

2 Timothy: Authority of God's Word

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2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17		
ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD BREATHED		
ITS NATURE	ITS PROOF	ITS PURPOSE
<p>What is Paul's encouragement to Timothy regarding the Scripture? 2Ti 3:16-17-note</p> <p>All Scripture is inspired by God</p> <p>What is the meaning of "all" (pas)? All of its parts (In Mt 5:18- note Jesus said even every "jot [iota; lsbe] or tittle [keraia; lsbe]) Click "plenary" in the last column</p> <p>How does the Psalmist support this interpretation in Ps119:160?</p> <p>Every single word is truth from the beginning. The totality of God's written revelation is not just true - it is Truth! There is not a speck of untruth in Scripture. It is everlasting.</p> <p>The whole body of revelation is truth. "Thy Word is nothing but truth" [Luther].</p> <p>Daniel Webster (1782-1852) emphasized the importance of THE TRUTH: "If truth be not diffused, error will be. If God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy. If the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will. If the power of the gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land...corruption and darkness will reign."</p>	<p>Click for discussion of several "tests" used to assess reliability of the Scriptures...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bibliographical test 2) Internal test 3) External test 4) Changed lives: Who would die for a lie? <p>What does God testify about Himself in Isaiah 46:9, 10? (Note Isaiah 46 contrasts futility and powerlessness of Babylonian idols with God)</p> <p>God states that only He He ("no other", "no one like Me") can tell what is going to happen before it happens</p> <p>Note: Morris writes that "Only God can correctly predict the future, for He controls it. The Bible is unique among all other books as a book of fulfilled prophecies" (Defender's Study Bible Note)</p> <p>Vine adds that "It is good for the believer to call to mind the former things, to remember the way the Lord has led and helped and delivered. It stirs the soul to renewed praise, and stimulates faith and hope as to the future." (Collected writings of W. E. Vine)</p> <p>Spurgeon on Is 46:10 says "World events are not tangled, confused, or perplexing to</p>	<p>What is the context of 2 Timothy 3:16-17-note ?</p> <p>2Ti 3:1-4-note Paul warned Timothy that in the last days difficult times would come (Be aware that the lifestyle of many will be opposed that taught in God's Word)</p> <p>2Ti 3:5-9-note Men holding to a form of godliness and yet denying its power would captivate weak women - these men opposed the truth (Be aware men will oppose God's Word)</p> <p>2Ti 3:10, 11-note Timothy followed Paul's teaching, conduct, etc (Dear beloved "Timothy" follow God's word just as Paul did so you are a vessel of honor like Paul)</p> <p>2Ti 3:12-note Those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus would be persecuted (Stand fast on God's Word so you are not shaken)</p> <p>2Ti 3:13-note Evil men and imposters will proceed from bad to worse - deceiving (Know God's Word so you are not deceived)</p> <p>2Ti 3:14, 15-note Your best protection will be to continue in the things learned and the sacred writings (they gave you the wisdom that led to salvation and continue to save you - sanctification)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Profitable for Teaching</p>

What does Peter teach us about the nature of the Scriptures in 1Peter 1:10-11-note?

The Spirit gave prophecies to the writers who wrote them down, read them, and tried to figure out what they meant. They recorded what they were told, but they didn't fully understand what they were writing. God didn't give them **thoughts** that they then expressed in their own words. God gave them the **words**.

What does Peter record about the reliability of the Scripture 2Peter 1:19-note (what does he compare the reliability to)?

A more sure prophetic Word than even the experience of the Transfiguration of Christ and the audible voice he heard out of heaven (see note on 2Pet 2:19)

What do some teach based on a misinterpretation of 2Peter 1:20?

Some teach that only the "spiritual leaders" may interpret Scripture

What is Peter really referring to when he states "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation"?

(clue: check the context)

The New Living Translation although clearly a paraphrase is correct in stating that "you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophets themselves". The point is that Peter was not referring to interpretation of Scripture but the origin of Scripture. It was not a man's own idea.

How does the context support the preceding interpretation (and the NLT rendering)?

Peter begins 2Pe 1:21 with "for" indicating he is explaining the previous verse, and in so doing he states that no prophecy originated in the will of man. (Read value of observing terms of explanation)

How does Scripture originate according to 2Peter 1:21-note?

The Holy Spirit moved men to speak words from God.

The same verb for "borne along" is used by Luke in Acts 27:15 "and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the

God... Courage, dear friend. The Lord, the ever-merciful, has appointed every moment of sorrow and every pang of suffering. If He ordains the number ten, it can never rise to eleven, nor should you desire that it shrink to nine. The Lord's time is best. The span of your life is measured to a hair's width. Restless soul, God ordains all, so let the Lord have His way. (click full devotional)

It is worth noting that arguments from **prophecy** have become less popular in an age characterized by critical biblical scholarship, which in many cases claims that apparently fulfilled prophecies were written after the events prophesied occurred.

What is God's challenge to the idols of the people in Isaiah 41:21, 22, 23?

To prove their power by means of a test of prophecy accurately fulfilled which of course they cannot do.

Note: God alone knows the future, declaring both the beginning and end of His creation, confirming that Scripture is His inspired revelation to mankind.

What does God say about Himself and His Word in Isaiah 42:8, 9?

After declaring "I Am Jehovah" He states that everything He has prophesied heretofore has come true. Then He adds that He will tell them the future before it happens.

Note: Vine comments "That His Name is the guarantee of the fulfillment of His word, is the clear intimation here in Isaiah 42:8. How sure and steadfast is His word! What an incentive it provides for faith to lay hold of His promises, even in the darkest hour and amidst the most perplexing and distressing circumstances! (Collected writings of W. E. Vine)

Morris adds that "Only God, who created time and is therefore independent of time, can predict future events with certainty. The Bible is unique in all literature, with hundreds of fulfilled prophecies given hundreds and thousands of years before their fulfillment. This is a certain mark of divine inspiration." ([Note](#))

PROOF THAT ALL SCRIPTURE

(what is right)

Profitable for Reproof

(what is wrong)

Profitable for Correction

(how to get it right)

Profitable for Training in righteousness

(how to live right)

Scripture has the potential to make us adequate, equipped 2Ti 3:17-note

FOR EVERY (ALL) GOOD WORK.

Scripture is complete and is all that we need to have a right relationship with God. We don't need a vision. We don't need a new revelation or a voice from heaven. We need to sit at the feet of Jesus like Mary not like Martha (Lk 10:38-40). **How do you begin your morning - like Mary or Martha?**

CANON OF SCRIPTURE

What does the "canon of Scripture" mean? Could you explain to another person in simple terms how we got our Bible?

Click discussion of "canon of Scripture" ([Or click here](#))

EVIDENCE FOR A SURE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD

Click for discussion of 3 tests (bibliographic, internal and external) that undergird the reliability of the Holy Scriptures.

PLENARY VERBAL INSPIRATION

What does plenary verbal inspiration mean?

Plenary = complete in all parts, nothing is missing

Verbal = word.

E.g., in Gal 3:16 Paul based his entire argument on the single word "**Seed**" as found in used in Ge 22:18 "And in your

wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be **driven along**. Here literally the wind but in 2Peter the picture of the Spirit like "wind" filling the "sails" of His prophets and moving them along.

What does Moses record that helps us understand the "inspiration" of Scripture? Ex 4:10, 11, 12

God told Moses that He had made His mouth and that He would be His mouth and teach him what to say. Note in this passage that God didn't inspire **thoughts**. He inspired **words**. That is why forty years later Moses was so insistent on giving verbatim instructions to the people of Israel: "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Dt 4:2).

Note how Moses completely missed the deeper meaning of God's Name "**I Am**" (remember His Names always speak of His character, His attributes, etc). Moses failed to see Him as "**I Am** all that you will every need for any and every trial or circumstance in life. What was Moses' problem? He looked to himself to be eloquent rather than fixing his eyes on the great "**I Am**". Are we not all a bit like Moses when confronted with a test or challenge we think we are inadequate to fulfill? God will not ask us to do something that He does not enable us to complete or fulfill.

What does Jehovah's response to Jeremiah's feeling of being an inadequate speaker teach us about inspiration of Scripture (Jer 1:6, 7, 8, 9) and what does He promise in Jer 1:12?

Jehovah touched Jeremiah's mouth and put His words in the prophet's mouth (most of this book is Jeremiah speaking). In Je 1:12 God promises that His Word will be fulfilled.

How did God communicate His Word in Ex 31:18?

Two tablets of the testimony of stone were written by the finger of God

What fact does Ex 32:16 emphasize?

The tablets were God's work, and the

IS GOD BREATHED

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY FULFILLED

How many prophecies are found in Scripture?

It has been estimated that there are 2500 prophecies in the Bible & about 2000 have been fulfilled to the letter

Click for illustration of a literal fulfillment of the Lord God's prophecy in Ezekiel 26:1-21 against the powerful city of Tyre.

How many OT prophecies speak about the Messiah?

333 OT prophecies are fulfilled in the Messiah (**Click for odds** that even 8 prophecies could have happened by chance)

Click chart of Messianic Prophecies

What did Jesus say about the Scriptures?

Mt 5:17, 18-note He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (i.e., to fulfill the moral law by keeping it perfectly and also fulfilled prophecies about Himself written hundreds of years earlier) The "jot" and "tittle" refer to the smallest letter and a mark which distinguished two letters in the Hebrew words of the Old Testament. Not only the **words**, but even the **letters** of Scripture are divinely inspired. The Lord's point is that every letter of every word of the OT is vital and will be fulfilled.

In English a **jot** would correspond to the dot above the letter "i" (and look like an apostrophe), and a **tittle** would be seen in the difference between a "P" and an "R". The small angled line that completes the "R" is like a tittle. These things are important because letters make up words and even a slight change in a letter might change the meaning of a word. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Note that in Mt 5:18 Jesus introduces His declaration with a "**truly**" (NAS) which corresponds to the Hebrew "Amen". Baker's NT Commentary has an interesting comment: "Whether 'truly' (RSV., NAS.) conveys that same fullness of meaning or whether, through association with such phrases as 'yours truly,' it has

seed (masculine, singular) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." writing that "the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his **seed**. He does not say, "And to **seeds**," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your **seed**," that is, Christ."

Inspiration = God-breathed

[Wayne Grudem on Plenary Inspiration](#)

What logically follows from this definition?

The Bible is **infallible**. It speaks only the truth. If God wrote it, it has to be true. God used **fallible** people to receive and record his **infallible** Word so that it would reach us correct and without error. Human beings, though they often err, need not err in all particular instances.

In addition to being perfect, the Bible is also **inerrant** in the original manuscripts. The Bible has no mistakes.

"Do not add to His words; lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar" (Pr 30:6, cp Pr 30:5)

The Word of God is also **authoritative**. When it speaks, we had better respond.

The Bible is **sufficient**. Nothing is missing. Because the Word of God is the breath of God, we don't need anything more. If a person says you need this or that spiritual or mystical experience don't believe them! The Spirit of God acting through the Word of God is **sufficient** to make you fully mature in Christ, adequate and equipped for every good work.

The Bible is also **effective** (see Heb 4:12 -note)

International Council on Biblical Inerrancy says that: **Infallible** signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters. Similarly, **inerrant** signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

Note: Revelation and **Inspiration** are not the same. **Revelation** is the message, and

writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets.

Note that Moses had nothing whatsoever to do with originating the stone tablets. The Lord not only delivered the thoughts, but He did so by writing the words Himself upon the stones

How did God communicate to Belshazzar King of Babylon in Da 5:5-note? What was the message and what transpired that same night? Da 5:24-30-note

Hand of a man wrote on the wall and Daniel interpreted the message that Babylon was **numbered** by God, the king was **weighed** and found deficient and Babylon would be **divided**. (Babylon was divided between the Medes and Persians) Belshazzar was slain that very night speedily fulfilling prophecy proving the Word was a true and sure supernatural message.

Note the fulfillment of God's sure word: "One ancient account alleged that Persia's General Ugbaru had troops dig a trench to divert and thus lower the waters of the Euphrates River. Since the river flowed through the city of Babylon, the lowered water enabled besiegers to unexpectedly invade via the waterway under the thick walls and reach the palace before the city was aware. The end then came quickly, as guards, Belshazzar, and others were slain on Oct. 16, 539BC" (MacArthur MacArthur Study = MSB)

How did God communicate in Mt 3:17 at the baptism of Jesus and in Mt 17:5 at the transfiguration of Jesus?

God spoke - His message in both was "This is My beloved Son with Whom I am well pleased" In Mt 17:5 He added "Listen to Him!"

Note that God's declaration was actually a combination of prophecies in Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, both of which would have been recognized by the Jewish listeners as prophecies of the Messiah.

Why should men listen to Jesus according to Jn 12:49-50?

Jesus spoke message given to Him by God the Father

lost some of the strength or solemnity usually associated with "verily," is a matter with respect to which opinions differ. In every case—let the reader examine this for himself with the use of a Concordance—in which this word occurs in the New Testament it introduces a statement which not only expresses a truth or fact—as, for example, $2 \times 2 = 4$ would be a fact—but an important, a solemn fact, one that in many cases is at variance with popular opinion or expectation or at least causes some surprise. It is for that reason that I personally prefer the translation "I solemnly declare" to "Truly I say." (Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew. p 290)

It is easier for the entire universe to fold up than for the smallest mark in the Bible to be altered. God's Word is eternal!

Note: MacArthur: Here Christ was emphasizing both the inspiration and the enduring authority of all Scripture. He was specifically affirming the **utter inerrancy** and **absolute authority** of the OT as the Word of God—down to the least jot and tittle... this suggests that the NT should not be seen as supplanting and abrogating the OT, but as fulfilling and explicating it. For example, all the ceremonial requirements of the Mosaic law were fulfilled in Christ and are no longer to be observed by Christians (Col. 2:16, 17-note). Yet not one jot or tittle is thereby erased; the underlying truths of those Scriptures remain—and in fact the mysteries behind them are now revealed in the brighter light of the gospel. They have not passed from the law is the sense Jesus means here. one jot or one tittle. (MSB)

Mt 24:35 Jesus' Words will not pass away - it is inerrant and absolutely trustworthy! (cf Isa 40:8) Every prophecy and every promise will be fulfilled perfectly and completely.

Morris: The only physical entity in this physical universe which is not subject to the law of disintegration is the written Word of God. This affirmation by Christ is a tremendous assurance of its **infallible** and **permanent authority**. (DSB)

Luke 24:25, 26, 27 Called the 2 on the road to Emmaus "foolish" for not believing all the prophets had spoken because **all**

inspiration was the primary method of delivering that message to mankind. (**Illumination** of Scripture is enlightenment by the Holy Spirit Who gives understanding of the Scripture) **Inspiration** is the act of the Holy Spirit in revealing to human writers the message that God intended to comprise the Old and New Testaments... Some people say that the Bible is inspired in the same way that those great works of literature were inspired... The problem with that view is it is saying that God didn't write the Bible—smart men did. Would smart men write a book that condemns men to hell? Would smart men write a book that provides no human means of salvation apart from the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ? No! Man writes books that exalt himself. He doesn't write books to damn himself... Second, inspiration is not only in the thoughts of the writers. Some say that instead of giving the writers specific words, God supplied the writers only general ideas, while the choice of vocabulary was theirs. That view doesn't square with what the Bible teaches (1Co 2:13)... Some 3,808 times in the Old Testament, expressions such as "Thus says the Lord," "The Word of the Lord," and "The Word of God" appear. These hardly express wordless concepts. God does communicate in words... Inspiration is not mechanical dictation. The Bible writers were not robots, writing in a semi comatose state, cranking it out without using their minds. (MacArthur, J., How to Get the Most from God's Word)

Our Lord tells us that "**He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God**" (John 8:47).

One way to tell a saved person from an unsaved one is that one listens to the Word of God and the other doesn't. **Are you listening?**

Excellent Resources

[Can I Really Trust the Bible?](#)

[Why Does It Make Sense to Believe in Christ?](#)

Note The words Jesus spoke were themselves a fulfillment of the prophecy in Dt 18:18 where God said "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."

What ways did God speak according to Hebrews 1:1-2-note?

To the fathers in the prophets (in many portions and many ways - e.g., dreams, visions, direct conversation, etc) and in the last days has spoken to us in His Son. Jesus is the final revelation.

How serious is God about the integrity and inerrancy of His Word in Rev 22:18-19-note?

Add to them and he add the plagues of the book

Take away from them and God would take away their part in the Tree of Life.

Jesus also warns "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:19-note). God doesn't want anyone tampering with His words.

Note: Morris in the Defender's Study Bible (DSB) has a very intriguing interpretation of this passage: "Note the importance of the words. The conveyance of precise thoughts requires the use of precise words. Only the doctrine of verbal inerrancy adequately expresses the true nature of Biblical inspiration. This warning at the end of the book of Revelation (in fact, the end of the Bible) stresses the necessity of literal interpretation. Actually, a literal interpretation is not an interpretation at all, for it takes the words at face value, assuming that the Holy Spirit (using the thoughts and abilities of the human writer whose words He inspired) was able to say exactly what He meant to say. Any kind of allegorical or figurative interpretation of those words (unless directly indicated in the context) assumes that the interpreter knows better than the Holy Spirit what He should be saying, and such an attitude is presumptuous, if not blasphemous."

The doctrine of inspiration, the truth that

the Scriptures spoke about the **Messiah** (Moses [Pentateuch] and prophets). Jesus clearly affirmed the validity of using Messianic prophecy.

Baker NT Commentary on Luke observes that "The trouble with the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day was that, on the whole, in reading the OT they saw only the **glory & victory** of the Messiah, not the fact that the path to these blessings was one of **suffering**. At times they would even go so far as to apply to the Messiah the references (in Isa. 52:13, 14, 15, 53:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,8, 9, 10, 11, 12) to the Servant's glory, but to apply to Israel the references to the Servant's suffering."

Although there are 66 books, written by 40 authors (most of whom had no interpersonal contact) over 1500 years, in 3 different languages, these diverse Scriptures are internally consistent, lending strong support to "One" Author. And so we see unity of message, despite diversity of human authors. This harmony is more apparent the more one studies the Bible! This harmony cannot be explained by coincidence or collusion and thus the unity of Scripture is a strong argument for its Divine inspiration. And more than 3000 yrs of criticism have failed to find even a single irreconcilable contradiction in the Word.

Jesus believed in the OT Creation, the flood and Jonah are often points of objection for skeptics?

What did Jesus say about...

Creation...

He quoted from Genesis chapter 1 in **Mk 10:6** declaring that "from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.

The worldwide flood...

He warned in **Lk 17:26, 27** that **His second coming** would be like the days of Noah...

the Scripture is indeed God's word to mankind, is critically important, and not surprisingly is one of the first points of attack of Satan.

What were his first words to Eve?

Ge 3:1b "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from *any* tree of the garden'?"

A W Pink comments that "The method of Satan's approach was the same then as it is now. "**Yea hath God said!**" He begins by throwing doubt on the Divine Word! He questions its veracity. He suggests that God did not mean what He had said. So it is today. Every effort that is being made to deny the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures, every attempt put forward to set aside their absolute authority, every attack on the Bible which we now witness in the name of scholarship, is only a repetition of this ancient question, "**Yea, hath God said?**" Next, he substitutes his own word for God's, "**Ye shall not surely die.**"

[\(Gleanings in Genesis-The Fall\)](#)

"they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the **day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.**"

Jonah...

In **Luke 11:29, 30** Jesus declared that..."This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign shall be given to it but the sign of Jonah. For just as **Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites**, so shall the Son of Man be to this generation...32 The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." Jesus explains the sign in (Mt 12:40) stating that

Click discussion of why we can accept Jesus' Word on the authority of the Word

**MESSIANIC PROPHECIES
FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST**

"And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:27)

SPECIFIC PREDICTION	OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
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<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE BORN OF A WOMAN circa 4000 B.C</p>	<p>"Beginning with Moses..."</p> <p>Genesis 3:15:And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise Him on the heel.</p>	<p>Galatians 4:4 But when the fulness of time came God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. (Note)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE THE SEED OF ABRAHAM & THE BEARER OF THE GOSPEL circa 2000 B.C</p>	<p>Genesis 22:18 "And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." . "</p> <p>Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ("the gospel" - compare Gal 3:8 in next column)</p> <p>Morris (Defender's Study Bible) notes that "In his theological argument concerning the Abrahamic covenant, Paul almost unconsciously makes an exceedingly strong affirmation of the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, basing his argument not just on one word, but one letter, "seed" instead of "seeds." Thus the promised "Seed" was not the nation Israel, but the one Person Who alone could fulfill the great promises made to Abraham, namely, Christ.</p>	<p>Matthew 1:1 "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."</p> <p>Galatians 3:16 "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ."</p> <p>Galatians 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU. (Genesis 12:3b)"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM circa 700 B.C</p>	<p>Micah 5:2 But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity (Note)</p> <p>Note that even if Jesus could have fulfilled some of the other prophecies "naturally", He could hardly have fulfilled His place of birth in an obscure village distinct from the other village by the same first name (Bethlehem)! Jesus sternly warned every skeptic of every age that "unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins ." (John 8:25)</p>	<p>Matthew 2:1-6 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 Where is He Who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him. 3 And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 And they said to him 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, 6 And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler , Who will shepherd My people Israel.'</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE BORN TO A VIRGIN circa 700 B.C</p>	<p>Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (God with us). (Note)</p>	<p>Matthew 1:18-23 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. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. 20 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 that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bear a Son and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He Who will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 23 "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."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE PRECEDED BY A FORERUNNER circa 700 B.C</p>	<p>Isaiah 40:3 A voice is calling: Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness, make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. (Note)</p>	<p>Matthew 3:1-3 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!"</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD MINISTER IN NAPHTALI AND GALILEE circa 700 B.C</p>	<p>Isaiah 9:1-2 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them. (Note)</p>	<p>Matthew 4:13-16 Leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles 16 The people who were setting in darkness saw a great light; and to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST ADVENT: MESSIAH WOULD ENTER INTO JERUSALEM ON A DONKEY</p> <p>SECOND ADVENT:</p> <p>MESSIAH'S</p> <p>circa 500 B.C</p>	<p>Zechariah 9:9 "Behold your King is coming to you, He is just and endowed with salvation, humble and mounted on a donkey even on a colt the foal of a donkey."</p> <p>Zechariah 9:10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; and His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. (Note)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FIRST ADVENT</p> <p>Matthew 21:5 Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden. 6 And the disciples went and did just as Jesus had directed them, 7 and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid on them their garments, on which He sat. 8 And most of the multitude spread their garments in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees, and spreading them in the road. 9 And the multitudes going before Him and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna ("Save us we pray") to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the multitudes were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SECOND ADVENT:</p> <p>(Not directly quoted so fulfillment is seen in several passages)</p> <p>Revelation 11:15-note And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."</p> <p>Revelation 19:16-note And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">MESSIAH WOULD BE REJECTED BY HIS OWN PEOPLE</p>	<p>Ps 69:8 I have become estranged from my brothers and an alien to my mother's sons.</p> <p>Is 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.</p>	<p>John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.</p> <p>John 7:5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.</p>

<p>MESSIAH'S BETRAYAL FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER FORETOLD (THE PRICE OF A GORED SLAVE!) circa 500 B.C</p>	<p>Zech 11:12 (Zechariah carried out the drama - see previous verses - by symbolically picturing Messiah asking those He came to shepherd what they felt He was worth to them) And I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages (In a mocking response, the leaders offered 30 silver pieces which was the amount of compensation paid for a slave gored by an ox - see Ex 21:32 below). 13 Then the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I (THE MESSIAH) was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the LORD. (Note)</p> <p>Ex 21:32 "If the ox gores a male or female slave, the owner shall give his or her master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.</p>	<p>Matthew 26:14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him.</p> <p>Matthew 27:3 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, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" 5 And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. 6 And 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." 7 And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers.</p>
<p>MESSIAH'S CRUCIFIXION FORETOLD LOTS WOULD BE CAST FOR MESSIAH'S GARMENT</p>	<p>Ps 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at Me; 18 They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.</p>	<p>John 19:24 They said therefore to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."</p>
<p>MESSIAH WOULD CRY OUT FROM THE CROSS</p>	<p>Ps 22:1 My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.</p>	<p>Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"</p>
<p>MESSIAH'S LEGS WOULD NOT BE BROKEN</p>	<p>Ps 34:20 He keeps all His bones; not one of them is broken. (cf. to Ps 22:17 above)</p>	<p>John 19:33 But coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.</p>

**THE TIME OF MESSIAH'S CRUCIFIXION
ACCURATELY FORETOLD**
circa 530BC

Daniel 9:24-note "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.
25-note "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 will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.
26-note "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.
27-note "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

See this time period charted out and the incredible fulfillment...click

Daniel's Seventieth Week

Related Resources

Daniel 9:24-27: Introductory Comments

Brief "Prophecy Primer" why interpret Daniel 9:24-27 and other prophecy literally?

Why Daniel 9:24-27 Is One of Most Significant Passages in Scripture

Daniel Commentaries grouped by interpretative approach to Daniel 9:24-27

Anecdotal Stories & Da 9:24-27

Evidence Supporting Unit of Time in Daniel 9:24-27 as Years

Daniel Commentaries from a literal, usually futuristic perspective

Da 9:24-27:Notes on Da 9:24-25

Da 9:24-27: Pt 2: Notes on Da 9:26-27

Daniel's Seventieth Week Charted in parallel with Daniel's other prophecies

See lectures by Kay Arthur on Daniel 9:24-27: Lec14, Lec15, Lec16

**PROBABILITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
PROPHECIES BEING FULFILLED IN ONE MAN:**

Yes, one could possibly find one or two prophecies fulfilled in other men, but not all 61 major prophecies! In fact the chance of one man fulfilling even eight prophecies is 1 in 10 to the 17th power (1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000) This has been illustrated by imagining placing 100,000,000,000,000,000 silver dollars on the State of Texas which would result in two feet "sea" of silver wherever you tread! Now it where the odds get interesting. Mark one of the silver dollars distinctively and throw it into the state. Stir it all up and blindfold a man who has one pick to select the marked coin. That's the odds against anyone fulfilling only 8 prophecies, much less what most authorities feel is something like 330 plus Old Testament prophecies in some way fulfilled in the Messiah. To phrase it another way, these incredible odds just illustrated are the same chance that the OT prophets would have had of writing eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man providing they wrote them in their own wisdom. One can conclude that the fulfillment of even just eight prophecies proves that God inspired the writing of these prophecies to a definiteness which lacks only one chance in 10 to the 17th power! The odds against all 330 plus OT prophecies being fulfilled in one man cannot even be reasonably illustrated, as they are so high!

Another objection to the Messianic Prophecies pointing to Jesus is that Jesus deliberately attempted to fulfill the Jewish prophecies. This objection seems plausible until we realize that many of the details of the Messiah's coming were totally beyond human control.

Note also that some of the prophecies concerning the Messiah are of such a nature that only God could fulfill them, such as Christ's virgin birth, His sinless and holy character, His resurrection, and His ascension. Only God could cause Jesus to be born of a virgin and to be raised from the dead.

**PREDICTED PROPHECY
FULFILLED TO EVERY JOT AND TITTLE
EXAMPLE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF TYRE**

An illustration of a fulfilled prophecy about the city of Tyre in [Ezekiel 26](#):

Tyre was a great Phoenician city and world capital for some 2,000 years, deriving its rule from domination of the seas. [Ezekiel 26](#) predicted Tyre's violent future and destruction at a time when it was still a dominant power.

Ezekiel predicted that many nations would come up against Tyre (Ezekiel 26:3), that Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar would be the first to attack it (Ezekiel 26:7), that Tyre's walls and towers would be broken down (Ezekiel 26:4,9); that the stones, timbers, and debris of that great city would be thrown into the sea (Ezekiel 26:12); that its location would become a bare rock and a place for the drying of fishermen's nets (Ezekiel 26:4, 5,14) and finally, that the city of Tyre would never be rebuilt (Ezekiel 26:14, 21). Note that 8 times in Ezekiel 26 it is clearly stated that the words spoken are from the Lord God (Eze 26:1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 14, 15, 19, 21)

History testifies that all this is precisely what happened. Many nations did come up against Tyre including the Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, and Crusaders. In 586BC, three years after Ezekiel's prophecy, Nebuchadnezzar was the first of these invaders, who, after a 13 year siege, broke down the walls and towers of mainland Tyre, thus fulfilling the first of Ezekiel's prophecies against Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar massacred all of Tyre's inhabitants except for those who escaped to an island fortress a half mile out in the Mediterranean Sea. It is notable that it was Tyre's abundance of fresh water (see note below) that allowed the city to hold out against Nebuchadnezzar for so many years. In the years after Nebuchadnezzar's crushing defeat, the people of the city transferred the wealth of the former mainland city of Tyre to an adjacent island and there the new city of Tyre prospered protected by the sea and walls extending out into the sea to protect the port.

Some 241 years after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the old city of Tyre, Alexander the Great began his conquest of the ancient world, as he sought to capture Persia. But before he went to Persia, he headed south to conquer Tyre, fearing that while his troops were in the East engaged in war, and that the Phoenician navy might therefore seek to invade Greece. Alexander approached Tyre and demanded that the city surrender but they refused. After Alexander's first attempt failed, he took the rubble of the old city of Tyre left by Nebuchadnezzar and built a causeway out to the island. The city was completely destroyed by Alexander as a warning to other cities that might seek to defy his demands of surrender. After hearing of Tyre's fall, many cities opened their gates in fear to avoid being destroyed.

Centuries later Alexander the Great fulfilled a portion of the prophecy. In order to conquer the island fortress of Tyre (because he lacked a navy), he and his celebrated architect Diades devised one of the most brilliant engineering feats of ancient warfare. They built a causeway from Tyre's mainland to the island fortress, using the millions of cubic feet of rubble left over on mainland Tyre. Thus Tyre was scraped bare as a rock, just as Ezekiel predicted.

The most astonishing of Ezekiel's predictions was that Tyre would never be rebuilt. This is singularly incredible because Tyre is strategically located on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea and contains the Springs of Reselain, which pump ten million gallons of fresh water daily, enough to take care of the needs of a modern city. Yet, history records that after a succession of invasions, Tyre finally and irrevocably fell in A.D. 1291, never to be rebuilt again. Some 200 years ago archeologists were watching some fishermen spreading their nets on the bare rocks of a place that proved to be Tyre. Today Tyre has been humbled to the point of becoming a place for the drying of fishermen's nets, literally what Ezekiel prophesied some 2500 years ago! What are the chances that Ezekiel could have guessed correctly? It has been conservatively in the book, Science Speaks, Professor Peter Stoner estimated that the chances are about one in 75,000,000.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST

When it comes to determining whether or not the Bible is the inspired Word of God we can rest confidently on the authority of Jesus Christ. We arrive at this conclusion by the following logic:

1. We have already shown that the New Testament can be trusted as an accurate historical document, giving firsthand information on the life of Jesus Christ.
2. In this accurate, historical document Jesus Christ is presented as having made certain claims about himself. He claimed to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the only way by which anyone can approach God.
3. Jesus Christ demonstrated that he had the right to make those Old Testament claims by fulfilling prophecies about the Messiah. He performed miracles, showing he had power over nature. The most significant miracle of all was his rising from the dead (John 2:19–21). The resurrection confirmed his claims to deity.
4. Since Jesus is the Messiah, God in human flesh, he is the last word on all matters. He had the divine authority to endorse all Scripture or some. He universally affirmed all Scripture, in every part, as the divine Word of God. The crucial issue of the inspiration of the Old Testament is solved by Jesus Christ and his attitude toward it. We see Jesus viewing the Old Testament with total trust, considering it the Word of God. See Matthew 15:3, 6; 22:31–32; John 10:35; and Matthew 5:18.

If Jesus is who he claimed to be, God in human flesh, then his view of Scripture is of paramount importance. We see him constantly referring to it as sacred in his teachings and in discussions with the religious leaders of his day.

The conclusion is clear: since Jesus is God and authenticates the whole body and every portion of the Old Testament, we can conclude that it is the inspired Word of God. (from McDowell, J: Josh McDowell's Handbook on Apologetics Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

Old Testament authority John Bright once said...

I am quite unable to get around the fact...that the Old Testament was authoritative Scripture for Jesus himself. Jesus knew no Scripture save the Old Testament, no God save its God; it was this God whom he addressed as "Father."...The very fact that the Old Testament was normative Scripture to Jesus, from which he understood both his God and (however we interpret his self-consciousness) himself, means that it must in some way be normative Scripture for us too. (Bright, Old Testament, p. 77.)

MESSIAH'S FORERUNNER

The idea of "**prepare**" means to "clear away the obstacles". The geographical feature of "**wilderness**" symbolized the arid lifelessness of the unconverted soul. **Mountains and hills** represent the proud and arrogant among men, valleys the people of low degree. All unevenness and roughness of character must be made smooth. All four Gospel writers quote this verse as applying to John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1, 2, 3, 4; Mark 1:1, 2, 3, 4; Luke 1:76, 77, 78; John 1:23) In the NT John the Baptist declared that repentance was necessary to prepare the way for Christ. **Highway** in Isaiah (and in the Gospels) figuratively referred to the hearts of people who must be spiritually prepared by repentance for God's glory to be revealed.

Constable writes

It was customary to construct processional avenues for approaching dignitaries and for idols carried in parade. The wilderness and desert represent the barren waste where God's people dwelt, complete with obstacles and impediments to overcome, and through which He would come to them with refreshment, as He did formerly at Mount Sinai. The idea is that He was certainly coming and His people should prepare for His appearing. ([Dr. Constable's Bible Study Notes and Commentary](#))

Freeman notes that..

It's been the custom for centuries for Eastern monarchs who are traveling through their domain to send men before them to prepare their way by removing stones (see Isaiah 62:10), leveling rough places, filling up hollows, cleaning up trash and litter, and generally making the road pleasant and easy for the distinguished travelers and their guests. One of the stories told about the semilegendary Queen Sammu-ramat (Semiramis of Greek legend, and mother of king Adad-nirari III, who reigned from 810 to 783), is that on one of her journeys she came to a rough, mountainous, region, and ordered the hills leveled and the hollows filled, which was done at enormous cost. Her object was not only to shorten her way, but to leave to posterity a lasting monument to herself. Since her time there have been other instances of similar character, but none involving so much labor and expense. (Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. *Manners & Customs of the Bible*)

In a devotional from **Our Daily Bread** on Isaiah 40:3 we read...

Many years ago Robert Louis Stevenson was stricken with a fatal illness. Seeking quiet and rest in a favorable climate, he chose a faraway island in the Pacific Ocean. He soon found conditions to be less than ideal, however, for the native chiefs were constantly at war with one another. Quarrels and disputes kept breaking out among them, but gradually Stevenson was able to solve these conflicts. By every kind act in his power he won their friendship, and soon he got them to settle their differences, teaching them how to be happy and at peace. These people had never had such a friend before. The great novelist became their hero, and they longed to show him their gratitude. They had no money to buy gifts, but one of the natives said, "We can make him a wide, smooth pathway straight through the heart of the jungle that shall lead to his land, for he has longed to have others come and visit him." All agreed to start immediately on its construction. Today this inscription appears over the entrance of that highway: "The Road of the Loving Heart," and just below it a plaque telling that it was built to please Stevenson because he had brought them joy and peace.

There is One greater than Stevenson who has also shown us His love, and through His sacrifice has brought eternal peace to our troubled hearts. In gratitude to Him, let us labor to prepare "the way of the Lord" for others, that through our consecrated lives and our words of testimony they may find easy access to our divine Friend. If we show them His grace, many will want to walk "The Road of the Loving Heart."

With the zeal of John the Baptist
Let us still "prepare the way"
For the weary feet of sinners
Who would seek the Lord today.— I. H.

When God's work comes to a standstill, you can be sure the obstacles in the way can be removed by human hands!

MESSIAH IN THE LAND OF NAPHTALI

The northern territory of Israel, called the land of Naphtali, which had been brought into contempt by the invaders, will be made glorious. (Galilee of the Gentiles was the Savior's boyhood home and the scene of part of His public ministry.) Christ's First Advent brought light to Galilee. His Second Coming will bring joy to the nation and put an end to slavery and war. The coming of the Messiah is synonymous with the coming of light to remove the darkness of captivity.

Constable writes that in Isaiah's time...

In contrast to the gloom of the false counselors, the residents of Galilee in Israel, who would experience the Lord's chastening, would enjoy glory. God would bring light when His people had lost all hope. Galilee was the first region in Israel to feel the lash of the Assyrian invaders. It was a melting pot and home to many Gentiles as well as Jews because the international highway between Mesopotamia and Egypt passed through it. Glory came to this region later when Jesus lived and ministered there (cf. Mt 4:13, 14, 15, 16). But it will enjoy even greater glory during Messiah's earthly reign, as will all of the Promised Land. ([Dr. Constable's Bible Study Notes and Commentary](#))

EVIDENCE UNDERGIRDING THE SURE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD

RELATED RESOURCE: [Can I Really Trust the Bible?](#)

The evidence that undergirds the reliability that the Scriptures we have access to today are in fact the actual, inerrant, fully inspired Words of our heavenly Father can be categorized as follows:

- 1) BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST
- 2) INTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST
- 3) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST

1) BIBLIOGRAPHICAL TEST

The bibliographical test is an examination of the textual transmission by which documents have been passed down through the centuries. The question this test addresses is in view of the fact that we do not have the original documents, how reliable are the copies we possess today and from which our Bibles are translated? What are the number of original manuscripts or what is the time interval between the original and the copies that we do possess?

One way to grasp the significance of this test is to compare similar criteria of ancient writers. For example, how do we know that the history of Thucydides (460-400 B.C.) is really what he wrote? We have only 8 manuscripts of Thucydides' history and the oldest is dated about A.D. 900, which give us a gap of about 1,300 years between when Thucydides wrote the original manuscript. This is quite a gap and a relatively small number of manuscripts and yet as **F. F. Bruce** notes

"No classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest manuscripts of their works which are of use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals."

Similar observations can be made of the writings of Aristotle who wrote his poetics circa 343 B.C. and yet the earliest copy we have is dated A.D. 1100, nearly a 1,400-year gap, and only five MSS are in existence.

How do the NT manuscripts stack up in comparison? The New Testament was written from about AD 50 to AD90. The earliest fragment dates about AD120, with about fifty other fragments dating within 150–200 years from the time of composition. Two major manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus (AD 325) and Codex Sinaiticus (AD350), a complete copy, date within 250 years of the time of composition. This may seem like a long time span, but it is minimal compared to most ancient works. Caesar composed his history of the Gallic Wars between 58-50 B.C. and its manuscript authority rests on 9-10 copies dating a almost 1000 years after his death! The first complete copy of the Odyssey by Homer dates 2,200 years after it was written. When the interval between the writing of the New Testament and earliest copies is compared to other ancient works, the New Testament proves to be much closer to the time of the original. In short, there are more than 18,000 copies of New Testament manuscripts in existence today which far out distances otherwise accepted works such as The Iliad which has 643 MSS, the second largest number of ancient manuscripts..

F. F. Bruce concludes that...

"The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of

classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning....And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt" (The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?)

Sir Frederic Kenyon, director and principal librarian at the British Museum and second to none in authority for issuing statements about manuscripts, concludes

The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.

In summary, the bibliographical test assures us that the NT has more manuscript authority than any piece of literature from antiquity, which leaves little doubt that the NT is an authentic piece of literature.

2) INTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST

John W. Montgomery explains this "test" writing that...:

"One must listen to the claims of the document under analysis, and not assume fraud or error unless the author disqualified himself by contradictions or known factual inaccuracies."

The ability of the writer or the witness to tell the truth is helpful to the historian to determine credibility. This in turn is closely related to the witness's nearness both geographically and chronologically to the events recorded. The New Testament accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus were recorded by men who had been either eyewitnesses themselves or who related the accounts of eyewitnesses of the actual events or teachings of Jesus.

Dr Luke records...

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; (Luke 1:1-3)

The apostle Peter adds that...

"we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." (2 Peter 1:16)

Finally the **apostle John** testifies that...

What was from the beginning what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life (he is writing of Jesus Christ)--and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

One still might argue that the above eyewitness were relating their own fabrication and not the truth.

As **Josh McDowell** goes on to explain...

The New Testament accounts of Jesus began to be circulated within the lifetimes of those alive at the time of his life. These people could certainly confirm or deny the accuracy of the accounts. In advocating their case for the gospel, the apostles had appealed (even when confronting their most severe opponents) to common knowledge concerning Jesus. They not only said, "Look, we saw this"; or, "We heard that"; but in addition they turned the tables around and right in front of adverse critics said, "You also know about these things...You saw them; you yourselves know about it." One had better be careful when he says to his opposition, "You know this also," because if he isn't right in the details, it will be shoved right back down his throat." (McDowell, J: - [Evidence That Demands A Verdict](#) (ONLINE)

F. F. Bruce adds that...

"it was not only friendly eyewitnesses that the early preachers had to reckon with; there were others less well

disposed who were also conversant with the main facts of the ministry and death of Jesus. The disciples could not afford to risk inaccuracies (not to speak of willful manipulation of the facts), which would at once be exposed by those who would be only too glad to do so. On the contrary, one of the strong points in the original apostolic preaching is the confident appeal to the knowledge of the hearers; they not only said, "We are witnesses of these things"; but also, "As you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22). Had there been any tendency to depart from the facts in any material respect, the possible presence of hostile witnesses in the audience would have served as a further corrective."

Will Durant, well known historian writes the following regarding the authenticity of the New Testament:

Despite the prejudices and theological preconceptions of the evangelists, they record many incidents that mere inventors would have concealed—the competition of the apostles for high places in the Kingdom, their flight after Jesus' arrest, Peter's denial, the failure of Christ to work miracles in Galilee, the references of some auditors to his possible insanity, his early uncertainty as to his mission, his confessions of ignorance as to the future, his moments of bitterness, his despairing cry on the cross; no one reading these scenes can doubt the reality of the figure behind them. That a few simple men should in one generation have invented so powerful and appealing a personality, so lofty an ethic, and so inspiring a vision of human brotherhood, would be a miracle far more incredible than any recorded in the gospels. After two centuries of higher criticism the outlines of the life, character, and teaching of Christ remain reasonably clear, and constitute the most fascinating feature in the history of Western man.

3) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE TEST

The external evidence test looks at other available contemporaneous historical writings to either support or deny the truth and reliability of the documents being scrutinized.

As an example, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (AD 130), a contemporary of the apostle John, explained the source of the Gospel of Mark as follows...

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

Archaeology attests to the accuracy of events recorded in the NT, the archaeologist Joseph Free noting that...

"Archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts."

F. F. Bruce comments on the detailed, very specific documentation by Dr Luke writing that...

"Where Luke has been suspected of inaccuracy, and accuracy has been vindicated by some inscriptional [external] evidence, it may be legitimate to say that archaeology has confirmed the New Testament record."

A. N. Sherwin-White, a classical historian, writes that

"for Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming"...and "any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted."

The conclusion one will arrive at after attempting to disprove the authenticity of the NT record of Jesus Christ is that if one is being intellectually honest, they would have to dismiss not only the New Testament but virtually all of the literature of the ancient world!

CHANGED LIVES - WHO WOULD DIE FOR A LIE?

Another crucial "test" of the authenticity of the NT was the effect that it had on the lives of those most closely associated with its main subject Jesus. In short, it radically changed their lives.

Galatians 4:4

Kenneth Wuest comments on the "fullness of time" writing...

This point of time marked some outstanding events in the history of the human race. First, it was the moment which God had ordained for Messiah's coming. To Daniel was given the date of His coming, 483 years after the edict of the Medo-Persian government to rebuild Jerusalem. Second, the Mosaic law had done its educational work, showing to the world that the most highly-favored nation on earth, the Jewish nation, was, despite all of God's blessings and mercy, totally depraved, giving the Gentile portion of the race a picture of its own totally depraved heart. Third, the Mosaic law in its three sections, the ten commandments, the laws governing social relationships, and the Levitical system of sacrifices, was done away with as a legal system, to be superseded by the gospel of grace centering faith in an historic Saviour. Fourth, the Roman empire maintained world peace. Roman roads made travel for missionaries easy. The universal use of the Greek language made the speedy propagation of the gospel possible. The earth-stage was all set for the greatest event in the history of the human race, the incarnation, sacrificial death, and bodily resurrection of God the Son. ([Galatians Online Commentary - excellent](#))

John MacArthur adds that...

When Jesus was born, everything was right for the coming of the Messiah.

First of all, the time was right religiously. During the Babylonian captivity, Israel once and for all forsook the idolatry into which she had so often fallen. Despite their many other sins and failures, including the national rejection of their own Messiah, no significant number of Jews has ever again turned to idolatry. Also during the Exile, Jews developed synagogues, which they used as places of worship, as schools, anti as courts. In addition to that, they at last had the completed Old Testament, assembled by Ezra and others after the return from Babylon. Those features facilitated the proclaiming of the Messiah's gospel among the people of Israel.

Second, the time was right culturally. Christians who propagated the gospel during the first several centuries had a common language with those to whom they witnessed and with whom they worshiped. Alexander the Great had thoroughly established Greek culture and language throughout the known world, and these continued their dominating influence long after Rome succeeded Greece as world ruler.

Third, the time was right politically. Rome had instituted the pax Romana (Roman peace), which provided economic and political stability. The apostles and other early preachers and teachers could travel freely and safely throughout the empire and could do so on the magnificent system of roads built by the Romans.

Each of those factors was in some unique way a key to the spread of the gospel. God's timing was perfect. ([MacArthur, J. Galatians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Micah 5:2

This verse looks forward to the birth of the One who was to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. This latter description points to the Messiah's eternity, and therefore to His deity. Note that there were two Bethlehems, thus Micah is very specific that this is Bethlehem Ephrathah, six miles south of Jerusalem.

See also Micah 5:2 Commentary

Isaiah 7:14

W E Vine comments that...

“behold, a [Heb., the] virgin shall conceive, and bear a son [the present tenses in the Hebrew vividly convey the future event in its certainty, as if it were already accomplished], and shall call His Name Immanuel” (Is 7:14). “Behold,” in Isaiah, always introduces something relating to future circumstances. The choice of the word **almah** is significant, as distinct from **bethulah** (a maiden living with her parents and whose marriage was not impending); it denotes one who is mature and ready for marriage. The various conditions relating to the prophecy are such that the only possible fulfillment is that recorded in Matthew 1:22, 23 and Luke 1:31, 32, 33, 34, 35. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Note that the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) used the word **parthenos** which means a virgin to translate the Hebrew word **'almah** in Isaiah 7:14 which further supports that the intent of that the 'almah in Isaiah 7:14 specifically was a reference to a virgin.

Matthew 1:18

Mary had been promised in marriage to Joseph, but the wedding had not yet taken place. In NT times, betrothal was a form of engagement and in fact a Jewish betrothal was as binding (probably considering the culture and times even more binding!) as our modern marriage. In fact a betrothed girl was a widow if her fiancé died. Normally a one-year period of waiting followed the betrothal before the consummation of the marriage. During that year the couple could only break their engagement with a divorce. Although an engaged couple did not live together until the marriage ceremony, unfaithfulness on the part of the betrothed was treated as adultery and punishable by death by stoning. During the time of her betrothal, the Virgin Mary became pregnant by a miracle of the Holy Spirit.

Note the Greek verb "**come together**" (sunerchomai) in this context is a euphemism for sexual relations. In some languages one may use such expressions as 'before they were joined' or 'before they slept together' or 'before they discovered one another.' ([Louv, J. P., & Nida, E. A. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains. United Bible societies](#))

Zechariah 9:10

Like some other Old Testament prophecies this one (Zech. 9:9-10) blends two events into one perspective—events that the New Testament divides into two distinct advents of Christ separated by the present Church Age (cf. Isa. 9:6, 7; 61:1, 2; Luke 4:18, 19, 20, 21). In His First Advent He rode on a donkey and presented Himself to the nation Israel but they rejected Him as their King. So His universal rule (Zech. 9:10) will be established when He comes again. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

This dual fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 at Messiah's first advent and Zechariah 9:10 which will be fulfilled at His Second Coming resulted in some pre-Christian sects of Judaism, including the Qumran community, expecting two Messiahs.

Zechariah 11:12

J Vernon McGee has a helpful note on what might at first seem to be a confusing point...

This is a very remarkable prophecy that has been literally fulfilled in a most remarkable way. Notice Matthew's record: "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver" (Matt. 26:14, 15). This is exactly the price that Zechariah mentions. It is quite interesting that the chief priests didn't want to pay very much. I wonder if Judas had a little difficulty agreeing on the price—"So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver."

Over in Matthew 27:9, 10, we find something else that is quite interesting: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." You will find this prophecy alluded to in Jeremiah 18:1, 2, 3, 4 and evidently quoted from Zechariah 11:12, 13. It is credited to Jeremiah simply because in Jesus' day Jeremiah was the first of the books of the prophets, and that section was identified by the name of the first book. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Or listen to him on Mp3 - [Zechariah 11:12-14 Commentary](#)) ([Zechariah - all 94 Mp3 Tracks](#))

CANON OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

Personally, I have had a difficult time understanding the meaning of the term "canon of Scripture" and for that reason have included material from several resources with the objective of helping all believers have a firm grasp on the meaning of this term. Obviously there is some reiteration but hopefully that will enhance and not detract from your understanding.

Tyndale Bible Dictionary defines the **canon** of the Bible as...

"Those books in the Jewish and Christian Bible considered to be Scripture and therefore authoritative in matters of faith and doctrine. The term translates both a Greek and a Hebrew word that mean **"a rule,"** or **"measuring rod."** **It is a list to which other books are compared and by which they are measured** After the fourth century ad, the Christian church found itself with only 66 books that constituted its Scripture; 27 of these were the NT and 39 were the OT. Just as Plato, Aristotle, and Homer form a **canon of Greek literature**, so the NT books became the **canon of Christian literature**. The criteria for selecting the books in the **Jewish canon** (the OT) are not known but clearly had to do with their worth in the ongoing life and religion of the worshiping nation. The criteria of the selection of NT books revolved around their "apostolicity," according to early church writers (also see guiding principles below). Like those of the OT, these books were collected and preserved by local churches in the continuing process of their worship and need for authoritative guidance for Christian living. The formation of the canon was a process, rather than an event, that took several hundred years to reach finality in all parts of the Roman Empire. Local canons were the basis for comparison, and out of them eventually emerged the general canon that exists in Christendom today, although some of the Eastern churches have a NT that is slightly smaller than that accepted in the West. Judaism, as well as Christianity as a whole, believes that the Spirit of God was operative in some providential way in the production and preservation of his Word. (Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. Tyndale Bible dictionary. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers)

"Canon" comes from the root word **"reed"** (English word "cane"; Hebrew form ganah and Greek Kanon). The **"reed"** was used as a measuring rod and eventually meant "standard." The word "canon" applied to Scripture means an officially accepted list of books. Note that the church did not **create** the canon or books included in what we call Scripture. Instead, the church **recognized** the books that were inspired from their inception. They were inspired by God when written. We don't know exactly what criteria the early church used to choose the canonical books. To reiterate, **canon** refers to the collection of writings accepted as inspired and therefore authoritative.

John MacArthur has a nice summary explanation of **canon** writing that the...

word **"canon"** may need some definition and explaining. Mention the canon of Scripture in a group of believers and you often get puzzled looks. They know God's Word is called a two-edged sword (see Heb. 4:12) but they can't seem to recall the passage that compares it to firearms. (Some people may be wondering if God's "canon" is a 12-inch or a 16-inch model.) Actually, the word **"canon"** is a metaphor, a play on words. It comes from the Greek word **kanon**, meaning **"a rod or bar," "a measuring rule, standard, or limit."** This

Greek term **kanon** originally came from a root word that meant “a reed.” In Bible times **areed** was used as a **Hebrew unit of measure**. So, the word came to mean, in a metaphorical sense, **a measuring rod, or standard**. The term was used in many ways: in grammar, as a rule of procedure; in chronology, as a table of dates; in literature, as a list of books or works that would correctly be attributed to a given author. Eventually, the term **canon** was used to refer to **the completed list of books given to man by God**. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, referred to the completed New Testament in a.d. 350 as the canon. In other words, he labeled the collection of 27 books used in the New Testament churches as the final part of God’s revelation, which had started with the Old Testament books. Although some of the books in the New Testament canon were challenged, the final choice of Athanasius and other early church fathers held up. Today, when we use the term “**canon of Scripture**” we are actually saying the Bible is complete. God has given us His revelation. The Bible is our **standard**—efficient, sufficient, infallible, inerrant, and authoritative. As God’s standard, it is binding and determinative in evaluating any other writing, concept, or idea.

Two basic tests were used to determine whether a book belonged in the Old Testament canon:

- (1) Was it inspired by God, written by a prophet or someone with the gift of prophecy?
- (2) Was it accepted, preserved, and read by God’s people, the Israelites?...

Jewish tradition holds that the final compilers of the Old Testament canon were part of the Great Synagogue, that school of scribes founded by Ezra after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon. Interestingly enough there were many attempts to add to the Scriptures back then, just as there are today. Efforts were made to add some fourteen non-canonical books to the Old Testament. This collection, called the Apocrypha... The **apocryphal books** were not allowed into the **Old Testament canon** by the Jews, however, because:

- (1) They were written long after the canon was completed, about 400 b.c., and lacked the prophetic quality to stamp them as inspired Scripture.
- (2) None of the apocryphal writers claim divine inspiration, and some openly disclaim it.
- (3) Apocryphal books contain errors of fact and teach questionable ethics and doctrines. For example, apocryphal writings justify suicide and assassination and also teach praying for the dead...

Interestingly enough, the Roman Catholic Church accepted the apocryphal books, and they were included as part of the Roman Catholic versions of the Bible.

Tests used by the early Christian church to determine New Testament Scripture were somewhat the same as those used for the Old Testament books.

(1) Was the book authored by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle? Again, the key question was the book’s inspiration. And to be inspired it had to be written by an apostle, someone who had walked and talked with the Lord or someone who had been a close companion of an apostle. For example, Mark was not an apostle, but he was a close associate of Peter. Luke, the only Gentile writer of the New Testament, was not an apostle but he worked closely with Paul who was an apostle through his special experience on the Damascus Road.

(2) Another test applied by the early church was content. Did the writing square with apostolic doctrine? In those early years of the church, heretics such as the Gnostics would try to slip in a phony book, but none ever made it. If it didn’t square with apostolic doctrine, it didn’t pass. The doctrinal aberrations were too easy to spot.

(3) A third test asked if the book was read and used in the churches. Did the people of God accept it, read it during worship, and make its teachings part of daily living?

(4) And the final test determined whether the book was recognized and used by the next generations after the early church, especially by the apostolic fathers.... It is important to note, however, that the church leaders did not force certain books on the church. No one man or group of men made a certain book canonical. **God determined the canon; man discovered it through long and steady usage.** The canon finally emerged through the combined conviction of church leaders and church members working in harmony and guided by the Holy Spirit. As with the Old Testament, a formidable group of apocryphal New Testament books also sprang up... But all these

failed to make the final New Testament canon because they failed one or more of the key tests of authenticity.

The canonical determination and collection of genuine and inspired books continued slowly and gradually. No church council ever decreed an "official" New Testament canon, but several councils did recognize the consensus of the people and the existence of canonical books. By the end of the fourth century the collection was complete. The canon was closed.

The writers of Scripture spoke with special conviction and authority that could come only from God. They did not use phrases like, "I think I am right" or "You probably won't agree with me, but ...". Instead they said again and again in different ways: "Thus says the Lord" and "God has put His words in my mouth." They did not guess their writings were inspired; they knew it.

The "canon of Scripture" is a term all Christians should know and understand better. It includes the sixty-six books that have been determined to be the infallible rule of faith and practice for the church for all time....

To allow anyone, or everyone, to claim to speak revelation from God is to pay too high a price. Christ has put His own stamp of authority on Scripture. The church has discovered the canon of God's Word under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. To abandon, or even downplay in the slightest way, the uniqueness of Scripture as the only truly inspired Word of God is to invite a spiritual free-for-all. (MacArthur, J., F. How to get the most from God's word Dallas, TX: Word Pub)

Easton's Bible Dictionary writes that

The **Old Testament Canon** is witnessed to by the New Testament writers. Their evidence is conclusive. The quotations in the New from the Old are very numerous, and the references are much more numerous. These quotations and references by our Lord and the apostles most clearly imply the existence at that time of a well-known and publicly acknowledged collection of Hebrew writings under the designation of "The Scriptures;" "The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms;" "Moses and the Prophets," etc. The appeals to these books, moreover, show that they were regarded as **of divine authority, finally deciding all questions of which they treat; and that the whole collection so recognized consisted only of the thirty-nine books which we now possess**. Thus they endorse as genuine and authentic the canon of the Jewish Scriptures. The Septuagint Version (q.v.) also contained every book we now have in the Old Testament Scriptures. As to the time at which the Old Testament canon was closed, there are many considerations which point to that of Ezra and Nehemiah, immediately after the return from Babylonian exile. (Bolding added)

Smith's Bible Dictionary adds that the "Canon of Scripture"...

may be generally described as the "collection of books which form the original and authoritative written rule of the faith and practice of the Christian Church," i.e. the Old and New Testaments. The word **canon**, in classical Greek, is properly a **straight rod**, "a **rule**" in the widest sense, and especially in the phrases "the rule of the Church," "the rule of faith," "the rule of truth," The first direct application of the term **canon** to the Scriptures seems to be in the verses of Amphilochius (cir. 380 A.D.), where the word indicates the **rule by which the contents of the Bible must be determined**, and thus secondarily an **index of the constituent books**. The uncanonical books were described simply as "those without" or "those uncanonized." The canonical books were also called "books of the testament," and Jerome styled the whole collection by the striking name of "the holy library," which happily expresses the unity and variety of the Bible.

After the Maccabean persecution the history of the formation of the Canon is merged in the history of its contents. The Old Testament appears from that time as a whole. The complete Canon of the New Testament, as commonly received at present, was ratified at the third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397), and from that time was accepted throughout the Latin Church.... The books of Scripture were not made canonical by act of any council, but the council gave its sanction to the results of long and careful investigations as to what books were really of divine authority and expressed the universally-accepted decisions of the church. The Old Testament Canon is ratified by the fact that the present Old Testament books were those accepted in the time of Christ and endorsed by Him, and that of 275 quotations of the Old Testament in the New, no book out of the Canon is quoted from except perhaps the word of Enoch in Jude.

To reiterate, **canonicity** is determined by God. It is not the antiquity, authenticity, or religious community that makes a book **canonical** or authoritative. A book is valuable because it is **canonical**, and not **canonical** because it is or was considered valuable. Its authority is established by God and merely discovered by God's people.

The basis of recognition of a book as part of the NT Canon was (a) apostolic authorship or authentication, (b) Christ-honoring doctrinal content, in line with the known teaching of other apostles, and (c) continuous acknowledgment and spiritually fruitful use of the books within the church from the apostolic age on. It is interesting that Martin Luther used criteria (b) to reject James because he felt James contradicted Paul, which they clearly do not do when one compares their messages. On the other hand the Catholic and Orthodox branches use (c) as a warrant for canonizing the apocryphal books.

Isaiah 46:10 Devotional Comment by C H Spurgeon - In the Face of the Future

World events are not tangled, confused, or perplexing to God. "I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure' " (Is. 46:9-10). Jehovah's power is apparent, from the least to the greatest, for God is in all and rules all. He guides the grain of dust in the March wind and the planets in their immeasurable pathways. He steers each drop of spray beaten back from the face of the rock. He leads the north star (Jer. 31:35). God is the dictator of destinies. He appoints both the ideas and the end. He is the King of kings (Rev. 19:16), ruling rulers and guiding counselors. He is the same in the crash of battle or in the hush of peace. He is the same in famine or in the joy of an abundant harvest. He is Lord. He does according to His will, not only in heaven but among the inhabitants of this lower world. The storm may rage, but all is well, for our Captain is the governor of storms. He who trod the waves of the Galilean lake is at the helm, and at His command winds and waves are quiet (Matt. 14:27).

Courage, dear friend. The Lord, the ever-merciful, has appointed every moment of sorrow and every pang of suffering. If He ordains the number ten, it can never rise to eleven, nor should you desire that it shrink to nine. The Lord's time is best. The span of your life is measured to a hair's width. Restless soul, God ordains all, so let the Lord have His way. (Spurgeon, C., & Clarke, R. H. *Beside still waters: Words of Comfort for the Soul*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)