

Unbelievable: Bible

Review:

There is a God – four miracles:

- The universe comes into existence, the universe tuned for life, life emerges from not living matter, and consciousness emerges

There is a Book – a book that stands out – unlike any other - MAPJ

- 66 books – 1400 plus years – number of authors

1. The Manuscript evidence –

- Early and numerous copies – 25,000 plus-
- 99.5 percent pure
- Nearly the entire New Testament can be rebuilt from the early church Fathers in their writings
- **The story hasn't changed**
- **The main components of the story can be supported by non-Christian writers**

Nearly the entire New Testament can be reconstructed from quotations in early Christian writings. According to textual scholars:

- By the end of the 3rd century (AD 300), **more than 36,000** quotations of the New Testament existed in patristic writings.

Bruce Metzger (leading New Testament textual critic): *"The quantity of New Testament material is almost embarrassing in comparison with other works of antiquity."... "The New Testament is over 99% pure. No doctrine is in doubt because of textual variation."*

F.F. Bruce *"There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."*

Gary Habermas, The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ-- *"Even if we had no New Testament at all, we would be able to recover a broad outline of Jesus' life, ministry, and death from **non-Christian sources.**"*

Most textual variants are minor, such as:

- **Spelling differences** (e.g., "John" spelled with one "n" or two).
- **Word order changes** that don't affect meaning (common in Greek).
- **Synonyms** used (e.g., "Jesus Christ" vs. "Christ Jesus").
- Less than **1%** of all variants are "meaningful and viable" (i.e., could change the meaning and have good manuscript support).
- **Even those do not affect any core doctrine.**

2. Archeology

- Physical evidence that proves the events happened
- Other evidence from historical non-Christian writers
- Early writings from non-Christians confirm the story

Dr. Merrill Unger (Biblical archaeologist) *Old Testament Archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner, filled in historical gaps.*

Nelson Glueck (The most famous Jewish Archaeologist in history) *"It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible."*

In contrast --The Journal of Mormon thought (1969 pp. 77-78)

"...When we turn to the Book of Mormon, however, we are unable to find any evidence at all that the Nephites ever existed. We must agree with the Mormon archaeologist Dee F. Green when he states: "The first myth we need to eliminate is that the Book of Mormon archaeology exists. Biblical archaeology can be studied because we do know where Jerusalem and Jericho were and are, but we do not know where Zarahemla and Bountiful, or any other location is for that matter, were or are."

Fletcher B. Hammond- (Address to BYU Archaeology Conference) "It is practically impossible to point to any Book of Mormon land and say unequivocally, here is that land. The gentiles have not received the Book of Mormon by faith for any other reason and until they do accept that book as scripture, it appears that empirical facts will not be allowed to come forth as evidence of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon."

3. Prophecy makes the Bible unique

- Unlike any other book – the prophecy and then the fulfillment

Source: The main prophecy about Cyrus is found in **Isaiah 44:28** and **Isaiah 45:1–4**. "[God] says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.'" (Isaiah 44:28, KJV) "Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him..." (Isaiah 45:1, KJV)

Date When Given: Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah. Scholars generally date the writing of **Isaiah** to around **740–700 BC**.

Important: Cyrus the Great would not even be born until about **600 BC** – about **100–150 years after** Isaiah's prophecy.

Peter Stoner was a mathematician who applied probability science to messianic prophecies. "**The chances of one man fulfilling just 48 prophecies is 1 in 10¹⁵⁷**." To visualize: 10¹⁵⁷ is a number so large that it vastly exceeds the total number of atoms in the observable universe.

Josh McDowell (Evidence That Demands a Verdict) "The Old Testament contains over **300 references to the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus.**"

- 4. Statistical probability** "The probability of Jesus fulfilling just **8 prophecies is one in 10¹⁷**. That would be like covering the state of Texas in silver dollars two feet deep, marking one, and then finding it blindfolded on the first try."
- 5. What Jesus says about scripture –looking back and going forward**
 - Jesus teaches that the Old Testament scriptures came from God
 - Jesus says His words will not depart
 - Jesus tells His disciples they will remember and proclaim scripture
 - The Apostles concur

Matthew 5:17–18 (KJV) John 10:34–36 (NIV) Luke 16:29–31 (NIV) Matthew 19:3–6 (NASB95) Matthew 24:35 (NIV) John 14:25–26 (NIV) Hebrews 1:1–4 (NIV) 2 Timothy 3:14–17 (NASB95) 2 Peter 1:20–21 (NIV)



Sample Small Group Questions
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