1:20-21:

***“But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’” Matthew 1:20 – 21***

The belief that Jesus Christ was also “God in the flesh” is covered extensively throughout the Gospel of John – John being one of the 12 Apostles who walked with Jesus throughout His three plus year ministry. Here are some key verses that confirm this:

***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” John 1:1 – 2***

***“And the Word became flesh [Jesus], and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14***

***“For the Law was given through Moses; [but] grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He [Jesus] has explained Him.” John 1:17 – 18***

The Bible introduces the Holy Trinity in Mark 1:9 – 11 and in Matthew 28:18-20 (see also Luke 3:21 – 22):

***“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John [the Baptist] in the Jordan. Immediately coming up out of the water, He [Jesus] saw the heavens opening, and the [Holy] Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice [God] came out of the heavens: ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”***

***“And Jesus came up and spoke to them [His disciples], saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”***

The critical things to have faith in here are (1) that an unimaginable and incomprehensible power was required to create the universe, (2) that Biblical Christians refer to this unimaginable and incomprehensible power as God, and (3) that this unimaginable and incomprehensible power Biblical Christians call God exists through all three “persons” of the Holy Trinity: God the Father/Creator, God the Son/Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit/Spirit.

Note: While the Bible does not officially use the words unimaginable or incomprehensible to describe God’s power, the Bible does make clear that all things are possible for God.

***“And looking at them [His disciples] Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” (Matthew 19:26) See also Mark 10:27, Luke 1:37 and Luke 18:27***

We like the description “unimaginable and incomprehensible” because there is really no such power that we, as mortals, could imagine or comprehend that would come even close to accomplishing all that God is responsible for. The value in viewing God’s power as something humanity cannot even imagine makes it easier to believe the inexplicable. It also gets us out of the practice of trying to view God through our own eyes. Instead, we suggest trying to “see” God with our heart, not our head.

And now to the bigger question that requires faith: Was the universe created by a divine unimaginable power (irrespective of what you name it) or was it created merely by chance? Because Biblical Creation requires a Divine Design as opposed to an accidental occurrence (as in the Big Bang Theory), having faith in the Biblical explanation that God is responsible for Creation is, as you can imagine, controversial.

All other explanations of Creation, other than the Bible’s, suffer from the same “from scratch” problem – in their explanations, something always had to exist prior to the theories’ causation of Creation. For example, Hubble’s Big Bang Theory required a “hot molten mass” to exist before the Big Bang, and Hawking says creation required an “infinite mass”. No document or theorem, other than the Bible, can explain how Creation actually came into being from nothing before it.

Some will then argue that well, it was really all by chance and there is simply no “Divine Intelligence” behind Creation. We noted early in the document that Oxford University mathematical physicist and 2020 Nobel Prize winner in physics for his

work on black holes, Sir Roger Penrose, concluded otherwise. He calculated that the odds of the universe, as we know it today, being created by “chance” from nothing are: “1 part in 10 to the power of 10 to the power of 123, that is 1 followed by 10 to the 123rd power zeros (or  $10^{10^{123}}$  ).”<sup>23</sup> Penrose said this number is so large that if you put a zero on every particle in the universe, you wouldn’t have enough particles to represent a number that big or as he said “No where close”. In reality, Penrose’s calculations render the possibility of our universe being created by chance, from nothing, at zero. Penrose’s conclusions were echoed by Cambridge University astrophysicist and mathematician Fred Hoyle and the senior astronomer at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, Owen Gingerich.

Most would agree there are only three possible logical conclusions from Penrose’s study: (1) if Creation didn’t happen by chance, it had to happen by design, or (2) the universe is self-oscillating (it creates itself and then destroys itself, over and over again), or (3) if it didn’t happen by chance, it must have always existed. The last theory has been thoroughly debunked by scientists, and the other two, well, they align with Scripture (Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 21:1-8).

Also remember, on the subject of evolution, we pointed out in the footnote on page 19 that according to Dr. Stephen Meyer, the odds of “useful” DNA proteins evolving on their own to make up the organizational mutations inherent in the history of the planet are 1 to the 10 trillion, trillion, trillion<sup>th</sup>. In other words, evolution, as described by Darwin, is impossible.

Or you can simply believe in what Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 19:26: **“With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”** For this reason, we actually developed a separate document, **“Scripture and Science – How Well Do They Relate?”**, to explain the logic – and yes, the science – behind Biblical Creation.

## 2. **Miracles happen that current science cannot explain. | The Holy Spirit sources miracles.**

As mentioned, the Bible makes it clear that nothing is impossible for God, and this characteristic applies to all three roles or persons of the Holy Trinity. That said, things that are miracles to us are commonplace to God whose power is unimaginable and incomprehensible.

And how does God perform miracles? Through His Holy Spirit. Why the Holy Spirit? Because God’s unimaginable power is simply too much to be physically witnessed in person by man. Would you really want to be sitting next to an infinite power that can create suns and galaxies at will? Probably not. By this, we do not mean to imply that the powers of God the Father/Creator are any more powerful than the powers of God the Holy Spirit. As we mentioned above, we believe the same powers are identical in all three persons of the Holy Trinity, but their roles are different. God has a presence through His Holy Spirit, and it is through His Holy Spirit that God performs miracles. Jesus confirms this as follows:

**“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”** John 14:26

This is another reason we can believe the Gospel accounts and believe the Bible is truly the word of God – because the Holy Spirit helped the disciples remember everything Jesus had spoken to them. Another example of the Holy Spirit performing miracles is found in Mark 13:11 when Jesus reassures His Apostles:

**“When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit.”**

We suspect, if you are honest with yourself, you will acknowledge having felt, at times in your life, God’s Holy Spirit working on your behalf. It is those instances where things happen that you simply can’t explain. Imagine a life where you can always count on the presence of the Holy Spirit to be there to take care of you. Is that a concept worth having faith in?<sup>24</sup>

## 3. **The Jewish Law was based on roughly 600+ laws, including the Ten Commandments | Jesus summarized the Old Testament’s Jewish Laws into two Commandments: Loving God and loving your neighbor as yourself. These form the foundation of a Christ-righteous life.**

The Old Testament had approximately 613 laws<sup>25</sup> (civil, moral and ceremonial) that proper Jewish brethren needed to follow to demonstrate their obedience and faith in God. The fact that the Jewish faith still honors many of these laws thousands of years later is pretty strong evidence of their existence.

The Bible asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that Jesus summarized these laws into only two. Mark 12:28-31 tells us: **“One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, ‘What commandment is the foremost of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The foremost is, “HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU**

<sup>23</sup> The Emperor’s New Mind, pg. 341-344

<sup>24</sup> If you still have difficulty believing in miracles, please read **The Case for Miracles** by Lee Strobel and **Miracles** by Craig Keener

<sup>25</sup> See Rabbi Simlai’s sermon recorded in Talmud **Makkot** 23b in the 3rd century CE.



**SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”**  
**The second is this, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”**

Why is it reasonable to believe Jesus made it simpler for people to follow God using only two commandments as opposed to being burdened with having to follow 600+ laws? It goes without saying that only having to follow two commandments makes being righteous far simpler, but there is another more important reason. While Jesus firmly believed the Jewish Law as given by God to Moses and others must stand (“**Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.**” Matthew 5:17), He also felt that the religious leaders of the day had distorted many of these laws to suit their own needs and beliefs. In Matthew 15:9, Jesus tells the religious leaders:

**“You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men’.”**

Jesus came to teach us how to better follow God and not be spiritually governed by the precepts of man.

#### **4. Prophets could predict the future | God has a plan for everyone and everything (Divine Design).**

We have already shown that Biblical prophets successfully prophesied future events (also see our PDF: *“Biblical Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus”*). As a corollary, the Bible asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that God not only knows the future, but that He also created that future – and thus has a plan for everyone and everything. Why is this a reasonable concept to believe? Well, if you believe that God created everything and knows all there is to know (His power being unimaginable and incomprehensible), then He also knows the future and what is going to happen, because He created that future. If God created what is going to happen in the future, then simple logic tells us He must have a plan for everything and a purpose for everybody. Remember, He is the Creator of all things and thus is also the author of our destiny. We should also remember, mankind tends to think from moment to moment while God sees things from beginning to end.

Jesus, having the powers of God, demonstrated that He, too, had the ability to know the future. Jesus confirms this to John in Revelation 21:6: **“Then He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.’”** There were numerous times during His ministry that Jesus told people He could not do certain things because the actions would betray who He really is. Here is an example of one of Jesus’ miracles almost everyone has at least heard about – turning water into wine. But notice too what Jesus says when first asked to take care of the problem:

**“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.’” John 2:1 – 4**

Jesus is telling His mother that He should not yet be performing miracles because demonstrating such powers will disclose too soon who He is (the Son of God, born of the Holy Spirit, and humanity’s Savior), and would disrupt the crucifixion timeline. Jesus knows the time to perform miracles will come, but, because it is His mother making the request, and only His disciples and His mother will know of the miracle, He performs the miracle anyway, thereby honoring one of God’s commandments (honor your mother and father) because He had yet to establish His own two commandments.

Jesus also predicts, among other things, His own death; and not only His death but also when, where and how it will happen. Humans have no capacity to do this. As Jesus confirms in Luke 13:31-33:

**“Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, ‘Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You.’ And He said to them, ‘Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal. Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next day; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.’”**

And Jesus also confirms in Matthew 25:1 –2:

**“When Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.’”**

Why is it important that we know Jesus has the power to know and predict the future? Because if Jesus knows the future, so does God. And if God knows the future, He knows what is in store for us. Why? Because He is the one who planned it. How do we know this? Jesus tells us in Luke 22:42:

**“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”**

Here are a few other Bible verses that tell us God has a plan for us:

**“Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.” (Proverbs 19:21)**

**“The Lord of hosts has sworn: ‘As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.’” (Isaiah 14:24)**

**“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, when he delights in his way.” (Psalm 37:23-24)**

And how do we know that God knows us intimately enough to also have a purpose for us? Matthew 10:30–31 tells us:

***“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear; you are more valuable (to God) than many sparrows.”***

## 5. **Jesus Christ was a real person | Jesus Christ was conceived through the Holy Spirit, is the only begotten Son of God, and was God in the flesh.**

In addition to Luke 1:31 (quoted above), Matthew also tells us in 1:18 – 25:

***“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.’ Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet [Isaiah 7:14]: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us.’ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.”*** (Jesus translated means Savior).

With regard to being the only begotten Son of God, Jesus tells us in John 3:16:

***“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”***

Note: The use of the term “begotten” is important here. To beget means to “procreate as father” with the offspring having the same characteristics of the father. Used here it means God-fathered, through the Holy Spirit, a mirror image of Himself in the flesh. This is confirmed again in Luke 1:35:

***“The angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.’”***

Why does common sense allow us to conclude that Jesus was also God, but in the flesh? Here are three common sense conclusions why we think it makes sense to believe Jesus was, indeed, the visible representation of the invisible God:

- a) Jesus either had to have God’s powers or at least be familiar with them in order to perform His miracles – especially raising the dead not once but three times (Lazarus, Jairus’ daughter, and the son of the Widow of Nain).
- b) Through His crucifixion on the cross, Jesus’ death, as a *sinless* blood sacrifice, was sufficient to pay the penalty for our sins and satisfy God’s wrath against mankind for having sinned. He could not have been any ordinary man. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement holds that only the blood sacrifice of a sinless person would be sufficient to pay for all of humanity’s sins. In other words, a sinful being would necessarily have to pay for his own sins first and thus could not also be able to pay the penalty for others’ sins. Only God the Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit fit the criteria of being sinless.
- c) Jesus, Himself, was resurrected from the dead. Only someone with the power of God could have defeated death. But this presents us with an interesting question. Did Jesus, the Son of God – who had all the powers of the Father – resurrect Himself, or did God the Father resurrect His Son? Acts 2:22-24 tells us that God the Father resurrected His Son Jesus from the dead:

***“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him [Jesus] to be held in its power.”***

But John 2:19 may tell us otherwise: ***“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’”***

We believe in John 2:19 Jesus was speaking metaphorically about His own body (temple) and foreshadowing His resurrection (in three days I will raise it – My body – up).

For some, this might represent a contradiction, but not if you fully understand the nature of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is a plurality of persons with three separate centers of will, intellect and emotions. But the attributes of power are identical in all three persons of the Holy Trinity. The Bible, being God’s Word, is always the truth and never contradicts itself. We think where people often get confused is they are trapped into a singularity thinking of Jesus Christ. In understanding Jesus, it might help to think in terms of the man Jesus (who was of the flesh) and the God Jesus (who is of the Spirit).

We believe that Jesus, by His choice, was entirely dependent on the Father and the Holy Spirit for all the miracles He did. Having emptied Himself of His Godly powers to become a man, and not making use of His own divine powers as the Son

of God, He demonstrated what a perfect man could do when submitting to, and being empowered by, the other persons of the Holy Trinity.

## 6. Jesus performed miracles | Jesus had the Holy Spirit, could read people's minds and hearts and perform other miracles.

The Bible asks us to believe that Jesus also had God's unimaginable powers, so telepathy, healing the sick, or raising the dead would not be hard for Jesus. This belief would also be consistent with Jesus being God's only begotten Son, being part of the Holy Trinity, and possessing the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1 confirms this (emphasis added):

*"Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness."*

Jesus acknowledges He has the Holy Spirit in Mark 2:8 when He is able to discern what people are thinking and feeling in their hearts (emphasis added):

*"Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, 'Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?'"*

That Jesus could perform miracles is also confirmed by Nicodemus, a documented and highly regarded religious leader and member of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council), as told in John 3:1-2:

*"Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, 'Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.'"*

In addition to the eyewitness accounts from the Gospels, and from the writings of the non-biblical historians previously mentioned, simple rational deduction can confirm that Jesus performed miracles. Common sense tells us that the size of Jesus' following would increase as word of His miraculous healings spread throughout the land, and this is exactly what happened. Later in His ministry, as Jesus went from town to town, people not only showed up to hear His teachings, but they also would immediately bring their sick to Him once word went out that He was in the area.

Common sense also tells us that if Jesus had not performed miracles, the abject fear of Jesus held by the Pharisees and Sadducees (the two main groups of religious leaders of the day) would have been unwarranted. Instead, their fear was so intense they bribed one of Jesus' disciples with 30 pieces of silver to betray His whereabouts so they could capture and crucify Him. Even when Pontius Pilate could find no guilt in Jesus, the Pharisees and Sadducees still lead the crowds calling for Jesus' crucifixion. They were more afraid of Jesus than they were of their own Roman Governor. Why would that be if it were not for Jesus having proven Himself to be God through performing His miracles?

## 7. Jesus Selected 12 Disciples Who Became Apostles | Jesus gave His Apostles the Holy Spirit to help them communicate His teachings to others; two of them [Matthew and John] wrote Gospels.

Given that most of Jesus' 12 disciples spent decades after Jesus' death and resurrection traveling throughout Israel, Syria, Asia Minor (Turkey), Greece, Italy and even India<sup>26</sup> spreading His Gospel, it is widely understood that the existence of the 12 Apostles is accepted.

But the Bible also asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that the 12 disciples were given the Holy Spirit, first from Jesus (John 20:22), and then they were filled with the Holy Spirit at the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

*"And when He [Jesus] had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"*

*"When the day of Pentecost had come, they [the 12 Apostles] were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance."*

The fact that Christianity now has over two billion followers supports not only the existence of the original twelve Apostles, but also their being led by the Holy Spirit. Also, as previously mentioned, it was the Holy Spirit who helped the disciples remember what Jesus had taught them so that they could not only spread His teachings successfully but also so they could write about them accurately. The Council of Laodicea also confirms this by having included (except for the Book of Revelation) the writings of the Apostles and other followers of Jesus in the original Bible compilation.

## 8. Jesus was crucified on the cross | Christ's death, and His sinless blood sacrifice, was sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity once and forever.

As previously pointed out, we have reasonably accepted evidentiary proof that Christ was crucified. However, the Bible also asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that Christ's death on the cross paid the penalty for our sins once and forever. Is

---

<sup>26</sup> It is thought that Thomas reached and was martyred in Myanpore, India.

such a belief reasonable? Since it is fundamental to Christianity, let's examine what elements are in play that support belief. Here are our suggestions on what you need to believe in to support the belief that Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins.

- God, or some Creative Force, had to exist and have unimaginable powers** – This makes sense as our universe does exist, and the possibility that its existence came into being by chance is impossible, so we checked this box.
- Mankind sins** – This is all too obvious, so we checked this box.
- Jesus Christ had to exist** – In addition to eyewitness testimony, respected, non-biblical Historians and even sworn enemies of Jesus (like the Jews who wrote the Talmud), confirm that Jesus was real, so we checked this box.
- Christ performed miracles that required God-like powers** – Eyewitnesses testified to it, no one denied it at the time, and later, non-biblical historians referenced it. We also know that miracles do happen, so we checked this box.
- Blood sacrifices had to be made for sins to be forgiven** – Hebrews 9:22 tells us *“And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* However, relying solely on Scripture to prove that a blood sacrifice cleanses sins is a circular reference. Even though it was common practice of the day, and the shedding of blood could easily mean death, common practice of something isn't evidence or proof, so we left this box unchecked.
- Because He is a member of the Holy Trinity and thus was sinless, Jesus' blood sacrifice through crucifixion was sufficient “substitutionary atonement” to pay the penalty for humanity's sins.** Because we have eyewitness testimony that Jesus made it clear to His Apostles on numerous occasions that His death was to be for the forgiveness of our sins (see Matthew 26:28 and Luke 24:46-47); and because we have Old Testament prophecies confirming that the Messiah would come to forgive us our sins (see Daniel 9:24-26 and Isaiah 53:10-12); and because we have non-biblical historians who confirm (a) Jesus' existence, (b) His performance of miracles, and (c) His death by crucifixion – we checked this box as making sense. We think it is quite logical to conclude that having an unimaginable power such as God – as Jesus – die on the cross, in the flesh and as a sinless being, would certainly have the impact necessary to pay the penalty for mankind's sins. If God kicked us out of heaven for sinning, He certainly can open the door to welcome us back into heaven by forgiving our sins through the death of His Son. Jesus said so in His last words:

*“Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”* John 19:30

Biblical scholars agree that Jesus' last words mean that because He died for us, no more blood sacrifices would be required for the forgiveness of sins. It is also helpful to remember the New Testament was written in Greek. The original Bible verse used the Greek word *“tetelestai”*, which in English translates into *“It is finished”*. *Tetelestai* was also the Greek accounting term for *“paid in full.”* With His last words, Jesus is telling us that with His death on the cross, mankind's debt to God for sinning is *“paid in full”*.

- Christ's crucifixion and His sinless blood sacrifice paid the penalty for our sins once and forever.** Because He is God in the flesh, Jesus has the nature of being eternal. Thus, His payment for our sins will last forever. So, we also checked this box.

## 9. **Christ was resurrected from the dead | Christ's resurrection in the flesh on the third day proved eternal life is possible.**

While there are at least some non-biblical historical writings that confirm Jesus' resurrection, we think the eyewitness testimony, coupled with the powerful behavioral changes of the Apostles – especially their willingness to die to spread the news of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection – makes a powerful case for believing in the resurrection of Jesus. What the Bible asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – is that Jesus, having been resurrected in the flesh – and not as a spirit – proves that eternal life can be a reality for all of us. Note: Jesus dying to forgive us our sins and His resurrection to prove the possibility of life everlasting (eternal life) is the *“good news”* of His Gospel (remember - in Greek, *Gospel* means *“good news”*).

The resurrected Jesus, in the flesh, appeared to many people. This includes once to Mary Magdalene and two other women (Joanna and Mary); three times to all but two of His twelve Apostles (He appeared to Thomas only twice and to Paul only once); once to His brother James; once to Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus; and lastly, to a crowd of 500. The Apostle Paul confirms much of this in 1 Corinthians 15:4-8:

*“And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep [died]; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.”*

Note: Paul is telling us that many of those who saw the resurrected Jesus were still alive some 25 years later when he wrote 1 Corinthians in 55 AD. We think it is reasonable to conclude that if Jesus had not been resurrected, some of those whom Paul is referring to in his letter to the Corinthians as having witnessed the resurrected Jesus would have blown the whistle on what would have been a monumental inaccuracy.

We, of course, have no physical or forensic proof that eternal life exists other than (1) what is written and promised in the Bible, and (2) what many have shared publicly about dying, witnessing the afterlife, and being brought back to life. The reality of eternal life is something that, for the most part, must be taken on faith. But because the Bible itself is worthy of your trust, we think you should not ignore the possibility of eternal life simply because it requires faith. Said differently, would you rather believe in eternal life and be wrong and risk nothing, or not believe in it and be wrong and risk your access to eternal life? The consequences of your choice couldn't be greater.

**10. Humanity does bad things, and we have all been guilty of doing bad things | Adam and Eve, the origin of humanity, disobeyed God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and as a result, committed the "original sin". The wages of sin is physical and spiritual death (see Romans 6:23) and thus the forfeit of eternal life.<sup>27</sup>**

Again, it is pretty evident that humanity is capable of bad behavior. Unfortunately, there is plenty evidence of this. In the Bible, we are asked to believe – as a matter of faith – that “bad behavior” and “sin” are synonymous, and that God's kingdom (being perfect) cannot abide sinful behavior. And, as was pointed out above, the Bible asks us to believe that God made Adam and Eve in His sinless image. So, when Adam and Eve violated God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, they not only sinned, but having sinned, they also forfeited eternal life through a spiritual death:

*“From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” Genesis 2:16 –17*

Having sinned, Adam and Eve had to be cast out of the Garden of Eden and later died. Genesis 3:22-3:24 confirms this:

*“Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ –therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

We believe that God is telling us that once we know what is Good, we might take from the tree of life and live forever, and once we know what is Evil, we might sin – (and God is also telling us that we can have one or the other, but not both).

**11. There are behaviors that lead to problems and humanity is tempted by them | The temptation towards sin is fostered by the physical world and the sinful nature of our physical flesh, aided by unholy spirits.**

Again, there is probably little doubt that, as humans, we are tempted by certain sinful behaviors. We won't list them as we suspect you already know, and have been tempted by, at least one of them. If you don't think you have, just know that lust, lying, coveting, and some types of anger are considered by the Bible to be sins.

In 1 John 2:15-16, the Bible tells us that sinful behavior is sourced by both our physical world and by the sinful nature of our physical flesh;

*“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”*

The Bible asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that our temptations are aided by unholy spirits which are commanded by Satan, and that, led by Satan's deception, Adam and Eve's willingness to disobey God became the source for humanity's willingness to sin, i.e., our sinful nature, which is passed on from generation to generation. This concept goes all the way back to Genesis which explains how the serpent - Satan - deceived Eve into eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, leading to Adam's commission of the first (“Original”) sin” (see Genesis 3:1 – 3:13).

We strongly suspect you have no problem knowing and believing that the history of humanity is littered with sin or bad behavior. So, the question at issue here is not does such behavior happen, but rather, what sources this behavior? Is human nature just inherently sinful, or is it subject to an external influence that makes it so? Or is it both? Put another

---

<sup>27</sup> Remember, when we chose to genuinely believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we will gain a new spiritual life that will last for eternity and which will transcend our physical death.



way, if there was no temptation to sin, would we still sin? You have to ask yourself, if there hadn't been a serpent, would there have been the sin?

We believe common sense tells us that we would not choose to sin absent temptation. Why? Because we all know that sinful behavior has painful consequences, and absent a mental illness, it is most unlikely that anyone would ever voluntarily choose pain over peace. But the Word of God, and not logic, is the final authority here. In our physical, sin-natured world, we are not of the spirit, but of the flesh; hence, we are sinful, not by exception but by nature. Two verses from Romans make this clear:

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* Romans 3:23  
*“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”* Romans 7:14

This doesn't mean that sin is not our fault – don't think that for a second. Giving into temptation, while it may be consistent with human nature, is still a choice – our choice. Satan is a deceiver, not a doer. Temptation will always be there – such is Satan's role – but falling prey to our sin nature and the world's physical influences, and sinning as a result, will always be our choice. Throughout the Bible, God and Jesus Christ make it clear that our choice has either positive or negative consequences.

That temptation is real and leads to sin is further evidenced by the order of the Lord's Prayer as told to us by Jesus in Matthew 6:13: **“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”**

But remember this: Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, not to get rid of temptation. And as stated in 1 John 1:9, God stands ready to continue pardoning our sins if we seek His forgiveness.

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Perhaps James 4:7 says it best:

*“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

(If you still have an issue believing in the existence of evil spirits, and their goal of tempting you with the “pleasures” of sin to separate you from God, we highly recommend you read **Bondage Breaker** by Neil Anderson).

## **12. There is a Christ-like lifestyle, that when followed, results in positive things | Believing in Christ with a abiding, enduring and repentant faith brings you the Holy Spirit.**

In Western cultures, few would dispute that leading a thoughtful, caring and healthy life will bring positive results.

The Bible also asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – that believing in Jesus will bring us the Holy Spirit, (and thus Fruit of the Holy Spirit). As recorded by Luke in Acts 2:38, the Apostle Peter said:

*“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is defined in Galatians 5:22 – 23:

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*

So why is it reasonable to believe that having an abiding, enduring, and repentant faith in Jesus will bring you the fruit of the Holy Spirit? The answer lies in what Jesus stood for, what He practiced, and what He preached:

- His two primary commandments that He wants us to keep are centered on love.
- He was known as the Prince of Peace.
- He brought joy to those He healed and was always kind to those in need.
- Being sinless, He was the epitome of goodness.
- He welcomed and taught to adults the faithfulness and obedience of children.
- He was patient with His disciples who seemed often to doubt.
- As for self-control, although He had the powers of God, He allowed His own crucifixion, letting God's will be done, instead of His own.

Call it what you will, but we think it is most reasonable to conclude that if you decide to believe in Jesus and model yourself after what He stands for, seek His righteousness, and keep His commandments, your repentant behavior will result in a life filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, as these are the very things Jesus was known for and stood for. James 2:18 summarizes this concept quite well:

*“But someone may well say, ‘You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.’”*

James is telling us that when we have faith in Christ and believe in Him, we will then behave like Him as well and will produce good works accordingly. On the contrary, good works alone are just good works – and it is faith that saves, not good works.

### 13. Jesus Created an Earthly Kingdom of Believers | His Second Kingdom Will Be Even Bigger.

With over two billion current, self-professed followers of Christ, the first part of this statement is obviously true. The second part of this statement – what the Bible asks us to believe as a matter of faith – is a bit more complicated and has many different steps in its fulfillment. What follows is a summary and simplification of the creation of Christ's second Kingdom, also referred to as the Millennial (one thousand year) Kingdom.

The Bible tells us that Christ's Millennial Kingdom will be created on Earth and will consist of three groups of people:<sup>28</sup>

1. Believers in Christ who were taken into the clouds during the Rapture of the Church and who are brought back to earth in their now imperishable bodies. This group includes those who "died in Christ" prior to the Rapture (i.e., those who had believed in Christ following His Resurrection and had since died) and those believers still living at the time of the Rapture.
2. The "Faithful" (also referred to as Saints) who died during the Old Testament times and prior to Christ's crucifixion, and thus who had no opportunity to know of Christ other than through Old Testament prophecies.
3. The people who survive the massive persecutions during the seven years of Tribulation, the Battle of Armageddon, and the Judgement of Nations. This group will consist of those who were not believers at the Rapture (or were born after the Rapture), but who, after the Rapture, repented and come to Jesus as believers.

Because it includes people whose lives date as far back as Noah and up to and including an unknown date into the future, it is logical to conclude that Christ's Millennial Kingdom will contain far more people than are alive today, professing to be Christians.

Obviously, since the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom has not yet occurred, there can be no physical evidence of it. So, all we have to examine is Biblical Scripture prophecy regarding the "End Times" and the creation of Christ's Millennial Kingdom; and there is plenty of it, oddly enough, in both the Old and New Testaments.

The last book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation (written by the Apostle John, who most likely spent the most time directly with Jesus), provides great detail on what we can expect during the "End Times", and it was told to John by Jesus in a dream. Because of its complexity and rather powerful content, we are creating a separate PDF document "End Time Events and Supporting Scripture References" that will be published at a later date.

Now, while there is no physical evidence of the second coming yet, we think it is reasonable to conclude that if you believe having faith in Christ brings eternal life, then wouldn't it naturally – and logically – follow that someone needs to be there at some point to judge whether your belief was genuine and authentic versus fake and for show? If you are not to be judged, why bother to be genuine? Another thing to bear in mind is that since the first coming of Christ was both prophesied and fulfilled, is there any reason to think the prophesied Second Coming of Christ won't be fulfilled as well?

### 14. We all will physically die | There is a heaven (God's kingdom) for those who believe in Jesus, and an eternal existence in hell for those who don't.

We all know we are going to physically die at some point; with that there should be no quarrel. Now, why not save the best for last? What the Bible also asks us to believe – as a matter of faith – is that our physical death (on earth) is not the end of our being, and while our "physical life" on earth is temporary, we all will have a spiritual life/existence that lasts for eternity.

For Biblical Christians, those who have an enduring, abiding and repentant faith in Jesus Christ and His Gospel, and who also believe in Jesus Christ as their sole and only access to the Father, are assured of an eternal life in heaven.

***"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" John 14:6***

***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.'" John 3:16***

From the Bible, we learn that all humans will enter eternity. The only question is where we will spend it. The two choices are either living forever in the Kingdom of God (heaven) with Jesus Christ as noted above or existing forever in the Lake of Fire (hell) with Satan. Here is an example of what the Bible tells us:

***"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the***

---

<sup>28</sup> See *The Footsteps of the Messiah* by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Revised Edition.

**bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 13:47-50**

**“For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.” 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10**

**“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:11-15**

## **So Where Are Heaven and Hell?**

The Bible asks us to believe in – as a matter of faith – the existence of both heaven and hell. So, it would be natural to ask, okay, if you want me to believe in them, can you tell me where they are located? If you are only looking for physical addresses, then no, we can't. But, if you are looking for something not so concrete to believe in, then yes, we think we can. Here is what we know from Scripture, and as you can imagine, it is a complex subject. We also cover this topic in more detail in our PDF document, *“Where Are Heaven and Hell?”*.

It is a complex subject because it depends on both location and timing. By location, we mean which heaven are you referring to: the “heavens” which God created on the first day; the “heaven” where God resides; the “heaven” where we go when we die prior to Christ's Millennial Kingdom; the kingdom of heaven which we believe is also Christ's Millennial Kingdom; or the new heaven God creates at the end of His Son's Millennial Kingdom? With respect to timing, we are talking about four possible time periods: (1) for those who died prior to Christ's crucifixion, (2) those who died after Christ's crucifixion and up to the Rapture, (3) those who died during Tribulation, and (4) those mortals who died during Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Fortunately for us, hell only has two locations and two timeframes, so we will deal with them first. The two locations are Hades (also referred to in the Bible as Sheol) and the Lake of Fire; the two timeframes are (1) up to the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, and (2) after Christ's Millennial Kingdom. Hades/Sheol is where those who were not faithful to God's Law, and those who had the opportunity to believe in Christ and chose not to, will go prior to the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. The Lake of Fire is where, at the end of Christ's Millennial Kingdom, everyone who is in Hades/Sheol gets cast for eternity. Regardless of where or when, hell is a place you do not want to find yourself.

With regard to which heaven and when, let's keep it simple and just focus on you, i.e., where do you go if you are alive now and die between now and before the Rapture of the Church, and have chosen to genuinely believe in Christ? Let's look at the conversation between Jesus and the thief on the cross:

***“And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man [Jesus] has done nothing wrong. And he was saying, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!’ And He [Jesus] said to him, ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’” Luke 23:41-43***

Because the Bible does not tell us exactly where Paradise is, heaven is something – at least for now – we have to accept with faith. Fortunately, there is a great Proverb from the Bible to help us with this: ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.” Proverbs 3:5-8.*** Another Bible verse lets us know that what we don't know now, will be revealed at the appropriate time: ***“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5*** (emphasis added). Simply put, yes, there is a heaven, and we will know of its location when the time comes for us to know.

We fully understand that for some, this may not be good enough. If you are in this group, here is something you may want to think about. If Jesus is wrong, then we are all in the same boat regardless of our beliefs; but if Jesus is right, what's your Plan B

if you choose not to believe in Him? When your best-case scenario is no better than a believer's worst case scenario, you might want to consider reevaluating your position.

The truth is, we simply do not have a physical address for heaven – at least not yet. This is why Heaven is probably the biggest “concept” that the Bible asks us to take on faith. First, outside of the Bible, we have no indisputable evidence of heaven. Yes, there are stories of people claiming to have died, seen heaven and then been miraculously brought back to physical life. As Biblical Christians, we certainly believe such things are possible. But, until you have become familiar with the Bible and accept it as truly the Word of God, the reality of heaven is something you will simply need to accept on faith. And what is important in this context is not that you know where heaven is, but rather that you (a) believe it exists, (b) decide it is where you want to spend eternity, and (3) take the necessary steps to assure your place in it. Should you believe in heaven? Ask yourself this simple question to find out: Would your life be better off believing there is a heaven and that you have a place in it? We thought so.

### **Summary**

After reviewing these expanded Biblical concepts, if you find that you simply cannot believe in them (i.e., are unwilling to accept them on faith), it may just be you aren't ready to be there yet. We encourage you to continue exploring who Christ is and what He stands for, as the benefits of having a relationship with Him are simply too life-altering to abandon too quickly.

## **6. Does the Bible Say What I Think it Says?**

At first blush, this question may seem rather odd; but remember, when discussing the Bible, we are talking about languages, colloquial expressions, and habits that existed thousands of years ago. It is possible that, on occasion, something might have gotten lost in the translation, as they say? Here is an example of why this last question is important. In Luke 14:26, Jesus tells the crowds gathered around Him:

***“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple’.”***

Really? Hate? Jesus could not possibly have meant that – it is the exact opposite of His teachings and completely inconsistent with His second commandment. Yet, there it is, in the Bible, in black and white (or red if you have a red-lined Bible).

For those who seek to disprove the Bible, they will latch onto statements like Luke 14:26 and beat you over the head with them. We suggest you take a different perspective. If you run across something in the Bible that just doesn't make sense, we suggest you start with a perspective of: “Hmm, what am I missing here? There is something I must not understand.” We hope that you will take this perspective because if the choice is between our understanding being wrong, or God being wrong, well, needless to say, it is probably our understanding that needs more examination. If you do take the time to do more research or ask someone with more biblical knowledge why something doesn't quite make sense to you, you'll hopefully walk away with that, “oh, now I get it” reaction. If not, keep digging, because without question, God is right, 100% of the time.

And Luke 14:26 is a perfect example. In the time of Jesus, the word “hate” was commonly used to denote “a lesser priority” or “in comparison to”. So, what Jesus is really saying, if He was using our terminology, is if you want to be a disciple of Christ, you need to put your love and trust in Him as your top priority – not your only priority, just your top priority. You will discover that Jesus wants you to love everybody, even your enemies, as you love yourself, but He wants you to put your love and trust in Him above all other relationships.

Another example would be the NASB translation of Genesis 1:8 where it tells us: ***“God called the expanse heaven.”*** While the original Hebrew verse was most likely changed to make it more “grammatically correct” – expanse and heaven both being singular – it is not the original Hebrew text which states ***“God called the expanse Heavens.”*** If you were to rely on the NASB version, you will get confused quickly. We recommend not resting in your confusion but rather doing more research to eliminate your confusion. Checking other Bible versions, especially the Interlineal Bible which provides the original texts in English, is a great place to start your research.

Realizing that sometimes the Bible may use words whose meaning has changed significantly over time, or whose grammar may have been changed to conform to more current standards, is why we will finish with a section on how to read the Bible.

## Suggestions for Beginners on How to Read the Bible

Another aspect of the Bible that warrants mentioning is that it is – uh oh, here’s that word again – a supernatural set of documents. Here is how we know this to be true.

The first time you open the Bible, you’ll probably find it is not an easy read. In fact, at first, we found it an extremely hard read. But, like everything else in life, familiarity requires practice; and reading the Bible is no exception. If you read a section of the Bible just once, your first reaction most likely won’t be all that great. Seriously. The Bible is simply not just your everyday read. But participate in a Bible study and listen to one trained in the Bible’s meaning, and you may well be shocked. You could easily walk away saying to yourself, “I had no idea that’s what it meant.”

To be awestruck by the Bible – and to start seeing it as truly a supernatural set of documents (books) takes time and patience, and you will need to read more than just a segment of it, and you may often need to read your selections multiple times. And you should try to participate in at least one Bible Study either at your church or online if you are not yet affiliated with a church. We also encourage looking at some YouTube videos (see our PDF document, “[Recommended Sermons and Videos](#)”). We guarantee that after you do this, you will suddenly find yourself reading the Bible completely differently than you did when you first started. Kid you not.

This process may take a few months of regular, repetitive reading, but trust us; you will suddenly begin to see things you never saw before. Words will suddenly jump out at you that your eyes simply skimmed over before. And these “new” words will suddenly have meaning you never thought possible – and the fact that you just skimmed over them before will amaze you (we’re being polite here). After a while – and yes, give it some time – you will realize the Bible is a *living* set of documents that keeps changing as your understanding of them deepens. Without a doubt, if you truly study the Bible, you will experience the feeling that hey, that word wasn’t there when I read that verse the last time.

*Please be sure to read our PDF document, “[Structure of the Bible](#)” before you start your Bible- reading journey. This way, you’ll have a better understanding of how things fit together. It will also help speed up your understanding of this wonderful and incredible manuscript.*

You have to begin your Bible reading somewhere and our recommendation is that you do not start on page one with the intention of reading the Bible all the way through to the end. You’ll be lucky to get halfway through Exodus (only the second of 66 books before you give up). Instead, we recommend you start with the first book in the New Testament – the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was one of Christ’s early disciples, and one of two disciples who physically walked with Jesus throughout His ministry and wrote a Gospel included in the Bible compilation. His book gives an excellent, eyewitness synopsis of Jesus’ ministry. After Matthew, we recommend reading the book of John, which is the other Gospel written by an early disciple of Christ who eyewitnessed Jesus’ impact on the world. The Gospel of John is important because unlike Matthew, Mark and Luke (the Synoptic Gospels), John offers a more in depth look at the persona of Jesus, i.e., who Jesus was as opposed to all the things He did.

*As you read these two Gospels, we also encourage you to view the remarkable series [The Chosen](#). This cinematic series brings to life the three plus years of Jesus’ ministry from the perspective of His disciples. It is beautifully written, directed and acted, and above all, accurate as to Scripture. How [The Chosen](#) captures what life was like in the days of Christ is also worthy of high praise. It is very inspiring to see the scenes you read about in Matthew and John accurately brought to life on the screen. And it is free – available as both an Apple IOS App and Android app. FYI, as of May 2021, [The Chosen](#) has over 190 million views and was rated 100% on Rotten Tomatoes. It is entirely crowd funded.*

After reading the gospels of Matthew and John, we recommend you next read the book of Acts, which describes the work of the Apostles after the resurrection of Jesus. From there, you may want to venture to the very beginning and read Genesis and Exodus to get some critical information on how things started, and also get a taste of the Old Testament as its style differs dramatically from the New Testament. We suggest you wrap up your introduction to the Bible by reading the Book of Daniel and the Book of Hebrews, which many have described as their favorites. After these exposures, you’ll be ready to tackle any part of the Bible.

*If you have followed these recommendations, you are well on your way to changing your life forever.*