Since He Wrote About Me

Jesus of Nazareth speaks in his own words about the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures

By William P. Welty, Ph.D.
In Remembrance of
CHARLES ROY WELTY
24 October 1952 – 20 April 2016
(http://weltybrothersstudios.com)

My twin brother (younger than I in the ways of the world by a whole eleven minutes), whose phenomenal talent at motion picture and radio scripting remains a source of continual amazement to me. May God grant you rest from your labors, after having produced more than 36 full length motion picture screenplays, about two dozen completed radio pilot scripts, and countless television series scripts and production treatments over a 20 year period—and all of them with a God-centered, family values orientation and world view—as we await the sure and certain resurrection from the dead at the end of days, when we are promised that we shall meet again.

I heard a voice from heaven say,
“Write this:
‘How blessed are the dead,
that is, those who die in the Lord from now on!’”
“Yes,” says the Spirit.
“Let them rest from their labors,
for their actions follow them.”
—Revelation 14:13

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TO DR. GARRY ANSDELL
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Three expositional Bible teachers who believe, as did Jesus the Messiah, that the Scriptures are historically accurate, trustworthy, and reliable records of the activity of God on earth.
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ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE: INTERNATIONAL STANDARD VERSION

The International Standard Version is produced by the ISV Foundation of Bellflower, California directly from the Hebrew and Aramaic texts of the Hebrew Scriptures and from the Greek New Testament, using a team of conservative biblical scholars drawn from the international Christian community. It is published in a variety of electronic formats, including Amazon Kindle® and Barnes and Noble Nook® editions, as well as Adobe Acrobat® PDF formats and in HTML format for use by webmasters. Visit http://isv.org to learn more.

ALSO BY THE AUTHOR:


A User’s Manual for the Bible: A Simple and Practical Answer to the Challenge Faced by the Church from the Emergent Church Heresy. (Bellflower, CA: ISV Foundation, 2014)


I, Jesus: an Autobiography. (Reporoa, New Zealand: Koinonia Institute, 2014)


I, Jesus: the World’s Last Emperor: Jesus of Nazareth Speaks about the End of the World and How he will Make it Happen. (Bellflower, CA: ISV Foundation, 2015)

On the Validity of the State of Israel. (Reporoa, New Zealand: Koinonia Institute, 2015)

Since He Wrote about Me: Jesus of Nazareth speaks in his own words about the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures. (Bellflower, CA: ISV Foundation, 2016)

Surviving God’s Discipline of a Nation. (Bellflower, CA: ISV Foundation, 2015)

Ten Test Questions for the World’s Finest Woman: A Protestant Theologian Looks at the life of Mary, the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth. (Post Falls, ID: Koinonia House, 2016)

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Jesus the Messiah trusted the Hebrew Scriptures of his day. That’s why Christians have claimed for centuries that the collection of 66 books we call The Bible is reliable with respect to what it affirms, correct in its history of God’s dealings with his universe and with humanity, historically accurate regarding its doctrinal teachings, and utterly trustworthy as a guide for day-to-day life.

But frankly, every generation has had its share of doubters. Maybe you’re one of them...
That’s why we’ve provided this book for your reading. We wish to demonstrate to you what Jesus the Messiah believed about the Bible. Specifically, we’ve counted 57 separate conclusions about the Hebrew Scriptures with which Jesus would have been familiar during the early part of the first century AD.

We’ve gleaned these conclusions by studying every account recorded in the New Testament in which Jesus the Messiah resorted to a quotation or citation of a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures during his discussions with his disciples or in argument with the Jewish leaders of his day. We’ve also include all references to biblical figures or events to which Jesus alluded in the New Testament.

Here’s a summary of each of the 57 claims about the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus made about the reliability of the Bible that had been recorded current as of his lifetime:

**JESUS’ HIGH VIEW OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES**

Claim #1: Jesus claimed that Moses specifically mentioned him, even though the Torah had been written about 1,400 years before Jesus had been born.

Claim #2: Jesus linked his claim that he would judge the dead at the Day of Resurrection to him having been written about by Moses in the *Torah*.

Claim #3: Jesus claimed that the Hebrew Scriptures in general spoke of him, even though the last book of the *Tanakh* had been written about 430 years before he had been born.

Claim #4: Jesus endorsed the absolute reliability and enduring nature of the Hebrew Scriptures so emphatically that he claimed not a single letter or portion of a letter would fail.

Claim #5: Jesus considered the laws contained in the *Torah* to have been authored by Moses.

Claim #6: Jesus considered circumcision to have been handed down from the days of the Patriarchs through the authority of Moses.
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Claim #25: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abel and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his rebuke and warning that judgment was coming to national Israel.

Claim #26: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Able and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his warning about how Israel would soon be destroyed as a nation, an event that occurred in 70 AD.

Claim #27: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Noah existed and that the flood of his day affected the entire world formed the basis of his warning about how his return to earth would affect the entire world.

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Claim #29: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob actually lived formed the basis of his defense of the resurrection of the dead.
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Claim #35: Jesus quoted Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4 as referring to himself.

Claim #36: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 41, using its authority to bolster his claim to be God incarnate.

Claim #37: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 110, and used a quotation from it to demonstrate how David’s Messiah was also God incarnate.

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Claim #41: Jesus cites Psalm 118, claiming that King David’s psalm is predictive of his rejection by Israel and subsequent exaltation.
Claim #42: Jesus believed that King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were real figures in the history of Israel, and that they both would have a place with him at the resurrection of the dead.

Claim #43: Jesus believed that Jonah existed and was swallowed by a sea creature. He employed that historical fact as a comparative to explain his coming resurrection.

Claim #44: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Jeremiah the prophet and his quote from his book demonstrated that he took it for granted that Jeremiah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

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Claim #48: Jesus cites the prophet Isaiah as applying to the rejection by Israel’s first century leaders in their rejection of the righteous requirements of the Law in deference to their oral traditions.

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Claim #50: Jesus cites the authority of the prophet Isaiah to explain what life will be like under his reign during his Millennial Kingdom.

Claim #51: Jesus cites the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to explain why he expelled merchants from the Temple.

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Claim #56: Jesus’ quotation from the prophet Hosea’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Hosea had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Claim #57: Jesus’ mention of the prophet Malachi and his quote from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Malachi had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus of Nazareth trusted the historical validity of the *Tanakh*. Every single person, without exception, who is mentioned by Jesus as having lived during Israel’s previous centuries is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus considered those records to be accurate and trustworthy accounts of actual events. As we will demonstrate within this work, Jesus displayed an unwavering confidence in the historical reliability and internal integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures. His respect for the Word of God even extended to the regulations about divorce and Sabbath observance.

Furthermore, when it came time for Jesus to defend his person, nature, and his mission, he cited the Bible of his day to authenticate his own authority and identity. To Jesus, the Hebrew Scriptures were the inerrant, infallible, and plenary inspired Word of God. If Jesus displayed such unwavering confidence in the integrity and inerrancy of the

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1 The word *Tanakh* is the traditional Hebrew language word for that collection of books Christians call the *Old Testament*. 

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Scriptures, considering every word, letter, and stroke of a letter to be valid and reliable, should not all of us express the very same confidence in the entire record of the completed Old and New Testaments, as well?
AN ASTONISHING CLAIM ABOUT JESUS OF NAZARETH

The Gospel of John records a remarkable statement uttered by one of the first disciples of Jesus the Messiah. In John 1:45, we find this claim made by Philip on the very day the two of them first met, while Jesus was going about calling to himself the twelve individuals who would form the core group of his first followers:
Philip found Nathaniel and told him, “We have found the man about whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote—Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth.”

That this incredible claim could come from the lips of a man who had only moments before met Jesus the Messiah at the very beginning of the man’s ministry is remarkable enough to warrant its own special study.

The Apostle John records Philip as saying that national Israel’s greatest historical figure wrote about Jesus the Messiah around 1,500 years before the rabbi from Nazareth had been born. If we were inclined to do so, we could spend quite some time delving into the implications that come to mind when we ask ourselves just how Philip could have reached such a conclusion after talking to the man for only a few moments. The Apostle John also affirmed that the prophet Isaiah wrote about Jesus of Nazareth. In John 12:41, he wrote that Isaiah “saw his glory and spoke about him.”

AN ASTONISHING CLAIM BY JESUS OF NAZARETH

But there’s more at stake than merely asking the questions, “How did Philip know that Moses wrote about Jesus?” or “How did John know that Isaiah wrote about Jesus?” Consider, for example, this statement uttered by Jesus during one of his angry encounters with the theological leaders of Israel who attacked the man and his message. As the Apostle John records the incident in John 5:43-47, Jesus makes this stinging rebuke:

43I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me. Yet if another man comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44How can you believe when you accept each other’s praise and do not look for the praise that comes from the only God? 46Do not suppose that I will be the one to accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope, 46because if you believed Moses, you would believe me, since he wrote about me. 47But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?”
In this remarkable statement, Jesus of Nazareth confirmed Philip’s comments that Moses wrote about Jesus. “If you believed Moses, you would believe me, since he wrote about me.” The simplicity of this seemingly matter-of-fact statement is astonishing in its implications. Speaking about 1,500 years after Moses led the early nation of Israel out of Egyptian slavery, not only does Jesus affirm the historic authenticity of the existence and work of Moses as he confirms the essential validity of Philip’s comment, but he also boldly asserts that Moses wrote about himself!

**Jesus on the Integrity of the Scriptures**

The late Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, professor of Semitic Philology and Old Testament Criticism at Western Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary (back in the early 1900’s when these schools had an evangelical heritage), was arguably one of the foremost conservative ancient Semitic language experts of the nineteen century. He summarized the importance of gaining an accurate understanding of—and agreeing with (!)—the view that Jesus the Messiah held regarding the reliability of the Scriptures. About a century ago, Professor Wilson observed:

> Objection has frequently been made to the use of the testimony of Jesus in corroboration of the historicity of the persons and events of the Old Testament to which the Gospels tell us that He referred, apparently in full belief in the accuracy and veracity of the Old Testament accounts of these persons and events. These objections are based fundamentally upon the supposition that Jesus in these references was merely conforming to the opinions and beliefs common among the Jews of His time, or that He really did not know enough to perceive that these opinions of His contemporaries were false and their beliefs groundless. For myself, I have always been of the belief and am today, that Jesus knew more about the Old Testament than the Jews of His day than any, or all, of the
wise men of all time; and this belief is based upon the conviction that God hath demonstrated Him to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead. And, if He is the Son of God, I can believe that He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified for my sins, and that He has ascended up on high, having brought life and immortality to light in His gospel.2

Dr. Wilson was correct: His conclusion that Jesus held the Hebrew Scriptures in very high regard, that he considered the entire canon of the Tanakh to be reliable with respect to what it affirms regarding the history of God’s dealings with humanity, and that the Scriptures were trustworthy regarding its doctrinal teachings has never been successfully refuted. Professor Wilson also suggested that anyone who studies the life and claims of Jesus should address themselves to answering the questions, What did Jesus say with regard to the Old Testament? and, Can anyone show that what He said is not true? In view of the character of Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament, it seems to me that all Christians at least should accept His opinion as to the facts of the Old Testament, unless it can be proved beyond controversy that what He thought and said about these facts is false. When it shall have been shown that Jesus was wrong in His treatment of the Old Testament, it will be time to resort to the theory of kenosis, in order to retain at least a remnant of our faith.3

THE KENOSIS: A DISCREDITED THEORY TO EXPLAIN AWAY JESUS’ HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

Starting about 200 years ago, a school of biblical studies called the higher critics began to influence Christian thought. This school of “scholarly” study assumed that the religious heritage of ancient Israel

3 Ibid., pp. 632-633.
was evolutionary in its growth and development. Many higher critics were heavily influenced by German theologians, who denied the deity of Jesus and the historical reliability of the Scriptures.

To these people, the recorded history of ancient Israel was largely mythological in nature. The stories recorded in the ancient texts that told of miracles were, in their view, largely only hagiography, that is, idealized religious stories intended to lend an atmosphere of the supernatural to what in the higher critics’ view was only a set of myths to begin with that had the effect of making the story seem more divine than it was to begin with. The higher critics also held the view that Jesus believed in the ancient traditions because he was a product of the religious mythology and ethos of his day. In short, these deniers of all things evangelical and supernatural believed that Jesus believed that the Scriptures should be taken as reliable historical records simply because he didn’t know any better!

These higher critics believed—without any substantiating evidence—that Jesus’ views about the Hebrew Scriptures were a byproduct of his backward era, cultural milieu, and religious heritage. Jesus held a high view of Scripture, these critics claimed, only because he was raised that way!

In an attempt to provide an “answer” of sorts to these critics, the now largely discredited theory of kenosis posited that in his incarnation, God the Son divested himself temporarily of a portion of his divine attributes, knowledge, form, and glory. These kenoticists, as they were called, claimed that Jesus could be mistaken about the reliability of the Hebrew Scriptures because he grew up in a culture that naively thought that the scriptural record could be trusted as reliable.

The word kenosis (based on the Greek verb KЕVΟW, kenόo) is derived from a reference to the incarnation of Jesus the Messiah in Philippians 2:7, which is rendered by the Holy Bible: International Standard Version as “emptiness.” The result was that Jesus was indistinguishable in outward appearance from generic human beings. Accordingly, due to the kenosis, Jesus could be mistaken about the literalness of Israel’s ancient history as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures.
But this view contains significant problems. Dan Musick, M.A. (Theology: Wheaton Graduate School, 1978) explains these problems with the following thoughts:

It is not uncommon to hear godly radio and television speakers, pastors and teachers teach that Jesus “emptied Himself of His divinity” or His deity, or that He “abandoned a sovereign position.” It has also been said, “When He left heaven and came to this earth, He gave up the voluntary use of His divine attributes.” And another has written, “Jesus restricted the use of these divine attributes when he took on the form of man.” Perhaps you have heard a speaker raise these questions: “While He was here on earth, was He omnipotent? ... God could not do many mighty works? That’s what the Bible says. Was He omnipresent? No. He was restricted by time and space.” It has also been asked, “How could Jesus be omniscient and not know the time of His return?” Another radio speaker has taught that God was downsized. “Think about how big the Word is. Think about how he downsized to become flesh—one cell...” Perhaps words such as these have warmed your heart at Christmas: “Those hands that formed all the worlds... would now have to be held... And the mouth that spoke, for by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, ...would now have to learn to speak Aramaic and Hebrew.”

These are statements and questions about the nature of God as revealed in Holy Scripture and summarized in historic creeds of the Christian faith. They beg for answers to foundational questions of the faith. Would God be God if He did not know the future, or if He did not sovereignly rule the universe? Would Jesus be God if He did not know the future, or if He did not sovereignly rule the universe? When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, did He continue, in His divine nature, to use His omnipotence,
omniscience and omnipresence to sovereignly rule the universe?

Jesus clearly taught, and the rest of Holy Scripture confirms, that He is Son of God and Son of man (Matthew 16:13-17). In the Creed of Chalcedon the early fathers rightly affirmed that Christ “must be acknowledged in two natures, without any commingling, or change, or division or separation.”

The Creed of Athanasius offers an important analogy to help us understand Biblical statements about Christ’s two natures: “As a rational soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ.” Because I am a rational soul I can say, “I will never die.” That statement is not true of my flesh, unless Christ returns before I die. On the other hand, because I am flesh I can also say, “I will not live forever.” That statement is not true of my soul.

In the same manner, certain statements by or about Christ are true only if ascribed to the appropriate nature. For example, because Christ is God He could say “You are of this world, I am not of this world” (NAS John 8:23). This statement is not true of Christ’s human nature. If we err in ascribing this statement to His human nature, we would conclude, as did the doceticists, that Christ was only a spirit. On the other hand, because Christ is man, He elsewhere says concerning His second coming: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (NAS Matthew 24:36). This statement is not true of Christ’s divine nature. If we ascribe this statement to His divine nature, we would conclude that as God, He did not know when He would return. He would not be omniscient, He would be less than God, and thus, not God at all, as the Arians argued.
KENOTIC THEOLOGY

Most kenoticists believe that Christ gave up His sovereign dominion when becoming incarnate. They follow the same logic as the Arians, but they are deceived into thinking their Christ is still God. These could be classified as neo-Arians. Other kenoticists believe that Christ continued being sovereign while on earth, but that His divine and human natures were not truly united into one Person. These could be classified as neo-Nestorian. Most kenoticists thus either diminish the deity of Christ or they undermine the union of the two natures in one Person.

Much of what we hear and read has been gleaned from theologians who have disseminated their views in commentaries and doctrinal treatises. Rather than study the scriptures regarding the kenosis and two natures of Christ, many of these pastors, teachers, and radio and television personalities go to their commentaries or other books in their libraries to find answers that they do not test with Scripture.

In his excellent work on Philippians 2, Rodney Decker shows the following sources for many of the distorted views of the kenosis.

- “Christ had a human soul, to which the Logos imparted his divinity, little by little until he became completely divine” (Dorner).
- Christ “laid aside his deity which was then restored at the ascension” (Gess and Beecher).
- He “abandoned certain prerogatives of the divine mode of existence in order to assume the human,” e.g., omniscience (Gore).
- “He surrendered the external, physical attributes of omniscience, though retaining the attributes of

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love and truth” (A. M. Fairbairn). This was also held by Thomasius, Deilitzsch, and H. Crosby.

- Christ “lived a double life from two, non-communicating life centers. As God, he continued his Trinitarian and providential existence, and as man he was united with a human nature. He did not know consciously anything of his divine, Trinitarian existence” (Martensen).

- “He disguised his deity and attributes, not by giving them up, but by limiting them to a time-form appropriate to a human mode of existence ... His attributes could only be expressed in relation to the (human) time and space that his human form could experience” (Ebrard).

- “He gave up the use of the attributes (cf. Carson, FD&FPJ, 35).”

- “He gave up the independent exercise of the divine attributes” (Strong, ST, 703).

- “He limited himself to the voluntary non-use of the attributes” (Walvoord).

Among Catholics the primary influence has come from Karl Rainer, one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century. According to John O’Connel in the March/April 1997 issue of The Catholic Faith, Rainer speaks of Christ as gradually developing His self-consciousness: “This consciousness in Christ realized itself only gradually during his spiritual history, and this history does not consist only, or even first and foremost, in being occupied with this or that fact of external reality but consists rather in the never quite successful attaining of what and who one is oneself “... “So Christ in His human consciousness never became fully aware of His self-identity, nor was He
fully cognizant that His Sacred Humanity was intimately united to the Logos.”

**Implications of Kenotic Theology**

In trying to understand the mystery of the incarnation, kenoticists have fallen prey to the tendency to submit the authority of God’s Word to human reason: “Understanding is believing” rather than “God said it, and I believe it.” They do not properly acknowledge Christ’s two natures during His 33 years on earth, and they ignore or subtly alter important Christological distinctions in God's Word. Dorner's view is at best a perversion of Biblical, orthodox Christology. The remaining views of the kenosis are senseless—what does the nonuse or nonexercise of omnipresence look like? And they are heretical.

1. **They destroy the integrity of the atonement.** The redemption of all creation (Romans 8:18-22) and of everyone who would ever believe in Christ required not only a perfect human being, but also a sacrifice that was also infinite in every way. It required the “blood of God” (Acts 20:28). “It was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross” (NAS Colossians 1:19-20). The fullness of the Father's divinity was in Christ during His ministry and passion, but most kenoticists substitute the word “partialness” for the word “fullness,” or they diminish the unity of the Person of Christ in the kenosis. Limiting Christ's sovereign deity or separating His two natures would leave all of humanity, and all of creation hopelessly subject to God's curse and to His eternal wrath.
2. **They distort the Christian view of the incarnation.**

The Bible says, “The Word became flesh” (NAS John 1:14); kenoticists teach that God minus the use of His dominion attributes became flesh, or that the Word remained separate from the flesh. The Bible states, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (NAS Second Corinthians 5:19); kenotic thinking holds that only God minus omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, was in Christ, or that God was not truly in Christ. The Bible affirms that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16). To be the Son of God is to have the same substance as God. Kenoticists teach a mutation: God birthed a Son Who either later became God minus boundlessness or Who was never really united to human flesh. “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (KJV First Timothy 3:16). According to kenotic thought the mystery of godliness lies not in the fact that “God was manifest in the flesh,” but that God minus sovereignty was manifest in the flesh, yet was still mysteriously somehow God. Or as Martenson or Rainer would suggest, that God was not really manifest in the flesh, yet was still somehow mysteriously one Person. Such views tend “...to rupture the hypostatic union of Christ’s divine and human natures.”

Sovereignty is an attribute of God. According to Don Fortner it means ruling “all things, everywhere, at all times absolutely.” If, by becoming man, Christ gave up the use of His divine attributes in any way, then He was not sovereign. If Jesus was not sovereign during His earthly ministry, then He was not God. If He was not God, the Word that was God (John 1:1) never became flesh—only part of the Word did. And the
name “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us” (NAS Matthew 1:23), is a lie, and God’s Word is not true.

3. **They deny the immutability of God.** Most distorted views of the kenosis mutate the Immutable. In order for the God the Son to abandon His sovereignty in any way, He would have to change His character or being. This, God would never do. “IAM WHO I AM” (NAS Exodus 3:14). “But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end.” (NAS Psalm 102:27). “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.” (NAS Hebrews 13:8). According to R.C. Sproul, “If God laid aside one of His attributes, the immutable undergoes a mutation, the infinite suddenly stops being infinite; it would be the end of the universe.”

4. **They undermine the monotheistic distinctive of the Christian faith.** The only way to limit the use of attributes of one Person without limiting the attributes of all three members of the Godhead is to divide God into three divine Beings for each of the three Persons. Jesus could then suspend His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, etc., while the Father and Holy Spirit would continue to exercise sovereign dominion over the universe. This view of the Trinity, however, is polytheistic, not Christian. The Christian faith is monotheistic. We believe there is only one God. “Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). The *Creed of Athanasius* affirms this truth: “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but there are not three gods, but one God... The Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent and the Holy Spirit is omnipotent, but there are not three omnipotent Beings, but one omnipotent Being ... We
distinguish among the Persons, but we do not divide the Substance.”

Kenotic theology has spawned two significant distortions of Scripture, that Christ, as God, emptied Himself of His glory, and that as God, Christ performed His miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit and did not use His own divine power to do the miracles. These two distortions of the kenosis must be examined in the light of infallible Scripture.4

**WHAT IS THE EMPTINESS OF THE **KENOSIS**?**

A cogent answer to the heresies of the Kenosis can be discerned by studying the larger context of Philippians 2:7 in Philippians 2:6-8. The passage reads as follows:

6 In God’s own form existed he,  
and shared with God equality,  
deemed nothing needed grasping.  
7 Instead, poured out in emptiness,  
a servant’s form did he possess,  
a mortal man becoming.  
In human form he chose to be,  
8 and lived in all humility,  
death on a cross obeying.

A careful exegetical analysis of the Greek text will demonstrate that the first line of Greek language poetry composed by the Apostle Paul in verse seven, which reads “…poured out in emptiness…” (Greek: ἐκένωσεν, ekénōsen) is defined by, modified by, and explained by the Messiah taking the form of a servant in his incarnation, and not by the temporary removal or setting aside of any of his attributes of deity. That servant’s form is further defined in line number three of verse 7’s poetry, in which the servant’s form that he took is explained as God becoming a mortal man. Other

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aspects of his emptying of himself by taking the form of a servant include his human mortality, (verse 7d), his humble life circumstances (verse 8b), and his obedience to death on a Roman cross (verse 8c). Professor Wilson summarized the issue as follows:

In former days, many good Christian men, who truly loved the Lord and relied humbly on His grace, believed in this doctrine; largely because they thought that the sayings of Jesus with regard to the Old Testament were not true in fact. Judging by the analogy of the Greek and Roman histories, they argued that the early history of the Old Testament consisted largely of myths and legends; and having given up their faith in its historic trustworthiness, and recognizing that Jesus believed in its trustworthiness, they preserved their faith in Him by taking refuge in kenosis. But today we know that the history of Israel, unlike that of Greece and Rome, is confirmed by a mass of evidence, which rules out all the old-time mythical theories as to its origin. Wherever the Old Testament records can be thoroughly tested, they have stood the test. As to writing, language, forms of literature, law, history and religion, it stands approved by the evidence of contemporaneous documents of unquestioned veracity and relativity. Its statements must be accepted on their face value unless it can be shown by evidence from outside that they are false.5

**THE ORTHODOX VIEW OF THE INCARNATION**

The orthodox, conservative view of the incarnation is that the divine attributes of Jesus were never set aside during the time of his mortality, though they were veiled to human sight for those 33-34 years, being manifest only on rare occasions as the circumstances warranted, and fully demonstrated in his post-resurrection appearances.

5 Ibid. p. 638.
In his incarnation, Jesus never “emptied” himself of his divine attributes. He did, however, take on the attributes of a servant, veiling his deity to most people who met him. But he never made a mistake with respect to his understanding of the Tanakh. Accordingly, the only times he asked questions were when he was soliciting information or responses to his actions as teachable moments in which he could display his grace toward people or rebuke stubborn national leaders of Israel. He never attributed historical doubt, doctrinal error, myth, or hagiographic literary genres to the records of the Hebrew Scriptures…not even once. Overall, the confidence displayed by Jesus the Messiah in the essential unbreakable nature of the biblical text was absolutely unshakable.

**The Brilliant Simplicity of the Hebrew Language**

As we will demonstrate within this work, Jesus of Nazareth displayed an unwavering confidence in the historical reliability and internal integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures. He attributed the authorship of the Law (i.e., the first five books of the Old Testament, commonly called the Torah) to Moses, which would have been composed after the exodus of the ancient Israeli people from their years of slavery in Egypt.
(estimated by conservative scholars to around 1440 BC, or perhaps about 90 years earlier).

By the time Moses handed down the tablets of the Ten Commandments to Israel on Mount Sinai, the ancient Hebrews as a nation had enough accumulated knowledge of reading and writing that the transmission of a written set of history and laws to the nation (and the attendant transmission of the text of the Torah itself) could be accomplished with very high confidence. Copies of it would be read and used as a standard for everyday life and practice in national Israel.

The Hebrew language, when compared to the amazing complexity of other ancient languages that were in use during the mid-second millennium, BC, is brilliantly simple in its structure. The Hebrew alphabet itself consists of only 22 consonants, and no vowels. This simplicity of the Hebrew alphabet stands in stark contrast to the alphabets of other contemporaneous languages in use in the ancient world.

COMPARING BIBLICAL HEBREW TO OTHER ANCIENT ALPHABETS

Consider, for example, the Hebrew alphabet in comparison to some of these other ancient languages. We’ve listed on the previous page two versions of the Hebrew alphabet dating from ca. 8th century BC and ca. 6th century BC, respectively. Please note on the next page how both alphabets, while differing in outward appearance, nevertheless contain 22 identical letters. Contrast this simplicity with the Hittite
alphabet, also posted to the right, which consists of about 375 separate characters. Other alphabets that are contemporaneous to ancient Hebrew include the Indus Valley Harappan language (about 417 symbols), the Luwian language of Anatolian (about 500 hieroglyphs), the Akkadian language (more than 1,500 Sumerian characters), the Egyptian language (more than 3,000 characters), and the Chinese language (about 10,000 pictograms).
Well now, maybe you don’t need to. Maybe you’ve spent the last several decades of your life in more-or-less full time analysis of the 66 books that comprise the collection of ancient writings we call the Bible. Perhaps you’ve even done some of your readings in the original languages in which those books were written. But
then again, it can take a lifetime to learn the subtle nuances involved in studying ancient Koiné Greek verbs, Hebrew niphal and other grammatical constructions and vocabulary, and more than a few Aramaic phrases thrown in as well. Bluntly speaking, becoming a competent Bible scholar is difficult work. For most of us, it takes a lifetime of study to begin even to start to articulate what the really difficult questions are that need to be asked and answered. On a personal note, it took me nearly fifteen years of study until I finally began to get the beginnings of an understanding regarding what the Apostle Paul meant when he talked about “veiling” of women in his first letter to the Corinthian congregation.

On the other hand, if you’re anything remotely resembling what we might call the “average” Christian today, chances are your knowledge of the Bible is less than stellar. If you’re a Christian, maybe you’re one of those people who demand that the Ten Commandments should be posted in court room hallways, but you couldn’t recite them in their biblical order if your life depended on your ability to do so.

Maybe you’re not aware that there are two different wordings of the Ten Commandments in the Bible itself, and that they’re not identical in wording! One of those wordings (I’ll let you figure out which one by reading the footnote) is supposed by some to support a literal six-day creation of the Universe. The other wording doesn’t make that claim at all, and it’s clear from the biblical text that its author never intended it to do so! I’ll leave the answer to that conundrum to your own study, with the counsel that this difference in wordings has been known by biblical scholars for centuries, and that there is a simple explanation for it that doesn’t involve mysterious conspiracies or contradictions to the biblical text on any level.

**THE EMERGING CHALLENGE OF THE EMERGENT CHURCH**

One day not so long ago, Koinonia Institute founder and CEO Dr. Charles “Chuck” Missler and I were talking about a disturbing trend that has been infecting the evangelical culture of the United States of America.

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6 See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5
This disturbing trend concerns a church movement commonly called the “Emergent Church”. Some observers call it the “Emerging Church”. As best as I can tell by analyzing the component elements that comprise this movement, emergent churches share two basic common characteristics: first, their leaders avoid biblical doctrine, and second, their members provide only lip service at best to serious, systematic study of the biblical text. All of the other criticisms that I’ve observed of this movement—and there have been hundreds of these criticisms over the past few years—seem to trace their origin to these two basic flaws.

The Emergent Church movement has been described with remarkable clarity by the Internet encyclopedia Wikipedia, a public, open source press institution not generally known for its impartiality with respect to theological matters. Wikipedia opines:

The emerging church is a Christian movement of the late 20th and early 21st centuries that crosses a number of theological boundaries: participants are described as Protestant, post-Protestant, evangelical, post-evangelical, liberal, post-liberal, conservative, post-conservative, Anabaptist, Adventist, reformed, charismatic, neo-charismatic, and post-charismatic. Emerging churches can be found throughout the globe, predominantly in North America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. Some attend local independent churches or house churches while others worship in traditional Christian denominations. Proponents believe the movement transcends such “modernist” labels of “conservative” and “liberal,” calling the movement a “conversation” to emphasize its developing and decentralized nature, its vast range of standpoints, and its commitment to dialogue. Participants seek to live their faith in what they believe to be a “postmodern” society. What those involved in the conversation mostly agree on is their disillusionment with the organized and institutional church and their support for the deconstruction of modern
Christian worship, modern evangelism, and the nature of modern Christian community.\(^7\)

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMERGENT CHURCH**

An insightful analysis of the Emerging Church may be found in an interview conducted with Dr. John Piper that was published on his web site Desiring God ([http://www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org)) on the subject *What is the “Emerging Church”*?\(^8\) Dr. Piper, a well-known and now-retired evangelical Christian pastor from the Reformed tradition, answered the question with this statement:

“Emerging” and “emergent” are sometimes distinguished.

*Emergent* seems to be a reaction—among younger believers primarily, 20- and 30-somethings—to several things. In my judgment it’s not a very healthy reaction, though I can understand why it might happen.

On one hand it seems to be a reaction against the large, plastic, mega-church phenomenon where relationships are not paramount. The emphasis on bigness, success, slick marketing, and super-duper high-powered worship services all feels very plastic, commercial, and not real, poetic, gutsy and down-to-earth. So there is a reaction against that.

On the other hand it’s a reaction to formalized doctrinal statements. The emergent church tends to find creative ways of coming together, like sitting on sofas, using candles for lighting, painting the walls—strange and different things like that—because it’s fresh and new and it gives release to different peoples’ expressions, and so on. And if you try to push them on what they believe they don’t like to tell you.

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8 [http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-emerging-church](http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-emerging-church)
If you Google the emergent church you’ll find some emergent websites. You’ll notice that they don’t like statements of faith. They don’t like them because they say that they alienate people. They push people apart instead of relationally nurturing people to come together.

So that’s the flavor. It’s not defined. There is no list on "this is what it means to be emergent." It’s just kind of a general reactionary movement.

What concerns you most about the emergent church?

The single greatest concern for me is their attitude towards doctrine. Stylistic things are neither here nor there. They come and go: whether you meet in a home or meet in a church, sit in a circle or sit in rows, paint on the walls or not—they’re all just peripheral issues. They’re the wineskins, not the wine.

The issue is their attitude towards truth. I’m deeply concerned about it, and I think that it will be the undoing of the emergent church as it has come to be. They don’t believe that truth itself is an objective propositional thing that has a yes and a no. Nothing is ever either/or, good or bad, right or wrong, ugly or beautiful. It’s all vague.

I’ve talked with some emergent types and tried to understand even their concept of truth, and you can’t get your hand around it.

Here’s a typical kind of response. One person made an accusation that the emergent church’s view of doctrine is like trying to nail Jello to the wall. I mentioned that to one of them and his response to me was, “Why would you want to nail Jello to the wall?” That’s clever, right? Yes it is, but it shows that that Jello is there. You just don’t nail it to the wall. You eat Jello. You cut it in cubes, etc. But you don’t nail it to the wall.

So all of this “nailing to the wall” of theses—doctrines that you would subscribe to—they’re not at home with
that kind of talk. They regard their position here as a virtue, I think, but I regard it as the undoing of their movement.

Now let me clarify one other thing. I said earlier that emergent and emerging aren't necessarily the same.

*Emerging* might be used by some people—like Mark Driscoll—to describe a proper reaction that is taking place against some of the negative things going on in the church, but a reaction that doesn’t throw away the doctrines.

So Mark is a very vigilantly biblical, reformed person when it comes to what we ought to believe. And he would want to stress that a big piece of that emerging church is not just its reaction to certain unreal things in middle class Christianity but also a very intentional mission orientation. The word “missional” is kind of the “in” word today. And a church that is missional tends to be a church where everything is thought about in terms of making an impact on people around the church who are not Christians. You design everything to think that way. And I think that is a good thing.

So be careful, when you're talking *emerging* or *emergent*, to know which group you’re talking about. The Mark Driscoll “emerging” type would put a very high premium on biblical faithfulness, truth, doctrine and propositions. But the emergent types would not put premium on that, but would explicitly say on their websites that they regard that kind of emphasis as harmful.9

Another insightful analysis of the Emerging Church may be found in Matt Slick’s cogently written essay entitled *What is the Emerging Church?*10 published on the web site maintained by Christian Apologetics

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9 [http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-emerging-church](http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-the-emerging-church)

10 [http://carm.org/what-emerging-church](http://carm.org/what-emerging-church)
and Research Ministry. Perhaps it is significant that Matt Slick founded CARM “to respond to the many false teachings of the cults on the Internet.”¹¹ Perhaps it is not insignificant that Mr. Slick’s personal doctrinal statement is theologically sound and above reproach.¹² An analysis of Mr. Slick’s views on the Emerging Church make it clear that the man classifies this movement as heretical and aberrant. Here’s a summary of what the man sees as the main characteristics of Emergent Theology:

Following are some of the common traits I have discovered by reading through Emerging Church material. But please understand that not all Emerging Churches adhere to all the points listed.

1. An awareness of and attempt to reach those in the changing postmodern culture.
2. An attempt to use technology, i.e., video, slide shows, internet.
3. A broader approach to worship using candles, icons, images, sounds, smells, etc.
4. An inclusive approach to various, sometimes contradictory belief systems.
5. An emphasis on experience and feelings over absolutes.
6. Concentration on relationship-building over proclamation of the gospel.
7. Shunning stale traditionalism in worship, church seating, music, etc.
8. A de-emphasis on absolutes and doctrinal creeds
9. A re-evaluation of the place of the Christian church in society.
10. A re-examination of the Bible and its teachings.
11. A re-evaluation of traditionally-held doctrines.
12. A re-evaluation of the place of Christianity in the world.

¹¹ http://carm.org/matt-slick
¹² http://carm.org/what-i-believe-matt-slick
Hopefully you can see some problems in the list. But, I have to say it again, not all Emerging Church adherents agree with all the points. Emerging Church pastors Mark Driscoll and Dan Kimball both acknowledge the necessity of preaching doctrinal truths which properly define Christianity while others like Brian McLaren are extremely lax when it comes to proclaiming the true biblical faith, so much so that he's been called a false teacher.13

**WHAT GOOD CAN THERE BE IN HERESY?**

Strictly defined, heresy is any deviation from the traditional, orthodox teachings of Christianity regarding the person, nature, work, or attributes of God. When applied to matters relating to the Church, the term generally refers to those teachings that attempt to redefine the role of the Church in relation to society. For example, the Scriptures make it clear that there will always be a tension of sorts between the things of the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. They will remain at war until the Messiah comes again to retake his creation by force.

It is helpful to remind Christians that the Messiah’s eventual and final conquering of the kingdoms of this world will not come about by political reform, evangelistic efforts, or even by military conquest by mortal armies. The resurrected saints who accompany Jesus back to earth at his second coming are unarmed. While the Scriptures may indicate that the armies of the earth will gather together to attack God’s armies (Revelation 19:19), the Bible indicates that they will never have an opportunity to begin their attack. Notice how the Apostle John describes the last battle called Armageddon:

14The armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, follow him [i.e., Jesus the Messiah] on white horses.  
15A sharp sword comes out of his mouth to strike down

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the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod and tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.

This passage of Scripture makes it clear that when he comes again, God the Son will destroy all of his enemies in a single action, and with a single uttered statement. His saints will be unarmed because they will be immortal, incapable of even being injured, and because they’ll be protected both by their own immortality and also by the presence of the Messiah himself.

When the Messiah is present in force, the enemy is routed. In a like manner, perhaps the presence of heresy in the Church comes pre-packaged, as it were, with its own set of unique benefits. Destructive as it is, the presence of heresy in the Church serves as a wake-up call to God’s people, telling all of us that we need to re-order our priorities and re-examine our lives. In a sense, destructive movements such as the Emergent Church can serve as a form of “severe mercy,” to borrow a phrase from C. S. Lewis, by which we learn to see our true present condition, compare it with the arena from which we have fallen, and turn to God for yet more grace so that we can become what we ought to be.

THOUGHTS ON HOW TO START FIXING THE PROBLEM

In First Timothy 1:3-6, the Apostle Paul warns his young pastor protégé Timothy that he should

...instruct certain people to stop teaching false doctrine and occupying themselves with myths and endless genealogies. These things promote controversies rather than God’s ongoing purpose, which involves faith. The goal of this instruction is love that flows from a pure heart, from a clear conscience, and from a sincere faith. Some people have left these qualities behind and have turned to fruitless discussion. They want to be teachers of the Law, yet they do not understand either what they are talking about or the things about which they speak so confidently.
This counsel from the Apostle Paul is as relevant today as it was when it was first penned back in the mid-first century of our Christian era. In Second Timothy 3:1-6, the Apostle Paul continues his warnings to his Timothy by instructing him that

...in the last days difficult times will come. ... ²People will be... ⁴lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. ⁵They will hold to an outward form of godliness but deny its power. Stay away from such people. ... ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men oppose the truth. They are depraved in mind and their faith is a counterfeit. ⁹But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those two men, their stupidity will be plain to everyone.

In Second Peter 2:1-3, the Apostle Peter reminds the early church that

...there were false prophets among the people, just as there also will be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. ²Many people will follow their immoral ways, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned. ³In their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. The ancient verdict against them is still in force, and their destruction is not delayed.

Jude, Jesus the Messiah’s younger brother turned Apostle, warned the first century church about false religious leaders and teachers. Starting in verse three of his short book, he wrote that he:

found it necessary to write to you and urge you to continue your vigorous defense of the faith that was passed down to the saints once and for all. ⁴For some people have slipped in among you unnoticed. ... They turn the grace of our God into uncontrollable lust and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus the Messiah. ... ⁸In a similar way, these dreamers also defile their flesh, reject the Lord’s authority, and slander his glorious beings. ...
Whatever these people do not understand, they slander. Like irrational animals, they are destroyed by the very things they know by instinct. How terrible it will be for them! … These people are stains on your love feasts. They feast with you without any sense of awe. They are shepherds who care only for themselves. They are waterless clouds blown about by the winds. They are autumn trees that are fruitless, totally dead, and uprooted. They are wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their own shame. They are wandering stars for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever. … These people are complainers and faultfinders, following their own desires. They say arrogant things and flatter people in order to take advantage of them. … But you, dear friends, must remember the statements and predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus, the Messiah. They kept telling you, “In the last times there will be mockers, following their own ungodly desires.” These are the people who cause divisions. They are worldly, devoid of the Spirit.

Jude’s counsel regarding how we should respond to the presence of false teachers and leaders is cogent and simple. In verse 20 of the book of Jude, he writes:

But you, dear friends, must continue to build your most holy faith for your own benefit. Furthermore, continue to pray in the Holy Spirit. Remain in God’s love as you look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, which brings eternal life. Show mercy to those who have doubts. Save others by snatching them from the fire. To others, show mercy with fear, hating even the clothes stained by their sinful lives.

Then Jude concludes his counsel with an important reminder about how God is eternally vigilant to watch out for the long-term interests of his Elect:
Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling and to make you stand joyful and faultless in his glorious presence, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus the Messiah, our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time and for all eternity! Amen.

Jude reminds us that it is God himself who keeps his own from falling, causing them to stand before him faultless.

**ON THE NEED FOR RENEWED EMPHASIS ON SYSTEMATIC BIBLICAL STUDY AND DOCTRINAL SOUNDNESS**

The primary tool that Jesus the Messiah uses to equip his saints to perform their day-to-day duties as members of the Church is that of gifted, mature men who lead the Body of Christ. As the Apostle Paul clearly explains in Ephesians 4:11-16, Jesus himself gave gifted men to the Church:

11...some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and still others to be pastors and teachers, 12to equip the saints, to do the work of ministry, and to build up the body of the Messiah 13until all of us are united in the faith and in the full knowledge of God’s Son, and until we attain mature adulthood and the full standard of development in the Messiah. 14Then we will no longer be little children, tossed like waves and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, or by clever strategies that would lead us astray. 15Instead, by speaking the truth in love, we will grow up completely and become one with the head, that is, one with the Messiah, 16in whom the whole body is united and held together by every ligament with which it is supplied. As each individual part does its job, the body builds itself up in love.

Let me make things clear: this passage does not say that gifted men equip the saints for the work of the ministry. The giver of the gifted men is the one who equips the saints, and that is Jesus the Messiah himself. As
valuable as they are, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and even the early apostles and prophets are not the equippers of the saints for their works of ministry. Jesus the Lord of his church is the one who does the equipping.

The Messiah’s primary tool for making this all happen is the instructional ministry and day-to-day discipleship function of godly leaders who turn young, relatively immature believers into a “whole body” that is “united and held together by every ligament with which it is supplied” (Ephesians 4:16). The resultant outcome of this process will be Christian maturity, which includes doctrinal solidarity and steadfastness.

Now if Jesus the Messiah uses gifted men to go about perfecting the saints, and if those gifted men are to do that perfecting through the ministry of the Word of God, it stands to reason that those gifted men should be comfortable in their understanding of the historical accuracy and reliability of the Scriptures if they’re going to be teaching that Word of God to the members of their local congregations.

This book has been written in order to present, in a systematic way, what Jesus the Messiah believed about the Scriptures that had been written during the time of his mortality in the first century of the Christian era. By demonstrating what he believed about the Bible of his day, we can be equipped with the tools we need upon which to build the foundation of our own teaching ministries.

We will begin our analysis of the view of Jesus regarding the reliability of the Scriptures by presenting a very brief overview of the four gospel narratives that make up the first four books of the New Testament. These four books contain everything that Jesus himself had to say about the Hebrew Scriptures of his day.

**BACKGROUND TO THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS**

**THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW**

The *Gospel of Matthew*, Matthew’s record of the life of Jesus, is widely perceived as having been written to a largely Jewish audience, since it focuses on what Jesus had to say, presenting him as the rightful Messiah entitled to sit on David’s throne.
Early Christian tradition identified the four Gospels with icons based on the four faces of angelic creatures described in the books of Ezekiel and Revelation (cf. Ezekiel 1:10; 10:14; Revelation 4:7ff; 21:13ff) and also reflecting the encampment of ancient Israel in the wilderness. Matthew’s Gospel has been symbolized as a lion, representing the camp of Judah standing east of the Tabernacle that serves as an expression of the character of the Messiah’s royalty by presenting Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The book is traditionally attributed to Matthew, a descendant of Levi who also served for a time as a tax collector for local Roman authorities. In that capacity, Matthew would have been skilled in the art of tachygraphy, an ancient Greco-Roman system of shorthand that could have enabled him to record the public discourses of Jesus in substantially a word-for-word format.

Many conservative scholars date this work to sometime after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD, even though evidence exists that this work—along with the rest of the New Testament—was actually completed antecedent to that date. One school of textual criticism suggests that Matthew was the first writer to have composed his Gospel, originally recoding its contents in Hebrew or Aramaic, with copies of it translated or transcribed at a later time into Greek for dissemination to the larger Christian community.

The Messianic Theme of this work is *The Gospel for Jews—What did the Messiah Say?*

**THE GOSPEL OF MARK**

The *Gospel of Mark*, John Mark’s record of the life of Jesus, is widely perceived as having been written to a largely Roman audience. Accordingly, this work focuses on what Jesus did as it presents him as a forceful man of action in control of the events surrounding him as he served those in need while demonstrating the great power and ability of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.
Many see this work as being written to provide courage and confidence to believers who were being persecuted in the mid-60’s AD. Mark records fewer parables than does Matthew and Luke, but describes more miracles in which the hand of Jesus is frequently mentioned to emphasize a sense of his personal service. Portions of the final addendum are disputed as to authenticity by some scholars due to conflicting evidence relating to the textual transmission history of parts of the record of post-resurrection events leading up to the ascension of Jesus to heaven.

Mark’s Gospel has been symbolized as an ox, representing the camp of Ephraim standing west of the Tabernacle and serving as an expression of the character of the Messiah’s labor and service by presenting Jesus as the servant of God and the servant of men.

Some scholars hold that this work was the first written Gospel rather than the Gospel of Matthew. Traditionally attributed to John Mark, a companion of Peter and Paul in several missionary activities, it is generally agreed that the Gospel of Mark was written in Rome, first intended for use by Roman citizens living there. Pertinent evidence for this theory includes frequent quotation of Aramaic words, followed by a translation of them, along with explanations of Jewish customs clearly intended primarily for non-Jewish readers.

Conservative scholars who hold to a very early date for the writing of this Gospel attribute this work to the late 60’s or early 70’s AD, most likely before the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD. Some note that allusions to persecution contained in the work (cf. 8:34-38; 10:38-40) seem to be too general to have been written down after the commencement of persecution under Nero in ca. 60 AD. Therefore it is surmised that a more likely post-persecution date for the writing of this work would have resulted in a more intense literary focus consistent with such persecution, had this book been composed at a date later than before 64 AD.

The Messianic Theme of this work is *The Gospel for Romans — What did the Messiah Do?*
THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

The Gospel of Luke, Luke’s record of the life of Jesus is widely perceived as having been written to a largely Greek audience, or at least to gentiles in general. Accordingly, this work focuses on who Jesus knew as it presents him in close interaction with men, women, and even a few children.

Authorship is traditionally attributed to the Greek physician (or Hellenistic Jew) Luke, who appears to have used a number of existing oral and/or written accounts to compose and compile his work, this book is actually part one of a two part compendium of the life of Jesus, the second part of which is the Book of Acts. Some conservative scholars suggest that Luke and Acts were composed under sponsorship of a sympathetic Roman authority named Theophilos (cf. Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1) as part of the Apostle Paul’s written testimony that would have been assembled in preparation for his trial in Rome before Caesar. A record of events surrounding Paul’s trip to Rome is recorded in the second half of Acts.

Luke’s Gospel has been symbolized as a man, representing the camp of Reuben standing south of the Tabernacle and serving as an expression of the character of the Messiah’s brotherly sympathy with humanity by presenting Jesus as the fully human, loving friend, companion, associate, and leader.

The earliest possible date for the completion of Luke’s Gospel must be the conclusion of events recorded in Acts 28, which records the Apostle Paul’s arrest and two years of his captivity in Rome in the very early 60’s AD. The second half of Luke’s narrative history contains no concluding statement recording Paul’s execution in Rome, which history records as having happened ca. 64 AD. Many conservative scholars surmise that Luke and Acts were completed shortly after the two year period noted in Acts 28:30 while Paul was still living. Otherwise, a notation would have been added regarding Paul’s death in Rome to the end of the book of Acts.

The Messianic Theme is The Gospel for Gentiles—Who Knew the Messiah?
**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

The *Gospel of John*, John’s record of the life of Jesus is widely perceived as having been written to a largely Christian audience. Accordingly, this work focuses on the divine nature of Jesus, presenting him as the pre-existent, eternal Word of God who pitched his tent (as the literal Greek of John 1:14 records the event) for a time among the people whom he came to save. This work focuses on a number of “I AM” claims made by Jesus regarding his nature that link the identity, essential character, and nature of Jesus directly and unmistakably to the Name of God recorded in Exodus 3:14.

John’s Gospel has been symbolized as an eagle, representing the camp of Dan standing north of the Tabernacle and serving as an expression of the character of the Messiah’s soaring majesty by presenting him as the Word, God Himself in full, majestic, eternal, and all-powerful Deity and now permanently incarnate as a human being.

Early church tradition attributed this work to John, arguably one of the closest friends that Jesus maintained while in ministry. Highly developed and intricate claims portraying Jesus as both Messiah and as God incarnate are cited in John’s narrative of what Jesus—and not merely John as the writer of this book—had to say about his nature and person, since the “I AM” statements are recorded as actual quotations from Jesus himself, not merely theological statements or conclusions about his nature. The early church father Irenaeus wrote that the Apostle John published this Gospel “during his residence at Ephesus in Asia” (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1).

Conservative scholars suggest that this work was completed well before the destruction of Jerusalem’s Temple in 70 AD, since no mention is made about this momentous event within it. Speculation by non-conservative critics that this Gospel was composed as late as ca. 170 AD were refuted by discovery of the *Roberts Fragment* Ψ52, which contains parts of John 8:31–38, demonstrating that John’s Gospel had gained enough history and wide-spread acceptance to have been circulated extensively by the early years of the second century AD, which
in turns suggests that the Gospel of John had been complete for many decades before the beginning years of the second century AD.

The Messianic Theme is *The Gospel for Believers—Who is the Messiah?*
hat Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated high confidence in the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen in his citations of this collection of 24 separate books that comprise what we Christians call the “Old Testament” and which the Jews call the Tanakh, in the New Testament gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In the ancient Jewish canonical order, what the Christian community considers to be the 39 books of the Old Testament were
looked at as 24 separate books. The twelve minor prophets were considered one book, and 1 and 2 Chronicles and Ezra were concatenated as one book, 1 and 2 Kings were concatenated as one book, and 1 and 2 Samuel were considered a single book as well. Taken together, the word *Tanakh* was coined by the Jews as an acronym taken from the three Hebrew words that described, *first*, the Law of Moses (*Torah*), *second*, the Prophetic Writings (*Neviim*), and *third*, the Historic Writings (*Chetubim*).

We begin our analysis by inviting the reader to consider, for example, the following general statements from Jesus the Messiah himself about the historical accuracy, doctrinal reliability, and general trustworthiness of the Hebrew Scriptures.

**Claim #1:** Jesus claimed that Moses specifically mentioned him, even though the Torah had been written about 1,500 years before Jesus had been born.

Arguably the most astonishing claim that Jesus made about his relationship to and view of the Hebrew Scriptures has been recorded for us by the Apostle John in the fifth chapter of his Gospel. The extended context of his remarks was a doctrinal fight in which he became involved following his appearance at the Bethesda Pool in Jerusalem, which John tells us was located near the Sheep Gate entrance to the city. That location is in what today is the Muslim Quarter of the Old City portion of modern Jerusalem. John mentions in his Gospel that it was surrounded by five colonnades, which could accommodate the presence of what John 5:4 tells us was “a large number of sick people” who “were laying—blind, lame, or paralyzed”.

For many years, higher critics doubted the veracity of John’s record of the healing that Jesus performed at the Bethesda Pool on the sophomoric grounds that they believed John’s claim about the five colonnades was a “hagiographic interpolation”—in other words, that
John made up the story about the colonnades without actually having been there. They claimed that the reference to the five colonnades was added by a later author as a sly reference to the five books of Moses. Apparently, it never occurred to these higher critics that John himself wrote the original account, that he visited the pool himself, and that there really were five colonnades.

Also, since the text of the account in John 5:5 specifically notes that “One particular man was there who had been ill for 38 years,” one would think that a man who knew enough about the incident to record the detail that the individual in question had been ill for exactly 38 years would also know how many sets of colonnades surrounded the pool! More accurately, these higher critics denied that the gospel account had been written by John himself, since there was no evidence that there were five colonnades surrounding the pool, or that there ever had been.

But then in the nineteenth century, archaeologists discovered the remains of the pool. It precisely fitted the description of the Bethesda Pool, right down to the five colonnades. There was one colonnade on each of the four sides of a rectangular structure, and a fifth one that dissected the pool across the middle of the structure.

You can see what the pool looked like in the model of the Bethesda Pool located in the model of ancient Jerusalem that was been constructed on the site of the modern Israeli Museum in Jerusalem. There’s a photo of the model of the Bethesda Pool on the top of the previous page. At any rate, as a direct result of the archaeological discoveries, the theories of the
higher critics that the pool carried only a metaphorical, rather than a historical, reality were finally laid to rest.

The context of Jesus the Messiah’s comment that the ancient Hebrew Scriptures contained accounts written by Moses in which the greatest authority in ancient Israel wrote about Jesus is a theological dispute regarding what Jesus did one Sabbath day when Jesus was visiting Jerusalem to attend one of the Jewish national festivals. At that festival, Jesus decided to heal the man who had been ill for 38 years. As John relates the story in John 5:8-12:

8Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” 9The man immediately became well, and he picked up his mat and started walking. Now that day was a Sabbath.

10So the Jewish leaders told the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.”

11But he answered them, “The man who made me well told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

12They asked him, “Who is the man who told you, ‘Pick it up and walk’?”

Notice, if you would please, how the theological argument was not initially caused by Jesus’ healing of the ill man. It was because the previously ill, but now healed, man was carrying the mat on which he had been laying on the Sabbath day! John 5:16 records how and why the fight began: “So the Jewish leaders began persecuting Jesus, because he kept doing such things on the Sabbath.”

The succinct, blunt reply of Jesus to the Jewish leaders only made things worse! John 5:17-18 records the following remarkable statement:

17But Jesus answered them, “My Father has been working until now, and I, too, am working.” 18So the Jewish leaders were trying all the harder to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath but was also
calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

Notice, if you would, that there were two complaints against the rabbi from Nazareth. First, they objected to Jesus “working” on the Sabbath day; and second, they didn’t appreciate him calling God his Father, because by doing so, he was “thereby making himself equal to God”.

In making his reply to the Jewish leaders, Jesus answered both objections in a single answer. He did this by linking the authority to work on the Sabbath to his eternal existence as part of his divine nature. In simple terms, his claim to have authority to work on the Sabbath day springs directly from his nature as sharing the same divine character qualities as God the Father. That’s because in Jewish thought, to be “a son of” someone means that the individual shares the same characteristic of the person named. So for Jesus to call himself “the Son of God the Father,” what Jesus meant in rabbinic thought was that the old proverb “like father, like son” applied quite literally to himself: Jesus was claiming to make himself equal in character to God himself.

**Claim #2:** Jesus linked his claim that he would judge the dead at the Day of Resurrection to him having been written about by Moses in the *Torah.*

Notice how the argument in which Jesus was engaged with the Jewish leaders reaches its crescendo in John 5:24-29, in which he lays the foundation for what will be his astonishing claim that Moses himself mentioned him way back 1,500 years earlier when the man composed the *Torah:*

> 24 Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, whoever hears what I say and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has passed from death to life. 25 Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, the time approaches, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear it will live. 26 Just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted the Son to have life in himself, 27 and he has given
him authority to judge, because he is the Son of Man.

28 Don’t be amazed at this, because the time is approaching when everyone in their graves will hear the Son of Man’s voice 29 and will come out—those who have done what is good to the resurrection that leads to life, and those who have practiced what is evil to the resurrection that ends in condemnation.

Now what strikes me as remarkable about this astonishing statement isn’t merely that Jesus is claiming to be the one who will judge everyone who has ever lived for each of their actions at the Resurrection Day.

That’s remarkable enough in its own right, but if you read through this section of John’s narrative again very carefully, you’ll see that all of his remarks are a setup for what happens next: Jesus links the origin of the Law of God written by Moses to himself! In John 5:39-40 and John 5:45-47, Jesus complained to the Jewish leaders that:

39 You examine the Scriptures carefully because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. Yet they testify about me. 40 But you are not willing to come to me to have life. …

45 Do not suppose that I will be the one to accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope, 46 because if you believed Moses, you would believe me, since he wrote about me. 47 But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe my words?”

Claim #3: Jesus claimed that the Hebrew Scriptures in general spoke of him, even though the last book of the Tanakh had been written about 430 years before he had been born.

Notice how, at the end of the mortal ministry of Jesus, John Mark records in his Gospel a seemingly off-the-cuff remark about the man’s relationship to the entire corpus of divinely revealed writings called the
Hebrew Scriptures. His apparently off-hand remark is recorded in Mark 14:17-21, specifically at verse 21:

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were at the table eating, Jesus said, “I tell all of you with certainty, one of you is going to betray me, one who is eating with me.” 19 They began to be very sad and asked him, one after the other, “Surely I am not the one, am I?” 20 He told them, “It’s one of you Twelve, the one who is dipping his bread into the bowl with me. 21 For the Son of Man is going away, just as it has been written about him, but how terrible it will be for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had never been born.”

By making the claim that his upcoming execution had been written about in the Hebrew Scriptures, Jesus the Messiah is claiming that his “going away” noted in verse 21 was described by these ancient documents. The last of the books (the book of Malachi) written by the ancient prophets was completed during the mid-400’s BC.

Claim #4: Jesus endorsed the absolute reliability and enduring nature of the Hebrew Scriptures so emphatically that he claimed not a single letter or portion of a letter would fail.

The fifth through the seventh chapters of the Gospel of Matthew record a verbatim transcript of Jesus the Messiah’s first public manifesto regarding what life in the Kingdom from Heaven is all about. Skilled as he was in the ancient speed writing skill of tachygraphy, Matthew recorded what we call “The Kings Speech” word-for-word. After beginning his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus engaged in what for lack of a better term we’ll call a “pre-emptive strike” against criticism by the contemporary Jewish leaders of Jesus’ view of the integrity of the Scriptures.
So radical was his conservative view of the biblical record that he would be attacked time and time again for his presumed tendency to depart from Scripture. As a point of fact, Jesus wasn’t departing from Scriptural truth. Instead, he claimed to be upholding that truth. What Jesus was attacking was the oral tradition handed down for generations by the Jewish leaders, not the written records of the biblical text itself. Matthew 5:17-19 sets forth Jesus the Messiah’s corrective exhortation:

17“No thought that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I didn’t come to destroy them, but to fulfill them, because I tell all of you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished. 19So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom from heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom from heaven.

At this point, let’s make a brief comment about Jesus the Messiah’s use of the term “the Law and the Prophets” as referring to the entirety of the then-existing written revelation of the Word of God. Strictly speaking, the complete Jewish term for what we Christians call the “Old Testament” consisted of three parts, not two. As we noted earlier, the Old Testament was divided into the Torah (consisting of the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy), the Neviim (the major and minor prophetic books), and the Chetubim (the historical writings). Here’s a complete list of how the Jews of Jesus’ day listed the books. For the benefit of our readers who may be familiar with the Hebrew language, we’ve also listed below the actual Hebrew language book titles as they occur in the Tanakh:

- ישעיהו ישם ענייה ורותה — The Torah: The Five Books of the Law
- בראשית — Genesis: The Messiah as the Promised Seed
-SSIPת — Exodus: The Messiah as the Rock that is Struck
- אליהו — Leviticus: The Messiah as the Sacrificial Lamb
Since He Wrote about Me

William P. Welty, Ph.D.

Numbers: The Messiah as the Brass Serpent
Deuteronomy: The Messiah as the Prophet Like Moses

— The Prophets

Joshua: The Messiah as the Captain of the LORD’s Armies
Judges: The Messiah as the Angel of the LORD
First Samuel: The Messiah as Great David’s Greater Son
Second Samuel: The Messiah as Great David’s Greater Son
First Kings: The Messiah as Greater than Solomon
Second Kings: The Messiah as Greater than Solomon

— The Former Prophetic Books
Isaiah: The Messiah as the Wonderful Counselor
Jeremiah: The Messiah as the LORD our Righteousness
Ezekiel: The Messiah as the Prince of the Eastern Gate

— The Latter Longer Prophetic Books
Hosea: The Messiah as the Loving Husband of the Wayward
Joel: The Messiah as the One Roaring from Zion
Amos: The Messiah as the One Standing on the Altar
Obadiah: The Messiah as the One Striking the Pride of Edom
Jonah: The Messiah as the One Seeking Those Who are Lost
Micah: The Messiah as the One from Eternity
Nahum: The Messiah as Stronghold in the Time of Wrath
Habakkuk: The Messiah as LORD in His Holy Temple
Zephaniah: The Messiah as LORD in the Midst
Haggai: The Messiah as the Desire of All Nations
Zechariah: The Messiah as the One Whom They Pierced
Malachi: The Messiah as the Sun of Righteousness

— The Writings

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But in his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus mentions only the first two divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Law and the Prophets) without mentioning the historical book section that the Jews called the Chetubim. His omission is deliberate, but it’s not because he believed that the Writings from Psalms to Second Chronicles had a lesser sense of reliability than the Law and the Prophets. As a point of fact, we’ll see in later chapters, below, that one of the most common references to the Hebrew Scriptures mentioned by Jesus was to the Psalms, specifically, to Psalm 110. And the Psalms were part of the Chetubim. Jesus was using a form of oral shorthand, so to speak, by referring to the entire Tanakh by its first two divisions only. His regular reference to and quoting of the Psalms demonstrates that he held the same high view of the third section of the Hebrew Scriptures that he did to the first two sections. Now with respect to Jesus’ view of the Hebrew Scriptures, he makes specific mention to the verbal, plenary reliability of every word, letter, and stroke of a letter of the
entire Hebrew and Aramaic corpus of the text. Note, if you would, please, this striking statement in Matthew 5:18:

“...because I tell all of you with certainty that until heaven and earth disappear, not one letter or one stroke of a letter will disappear from the Law until everything has been accomplished.”

The smallest letter in the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabets in which the Hebrew Scriptures were composed is the Hebrew letter yod. It looks like this: י.

When Jesus referred to “one stroke of a letter” in Matthew 5:18, he was talking about the small, differential stroke appended to certain forms of the individual letters by which a reader could distinguish between what would otherwise be identical in shape but different in meaning. Consider, for example, these five different Hebrew letters:

ח ה ד ר ב

Read left to right, they represent the Hebrew/Aramaic letters “B,” “R,” “D,” “H,” and “Ch,” respectively.

➤ You’ll notice that the letter “B” consists of two strokes: a lower horizontal stroke and an upper horizontal stroke that curves down to the right and intersects the lower horizontal stroke.

➤ The letter “R” lacks the lower horizontal stroke that occurs in the letter “B”.

➤ The only distinguishing difference between the letter “R” and the letter “D” is the extremely small extension of the upper horizontal stroke on the “D”:

ד  Extender
The letter “H” is formed by adding a small vertical stroke to the letter “D”:

The only distinguishing difference between the letter “Ch” and the letter “H” is that the small vertical stroke added to the letter “D” extends all the way to the top horizontal line of the letter “Ch,” but not to the top horizontal line of the letter “H”:

It was to these strokes that Jesus was referring when he said that not even a stroke of a letter would pass away from the Law and the Prophets before the Word of God would be fulfilled. Jesus wasn’t the only one who held this view. The Talmud itself said the same thing:

- Should anyone, in Deuteronomy 6:4, change (d) to (r), he would ruin the world, because instead of reading “Listen, Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone,” the verse would read “Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is a false Lord.”
- Should anyone, in Exodus 34:14, change (r) to (d), he would ruin the world, because instead of reading “…you are not to bow down in worship to any other god,”, the verse would read “…you are not to worship the one true God.”
- Should anyone, in Leviticus 22:32, change (ch) to (h), he would ruin the world, because instead of reading, “You
are not to defile my sacred name,” the verse would read “Neither are to praise my sacred name.”

➢ Should anyone, in Psalm 150:6, change (h) to (ch), he would ruin the world because instead of reading, “Let everyone who breathes praise the Lord!” the verse would read “Let everyone who breathes profane the Lord.”

➢ Should anyone, in Jeremiah 5:12, change (b) to (k), he would ruin the world, because instead of reading, “They have lied about the Lord,” the verse would read “They have lied like the Lord.”

➢ Should anyone, in First Samuel 2:2, change (k) to (b), he would ruin the world, because instead of reading, “Indeed, there is no one holy like the Lord,” the verse would read “Indeed, there is no holiness in the Lord.”

By claiming that not a single letter or stroke of a letter of the Hebrew Scriptures would ever fail, Jesus the Messiah was claiming that the Bible of his day was reliable in its record of the history that it records, that it was trustworthy in the teachings about God that it contains, and that it was accurate in all aspects of its predictive history that we call prophetic literature.

That the Talmud concurs with the assessment by Jesus the Messiah as to the reliability of the Hebrew Scriptures is, I suspect, an unwitting endorsement of the man’s view of the Bible. That’s because the Talmud was being compiled during the lifetime of Jesus, and was not formally completed until about five hundred years after his earthly ministry was concluded. I know of no instances in which, if the historical record of Scripture were thoroughly tested in comparison with outside evidence contemporaneous to the claimed date of the biblical events, that the prima

facie accounts of the Bible should not be taken as correct where it cannot yet be tested.

Perhaps you’re thinking that all of the above may be very well and good, but the analysis of the letters and strokes of a letter of those five letters was undertaken on the modern Hebrew alphabet. What about the actual Hebrew alphabet characters in use during Jesus’ life time? Well now, the table below lists a selection of letters from the Early, Middle, and Late Hebrew alphabets:¹⁵

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Late</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>י</td>
<td>ר</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>Bet</td>
<td>Tent floorplan</td>
<td>Family, House, In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ל</td>
<td>ו</td>
<td>ד</td>
<td>Resh</td>
<td>Head of a man</td>
<td>First, Top, Beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ד</td>
<td>מ</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>Dal</td>
<td>Door</td>
<td>Move, Hang, Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ה</td>
<td>ג</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>Hey</td>
<td>Man with arms raised</td>
<td>Lock, Reveal, Breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כ</td>
<td>ח</td>
<td>ה</td>
<td>Hhet</td>
<td>Tent wall</td>
<td>Outside, Divide, Half</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The very same pattern of letters and strokes of a letter that applies to the modern Hebrew alphabet also applies to Early, Middle, and Late Hebrew. This striking similarity of appearance is particularly evident in Middle Hebrew, where:

- The “Ch” and the “H” letter forms differ only by a single added descending stroke to the left side of the letter “Ch” or a slightly longer upper top level horizontal stroke for the letter “H”; and,

- In the presence of a descender on the “B” that isn’t present in the “D”; and,

The difference between the “B” and “R” is only evident in the curvature of the descender for the letter “B”.

To sum up, no mere scholarly assumption, theory, claim, or opinion carries enough internal credibility sufficient to warrant maintaining doubt regarding the truth of documents that are twenty or thirty centuries old. Speculation, theory, and “learned opinion” are not evidence sufficient to impeach the integrity of Jesus the Messiah’s faith in the Scriptures. As Professor Robert Dick Wilson observed:

as far as any one today knows, every reference that He made to the Old Testament is true... Today we know that the history of Israel, unlike that of Greece and Rome, is confirmed by a mass of evidence, which rules out all the old-time mythical theories as to its origin. Wherever the Old Testament records can be thoroughly tested, they have stood the test. As to writing, language, forms of literature, law, history and religion, it stands approved by the evidence of contemporaneous documents of unquestioned veracity and relativity. Its statements must be accepted on their face value unless it can be shown by evidence from outside that they are false.16

ON THE BIBLICAL TEXT OF JESUS’ DAY

Unlike the situation faced by those who study the manuscript transmission history of the Greek New Testament, students of biblical Hebrew don’t have to be concerned much with sorting out which manuscripts of the Old Testament are more reliable or trustworthy than others. That’s because with respect to biblical Hebrew, unlike the vast catalog of literally thousands of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament that we have to study, only two different manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament exist to be studied. They are the Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex, named after the cities of Leningrad, Russia and Aleppo, Syria, where they were stored originally.

The Aleppo Codex is now stored in Israel. The Leningrad Codex resides in the National Library of Russia. Both manuscripts are about 1,000 years old, but the Aleppo Codex is slightly older than the Leningrad Codex, dating from the 10th century AD. It was endorsed with respect to its accuracy by Maimonides, the great Jewish scholar of the Middle Ages. However, it lacks most of the Torah and other parts. Furthermore, shortly after World War II (i.e., between 1947 and 1958), 193 of its 487 original pages disappeared from the manuscript and are probably in the hands of private collectors.

In contrast to the Aleppo Codex, the Leningrad Codex is quite complete. It’s the oldest complete codex of the Old Testament that has survived until the 21st century. Accordingly, the Leningrad Codex is the primary source document for recovery of details that are presently
missing from the *Aleppo Codex*. Now with respect to both of these codices, V. S. Herrell has observed:

The Hebrew text … is clearly not the original Hebrew, nor even the Hebrew that was in use in the 1st century AD. The Hebrew of the 1st century AD was closely akin to the Greek Septuagint that we have today; this is clear because, although the Hebrew was little used, when it was used in ancient writing it was clearly in agreement with the Greek Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text. For example, although Philo and Josephus both used the Greek Septuagint, it is believed by most scholars that they frequently had access to a Hebrew Bible and even consulted it on a few occasions. It is through evidence like this that we see that the then current Hebrew disagreed with the Hebrew Masoretic Text of today. In the 1st century, the Christians and all other Greek speaking Israelites, including 1,000,000 of them who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, used the Greek Septuagint. Jesus and His Apostles wrote in Greek and quoted the Greek Septuagint. Of this there can be no doubt. This is a fact that can be confirmed in any encyclopedia or scholarly book on the subject. As we have already pointed out, we know this because the quotations of the Greek New Testament are exactly aligned with the Greek Septuagint, but in sharp opposition to the Hebrew Masoretic Text. There is, however, no reason to believe that they were in

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Figure 7: Exodus 15:2-16:3 from *Leningrad Codex*
disagreement with the Hebrew that was current in the 1st century AD.\textsuperscript{17}

No substantial manuscript problems exist that call into question the essential accuracy of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures of Jesus’ generation. With respect to our modern English language translations of the text of the Bible that Jesus studied, virtually all of them are reliable. While a few notable differences of opinion exist as to the modern day translation of some Hebrew words,\textsuperscript{18} they are reliable in their translation of the history of Israel, the poetic books, and the prophecies of the Old Testament.

To sum up, when you add the testimony of the New Testament to the mix, sacred history and the doctrines of redemption are so well rendered that anyone who reads them may learn by such reading how they may become wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus the Messiah. In those occasions when he refers to the Law, Jesus recognizes the verbal accuracy and the authority of the Biblical texts bearing upon the Sabbath and divorce; and, then, as the Lord of both Sabbath and of man, he makes known a higher and better Law.


\textsuperscript{18} Such as, for example, whether the Hebrew word *almah* used in Isaiah 7:14 means “young woman” or “virgin”. In our work *Ten Test Questions for the World’s Finest Woman: A Protestant Theologian looks at the life of Mary, the Mother of Jesus*, we addressed that subject, demonstrating that the Septuagint’s rendering of *alma* as *parthenos*, or “virgin”, was the correct choice by the pre-Christian translators of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek.
hat Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated high confidence in the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen in his references to Moses throughout the days of his public ministry. We invite the reader to consider, for example, the following direct quotes from the New Testament record:
Claim #5: Jesus considered the laws contained in the Torah to have been authored by Moses.

Immediately upon completing his delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, the Apostle Matthew recorded the following incident in Matthew 8:1-4:

1When Jesus came down from the hillside, large crowds followed him. 2Suddenly, a leper came up to him, fell down before him, and said, “Sir, if you want to, you can make me clean.”

3So Jesus reached out his hand, touched him, and said, “I do want to. Be clean!” And instantly his leprosy was made clean. 4Then Jesus told him, “See to it that you don’t speak to anyone. Instead, go and show yourself to the priest, and then offer the sacrifice that Moses commanded as proof to the authorities.”

The offerings to which Jesus refers are recorded in Leviticus 14:1-32. Notice how the text of this passage begins with an affirmation that it was dictated by God Himself directly to Moses, who then set them down in permanent written form for use by the believing community of ancient Israel.

Also, if you read through the extended section from Leviticus that we’ve reproduced for your perusal, below, you’ll see why Jesus did not specifically tell the cleansed man which offering to present when he appeared before the priests in the Temple. Specifically, the Mosaic law provided a range of offerings, all of which were based on the ability of the offeror to pay, based on his economic stance in the community of Israel. It would be up to the offeror to examine his own circumstances and choose which type of offering to present in the Temple at his appearance before the Lord in the Temple.

Furthermore, the directive by Jesus to the man not to speak to anyone until he had presented himself to the Temple authorities was 100% consistent with the Torah’s command that he would not be considered legally cleansed (even with the Messiah’s supernatural
cleansing!) until he had completed the Law’s required offerings. You can read this requirement in Leviticus 14:1-32:

1 The LORD told Moses, \(^2\) “This is the law concerning those who have infectious skin diseases, after they have been cleansed: \(^3\) The priest is to go outside the camp and examine the infectious skin disease to confirm that the person has been healed. \(^4\) If he has been healed, then the priest is to command that two live and clean birds, some cedar wood, some crimson thread, and hyssop be brought for the one cleansed. \(^5\) Then the priest is to command that one bird be slaughtered on an earthen vessel over flowing water. \(^6\) He is to take the live bird, the cedar wood, the crimson thread, and the hyssop, and dip them together in the blood of the bird that had been slaughtered over the flowing water. \(^7\) He is to sprinkle the blood seven times on the person with the infectious skin disease and then pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird into the open fields. \(^8\) The person who is clean is to wash his clothes, shave all his hair, and bathe in water, after which he is to be declared clean. Then he can be brought back to the camp, but he is to remain outside his tent for seven days. \(^9\) On the seventh day, he is to shave the hair on his head, chin, back, and eyebrows. After he has shaved all his hair, washed his clothes, and bathed himself with water, then he will be clean.”

\(^10\) “On the eighth day, he is to take two lambs without defect, a one year old ewe lamb without defect, one third of a measure of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a meal offering, and one log of oil. \(^11\) The priest who will pronounce him clean is to present the person to be cleansed and these offerings in the LORD’s presence at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. \(^12\) The priest is to take one of the lambs and present it as a guilt offering, along with one log of olive oil, which he is to wave as a raised offering.
in the LORD’s presence. Then he is to slaughter the lamb in the place where he slaughtered the sin and burnt offerings—that is, at a place in the sanctuary. Just as the sin offering is for the priest, so also is the guilt offering. It’s a most holy thing.

14“Then the priest is to take some of the blood from the guilt offering and place it on the right earlobe of the person to be cleansed, on his right thumb, and on his right great toe. Then the priest is to take some of the log of olive oil and pour it into his own left hand. The priest is to dip his right finger in the olive oil that is in his left palm and sprinkle some of the olive oil with his finger seven times in the LORD’s presence.

17“As to the remainder of the olive oil in his palm, he is to place some on the right earlobe of the person to be cleansed, on his right thumb, on his right great toe, and on the blood of the guilt offering. Then he is to place the rest of the oil in his palm on the head of the person to be cleansed, thus making atonement for him in the LORD’s presence. This is how the priest is to present the sin offering to make atonement for the person being cleansed of his impurity. After this, he is to slaughter the whole burnt offering. The priest is to offer both the whole burnt and the grain offerings on the altar. After the priest makes atonement for him, he will be clean.”

21“If the offeror is poor and cannot afford the regular offering, then he is to take one lamb for a guilt offering that will be presented in the form of a wave offering to atone for him, one tenth of a measure of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, one log of olive oil, 22and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, whichever he can afford. One is for a sin offering and the other is for a whole burnt offering.
“On the eighth day, he is to bring them for cleansing to the priest in the LORD’s presence at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The priest is to take the lamb for a guilt offering and the olive oil and wave them as a raised offering in the LORD’s presence. Then he is to take the lamb for the guilt offering and place some blood from the guilt offering on the right earlobe of the person to be cleansed, on his right thumb, and on his right great toe. Then the priest is to pour olive oil into his left palm and use his right finger to sprinkle oil from his left palm seven times in the LORD’s presence. The priest is to place oil from his palm on the right earlobe of the person being cleansed, on his right thumb, on his right great toe, and where the blood for the guilt offering is poured.

As to the remainder of the oil in his palm, the priest is to use it to anoint the head of the person to be cleansed, in order to make atonement for him in the LORD’s presence. Then he is to offer one of the turtledoves or the young pigeons, whichever he can afford. Based on what he can afford, one is for a sin offering and the other is for a whole burnt offering. Along with the grain offering, the priest is to make atonement for the person to be cleansed in the LORD’s presence. This is the regulation concerning one who has an infectious skin disease but who cannot afford his cleansing.”

Perhaps in closing our discussion of this subject, we might do well to point out one other factor regarding the regulations set forth in the Torah regarding cleansing from leprosy. That observation is this: back in the days of Moses and the early Israeli nation, leprosy was a permanent disease. Once it was contracted, it was incurable. That certain disease that we call today “leprosy” bears only a surface resemblance to biblical era leprosy. Biblical era leprosy was far more virulent than its modern equivalent, most notably in the area of communicable nature. The ancient form of the disease was so dangerous that
its victims required complete isolation from other members of the community. While modern leper colonies continue this social tradition to some extent, today’s disease is very difficult to contract by direct physical contact. Given the virulent nature of the disease, and the extreme likelihood that its sufferers would have carried the disease for life, we wonder if the ultimate purpose of the regulations for cleansing were put in place in anticipation of the day that would come when the Messiah would arrive with the power and authority to cleanse lepers with a touch or a word of healing.

I do not mean to appear crass here, but have you ever stopped to consider that whenever you read in the New Testament that Jesus healed a leper with a touch, he was violating the non-contact provisions of the regulations for dealing with leprosy set forth in the Torah? He did this for the same reason that as Lord of the Sabbath, he could override its provisions for the sake of the good of humanity. So also, as Lord of healing, whenever Jesus touched a leper, instead of Jesus being made unclean, the leper was healed, because he came to serve humanity and fulfill the Law.

Claim #6: Jesus considered circumcision to have been handed down from the days of the Patriarchs through the authority of Moses.

In one of his many dialogs with the Jewish leaders of his day, Jesus claimed that the regulation that circumcision be performed on the eighth day of life was given through the authority of Moses, who passed the requirement on to national Israel from the time of Abraham. John 7:19-22 records the claim by Jesus:

22“Moses gave you circumcision—not that it is from Moses, but from the Patriarchs—and so you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.”

By this statement, Jesus affirmed the historical viability not only of Moses, but also of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well.
Jesus on the Torah: The Singular Unity of the Text

Many generations ago, a group of German-based higher critics began to promulgate a theory that the Torah was composed and compiled about the time of the exile to Babylon, or shortly thereafter, and not in the mid-15th century BC, as the conservative scholarly community (and Jesus himself!) contends. They made their determination by assuming that the development of the Tanakh was evolutionary in method. By making this erroneous assumption, these textual critics rejected the unity of the authorship of the Torah, thus standing in irreconcilable opposition to the view of Jesus regarding the five books of Moses. That’s because Jesus considered the entire Torah to be the product of a single author, whom he identified as the man who led the nascent nation of Israel out of Egypt into Canaan.

In contrast to Jesus’ view of the essential unity of the Torah, the German higher critics believed they could determine who wrote the Torah by segmenting the text into differing authors based on how they used the various names of God in their writings. The late Dr. Gleason Archer, Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, summarized the documentary hypothesis of textual criticism by which the authors of the Torah were described by letters of the alphabet:

- J—written about 850 B.C. by an unknown writer in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. He was especially interested in personal biography, characterized by vivid delineation of character. He often portrayed or referred to God in anthropomorphic terms (i.e., as if He possessed the body, parts, and passions of a human being). He also had a prophet-like interest in ethical and theological reflection, but little interest in sacrifice or ritual.

- E—written about 750 B.C. by an unknown writer in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He was more objective than J in his narrative style and was less
consciously tinged with ethical and theological reflection. He tended rather to dwell upon concrete particulars (or the origins of names or customs of particular importance to Israelite culture). In Genesis, E shows an interest in ritual and worship, and he represents God as communicating through dreams and visions (rather than through direct anthropomorphic contact, after the fashion of J). In Exodus through Numbers, E exalts Moses as a unique miracle worker, with whom God could communicate in anthropomorphic guise.

- About 650 B.C. an unknown redactor combined J and E into a single document: J-E.

- D—composed possibly under the direction of the high priest Hilkiah, as an official program for the party of reform sponsored by King Josiah in the revival of 621 B.C. Its object was to compel all the subjects of the kingdom of Judah to abandon their local sanctuaries on the “high places” and bring all their sacrifices and religious contributions to the temple in Jerusalem. This document was strongly under the influence of the prophetic movement, particularly of Jeremiah. Members of this same Deuteronomic school later reworked the historical accounts recorded in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.

- P—composed in various stages, all the way from Ezekiel, with his Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26) ca. 570 B.C. (known as H to Ezra, “the ready scribe in the law of Moses” under whose guidance the latest priestly sections were added to the Torah. P is concerned with a systematic account of the origins and institutions of the Israelite theocracy. It shows a particular interest in
origins, in genealogical lists, and details of sacrifice and ritual.¹⁹

Each of these separate writers had their work compiled and/or redacted by yet another unnamed person into the document we now know as the Torah. The usual suspect for the man who did the editing is someone such as Ezra, who lived after the exile to Babylon was completed, but there appears to be no universal consensus among higher critics as to the “true” identity of this mythical editor.

There is no textual transmission evidence of any kind that supports this documentary theory regarding the origin of the Torah. Surviving copies of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew text that was completed during the 2nd century, BC) are substantially in agreement with the Hebrew editions. Virtually no one dared to suggest that the Torah was written by anyone other than Moses himself²⁰...until, that is, the German rationalist higher critics assumed that Moses could not have composed it and therefore the work had to be the product of a committee of some kind that assembled all of the historical myths (which included the Levitical regulations!) into a single document about 800 years after Israel had been using them to conduct their ministries in the Tabernacle and the Temple.

Claim #7: Jesus had little respect for the traditions handed down about how to obey the Torah, but he had high respect for the authority of the Torah itself.

The Apostle Matthew recorded the following details regarding a theological fight that Jesus had with the Pharisees and Torah experts who were active during Jesus’ public ministry. The incident is recorded in Matthew 15:1-6:

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²⁰ As far back as 1670, the Spanish pantheistic Benedict Spinoza had expressed the view in his Tractatus Theologico-Politicus that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, because he is referred to in the third person rather than by the first, and because he could not have recorded his own death, as is done in Deuteronomy 34. Spinoza proposed Ezra as the final composer of the Torah. But Spinoza’s theory was largely ignored until the rise of the German higher critics.
Then some Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus and asked, “Why do your disciples disregard the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands when they eat.”

But he answered them, “Why do you also disregard the commandment of God because of your tradition? Because God said, ‘You are to honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever curses father or mother must certainly be put to death.’ But you say, ‘Whoever tells his father or his mother, “Whatever support you might have received from me has been given to God,” does not have to honor his father.’ Because of your tradition, then, you have disregarded the authority of God’s word.

We invite the reader to notice that this incident records the high contrast that Jesus makes between the authority of the Law of Moses and the traditions of the elders of first century Israel. Jesus clearly held the view that the traditions put in place over the centuries following Moses’ giving the Law to Israel had the effect of disregarding the authority of the Torah.

Claim #8: Jesus believed that the authority of the Torah originated from the earliest days of humanity, not merely from Mount Sinai.

Claim #9: Jesus believed that the book of Genesis was written by Moses.

Matthew 19:1-8 records a theological debate between Jesus and a group of Pharisees that took place in the territory of Judea late in his ministry. The debate began with what on the surface appeared to be an innocent question about what the Torah had to say about the grounds for divorce. But things quickly morphed into an insightful rebuttal by Jesus in the form of some point-counterpoint questions that were targeted back at the Pharisees. As Matthew records the incident:

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the territory of Judea on the other side
of the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

⁴He answered them, “Haven’t you read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female’ ⁵and said, ‘That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must never separate.”

Jesus bases his answer to the Pharisees on the authority of the Torah. Specifically, he cites Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 as the foundation of his argument to rebut the Pharisees. He concludes his initial stance by assuming the literalness of a proper interpretation of the origin of marriage.

In doing so, Jesus rejects as untenable all theories of the origin and evolution of the marriage institution as a cultural norm that rose gradually as a means to preserve humanity throughout future generations. Instead, he states that marriage is an institution so serious in its form and function that to separate the marital union by divorce is akin to cutting apart a human body. Furthermore, as Dr. Robert Dick Wilson observed:

This is objected to on the ground that it affirms monogamy to have been the original family bond. This has been challenged by the evolutionists who regard the monogamous relation as the result of a long process of development. But can anyone maintain that this has been conclusively proved to be the case? If man is really a fallen creature, as the Bible affirms, he may have departed rapidly and far from this primitive ideal. If man is not a fallen being, not merely does our whole theology need to be radically reconstructed, but the need of redemption is annulled and God’s revelation of free and abundant grace
through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, becomes an absurd delusion.\(^{21}\)

At any rate, the serious answer by Jesus to the Pharisees prompted them to attempt to trap him in a contradiction. In Matthew 19:7-8, they quizzed him:

7 They asked him, “Why, then, did Moses order us ‘to give a certificate of divorce and divorce her’?”
8 He told them, “It was because of your hardness of heart that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. But from the beginning it was not this way.”

This incident is also recorded by the apostle John Mark in Mark 10:2-3, where he said:

2 Some Pharisees came to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”
3 “What did Moses command you?” he responded.
4 They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to divorce her.”

By giving this answer, Jesus recognized as historical fact that there was a beginning to humanity, and by extension, he confirmed the historical veracity of the creation of Adam and Eve.

**Claim #10: Jesus believed that Moses also authored the books of Leviticus, Exodus, and Deuteronomy.**

Mark 7:8-13 provides us with yet another instance of theological debate between Jesus the Messiah and the Pharisees of his day. The occasion was an inquiry from those Pharisees about why the followers of Jesus did not follow the traditions of the Jews relating to washing before meals. Jesus’ reply was to accuse the Jews, telling them:

8 “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” 9 Then he told them, “You have such a

fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your own tradition! 10Because Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and ‘Whoever curses his father or mother must certainly be put to death.’

His accusation against the Pharisees is bolstered by Jesus citing two separate parts of the Torah. In verse ten, he quotes from both Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 when he tells them that Moses said “Honor your father and your mother.” Then he quotes from both Leviticus 20:9 and Exodus 21:17, thus confirming his trust in the authorship by Moses of Leviticus, Exodus, and Deuteronomy.

11But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or mother, “Whatever support you might have received from me is Corban,”’ (that is, an offering to God) 12you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.’ 13You are destroying the word of God through your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many other things like that.”

Claim #11: Jesus believed that the Ten Commandments were authoritative and binding upon national Israel.

That Jesus endorsed the validity of the Ten Commandments is stressed so seriously by New Testament writers that all three of the Synoptic Gospels record an incident when Jesus was quizzed about how an individual could obtain eternal life. Here are the records set forth by the Apostles Matthew, Mark, and Luke, respectively:

Matthew 19:16-19

16Just then a man came up to Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what good deed should I do to have eternal life?”
17Jesus asked him, “Why ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you want to get into that life, you must keep the commandments.”
18The young man asked him, “Which ones?”
Jesus said, “‘You must not murder, you must not commit adultery, you must not steal, you must not give false testimony, 19’honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘you must love your neighbor as yourself.’”

**Mark 10:17-19**

17 As Jesus was setting out again, a man ran up to him, knelt down in front of him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “Nobody is good except for one—God. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Never murder.’ ‘Never commit adultery.’ ‘Never steal.’ ‘Never give false testimony.’ ‘Never cheat.’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

**Luke 18:17-20**

18 Then an official asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”


Please note, if you would, that:

- Even though Jesus omitted from his listing of the Ten Commandments the requirement to keep the Sabbath; and,

- Even though Matthew’s edition of the incident shows Jesus adding the command to love your neighbor as yourself to the list (see Matthew 19:19); and,

- Even though Mark’s edition of this account has Jesus adding a prohibition of cheating in business (see Mark 10:19) to the listing,
nevertheless it is clear from even a casual reading of the above verses that the authoritative nature of the Ten Commandments forms the basis of Jesus’ answer to his inquirer.

Claim #12: Jesus linked his claim to have been the only person to have gone to heaven with the historical reality of the incident of the serpent in the wilderness.

The Apostle John records a claim by Jesus that he was eternally existent in heaven and that he had come to visit the earth. In doing so, he linked the validity of his claim to an historical incident in the life of Moses recorded in the Torah. John 3:13-15 tells us:

13“No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15so that everyone who believes in him would have eternal life.”

The incident to which Jesus is referring can be found in Numbers 21:4-9, where Moses recorded an incident of rebellion against God in which the Israelites incited the anger of the Lord following a military victory against Hormah. The passage tells us that the Israelites...

4…traveled from Mount Hor along the caravan route by way of the Sea of Reeds and went around the land of Edom. But when the people got impatient because it was a long route, 4 the people complained against the LORD and Moses. “Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?” they asked. “There’s no food and water, and we’re tired of this worthless bread.”  

6In response, the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people to bite them. As a result, many people of Israel died. 7Then the people approached Moses and admitted, “We’ve sinned by speaking against the LORD and you. Pray to the LORD, that he’ll remove the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed in behalf of the people.
Then the LORD instructed Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent out of brass and fasten it to a pole. Anyone who has been bitten and who looks at it will live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent and fastened it to a pole. If a person who had been bitten by a poisonous serpent looked to the serpent, he lived.

A number of specific observations spring from examining how Jesus used the incident of the serpent in the wilderness in his dialog with the Pharisees:

- **First**, Jesus assumes that Moses himself recorded the incident in the Torah; and,
- **Second**, the historical reality of the incident is assumed to be accurate as it is described by Moses, because Jesus bases the reality of his crucifixion on the reality of the incident in the wilderness.
- **Third**, Jesus compares the activity of the Israelis in the wilderness who wished to be healed from the snake attacks (merely looking at the image of the serpent) with the activity of faith in himself.

**Claim #13:** Jesus assumed that the claim of ancient Israel that Moses delivered the Law to the nation had historical validity.

In John 7:14-24 the Apostle records yet another debate with the Jewish leaders of his day regarding how the Messiah kept the Sabbath. As part of his debate, Jesus asked the Jews the following rhetorical question and supplied his own built-in rebuke to them, all in the same short answer:

“Moses gave you the Law, didn’t he? Yet none of you is keeping the Law. Why are you trying to kill me?”...
Claim #14: Jesus assumed that the Torah continued in full immutable force and effect through the completion of the life ministry of John the Baptizer.

Luke 16:16-17 records Jesus repeating his claim about the immutability of the Law and the Prophets (which term is, as we noted earlier, is an abbreviated term that means the entirety of the Torah). But he does note that the applicability of the Torah will have reached its culmination in the ministry of John the Baptizer. After him, there will be no more prophetic writings, and Jesus by his sacrifice will fulfill the atonement requirements of the Law:

16“"The Law and the Prophets were fulfilled with John. Since then, the good news about the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everybody enters it enthusiastically. 17However, it is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for one stroke of a letter in the Law to be dropped.

The really puzzling part of this quotation by Jesus is his comments about the Law and the Prophets enduring through John the Baptizer. How can Jesus say the Law is eternal, that the earth will pass away before a single letter of it fails, yet in the very same sentence he claims that it has been fulfilled in John’s day? I believe that the answer to this conundrum lies in making three distinguishing divisions of God’s Law as set forth in the Torah. The divisions rather conveniently can be listed as an acrostic that spells out the word "LAW". The three divisions of the law distinguish between:

L = Life in God’s Society  
A = Atonement Requirements  
W = Witness of God’s Eternal Character

The overwhelming stress on keeping the Law of God as expressed in the New Testament has nothing to do with the Law as an expression of the first two distinguishing characteristics.  

Life in God’s Society is that portion of the Law of God that pertained to the theocratic structure of Israel. This part of the law mandated that a
railing be constructed around roofs so nobody would fall off of them. It also *mandated* that housetops be flat so people could live on the roofs! It was not possible to enforce this aspect of the Law outside of national Israel and it is not binding to the Christian today. If it were, I'd be asking you why, for example, (1) you don't have a flat roof on your home that people can use to visit together, and (2) why you don't have a parapet constructed around that flat roof! And what about the Law’s requirement that people not mix different types of clothing together? Put in that light, I think the abrogation of the requirement to practice this part of the Law today is obvious.

*Atonement Requirements* are that portion of the Law of God that pertained to maintaining both national and personal relationship and fellowship with God through the sacrificial systems of the Old Testament. These were fulfilled in the death and atonement of Jesus. They are not so much as abrogated by his death as they are fulfilled by them. Animal sacrifices are not mandated today, but will be instituted in the Millennial Temple described by Ezekiel’s description of that building set forth in the last 10 chapters or so of Ezekiel’s book. But these sacrifices do not appear to be atonement oriented. They’re more likely thanksgiving offerings.

*The Witness of God’s Eternal Character* is binding on the Christian today. All aspects of the Ten Commandments except those that pertain to Life in God’s Society (keeping the Sabbath as the fourth commandment is one of these) are included as part of this aspect of God’s Law. The Apostle Paul points out that it was the Tenth Commandment that particularly grieved him, since it prohibits coveting.

It is debatable whether execution for adultery falls under the Witness of God’s Eternal Character (enduring for all times and cultures) or Life in God’s Society (abrogated by the destruction of Israel’s national sovereignty under Rome). The first century Jewish community had abrogated the death penalty for adultery, since the Romans had taken that right away from them. Instead, the offenders would be excommunicated from the community of the faithful. Given that the only case where Jesus was challenged to rule on the death penalty (the woman caught in adultery described in the eighth chapter of John), he merely *outed her publicly*
because all of the eyewitnesses refused to testify, I’m inclined to suggest that the death penalty should not apply to moral failures. I note that the penalty that the Apostle Paul mandated for the Corinthian fornicator was not that he be executed for violating the seventh commandment.

By not making distinctions between these parts of God’s Law described above, it is possible to create confusion in the minds of Christians who don’t know any better, and this can lead to a charge of making Christians fulfill the Law in order to be acceptable to God. An early church council, described rather thoroughly in the book of Acts, addresses this concern, and concludes that certain aspects of the Law are binding on Christians, including abstaining from eating blood and from fornication.

**Claim #15: Jesus claimed that throughout the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures, its writers mentioned him.**

Perhaps one of the most remarkable of Jesus’ claims regarding the Hebrew Scriptures is delivered by him during the 40 day period that followed his resurrection. The Apostle Luke records an incident in Luke 23:14-27 involving two of Jesus’ followers. It took place on the road to Emmaus during the week following his crucifixion:

14They were talking with each other about all these things that had taken place. 15While they were discussing and analyzing what had happened, Jesus himself approached and began to walk with them, 16but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

17He asked them, “What are you discussing with each other as you’re walking along?” They stood still and looked gloomy.

18The one whose name was Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn’t know what happened there in the past few days?”

19He asked them, “What things?”

They answered him, “The events involving Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in what he said and did before God and all the people, 20and how our high
priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and had him crucified. But we kept hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel. What is more, this is now the third day since these things occurred. Even some of our women have startled us by what they told us. They were at the tomb early this morning and didn’t find his body there, so they came back and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who were saying that he was alive. Then some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. However, they didn’t see him.”

Then Jesus told them, “O, how foolish you are! How slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! The Messiah had to suffer these things and then enter his glory, didn’t he?” Then, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them all the passages of Scripture about himself.

At the conclusion of this impromptu executive briefing by Jesus the Messiah for the benefit of his two followers, the two men returned to Jerusalem in search of the surviving eleven disciples. After the two men located them, they explained what had happened. Then, rather unexpectedly, Jesus appeared to them. In Luke 23:44-47, Luke tells us what Jesus said to them:

...“These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds so that they might understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is how it is written: the Messiah was to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and then repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
Biblical scholars have wished that a transcript of what Jesus said on these two occasions had been left for posterity. I suggest that one practical effect of Jesus not letting a record of the content of his briefing be left for us to read is that the deliberate omission of a transcript of the briefing has required diligent readers to search the Scriptures in order to assemble their own listing of passages in the *Tanakh* that refer to Jesus. Here’s a partial listing of passages that Jesus may well have mentioned in his briefing:

### 1. The Coming of Shiloh

Genesis 49:10 records a prophetic statement uttered by Jacob regarding a descendant of Judah. The passage is translated by the *Holy Bible: International Standard Version* reads as follows:

10 The scepter will never depart from Judah,  
nor a ruler’s staff from between his feet,  
until the One comes, who owns them both,  
and to him will belong the allegiance of nations.

Some of the older English translations (such as the Authorized “King James” Version) render the third line of this as “until Shiloh comes.” This prophecy has traditionally been interpreted to be an unmistakable claim that it will be from Judah’s house that Messiah shall descend.

The *Targum of Onkelos* (see sample page in the image on the next page, below), produced by non-Christians ca. 35-120 AD as an Aramaic language edition of the *Torah*, translates this passage by rendering “ruler” as “scribe,” the phrase “the One comes, who owns them both” as “the Messiah, whose is the kingdom,” and “to him will belong the allegiance of nations” as “and him shall the peoples [of the world] obey. The *Targum of Jonathan*, also produced by non-Christian Jews ca. first century, AD, does not appear to me to have been rendered in poetic format from the Hebrew to the Aramaic. It reads:

Kings and sultans shall not cease from those of the house of Judah nor scribes from the thousands of the law from his descendants until the time when the king Messiah shall come, the least of his sons, and on account of him shall the peoples pass away.
The Samaritan Targum reads:
The scepter shall not cease from Judah nor a leader from between his ranks until that Shiloh come, and to him shall the peoples be assembled.

The Greek Septuagint translation of the Tanakh, produced ca. mid-second century, BC, renders this verse:

A ruler shall not depart from Judah nor a leader from his loins until the things that are instore for him shall come; and he is the expectation of the nations.

The Latin Vulgate reads:

The scepter shall not be taken away from Judah nor a leader from his loins until he who is to be sent shall come; and he shall be the expectation of the nations.

The Arabic translation of Saadya Gaon (ca. 10th century, AD) reads:

The scepter shall not pass away from Judah nor a lawgiver from his command until that he to whom it belongs shall come and unto him shall the tribes be gathered.

Even the most skeptical of readers of the Christian New Testament cannot help but notice that each of these ancient renderings (all of which were produced for the Jewish community except for the Latin Vulgate) interpret this verse as referring to the Messiah.

There is no textual transmission or manuscript evidence of any kind that even begins to suggest that these words were not originally spoken by Jacob himself, that they were not written down in permanent form by Moses for transmission to future generations, or that they do not refer to Jesus.

As a point of historical certainty, so confident were the rabbinic authorities of the late first century BC and early first century AD that when Roman hegemony was finally extended over national Israel during the reign of Herod, certain Jewish religious authorities were heard to lament, “Woe to us! For the scepter has departed from Israel, and Messiah has not come!” It is unfortunate for them that they did not know at the time that
over in Bethlehem, a descendant of Israel’s ancient King David (through his son Nathan, as the Gospel of Luke records) had been born.

2. **The Star from Jacob**

   Numbers 24:17-19 contains a prophetic statement spoken by the false (!) prophet Balaam regarding the future of Israel’s greater Son:

   A star streams forth from Jacob;  
   a scepter arises from Israel.  
   He will crush Moab’s forehead,  
   along with all of Seth’s descendants.  

   Edom will be a conquered nation  
   and Seir will be Israel’s defeated foe,  
   while Israel performs valiantly.  

   He will rule over Jacob,  
   annihilating those who survive in the city.
The Jewish Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan renderings of “star” as “king” and “scepter” as “Messiah” have never been questioned by Jewish scholars and textual interpreters until the coming of the higher critics.

3. **The Seed of the Woman**

One of the earliest records of humanity recorded by Moses in the book of Genesis documents a conversation between God and the creature called *The Shining One*. Genesis 3:15 is called the *Protoevangelium* because this verse contains the very first prediction of how God will repair the damages caused by the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The verse reads:

15“
I’ll place hostility between you and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring. He’ll strike you on the head, and you’ll strike him on the heel.”

This verse has been interpreted to mean that the Messiah would destroy the power of the Devil. It is on the shoulders of skeptics to demonstrate that this is not the correct meaning of the verse, given that the prophecy has been historically and universally accepted as being a reference to the Messiah.

4. **The Prophet like Moses**

At one point during the early ministry of John the Baptizer, a group of men were sent by the Pharisees to quiz the man about his identity. At the time of the interview, Jesus had not yet revealed himself to national Israel. In John 1:19-25, the Apostle John recites how the conversation went:

19This was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and descendants of Levi to him from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?”

20He spoke openly and, remaining true to himself, admitted, “I am not the Messiah.”

21So they asked him, “Well then, are you Elijah?” John said, “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?”
He answered, “No.”

22“Who are you?” they asked him. “We must give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

23He replied, “I am ‘...a voice crying out in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the Lord’s highway,’” as the prophet Isaiah said.”

24Now those men had been sent from the Pharisees.

25They asked him, “Why, then, are you baptizing if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?”

Notice, if you would please, how the Pharisees specifically ask John the Baptist if he were “the Prophet” in verses 21 and 25. John emphatically refuses to be identified with this individual. You’ll find the same reference to “the Prophet” clearly noted in one of the miraculous feeding instances that Jesus performed during his public ministry. John 6:13-15 tells us that after feeding thousands of men (not counting women and children):

13...they collected and filled twelve baskets full of pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

14When the people saw the sign that he had done, they kept saying, “Truly this is the Prophet who was to come into the world!” 15Then Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, withdrew again to the hillside by himself.

The term “the Prophet” finds its origin in Deuteronomy 18:18-19, where Moses records a conversation between God and him that took place one day regarding the future prophets who would arise in years to come. Moses records God as having told him:

18I will raise up a prophet like you from among their relatives, and I will place my words in his mouth so that he may expound everything that I have commanded to them. 19But if someone will not listen to those words that
the prophet speaks in my name, I will hold him accountable.

Throughout the history of Israel from the time of Moses until the final entry into Roman captivity of national Israel and the destruction of Herod’s Temple in 70 AD, absolutely no one has arisen that even begins to demonstrate any of the public recognition (either in favor of or against) that would characterize “the Prophet”. Who’s to say that the Prophet isn’t a not-so-oblique reference to the Messiah?

**Claim #16:** Jesus certified that the feeding of national Israel in the wilderness with manna actually occurred.

Nobody knows what the manna was made of that fed national Israel for about 40 years during the wilderness wanderings described in the Torah. We don’t know by what agency it was supplied to the ancient Israelis. All we know is that the text of the Hebrew Scriptures attributes its origin to the daily, supernatural supply by God to meet the nutritional needs of his people. As a point of linguistic fact, the Hebrew word for “manna” is merely a question that is literally translated as “What is it?” The substance has no formal name in the Hebrew language! The text of the Torah tells us that:

- It was delivered during the night to the area surrounding the encampment of national Israel in the wilderness; and,
- The supply continued unabated for decades; and,
- It was delivered only in quantities sufficient for a single day, except on the morning before the Sabbath, at which time a quantity sufficient to alleviate collection on the seventh day of the week was provided; and,
- Its substance would only last for a few hours. If any were kept overnight, it would spoil rapidly and be inedible the next morning (except for the
quantity gathered in anticipation of the Sabbath day).

Jesus commented on the manna in a discussion with some Jewish leaders, as recorded by John 6:30-32 and by John 6:49:

30So they asked him, “What sign are you going to do so that we may see it and believe in you? What actions are you performing? 31Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

32Jesus told them, “Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. …

49Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and died.”

In regards to the manna in the wilderness, Robert Dick Wilson comments:

But just what God did there in the wilderness, we do not know, nor how He did it. Nor do we know how Jesus fed the five thousand. Neither do we know how He made the universe and the mountains and the cattle on a thousand hills. He is the greatest of all physicists, electricians and mechanics, the maker of chemists and chemicals, the fashioner of our bodies and spirits and the one who cares for them. When He wills to go beyond the ordinary processes and laws of the nature, which He has created, we pause in adoration and wonder and exclaim: “What has God wrought?” We read Job and Isaiah and cry out: “What is man that thou art mindful of him?”22

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Claim #17: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the Scripture cannot be disregarded or broken.

John 10:34-36 contains a quote by Jesus the Messiah that comes directly from Psalm 82:6. After quoting the Psalm, note that Jesus calls attention to a question that he wants his inquirers to answer. But Jesus’ question has a built-in assumption, the truth value of which he takes quite literally for granted: the Scripture cannot be disregarded. The literal Greek reads, “It is not possible to break the Scripture.” For those of our readers who understand Koiné Greek, the verse reads: καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή (kai ou dýnatai luthēnai he graphē):

34Jesus replied to them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, “You are gods’”?

35If he called those to whom a message from God came ‘gods’ (and the Scripture cannot be disregarded), how can you say to the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world, ‘You’re blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I’m the Son of God’?”

The Greek verb used by Jesus in this parenthetical phrase, λυθῆναι (luthēnai), means “to undo” what is tied up or constrained. It has been used to refer to the breakage of a seal on a legal document (such as a will), “to loosen, set free, or untie” an animal, a restraining chain, or a prisoner from a jail, or “to remove” a wrapping, such as the grave-clothes that bound Lazarus in John 11:44. Jesus claimed in a rather matter-of-fact way that the Scripture cannot be overturned in such a manner.

Claim #18: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the authority of Moses should be respected and obeyed.

Even though Jesus of Nazareth remained at odds with the Jewish religious authorities throughout his entire public ministry, he was never at odds with respect to the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, the authority of Moses himself, or with respect to the authority of the descendants of Moses who occupied Moses’ seat of authority.

The high contrast that is evident in regards to the high value of the Hebrew Scriptures always stood out in contrast with the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. One of the more startling examples of this dichotomy stands out with crystal clarity when one examines Matthew 23:1-7:

1Then Jesus told the crowds and his disciples, 2“Then the scribes and the Pharisees administer the authority of Moses, 3So do whatever they tell you and follow it, but stop doing what they do, because they don’t do what they say. 4They tie up burdens that are heavy and unbearable and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they refuse to lift a finger to remove them.

5They do everything to be seen by people. They increase the size of their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 6They love to have the places of honor at festivals, the best seats in the synagogues, 7to be greeted in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by people.

Claim #19: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the suffering and betrayal that he would undergo was predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures by the Prophets.

Luke records a statement by Jesus to his followers by which he declares that the salient events relating to his upcoming crucifixion were predicted by the Hebrew Scriptures. Luke 18:31-33 records what he said:

31Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “Pay attention! We’re going up to Jerusalem. Everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled, 32because he’ll be handed over to the unbelievers, and will be mocked, insulted, and spit on. 33After they have whipped him, they’ll kill him, but on the third day he’ll rise again.”

Now with respect to this surprising claim that everything written by the prophets whose writings contributed to the Hebrew Scriptures would
reach their fulfillment over the next few days, it may surprise our readers to learn just how many prophecies contained in the Old Testament are considered by biblical scholars to have been completed in the life of Jesus. Listed below are 353 of them:  

**HEBREW SCRIPTURE PROPHECIES FULFILLED BY JESUS THE MESSIAH**

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Claim #20: Jesus held the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in such high esteem that he linked the entirety of the Law and the Prophets to their integrity.

While Jesus clearly recognized the validity and authority of the Ten Commandments, he also unmistakably linked the authority of the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus to the theological integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures. In Matthew 22:35-40 (and reiterated in Mark 12:28-34), Jesus indicated that the integrity of the Law and the Prophets rested on two commandments that were never included in the original set:

35 One of them, an expert in the Law, tested him by asking, 36 ‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’

37 Jesus told him, ‘“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the greatest and most important commandment.

39 The second is exactly like it: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments.”
Mark 12:28-34

28Then one of the scribes came near and heard the Sadducees arguing with one another. He saw how well Jesus answered them, so he asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of them all?”

29Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

32Then the scribe told him, “Well said, Teacher! You have told the truth that ‘God is one, and there is no other besides him.’ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

34When Jesus saw how wisely the man answered, he told him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that, no one dared to ask him another question.

Notice how these two commandments are recorded in the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus:

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

4“Listen, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5You are to love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

Leviticus 19:18

You are not to seek vengeance or hold a grudge against the descendants of your people. Instead, love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.


Claim #21: Jesus held conversations from time to time with Satan, which demonstrated that he believed this creature existed and had influence in the world.

Claim #22: Jesus held the book of Deuteronomy in such high esteem that he used it to rebut the temptations of Satan during his time in the wilderness.

Jesus endured several occasions of temptation by Satan during his pre-ministry time of spiritual testing in the wilderness. It comes as a surprise to many to learn that it was from the book of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus quoted his answers to Satan’s accusations. Notice how he cites the book of Deuteronomy in rebuttal to all three temptations:

Luke 4:3-4 (citing Deuteronomy 8:3)

3 The Devil told him, “Since you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread.”

4 Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One must not live on bread alone, but on every word of God.’”

The larger context of Jesus’ answer from Deuteronomy comes from Deuteronomy 8:1-20:

1 “Be careful to observe every command that I’m instructing you today, in order that you may live, increase, and enter and take possession of the land that the Lord promised by an oath to your ancestors. 2 Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way these 40 years in the desert, to humble and test you in order to make known what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you, causing you to be hungry, yet he fed you with manna that neither you nor your ancestors had known, in order to teach you that human beings are not to live by food alone—instead human beings are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.
4“‘The clothes you wore did not wear out, nor did your feet blister during these 40 years. 5Be convinced in your heart that as a father disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you. 6Observe the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him, 7because the LORD your God is bringing you to a good land—a land with rivers and deep springs flowing to the valleys and hills. 8It’s a land filled with wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, and pomegranates. It’s a land filled with olive oil and honey— a land without scarcity. You’ll eat food in it and lack nothing. It’s a land where its rocks are iron and you can dig copper from its mountains.”

10“‘When you have eaten and are satisfied, bless the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you. 11Be careful! Otherwise, you will forget the LORD your God by failing to keep his commands, ordinances, and statutes that I’m commanding you this day. 12Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you have built beautiful houses and lived in them, 13when your cattle and oxen multiply, when your silver and gold increase, 14then you will become arrogant. You’ll neglect the LORD your God, 15who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery, and who led you through the vast and dangerous desert, that parched land without water, with its poisonous snakes and scorpions. He brought water out of solid rock for you, 16and fed you in the desert with manna that neither you nor your ancestors had known, to humble and test you so that things go well with you later. 17You may say to yourselves, ‘I have become wealthy by my own strength and by my own ability.’ 18But remember the LORD your God, because he is the one who gives you the ability to produce wealth, in order to confirm his covenant that he promised by an oath to your ancestors, as is the case today. 19If you neglect the LORD your God, follow other
gods, and serve and worship them, I testify to you today that you will certainly be destroyed. Just like the nations whom the LORD destroyed before you, so will you be destroyed, because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

Several biblical scholars have speculated over the centuries that the threats contained in verses 19-20 of this chapter from Deuteronomy were prophetic references to what happened when Jerusalem was finally destroyed in 70 AD under Roman General Titus. We’ll have more to say on this subject starting on page 133, below.

*Luke 4:5-8 (citing Deuteronomy 6:13)*

5The Devil also took him to a high place and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant. 6He told Jesus, “I will give you all this authority, along with their glory, because it has been given to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7So if you will worship me, all this will be yours.”

8But Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’”

This dialog between Jesus and Satan demonstrates the high regard Jesus had for Deuteronomy 6:10-15, since it is from that passage that Jesus drew his first response to the Temptation in the wilderness. The original passage reads:

10When the LORD your God brings you to the land that he promised to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he will give you large and beautiful cities that you didn’t build, 11houses filled with every good thing that you didn’t supply, wells that you didn’t dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you didn’t plant. When you eat and are satisfied, 12be careful not to forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and slavery. 13Fear the LORD your God, serve him, and make your oaths in his name. 14Do not follow other gods, from the gods of the
peoples around you. 15 For the LORD your God who is among you is a jealous God. He will turn his anger against you and destroy you from the surface of the land.

The answer of Jesus to Satan from this portion of Deuteronomy includes in its larger context the motivational warning that disobeying it would incite the disciplinary wrath of God.


9 The Devil also took him into Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the Temple. He told Jesus, “Since you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 because it is written, ‘God will put his angels in charge of you to watch over you carefully.

11 With their hands they will hold you up, so that you will never hit your foot against a rock.’”

12 Jesus answered him, “It has been said, ‘You must not tempt the Lord your God.’”

Jesus cites the very next verses in Deuteronomy 6:16-19 to answer Satan’s third challenge in the wilderness. The original passage from Deuteronomy reads:

16 “Don’t test the LORD your God like you did in Massah. 17 Be sure to observe the commands of the LORD your God, his testimonies and his decrees that he gave you. 18 Do what is good and right in the LORD’s sight so it may go well with you. Then you’ll enter and possess the good land that the LORD your God promised to your ancestors, 19 expelling all your enemies before you, as the LORD said.”

**Claim #23:** Jesus held Deuteronomy in such high esteem that he cited it as the basis for Church discipline.

In one of his discourses on Church relations, Jesus addressed the issue of discipline for disobedient believers in Matthew 18:15-16:
“If your brother sins against you, go and confront him while the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. But if he doesn’t listen, take one or two others with you so that ‘every word may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’”

The citation from the Hebrew Scriptures cited in Matthew 18:16 is from Deuteronomy 19:15, the larger context of which reads in Deuteronomy 19:15-21:

“The testimony of one person alone is not to suffice to convict anyone of any iniquity, sin, or guilt. But the matter will stand on the testimony of two or three witnesses. When a malicious witness takes the stand against a man and accuses him, then both must stand with their dispute in the LORD’s presence, the priests, and the judges at that time. The judges will investigate thoroughly. If the false witness lies in testifying against his relative, do to him just as he intended to do to his relative. By doing this you will purge evil from your midst. When others hear of this, they will be afraid and will not do such an evil deed again in your midst. Your eyes must not show pity—life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot.”

**Jesus on Administration of Justice**

Jurisprudence is the philosophy of the administration of law. It is an admirable goal to attempt to conform a nation’s laws to biblical truth. But the outworking of those standards runs squarely into this challenge: the entire presuppositional structure of western jurisprudence stands in conflict with the biblical standard of the administration of law. Until we come to understand this fundamental conflict, and adjust our application of jurisprudence to a nation’s judicial standards, those standards will, of necessity, result in continual dichotomy.

For example, the modern model of jurisprudence dictates that criminal trials are adversarial in form and function. There is a prosecuting
attorney who represents the interests of the national, state, regional, or municipal government. The prosecutor’s function is to bring an indictment against the accused. The accused is provided a defense attorney, either at the accused’s own expense or at the expense of the state. The judge in the proceeding acts as the referee between the adversarial parties. The jury acts as the adjudicators of the evidence in order to determine either innocence or guilt beyond reasonable doubt. Witnesses to the crime are called by the prosecutor, using subpoena powers to compel testimony even if the witness is reluctant to testify.

Everything described above with respect to the modern model is antithetical to the jurisprudence in force in the Jewish community of the Bible. In Jerusalem at the time of Jesus the Messiah, (i.e., ca. the early to mid-30’s A.D.), there was no prosecuting attorney. The witnesses or the aggrieved victim were the prosecutors. If they declined to press charges, there would be no trial, whether for a criminal or a civil matter. There was no jury. The judge represented the interests of the defendant.

In cases where capital punishment was called for as the penalty for a criminal conviction, the witnesses were responsible for initiating the carrying out of the death penalty, which in the biblical economy required the guilty party to be taken to a high place, thrown from there to the ground (thus stunning the convicted criminal), and then large boulders were to be cast at the individual, killing the criminal.

The first stones were to be cast by the witnesses. The penalty for perjury in any trial was that the party whose testimony’s validity was impeached was to suffer the same penalty that fit the crime on trial. You can read the specific statute about this in Deuteronomy 19:19, above. In the case of a capital offense, the penalty for perjury was death by stoning. The first stone would be cast by the person who had been falsely accused.

What made the biblical system of jurisprudence so fair and just was that it provided much room for grace and leniency. The penalty for theft was not prison time. It was four-fold restitution from the criminal. The penalty for rape was execution, but only if the victim testified as the prosecuting witness against the attacker. If the witness decided to forgive the attacker, no case could be brought against the attacker. If the criminal
was repentant, the judge had broad discretionary authority to dismiss the charges.

Under the biblical system of jurisprudence, the penalty for moral offences against God, against his people, and against his Word remained high, thus reflecting the moral outrage of God at rebellion and lawlessness.

But in actual practice, the Bible records only a couple of instances when the harsh penalties for disobedience to God’s law were enforced to the limits of ancient jurisprudence. In the book of Exodus, a man was stoned to death for violating the Sabbath. In this instance, the act of disrespect was considered to be a “sin with a high hand,” i.e., disobedience carried out in direct rebellion against God’s right to insist that people live life according to his standards. David, despite committing the sins of murder and adultery, was never prosecuted nor executed because he repented for his behavior when confronted by the prophet Nathan.

In the New Testament, the only time Jesus himself was confronted with a demand that the biblical standard of jurisprudence be brought to bear with respect to a criminal matter, it was to enforce a biblical penalty for the commission of an act of porneia, that is, for an incident of sexual immorality, where the woman had been caught in the very act. It is to this famous story that we now must turn in order to extract some principles by which a suggested set of guidelines for administering justice with respect to Law can be crafted.

**GUIDELINES FROM JESUS ADJUDICATING A CAPITAL CRIMINAL CASE**

When you add up the sum of all things relating to the Christian worldview of life, it really doesn’t matter whether your background is traditional Catholicism, the Protestant Community, Orthodox Church, or something else: **everybody** agrees that the standards set by Jesus of Nazareth are the *sine qua non* (that is the essential element, indispensable component, or necessary factor) relating to what defines godly, wise, and just behavior.

Frankly speaking, nobody will ever be rebuked by God the Father because he or she behaved *too much* like Jesus. Bearing this principle in
mind, the Apostle John records an incident in John 8:2-11 where a woman caught in the very act of adultery is brought before Jesus:

2 At daybreak he appeared again in the Temple, and all the people came to him. So he sat down and began to teach them. 3 But the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. After setting her before them, 4 they told him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death. What do you say?” 6 They said this to test him, so that they might have a charge against him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.

7 When they persisted in questioning him, he straightened up and told them, “Let the person among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. 9 When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the oldest, and he was left alone with the woman standing there. 10 Then Jesus stood up and asked her, “Dear lady, where are your accusers? Hasn’t anyone condemned you?”

11 “No one, sir,” she replied.

Then Jesus said, “I don’t condemn you, either. Go home, and from now on don’t sin anymore.”

We can dismiss from consideration the transparent motives of the Pharisees in bringing this case to Jesus to begin with. They weren’t interested in having justice done. Their objective was to place Jesus squarely on the horns of an impossible dilemma.

If Jesus were to act as trial judge and call for her death by stoning, he would run afoul of Roman authorities, who had removed from Jewish leaders the authority to execute criminals. In the case of the woman caught in adultery, the Pharisees intended to bring a charge of sedition against Jesus if he agreed to act as judge in the case that had
been brought before him. If Jesus were to refuse to prosecute, the Pharisees could bring a charge of failing to enforce the Law of Moses in his role as acting judge of the criminal proceeding. In short, it was a case of “damned if you do, damned if you don’t”.

But Jesus called their bluff, so to speak, and took the case. He fulfilled the requirements of the law perfectly, by reminding the witnesses that as judge of the trial, he would be cross-examining the witnesses. The witnesses whose testimony could not be refuted, that is, whose testimony was “without sin,” as the rabbis used the term in the first century A.D., would be required to cast the first stone.

Of course, the very same law that called for the death of the woman caught in adultery applied equally well to the woman’s partner, whom the Pharisees rather conveniently neglected to arrest. Jesus knew that the penalty for committing perjury in a capital case was that the false witness was required to be stoned, along with any witness whose testimony could be demonstrated to be incomplete or otherwise inconsistent with truth—by the accused woman in the case of the woman noted in John 8. Accordingly, by accepting the invitation to act as judge in the case, Jesus was putting the witnesses on notice that their lives were on the line and subject to forfeit if he were able to prove on cross-examination that perjury had been committed.

And so the witnesses walked away from the trial. The case against the woman collapsed due to lack of witnesses, not because she was innocent of the charges, but because nobody would testify against her. So Jesus let her go with a warning, even though she was guilty as charged. The resultant outcome was that all requirements of God’s justice were met, and a repentant woman was extended saving grace.
hat Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated high confidence in the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen in his absolute declarations that various historical figures cited in the Tanakh actually lived and that various events—including the supernatural events—actually occurred.

In essence, Jesus the Messiah denied that the supernatural events recorded in Scripture were hagiographic in intent; that is, he denied that they were spiritual embellishments by anonymous ancient authors intended to enhance the credibility of sacred history. To put things in simple terms, if time travel were possible, Jesus of Nazareth held the view
that it would be possible to go back into biblical history and personally meet Adam, Eve, Abel, Noah, Abraham, King David, King Solomon, Elijah the Prophet, the Queen of Sheba, Jonah, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Hosea, and Malachi.

It would also be possible to have witnessed the creation of Adam (and of Eve from Adam’s body), to have seen Abel killed by his brother Cain, to have observed Noah’s flood, to have met Abraham as the man dined with the three divine visitors just before the destruction of the cities of the plain, or to have watched the region of Sodom and Gomorrah while those cities were being destroyed by fire. A time traveler could have met Jonah on the beach on the west coast near ancient Nineveh, where he was deposited on shore following his experience with the sea creature.

Claim #24: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Adam and Eve existed formed the basis of his high view of marriage.

Matthew 19:3-6 demonstrates from the dialogues in which Jesus engaged with the Pharisees that Jesus took it for granted that Adam and Eve existed:

3Some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

4He answered them, “Haven’t you read that the one who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female’ 5and said, ‘That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? 6So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must never separate.”

Before we proceed any further in our discussion of Jesus’ view on creation, perhaps we should take a moment to discuss Jesus obvious reluctance to refer to himself with first person pronouns when talking about his claimed divine attributes. He also rarely utilized active verbs when talking about
his claims to be able to exercise divine authority. For example, notice Jesus’ comments about himself in Mark 2:10:

“I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins…”

Jesus does not say, “I want you to know that I have authority on earth to forgive sins…” To do so would create the appearance of arrogance. So he avoids creating an impression of presumption by referring to himself in the third person singular. In other places in the New Testament, the reader also will observe that when referring to his actions as God, Jesus will utilize passive verbs instead of employing the active voice. For example, consider this statement made by Jesus in Matthew 10:26-28 during an address he made to his followers about why it’s important never to be afraid of those who persecute them:

26“So never be afraid of them, because there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing secret that will not be made known. 27What I tell you in darkness you must speak in the daylight, and what is whispered in your ear you must shout from the housetops. 28Stop being afraid of those who kill the body but can’t kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell.”

In these four short sentences, Jesus is telling his followers that:

- **First,** nothing can be hidden forever, because he will uncover all things hidden, a power that only God possesses.
- **Second,** nobody can keep secrets from him, because he will reveal them, a power of omniscience that can be wielded only by God.
- **Third,** instead of fearing other people, the followers of Jesus should fear him, because he can destroy human beings in hell, a prerogative that only God possesses.
JESUS’ USE OF THE PASSIVE VOICE TO DESCRIBE HIS DEITY

An observant reader of the New Testament Gospels will also note that in the records of his public dialogs, Jesus refers to his possession of divine attributes in an almost casual, off-handed way, displaying a matter-of-factness that, frankly speaking, is incongruous with respect to the man’s obvious humility, his heart as a servant of humanity, and with respect to the astounding claims that are being made by these verbs in the passive voice, third person singular.

Jesus is saying: “I can destroy the ungodly in hell,” and, “I will reveal all hidden and secret evil activities undertaken by the ungodly.” And he makes these statements obliquely, with humility, almost as if he’s sharing a secret that only a select few people are privileged to hear. We do not wish to appear indelicate here, but nowadays people who speak that way about themselves have a tendency to be placed in rubber rooms by court-ordered psychologists on the grounds of mental instability. An incident recorded in Luke 7:48-50 provides a significant insight concerning the dynamics that were at work in Jesus’ comments about his authority to forgive. The context of the incident recorded by Luke concerns a conversation Jesus had with a woman during an evening meal:

48 Then Jesus told her, “Your sins are forgiven!”
49 Those who were at the table with them began to say among themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins?”
50 But Jesus told the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Those sitting at the table watching the interaction between Jesus and the woman whose actions had drawn their attention during the dinner concluded that there was something unusual about the person of Jesus himself.

In simple terms, what Jesus said to the woman would, in other circumstances, be considered the highest arrogance at least, and downright blasphemous at worse. His comments were out of school, out of place, and far out of the protocol of a dinner discussion. And yet there is a casualness,
Since He Wrote about Me

William P. Welty, Ph.D.

a presuppositional set of assumptions that pervades the character of Jesus as he talks casually to the woman. That casualness is the self-confidence displayed as he tells the woman, “Go in peace.” He tells her something that only God can truly know (that her sins had been forgiven), even though the extension of forgiveness is something that only God can accomplish.

And therein lies the consternation expressed by the dinner guests. They knew that one of only three possible conclusions could be drawn from what Jesus was saying to the woman: either Jesus was committing blasphemy, or he was claiming to know a fact that only God could know, or that he was claiming to be God himself.  

All of the above discussion regarding Jesus’ tendency to veil any references to his divine abilities behind his employment of passive verbs applies directly to Matthew 19:4, because the “one who made them” at the beginning was Jesus of Nazareth himself, acting at the very beginning of creation to create Adam and Eve. The Apostle John addresses this truth about Jesus of Nazareth in John 1:3, where he writes:

3 Through him all things were made, and apart from him nothing was made that has been made.

The wide-reaching extent of this claim is absolutely breathtaking: John informs his readers that everything that exists came about through the creative activity of Jesus of Nazareth during his pre-incarnate state. Stars, planets, galaxies, asteroids, meteors, interstellar dust clouds, angels, and all life on earth, including Adam and Eve, came from his creative hand.

On another occasion recorded in Mark 10:5-9, Jesus explained that Moses delivered the Torah’s divorce regulations to Israel because God anticipated that the stubborn, hard-hearted disobedience of national Israel would lead to a failure to maintain God’s high standards relating to marriage.

5 But Jesus told them, “It was because of your hardness of heart that he wrote this command for you. 6 But from the

25 For a more detailed discussion of the remarkable claims of Jesus regarding his claims to being God incarnate, see our previous work I, Jesus: an Autobiography (Reporoa, New Zealand: 2014), written by this author with Dr. Chuck Missler.
beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’
That’s why ‘a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they’re no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, man must never separate.”

Claim #25: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abel and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his rebuke and warning that judgment was coming to national Israel.

Luke 11:48-51 demonstrates from Jesus’ rebuke to the Pharisees that Jesus took it for granted that Able existed and that Zechariah was a historical figure:

48So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors, because they killed those for whom you are building monuments. 49That is why the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles. They will kill some of them and persecute others,’ 50so those living today will be charged with the blood of all the prophets that was shed since the foundation of the world, 51from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who died between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation!

Claim #26: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Able and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his warning about how Israel would soon be destroyed as a nation, an event that occurred in 70 AD.

During the final week of Jesus’ mortal life and public ministry, he provided a massive, extended rebuke to the religious leaders of Israel. You’ll find the entire discourse recorded in the 23rd chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. In that discourse, Jesus took it for granted that Able and Zechariah were historical figures, and that their shed blood would be requited by the destruction of national Israel, and event that occurred during the lifetimes
of many of the very people who heard his rebuke. The reference to Abel and Zechariah is found in Luke 11:49-51:

49 That is why the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles. They will kill some of them and persecute others,’ 50 so those living today will be charged with the blood of all the prophets that was shed since the foundation of the world, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who died between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation!

Abel’s death at the hand of his brother Cain is described in Genesis 4:8. The assassination of Zechariah is described in Second Chronicles 24:20-21:

20 Then Jehoiada the priest’s son Zechariah was clothed by the Spirit of God, and he stood above the people and told them, “This is what God has to say: ‘Why are you breaking the LORD’s commandments. You’ll never be successful! Because you have abandoned the Lord, he has abandoned you.’”

21 But the people conspired against him, and at the direct orders of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the LORD’s Temple. 22 This is how King Joash failed to remember the kindness that Zechariah’s father Jehoiada had shown him: he killed his son. As he lay dying, Zechariah cried out, “May the LORD watch this and avenge.”

The destruction that Jesus mentioned in Luke 11:51 was fulfilled by the invasion of Jerusalem by Roman General Titus in 70 AD.

**The Destruction of Jerusalem**

Luke’s Gospel alone records a portion of a private, executive level counsel from Jesus the Messiah about what lay ahead for the city of Jerusalem leading up to the coming destruction of the Temple and related events. Consistent with Luke’s pattern to emphasize the relational aspects
of the events surrounding the life of Jesus, Luke’s comments on the destruction of Jerusalem will focus on how the divine pattern of judgment sees its outworking and effect on the citizens of Jerusalem. As one observer notes:

What Luke does is easier to understand when we grasp how divine history was read by the Jews, as well as by the prophets. The belief was that God’s judgment followed certain patterns. How he judged in one era resembled how he would judge in another. Because God’s character was unchanging and because he controlled history, such patterns could be noted. Thus deliverance in any era was compared to the exodus. One event mirrored another.
Exilic judgments, whether Assyrian or Babylonian, were described in similar terms. This “mirror” or “pattern” interpretation of history has been called a typological-prophetic reading of the text, with the “type” reflecting a basic pattern in God’s activity. This way of reading history sees events as linked and mirroring one another. Sometimes the events are described in such a way that we modern readers would not readily notice that distinct events are being discussed. Sometimes a text offers clarifying reflection after more events detailing God’s program have been revealed. Jesus’ eschatological discourse links together two such events, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the events of the end signaling his return to earth. Because the events are patterned after one another and mirror one another, some of Jesus’ language applies to both. Mark and Matthew highlight the mirror’s long-term image, while Luke emphasizes the short-term event. Either focus is a correct portrayal of Jesus’ teaching. Failure to appreciate the typological background to this speech, however, has led to an
overemphasis of one image against the other within the Synoptics. Some readers insist that the portrait of one writer must exactly match that of another. Instead, complementary emphases are possible. But appreciation of typology allows each author to speak for himself and allows the accounts of all the Synoptic writers to be viewed not in contradictory or one-sided terms but as complementary. The speech makes several points.

- First, Luke clearly shows how the destruction of AD 70 is distinct from but related to the end. The two events should not be confused, but Jerusalem’s destruction, when it comes, will guarantee as well as picture the end, since one event mirrors the other. Both are a part of God’s plan as events move toward the end.

- Second, Jesus’ prophetic character is highlighted by this section. God is speaking through Jesus about unfolding events in the plan. Such prophetic gifts were highly respected in the ancient world (Philo Life of Moses 2.9.50-51).

- Third, the Jewish nation’s fate was clearly tied to its reaction to Jesus. The reader is not to question that the events Jesus describes will result from the nation’s failure to respond to him (19:41-44). In fact, if one were to ask why Jerusalem was being judged, Luke has given

➢ Fourth, the passage offers reassurance to disciples that God will enable them to face persecution and deliver them from it, whether by giving them words to say in their own defense or by saving them after martyrdom.

➢ Fifth, the call is to remain steadfast because God is in control.

So the speech offers information and exhortations. It provides a general outline but not a detailed, dated calendar of future events. Such a general portrait without detailed dates is a common form for biblical apocalyptic material. We must be careful not to get more specific than Scripture does about the events of the future. Even though the portrait Jesus gives is general, he is saying, in effect, “Rest assured, God’s plan is being fulfilled.”

Luke 21:20

20“So when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then understand that its devastation is approaching.

Luke’s employment of the slightly disjunctive Greek phrase ὅταν δὲ ἰδεῖτε, Ἡταν δὲ ἰδεῖτε, (literally, “Now when you observe...”) suggests that by the Messiah using the second person plural verb, his followers to whom the Messiah is speaking will one day serve as personal eyewitnesses.

of what is to come. This use of the Greek present tense sets what Jesus will be saying about the future invasion of Jerusalem apart from his answering response to the question asked by the disciples regarding the end of the age, since the end of the age will not take place until the Gospel is proclaimed throughout all nations of the earth. To sum up, the end of the age will not take place for centuries, but the destruction of Jerusalem will be accomplished within a generation; i.e., in less than about 40 years, and some of the people listening to him at that moment would live to see that destruction. The siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD was the decisive event of the First Jewish–Roman War. The Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus, with Tiberius Julius Alexander as his second-in-command, besieged and conquered the city of Jerusalem,\(^27\) which had been occupied by its Jewish defenders in 66 AD. The siege ended with the sacking of the city and the destruction of its Temple on the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av, which also “happened” to be the anniversary of the destruction of Solomon’s Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. (The destruction of both the first and second temples is still mourned annually as the Jewish fast Tisha B’Av.)

There is still some debate as to whether or not Titus actually ordered the destruction of the Temple complex. We are inclined to side with G. J. Goldberg’s view expressed in his contrarian article *The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem*.\(^28\) He writes:

> The Temple was destroyed despite Titus’ order that it be preserved, and despite his attempts to put out the fire once it started. So writes Josephus, and so this is how Titus wished to be seen. But a later historian, Sulpicius Severus (apparently based on Tacitus' lost history) says the opposite -- that Titus ordered the destruction. It is difficult to know the truth, but a glaring piece of evidence is the calendar: Titus held the decisive council to determine the Temple’s fate on the Ninth of Av, and the fire began the next day, the Tenth. The Tenth corresponding exactly to the date of the destruction of the First Temple by


\(^{28}\) See [http://www.josephus.org/FlJosephus2/warChronology7Fall.html](http://www.josephus.org/FlJosephus2/warChronology7Fall.html).
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Jeremiah 52:12; but 2 Kings 25:8 places it on the Seventh of Av). Titus' Jewish advisers, including Josephus, would have made him aware of that fact. We can be all but certain that Titus chose the meeting date for its historical significance, and attack on the Temple on the Tenth would have been auspicious for Roman success and a fateful signal for the Judeans.

But for Josephus, the date of the fire was not due to Roman choice. He had been trying his hardest to obtain the peaceful surrender of the rebels and in this way preserve the Temple and the city. The long, long sermon he claims to have given before the walls is surely a fabrication.

It is easy to imagine that after the destruction he would have tormented himself: “Is there something I could have said that would have saved the Temple? If I had only found the right words...” The idealized speeches can be seen as an intellectual way to handle this guilt, as indeed, perhaps, is his entire writing of the War. In these speeches he finds solace by explicitly identifying himself with Jeremiah, another prophet who failed to save his city. There was nothing, he realizes, that he or any human could have done:

The Deity, indeed long since, had sentenced the Temple to the flames; but now in the revolution of the years had arrived the fated day, the Tenth of the Month of Lous [Av]. [...] Deeply as one must mourn for the most marvelous edifice which we have ever seen or heard of, yet may we draw very great consolation from the thought that there is no escape from Fate, for works of art and places, any more than for living beings. And one may well marvel at the exactness of the cycle of Destiny; for, as I said, she waited until the very month and the very day on
which in bygone times the Temple had been burnt by the Babylonians.29

His solution is simple. The destruction was not Josephus’ fault, nor was it the decision of Titus: the date was not the choice of Rome, but the decision of Fate. Josephus is required to praise Titus, as he did Vespasian before him, because these were chosen by Destiny. By doing so, he was able to relinquish any idea of his own guilt, and live in a kind of peace.


21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, those inside the city must leave it, and those in the countryside must not go into it, 22 because these are the days of vengeance when all that is written will be fulfilled. 23 “How terrible it will be for those women who are pregnant or who are nursing babies in those days!—because there will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be carried off as captives among all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled on by unbelievers until the times of the unbelievers are fulfilled.”

The destruction predicted by Jesus in Luke 21:21-24 was fulfilled with astonishing brutality and literalness. Consistent with a prediction recorded by the prophet Daniel, the Temple was not to be destroyed until the Messiah was “cut down,” (Daniel 9:24-26) as the Bible records Gabriel warning Daniel about the future of Israel:

24 Seventy weeks have been decreed concerning your people and your holy city: to restrain transgression, to put an end to sin, to make atonement for lawlessness, to establish everlasting righteousness, to conclude vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. 25 So be informed and discern that seven weeks and 62 weeks will elapse from the issuance of the command to restore and

29 Cf. War 250, 267-270
rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed Commander. The plaza and moat will be rebuilt, though in troubled times. Then after the 62 weeks, the anointed one will be cut down (but not for himself). Then the people of the Coming Commander will destroy both the city and the Sanctuary. Its ending will come like a flood, and until the end there will be war, with desolations having been decreed.

The pro-Roman Jewish historian Josephus described some of the circumstances surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in chapters eight and nine of Book Six of his famous treatise, War of the Jews:

(403) So the Romans being now become masters of the wars, they both placed their ensigns upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had gained, as having found the end of this war much lighter than its beginning; for when they had gotten upon the last was, without any bloodshed, they could hardly believe what they found to be true; but seeing nobody to oppose them, they stood in doubt what such an unusual solitude could mean. (404) But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses wither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; (405) and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. (406) But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met

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with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood. (407) And truly so it happened, that though the slayers left off at the evening, yet did the fire greatly prevail in the night, and as all was burning, came that eighth day of the month Gorpieus [Elul] upon Jerusalem; (408) a city that had been liable to so many miseries during the siege, that, had it always enjoyed as much happiness from its first foundation, it would certainly have been the envy of the world. Nor did it on any other account so much deserve these sore misfortunes, as by producing such a generation of men as were the occasions of this its overthrow.

CHAPTER 9

1. (409) Now, when Titus was come into this [upper] city, he admired not only some other places of strength in it, but particularly those strong towers which the tyrants, in their mad conduct, had relinquished; (410) for when he saw their solid altitude, and the largeness of their several stones, and the exactness of their joints, as also how great was their breadth, and how extensive their length, he expressed himself after the manner following:-(411) "We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war, and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers!" (412) At which time he had many such discourses to his friends; he also let such go free as had been bound by the tyrants, and were left in the prisons. (413) To conclude, when he entirely demolished the rest of the city, and overthrew its wars, he left these towers as a monument of his good fortune, which had proved his auxiliaries, and enabled
him to take what could not otherwise have been taken by him.

2. (414) And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and opposed them, but should take the rest alive. (415) But, together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and the infirm; but for those that were in their flourishing age, and who might be useful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and shut them up within the walls of the court of the women; (416) over which Caesar set one of his freed men, as also Fronto, one of his own friends; which last was to determine every one's fate, according to his merits. (417) So this Fronto slew all those that had been seditious and robbers, who were impeached one by another; but of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph; (418) and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theaters, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves. (419) Now during the days wherein Fronto was distinguishing these men, there perished, for want of food, eleven thousand; some of whom did not taste any food, through the hatred their guards bore to them; and others would not take in any when it was given them. The multitude also was so very great, that they were in want even of corn for their sustenance.

3. (420) Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-
seven thousand, as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, (421) the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which, at the very first, occasioned so great a traitness among them that there came a pestilential destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a famine, as destroyed them more suddenly.31

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE SIEGE**32

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<tr>
<td>4.658-663; Life 416</td>
<td>Dec 69 - Early 70</td>
<td>Vespasian, the new Emperor, dispatches son Titus from Alexandria to finish the war in Judea. Titus marches to Caesarea with 2000 Alexandrian troop and 3000 Euphrates guards under command of Tiberius Alexander (Jewish apostate). Josephus accompanies them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.40-66</td>
<td>Titus nears Jerusalem; first fight.</td>
<td>Legion XV and XII join Titus; and encamp at Gibeah of Saul, 30 stadia (3.5 mi, 5.5 km) north of Jerusalem. While Titus reconnoiters with 600 horsemen, the Judean fighters attack, but Titus bravely plunges through them to safety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>The Legions assemble and camp at Jerusalem.</td>
<td>Legion V joins Titus by way of Emmaus. The camp is moved to Mt. Scopus, overlooking Jerusalem. Legion X soon joins them, making a separate camp on the Mt. of</td>
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32 See [http://www.josephus.org/FlJosephus2/warChronology7Fall.html](http://www.josephus.org/FlJosephus2/warChronology7Fall.html)
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<td></td>
<td>Olives, east of the city across the Kidron valley.</td>
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<td>5.25; 5.71</td>
<td>The factions awake to the danger.</td>
<td>In Jerusalem, the factions have continued fighting. Nearly all of the grain stored in the city has been burnt during the conflict. When confronted with the reality of the three Roman camps, the factions at last make an uneasy alliance among themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.72-97</td>
<td>Daring Judean attack on Titus.</td>
<td>A group of Judean soldiers dash across Kidron in a surprise attack on the 10th Legion. Titus and picked troops come to the rescue, driving the Judeans back down the ravine, Titus at times singlehandedly keeping them from advancing. “Thus, if without a syllable added in flattery or withheld from envy, the truth must be told, Caesar personally twice rescued the entire legion when in jeopardy…” (5.97)</td>
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<td>5.98 ff;</td>
<td>John of Gischala controls the Temple.</td>
<td>John of Gischala (Josephus’ old rival in Galilee) defeats Eleazar’s Zealots and gains control of the inner court of the Temple. The factions are reduced to two. Simon son of Gioras (the popular leader from the countryside) has 10,000 Judeans plus 5,000 Idumeans, John has 6,000 of his original men plus 2,400 of Eleazar’s that have joined him. Simon controls the Upper City and the Third Wall to the Kidron valley at the southeast corner, and part of the Lower City. John controls the Temple and</td>
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<td>5.248-257</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.114</td>
<td>Josephus begins negotiations.</td>
<td>Josephus conveys to the rebels Titus’ invitation to peace negotiations, but receives no response.</td>
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<td>5.106-130</td>
<td>Approach to the city walls levelled.</td>
<td>Titus orders the leveling of gardens, walls, plantations of the suburbs, flattening the space from Scopus almost to the city walls. A Judean pretense at negotiations ends in an ambush of several Roman soldiers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.133; 5.567</td>
<td>May 1, 70 Nissan/Xanthicus 14</td>
<td>Titus and three legions move camp to the northwest corner of Jerusalem, two stadia (1/4 mile) from the tower Psephinus. The 10th Legion remains on the Mt. of Olives.</td>
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<td>5.261</td>
<td>Titus, Josephus and Nicanor reconnoiter.</td>
<td>Titus circles the walls to select an assault point, accompanied by Nicanor and Josephus in an attempt to negotiate with the rebels. Nicanor (an old friend from Galilee) is wounded by a rebel arrow in the left shoulder.</td>
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<td>5.260</td>
<td>Assault point chosen.</td>
<td>Titus decides to make assault “opposite the tomb of John Hyrcanus” in the northwest in order to capture the Upper City and the Antonia fortress. The Legions are ordered to build earthworks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.262-274</td>
<td>Both sides begin artillery fire.</td>
<td>Simon places previously captured Roman artillery on the walls opposite the works, but his men are inexperienced with their</td>
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<td>use. Titus positions artillery in front of his engineers for protection. The 10th Legion has the best artillery, capable of sending a one-talent (75 pound/34 kg) stone a distance of two stadia (one-quarter mile/370 meters). The Judeans place observers on the walls to warn of the incoming missiles, which are clearly visible white stones, allowing time for their men to take cover. The Romans respond with stealth technology: they paint the stones black.</td>
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<td>5.275-289</td>
<td>The battering rams begin to act on the walls.</td>
<td>The ramps having been completed to within ramming distance, Titus orders the battering rams into action. The tremendous noise of the battering spurs the rival Judean factions into a truce, and they jointly attack the rams from the walls with fire and projectiles. In a ground sortie, Judeans set fire to the Roman works – “Jewish daring outstripped Roman discipline” -- but Titus drives off the attackers and the fire is extinguished. In this attack one Jewish prisoner is taken and crucified in sight of the walls to frighten the populace. An Idumean general, John, is killed by an arrow.</td>
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<td>5.292</td>
<td>Roman tower collapses.</td>
<td>The next night a fifty-cubit-high Roman siege tower collapses; the troops panic, believing the rebels had invaded. Titus calms them.</td>
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<td>5.300-302</td>
<td>May 25 Artemisius/Iyyar 7</td>
<td>After 15 days of battering, Jerusalem’s outer (Third) wall begins to break from the rams. The insurgents abandon the wall without much concern, in favor of defending the other two. The Romans raze a large part of the wall and the northern quarter of the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.303-315</td>
<td>Romans move camp to the Second Wall.</td>
<td>Titus moves the camp to within the Third Wall. Among the Judeans, John defends the Antonia fortress and the north portico of the Temple, Simon occupies the approach to the tomb of John Hyrcanus and the wall near the Herodian tower Hippicus. They stage quick sorties against the Romans and “still cherish hopes of salvation;” Simon in particular is revered. Judeans “thought only of the injury which they could inflict, and death seemed to them a trivial matter if it involved the fall of one of the enemy. Titus, on the other hand, cared as much for his soldiers' safety as for success...he ordered his troops to prove their manhood without running personal risks.”</td>
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<td>5.317-330</td>
<td>False negotiations by Castor.</td>
<td>Titus brings the battering ram against the central tower of the north portion of the Second Wall. The Judean deceiver Castor delays Titus with false peace negotiations, but a suspicious Josephus refuses to take part. Castor attacks one of the negotiators; when the battering is resumed, Castor sets fire to the tower and escapes.</td>
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<td>5.331-347</td>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>The Second Wall cracks. Titus enters but is forced back. Jerusalem’s Second Wall is breached five days after the Third Wall. Titus with picked troops recklessly enters the breach in the Second Wall and into a crowded market district, asking the citizens to surrender peacefully so as to preserve the city. But the Judean militants attack, many soldiers are wounded, “and the entire invading force would probably have been annihilated, had not Titus come to their relief, covering them as the soldiers are forced back through the wall.”</td>
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<td>5.347</td>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>The Second Wall is razed. After battling four more days, the Romans finally master the Second Wall and raze its northern portion.</td>
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<td>5.348</td>
<td>A pause in the siege. Titus suspends the siege and dramatically lines the soldiers up to receive their pay in sight of the wall, a process that takes four days, impressing upon the rebels the numbers and arms of the Romans. The rebels do not surrender.</td>
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<td>5.356; 5.466</td>
<td>Early June (c. Artemesius 12) Romans begin building earthen banks at two locations, Antonia and the Hyrcanus monument. Titus splits his forces to build four embankments: Legions V and XII build earthworks against the Antonia Fortress so as to attack the Temple, and Legions X and XV build works in the northern part of this city across from John Hyrcanus’ monument in order to take the Upper City. The rebels fire on them with hundreds of artillery pieces.</td>
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<td>5.361-419; Life 1-7, Life 414-417</td>
<td>Josephus appeals to the rebels to surrender.</td>
<td>Titus, seeking to avoid the destruction of the city, delegates Josephus to speak to the rebels in their native language and persuade them to surrender. Josephus circles the walls as he speaks to the rebels. He implores them to spare themselves, the people, the country and the Temple. The Romans, he says, have done more to protect the Temple than they. It is rational to give in to superior arms, and the Romans were masters of the world because, clearly, the will of the Deity was with them. The city’s forefathers had surrendered to the Romans knowing this. The Romans knew that famine was raging in the city, its fall was inevitable, yet they would be treated well if they surrendered now, while none would be spared if all offers were rejected. The Bible demonstrates that when the Deity supports the Jews, success is obtained without warfare, while if war is waged against superior powers the result is always defeat and destruction for the Jews. “Thus invariably have arms been refused to our nation, and warfare has been the sure signal for defeat.” Josephus compares himself directly to Jeremiah: “For, though Jeremiah boldly proclaimed that they were hateful to God…and would be taken captive unless they surrendered the city” they did not put Jeremiah to death, but in contrast the rebels now “assail me with abuse and missiles, while I exhort you to save yourselves.”</td>
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<td>Miracles, moreover, greeted the Romans: the pool at Siloam, which had been dried up, now filled with water at Titus' approach. In the end, Josephus makes a personal appeal: “I have a mother, a wife, a not ignoble family, and an ancient and illustrious house involved in these perils; and maybe you think it is on their account that my advice is offered. Slay them, take my blood as the price of your own salvation! I, too, am prepared to die, if my death will lead to your learning wisdom.”</td>
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<td>5.420-445</td>
<td>Horrific famine seizes Jerusalem.</td>
<td>Although Josephus “with his tears thus loudly appealed to them,” the insurgents do not yield. However, non-combatants are inspired to desert; they sell their possessions for gold, then swallow the gold coins to hide them as they escape to the Romans. The deserters give the Romans pitiful reports of increasing famine in the city and attacks by insurgents performing house-to-house searches for food, beating and torturing those within. The wealthy are robbed and murdered by the forces of John and Simon. “To narrate their enormities in detail is impossible; but, to put it briefly, no other city every endured such miseries, nor since the world began has there been a generation more prolific in crime.”</td>
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<td>5.446-451</td>
<td>Mass crucifixions.</td>
<td>As the construction of the embankments proceeds the Romans capture escapees from the city, as many as 500 a day.</td>
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<td>Prisoners are tortured, killed, and then crucified before the walls to intimidate the populace. Titus is saddened by the necessity of the crucifixions. “So great was their number, that space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies.”</td>
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<td>5.458-459</td>
<td>The Judeans swear to fight Romans with their last breath, even if it means the destruction of the Temple.</td>
<td>The cruelty of the Romans has the reverse effect of discouraging desertion. Titus continues to exhort the rebels to surrender peacefully and thus save the city and the Temple. The Judeans reply by expressing negative opinions of Titus and the Emperor, and declare they prefer death to slavery, will fight the Romans with their last breath, and “that the world was a better Temple for the Deity than this one.” [A radical concept too shocking for Josephus to contemplate: that the Temple might not be necessary.] The result of the conflict, they say, in any case is up to the divine will, not to them.</td>
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| 5.466-490; 5.522-526 | June 16 Artemesius 29 The rebels destroy the earthworks. | On the seventeenth day of the building of the works, John undermines the Antonia earthworks built by the Vth Legion and sets fire to the supporting timbers, causing the tunnels to collapse and the whole works to burn. Two days later Simon's men set fire to the other works and battering engines. The Roman soldiers are dispirited at the loss of so much hard work and also at the lack of timber to rebuild, for all the trees around
## Reference | Action | Action Detail
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 |  | the city had been cut down for a distance of 90 stadia (10mi / 16 km). | 5.491-534 Titus decides to starve the city. Titus holds a difficult consultation with his officers. Unable to rebuild the works, but unwilling to wait indefinitely, Titus decides to blockade the city completely to prevent food supplies entering. At the same time he will rebuild the embankments at one position only, against Antonia. Enthusiastic troops build an earthen wall (or trench) completely around the city in three days. All hope of escape being cut off, the famine within the city intensifies. Burials are neglected, bodies pile up. Insurgents continue the trials of prominent persons, execute eminent men and imprison Josephus’ father. 
 |  |  | 5.541-547 Josephus knocked unconscious by a rebel missile. As Josephus continues his exhortations at the wall, he is struck in the head with a stone and knocked unconscious. The Romans rescue him. Militants think him dead and rejoice. Josephus’ mother, in prison, laments his death. But Josephus quickly recovers and appears before the walls, vowing revenge. “The sight of him animated the people and filled the rebels with dismay.”
 |  | Deserters cut open for their gold. Syrian troops discover some deserters have swallowed gold coins. The rumor spreads that all deserters are filled with gold. Arabs and Syrians cut open all who escape the city. “In one night no less than two
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<tr>
<td>5.562-566</td>
<td>John plunders the Temple.</td>
<td>John melts down the Temple vessels for gold and distributes sacred wine and oil to his men. He reasons they can employ “divine things on behalf of the Divinity.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.567-572</td>
<td>Hundreds of thousands dead.</td>
<td>Deserter Mannaeus ben Lazarus is assigned by the Romans to watch a city gate. He counts 115,880 bodies carried through the gate during the siege, in the period from Xanthicus 14 to Panemus 1 (May 1 to July 20). Reports from within the city give the total dead among the lower classes at 600,000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1-22</td>
<td>July 20 Panemus/Tammuz 1 New earthworks ready.</td>
<td>The Antonia earthworks are completed in 21 days. These are heavily guarded, as all timber had been used within 10 miles of the city. John makes a strong attempt to destroy the constructions but fails.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.23-32</td>
<td>Antonia is breached, but to no effect.</td>
<td>The Romans, under heavy fire, bring siege-engines against the Antonia Fortress. Armored engineers undermine the foundation. Suffering the pounding of the battering rams, a portion of the wall collapses. It has been weakened by the tunnel previously dug by John’s men to attack the earlier works. But the Romans are dismayed to discover John has built another wall behind it.</td>
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Titus encourages the soldiers.

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<tr>
<td>6.33-53</td>
<td>Titus exhorts the dispirited troops, saying: The Deity is on their side—it is more glorious to die in battle than of disease—fallen warriors immediately—take their place among the stars rather than reside in the underworld—the new wall will be easily overthrown and once Antonia is taken the city is theirs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.54-67</td>
<td>July 22 Panemus/Tammuz 3 First attack fails.</td>
<td>Inspired by Titus, Sabinus of Syria leads an impressive attack to scale the wall, but at the summit trips and is killed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.68-92</td>
<td>July 24 Romans take Antonia. Two dozen soldiers, acting on their own initiative, lead a daring night attack and seize Antonia. The rebels fall back into the Temple grounds, battle fiercely and prevent further Roman advances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.93-129</td>
<td>August 5 Panemus/Tammuz 17 Temple sacrifices end.</td>
<td>The daily sacrifices in the Temple are halted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>Josephus argues with John to restore the sacrifices. Josephus delivers a message from Titus to the rebels, within hearing of all the populace: John may leave the Temple so that it will be no longer polluted, and the sacrifices may be restored. John enters into a heated argument with Josephus, John stating the city was God’s and so could not be captured, Josephus replying that John had driven the divine presence away by</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.130-149</td>
<td>Battle for the Temple.</td>
<td>A major battle for the Temple between the Romans and Judeans ends in a draw. Josephus records the names of a number of Judean heroes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.150-157</td>
<td>Earthworks built around the First Wall.</td>
<td>The legions build several embankments to approach the First Wall: one at the northwest corner of the inner Temple, one at the northern hall between two gates, one opposite the west portico of the outer court, and one opposite the north portico. The work is exhausting, timber having to be carried from a great distance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.158-163</td>
<td>Assault on the 10th Legion.</td>
<td>The rebels attempt an assault on the 10th Legion on the Mount of Olives, but are repulsed after a sharp battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.165</td>
<td>August 10 Panemus/Tammuz 22 Rebels set fire to Temple porticoes.</td>
<td>The rebels set fire to the northwest portico that is connected to Antonia, to begin to separate the Temple from the occupied fortress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.166; 6.311</td>
<td>August 12 Panemus/Tammuz 24 Romans set fire to the adjoining portico. The rebels cut away the rest. Antonia becomes completely disconnected from Temple. (This causes the Temple to become 'four-square', fulfilling an oracle predicting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temple severed from Antonia.</td>
<td>the city’s fall.</td>
<td>Conflicts around the Temple rage incessantly.</td>
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<td>6.177-190</td>
<td>August 15 Panemus/Tammuz 27 Romans killed in west portico trap.</td>
<td>When the rebels feign retreat, a number of Romans leap onto the west portico, but find it is a trap: the portico has been filled with incendiary materials. It is set ablaze, killing nearly all of the soldiers (except for one clever Artorius). The west portico is cut away by the rebels. The Romans destroy the north portico up to the Kidron ravine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.193-219</td>
<td>Horrible famine. The news of Mary provokes hatred and despair.</td>
<td>The victims of famine are dying in countless numbers. Hungry rebels like mad dogs stagger from house to house searching for food. Shoe leather and grass is gnawed on. Famine reaches its ultimate depth: the tale of Mary daughter of Eleazar shocks the rebels and Romans alike. “For fear of being regarded as fabricator, I would gladly have omitted this tragedy, had I not innumerable witnesses among my contemporaries.” Titus vows to bury this abomination beneath the ruins of the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.220-228</td>
<td>August 27 Lous/Av 8 Romans fail to breach the wall of the Temple court.</td>
<td>Two legions complete their earthworks. Titus orders rams opposite the western hall of the outer Temple court. Siege-engines and mines having little effect, Romans scale the porticoes with ladders, but suffer heavy losses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.233-237</td>
<td>Titus orders the Temple gates set on fire.</td>
<td>“Now that Titus saw that his endeavor to spare a foreign Temple led only to the injury and slaughter of his troops,” he orders the gates set on fire. The silver melts</td>
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<td>and the fire enters the woodwork and spreads to the porticoes. After a day, Titus orders the fire extinguished and a road built to the gates for the ascent of the Legions, but fires continue to burn. Two important officers of Simon's desert to the Romans.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.229-243</td>
<td>August 28 &lt;br&gt; Lous/Av 9</td>
<td>War council on whether to destroy the Temple. Titus decides to save it.</td>
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<td>Titus holds a council to decide what to do with the Temple. This council consists of his six chief staff officers: Tiberius Alexander (prefect of the forces and of Jewish descent), the commanders of Legions V, X, and XV, the prefect of the two Alexandrian legions, and the procurator of Judea. The tribunes and procurators also are called in. Some commanders recommend it be destroyed, others that it be preserved unless the rebels used it as a fortress. Titus states he would preserve the Temple at all costs, even if used as a fortress, because its beauty should be preserved as a possession of Rome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.244-264; Jeremiah 52:12 &lt;br&gt; (contra 2 Kings 25:8)</td>
<td>August 29 &lt;br&gt; Lous/Av 10</td>
<td>Roman soldier sets fire to the interior of the rooms surrounding the sanctuary.</td>
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<td>The Judeans attack the guards in the outer court through the east gate, are forced back to the inner court after a three hour battle. Titus withdraws to Antonia, resolving to attack the next day. But the rebels again attack and are routed back to the sanctuary. At that moment one of the soldiers, without orders “but moved by some supernatural impulse,” snatches a burning timber from a fire and throws it through a golden door on the north side of the chambers surrounding the sanctuary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.265</td>
<td>Interior of the holy house set on fire.</td>
<td>Titus is given the news. He attempts to order the fire extinguished, but is either not heard or is ignored. Battle rages around the altar. Titus enters the sanctuary to view its contents. The interior is not yet on fire, and seeing that the building can still be saved, Titus makes a second attempt to have the fire put out. But when he exits the building, one who had entered with him thrusts a firebrand through the hinges of the gate. The interior of the sanctuary is now on fire. “Thus, against Caesar's wishes, was the Temple set on fire.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.271 ff</td>
<td>The Temple is consumed by fire.</td>
<td>Josephus provides an eyewitness account of the destruction, the fire and the noise. “You would indeed have thought that the Temple-hill was boiling over from its base, being everywhere one mass of flame, yet the stream of blood was more copious than the flames.” He observes that this was on the very day and month that the First Temple had been burnt by the Babylonians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.281-288</td>
<td>Crowds of people burned alive on the porticoes following a false prophet.</td>
<td>The Romans burn all the buildings in the Temple complex, destroying the treasure chambers of the wealthy. The populace, especially poor women and children, are persuaded by a “false prophet” to go up to the Temple court to receive deliverance from the Deity. The crowd of about 6,000 climbs onto the porticoes, which are set on fire by the Romans. All perish.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.315</td>
<td>Genuine signs had predicted the destruction.</td>
<td>There were many false prophets at the time, says Josephus, yet people had not paid attention to the genuine signs of destruction: a star resembling a sword standing over the city, a comet, a brilliant light around the altar, a vision of armed battalions in the sky, and voices in the Temple, along with the prophecies of a peasant crying 'Woe to Jerusalem.' “It is impossible for men to escape their fate, even though they foresee it.”</td>
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<td>6.316-322</td>
<td>Roman sacrifices performed in the Temple.</td>
<td>Romans carry standards into the sanctuary at the east gate and sacrifice to them. So much gold has been taken from Temple that the price of gold throughout Syria is halved. The priests are executed by Titus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.323-355</td>
<td>Rebels in the city refuse to surrender.</td>
<td>The rebels flee into the city and ask for council with Titus. Titus lectures them and offers to spare their lives if they surrender. The rebels reply they cannot accept his offer, having sworn never to do so. Instead they ask to be freed into the desert. An angry Titus ends the talks, orders troops to burn and sack the city.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.358-364</td>
<td>Lower City burned.</td>
<td>The rebels gather all their plunder and flee to the Upper City. The entire Lower City is burned to the pool of Siloam.</td>
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<td>6.365</td>
<td>Josephus negotiates.</td>
<td>Josephus still attempts to talk the rebels into surrendering, or at least to give up the holy relics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.379</td>
<td>Rebels in tunnels.</td>
<td>Rebel leaders hide in the underground passages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.374</td>
<td><em>September 7 Lous/Av 19</em> Siege of the Upper City.</td>
<td>Titus orders new earthworks built to attack the Upper City. Four legions work on the west side of the city opposite the royal palace. Syrian auxiliaries build embankments to the east of the Upper City.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.379-6.383</td>
<td>Rebels and their families sold as slaves.</td>
<td>The chiefs of the Idumaeans send emissaries to surrender to Titus, but Simon discovers the plot and executes the conspirators. There are masses of deserters to the Romans, most of whose lives are spared by Titus. Over 40,000 captured citizens are released by the Romans, but the rebels, including women and children, are sold as slaves. Due to the excess of supply, they are priced low.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.387-391; 7.162</td>
<td>Temple treasures recovered.</td>
<td>Priest Jesus ben Thebuthi delivers some of the Temple treasures to Titus in exchange for protection. Included are two candelabra, solid gold and massive tables, bowls, and platters, the veils, the high-priests garments including the precious stones, and many other items. The Temple treasurer Phineas provides more, including priestly clothing and incense. The treasures are eventually displayed by Vespasian in Rome in the newly constructed Temple of Peace.</td>
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| Life 418-421 | Josephus frees his brother and | Josephus gains permission from Titus to release his brother and 50 friends. Josephus
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<td>acquaintances, including taking down three who are crucified.</td>
<td>enters the Temple compound and liberates 190 captive women and children he knows, and receives sacred books (from the temple?). He recognizes three acquaintances who had been crucified, and Titus allows them to be taken down -- two die, one survives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.392-402; 6.409-413</td>
<td>September 25 Gorpiaeus/Elul 7 Romans take the Upper City.</td>
<td>The earthworks against the Upper City are completed after 18 days. The rebels panic, fleeing or surrendering without a fight despite their superior position in the massive Herodian towers. Many hide in the ravine below Siloam and then in the underground passages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.403-408</td>
<td>September 26 Gorpiaeus/Elul 8 Jerusalem is sacked and set ablaze.</td>
<td>The Romans now command the whole city, plant standards on the walls, and loot the city. All Jerusalem is in flames.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.414-419</td>
<td>All people in Jerusalem enslaved or killed.</td>
<td>Everyone in Jerusalem is made a prisoner; any that are armed are put to death, as are the old and feeble. Fronto is appointed to determine the fate of the rest: those under age seventeen are sold, the strong are sent to the work camps, others to the games.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.420-422</td>
<td>1,000,000 dead.</td>
<td>Number of prisoners taken in the entire war: 97,000. Died during siege: 1,100,000. This large number during the siege was due to the Passover celebration, as Jews from many countries had been in the city for the</td>
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<td>festival when the siege began. Josephus tells skeptical readers this number is consistent with Cestius’ population estimate under Nero.</td>
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<td>6.430-43; 7.26-36</td>
<td>Simon and John captured.</td>
<td>Simon hides in the underground passages with his close followers. He attempts to tunnel his way out, but eventually gives up and arises out of the ground at the site of the Temple wearing a royal purple robe. He surrenders quietly to General Terentius Rufus. This alerts the Romans to the passages, which are then searched; 2,000 bodies are found. John gives up from starvation. John is sentenced to life in prison, while Simon is to be executed at the triumph in Rome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.434</td>
<td>The walls of Jerusalem are razed.</td>
<td>Romans set fire to the outlying quarters of the city and tear the walls to the ground.</td>
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<td>7.1-4</td>
<td>Jerusalem and the Temple demolished.</td>
<td>Titus orders the whole city and Temple to be razed to the ground, leaving only the tallest towers and a small portion of the wall on the west. The Xth legion is left to garrison Jerusalem.</td>
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<td>7.19</td>
<td>Titus departs to Alexandria.</td>
<td>The 12th Legion, which had been defeated by the Jews under Cestius, is banished to the Armenian border. The 5th and 15th legions accompany Titus to Caesarea and then to Alexandria.</td>
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**Claim #27:** Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Noah existed and that the flood of his day affected the entire world formed the basis of his warning about how his return to earth would affect the entire world.

In his *Olivet Discourse*, in which Jesus the Messiah provides to his followers an executive briefing on the end of the world, Jesus took it for granted that Noah was a historical figure and that the flood described in the book of Genesis actually happened. The Gospels written by Matthew and Luke describe the event:

*Matthew 24:36-39*

> 36“No one knows when that day and hour will come — neither the heavenly angels nor the Son, but only the Father, 37 because just as it was in Noah’s time, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. 38In those days before the
Since He Wrote about Me

William P. Welty, Ph.D.

flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and
giving in marriage right up to the day when Noah went
into the ark. 39 They were unaware of what was happening
until the flood came and swept all of them away. That’s
how it will be when the Son of Man appears.”

Luke 17:26-27

26 “Just as it was in Noah’s time, so it will be in the Son
of Man’s time. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying,
and being given in marriage right up to the day when
Noah went into the ark. Then the flood came and
destroyed all of them.

Claim #28: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob actually lived formed the basis of his warning
to and rebuke of Israel’s leaders about their
threatened exclusion from eternal life.

One of the rebukes by Jesus to Israel’s leaders during one of his
meetings with a Roman centurion presents a solemn warning about the
coming exclusion of certain Jewish religious leaders from eternal life. But
notice, if you would, please, that Jesus does this by crafting his argument
on the foundation of his assumption that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived
at some time during the history of national Israel. Matthew 8:5-12 records
the incident:

5 When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a centurion
came up to him and begged him repeatedly, “Sir, my
servant is lying at home paralyzed and in terrible pain.”

7 Jesus told him, “I will come and heal him.”

8 The centurion replied, “Sir, I am not worthy to have
you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my
servant will be healed, because I, too, am a man under
authority and I have soldiers under me. I say to one of
them ‘Go’ and he goes, to another ‘Come’ and he comes,
and to my servant ‘Do this’ and he does it.”
10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and told those who were following him, “I tell all of you with certainty, not even in Israel have I found this kind of faith!  
11 I tell all of you, many will come from east and west and will feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom from heaven. 12 But the unfaithful heirs of that kingdom will be thrown into the darkness outside. In that place there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Claim #29: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob actually lived formed the basis of his defense of the resurrection of the dead.

One of the rebukes by Jesus to Israel’s leaders concerned their sophomoric views about marriage, whether in the present age or in the age to come. Notice, if you would, please, how Jesus links their ignorance of the truth about marriage to his views on the resurrection from the dead. And then he links the validity of the future resurrection from the dead by mentioning Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom he declares are still alive with God in heaven. Matthew 22:29-32, Mark 12:24-27, and Luke 20:37 mention this:

Matthew 22:29-32
29 Jesus answered them, “You are mistaken because you don’t know the Scriptures or God’s power, 30 because in the resurrection, people neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. 31 As for the resurrection from the dead, haven’t you read what was spoken to you by God when he said, 32 ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

Mark 12:24-27
24 Jesus answered them, “Aren’t you mistaken because you don’t know the Scriptures or God’s power? 25 When people rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. 26 As
for the dead being raised, haven’t you read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

Luke 20:37

37 Even Moses demonstrated in the story about the bush that the dead are raised, when he calls the Lord, ‘the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’

38 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, because he considers all people to be alive to him.

Claim #30: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Abraham in his dialogue with Zacchaeus demonstrated that he took it for granted that Abraham had been a real person.

One day a notoriously corrupt Jewish tax collector entertained Jesus of Nazareth at a meal. After the meal, Jesus affirmed the reality of the man’s repentance by mentioning the man’s association with Abraham, whom Jesus presumed actually had lived on the earth. Luke 19:8-10 records the conversation:

8 Later, Zacchaeus stood up and announced to the Lord, “Look! I’m giving half of my possessions to the destitute, and if I have accused anyone falsely, I’m repaying four times as much as I owe.”

9 Then Jesus told him, “Today salvation has come to this home, because this man is also a descendant of Abraham, and the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

John 8:37-39

37 “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are trying to kill me because you’ve not received what I’ve told you. 38 I declare what I’ve seen in my Father’s
presence, and you’re doing what you’ve heard from your father.”

39 They replied to him, “Our father is Abraham!”

Jesus told them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing what Abraham did.”

John 8:56-58

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day, and he saw it and was glad.”

57 Then the Jewish leaders asked him, “You are not even 50 years old, yet you have seen Abraham?”

58 Jesus told them, “Truly, I tell all of you emphatically, before there was an Abraham, I AM!”

We invite the reader to pay particular attention to what Jesus said in John 8:56: the Pharisees understood the implications of Jesus well enough to express their absolute disbelief in the implications of what he was claiming. Specifically, while the Pharisees had enough confidence in the credibility of the book of Genesis to believe that Abraham had existed, they could not believe that Jesus was claiming to have known Abraham personally. But Jesus leveraged his previous statement recorded in John 8:56 to add fuel to the fire of the debate: he claimed to have existed as God before Abraham when he said, “Before there was an Abraham, I AM!”

Claim #31: Jesus publicly stated and believed that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a real, historical event and referred to it as the foundation of his warning about the coming judgment at the end of the world.

Matthew 10:11-15 describes Jesus’ instructions to his disciples about their communication of the Gospel to the world. In doing so, he reminds them about what will happen to those individuals who reject obedience to his demands that people believe in him.

11 “Whatever town or village you enter, find out who is receptive in it and stay there until you leave. 12 As you
enter the house, greet its occupants. 13 If the household is receptive, let your blessing of peace come on it. But if it isn’t receptive, let your blessing of peace return to you. 14 If no one welcomes you or listens to your words, as you leave that house or town, shake its dust off your feet. 15 I tell all of you with certainty, it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town!”

Luke 10:8-12

8 “Whenever you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat whatever they serve you, 9 heal the sick that are there, and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you!’ 10 But whenever you go into a town and people don’t welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘We’re wiping off your town’s dust that clings to our feet in protest against you! But realize this: the kingdom of God is near!’ 12 I tell you, on the last day it will be easier for Sodom than for that town!”

Luke 17:28-30

28 So it was in Lot’s time. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But on the very day when Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed all of them. 30 The day when the Son of Man is revealed will be like that.

Jesus’ high reliability of the book of Genesis’ account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was also mentioned in the Messiah’s rebuke to Capernaum. Matthew 11:23-24 tells us:

23 “And you, Capernaum! You won’t be lifted up to heaven, will you? You’ll go down to Hell! Because if the miracles that happened in you had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 Indeed I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you!”
Claim #32: Jesus believed that Moses and Elijah were real figures in the history of Israel, and claimed to have spoken with both of them.

Mark 9:2-6 describes one of the most dramatic incidents in the life of Jesus when he took three of his disciples on a hike up a nearby mountain to be with him on a short, but very private retreat. Mark tells us:

2 ...Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain to be alone with him. His appearance was changed in front of them, and his clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone on earth could bleach them. 4Then Elijah appeared to them, accompanied by Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

5Then Peter told Jesus, “Rabbi, it’s good that we’re here! Let’s set up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” 6(Peter didn’t know how to respond, because they were terrified.)

The account transmitted to us regarding this incident is striking in its simplicity and sheer humanity of the drama that played out on that mountain top. For one thing, it’s abundantly clear from the narrative that the incident was no mere vision. For a brief few minutes, Jesus the Messiah manifested the Shekinah glory of God, which he always possessed, but which he veiled for all other times in his earthly, mortal existence. During those few minutes, the New Testament record claims that Jesus met with Moses and Elijah, and engaged in an extended dialogue with them both.

Claim #33: Jesus demonstrated that he believed King David existed by affirming the man’s existence and by citing many Psalms, all the while attributing their authorship to David.

Few modern Biblical archaeology discoveries have attracted as much attention as the Tel Dan inscription—also called the “House of David” inscription—that was discovered in writing on a ninth-century B.C. stone stela. That’s because the inscription furnished the first historical evidence that the man named King David in the Tanakh really
existed. Well now, at least that’s how the liberal *Biblical Archaeology Review* assesses its 1993 discovery at the site of Tel Dan in northern Israel in an excavation directed by Israeli archaeologist Avraham Biran.

Then again, if these enemies of the historical validity of the Hebrew Scriptures would only take a good look at the statements attributed to Jesus the Messiah in the New Testament, they would learn that Jesus’ own words furnish abundant evidence that King David not only was a real historical person, but that he authored the Psalms attributed to him in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The broken and fragmentary inscription commemorates the victory of an Aramean king over his two southern neighbors: the “king of Israel” and the “king of the House of David.” In the carefully incised text written in Aramaic characters, the king boasts that he vanquished several thousand Israelite and Judahite horsemen and charioteers before personally dispatching both of his royal opponents. Unfortunately, the recovered fragments of the “House of David” inscription do not preserve the names of the specific kings involved in this brutal encounter, but most scholars believe the stela recounts a campaign of Hazael of Damascus in which he defeated both Jehoram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah.33

One notable example of Jesus tendency to assume the historical validity of the record of David’s existence and reign over Israel may be read in Matthew 12:1-8:

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At that time, Jesus walked through the grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples became hungry and began picking heads of grain to eat. When the Pharisees saw this, they told him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!”

But he told them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? How is it that he went into the house of God and ate the Bread of the Presence, which was not lawful for him and his companions to eat but was reserved for the priests? Or haven’t you read in the Law that on every Sabbath the priests in the Temple violate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? But I tell you, something greater than the Temple is here! If you had known what ‘I want mercy and not sacrifice’ means, you would not have condemned the innocent, for the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Matthew’s edition of this incident also affirms the canonicity of the writings of the prophet Hosea, which are part of the Nevi’im. Hosea 6:6 is quoted by Jesus in his response to the Jewish leaders. This verse is part of a larger context containing an exhortation by Hosea for the ancient Israelis to return to God. Hosea 6:1-7 reads:

1“Come, let us return to the LORD;
   even though he has torn us,
   he will heal us.
Even though he has wounded us,
   he will bind our wounds.
2After two days, he will restore us to life,
   on the third day he will raise us up,
   and we will live in his presence.
3Let us know,
   let us pursue knowledge of the Lord;
   his coming is as certain as the dawn.
He will come to us like the rain,
like the autumn and spring rains come on the earth.

4“What am I to do with you, Ephraim? What am I to do with you, Judah?
Your love is like a morning rain cloud—it passes away like the morning dew.

5Therefore I cut them to pieces by the prophets, killing them by the words from my mouth.
The verdict against you shines like a beacon.

6For it is love that I seek, and not sacrifice;
knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

7“But like Adam, they broke the covenant; in this they have acted deceitfully against me.

A slightly different version of this episode may be read in Mark 2:23-28:

23Jesus happened to be going through the grain fields on a Sabbath. As they made their way, his disciples began picking the heads of grain. 24The Pharisees asked him, “Look! Why are they doing what is not lawful on Sabbath days?”

25He asked them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26How was it that he went into the House of God during the lifetime of Abiathar the high priest and ate the Bread of the Presence, which was not lawful for anyone but the priests to eat, and gave some of it to his companions?”

27Then he told them, “The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. 28Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Luke also records this pronouncement in Luke 6:1-5:

1One time Jesus was walking through some grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them.
2 Some of the Pharisees asked, “Why are you doing what isn’t lawful on Sabbath days?”

3 Jesus answered them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions became hungry? 4 How was it that he went into the house of God, took the Bread of the Presence and ate it, which was not lawful for anyone but the priests to eat, and then gave some of it to his companions?”

5 Then he told them, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

In each of these three passages from the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus the Messiah is referring to a passage in the Chetubim (Historical Writings) portion of the Hebrew Scriptures recorded in First Samuel 21:1-6:

1 David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech was trembling as he came to meet David. Ahimelech told him, “Why are you alone, and no one with you?”

2 David told Ahimelech the priest, “The king commanded me about a matter, saying to me, ‘Don’t let anyone know anything about the matter I’m sending you to do and about which I’ve commanded you. I’ve directed the young men to a certain place.’ 3 Now, what do you have available? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever you have.”

4 The priest answered David: “There is no ordinary bread available; only consecrated bread, provided that the young men have kept themselves from women.”

5 David answered the priest, saying to him, “Indeed, women were kept from us as is usual whenever I go out on a mission, and the equipment of the young men is consecrated even when it’s an ordinary journey, so how much more is their equipment consecrated today?” 6 o the priest gave him consecrated bread because no bread was there except the Bread of the Presence that had been
removed from the LORD’s presence and replaced with hot bread on the day it was taken away.

In citing this portion of First Samuel to answer his critics, Jesus affirms the historical reality of David, of Ahimelech the priest, and the accuracy of the account recorded in First Samuel regarding King Saul’s pursuit of David and the aftereffects of that pursuit.

**Claim #34: Jesus quoted Psalm 8:2 as a basis for his rebuke to the high priests and scribes of Jerusalem.**

All too often in life, children recognize what their parents and other adults miss. In the simplicity of their young minds, when they see miracles happen, they instinctively know that God is at work. In Matthew 21:14-16, the Apostle records an incident in the Temple when the high priests and scribes couldn’t see the forest for the trees, so to speak.

*Matthew 21:14-16*

14Blind and lame people came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. 15But when the high priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he had done and the children shouting in the Temple, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became furious 16and asked him, “Do you hear what these people are saying?”

Jesus told them, “Yes! Haven’t you ever read, ‘From the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have created praise’?”

The passage that Jesus quotes here is a paraphrase of Psalm 8:1-2, which reads:

1LORD, our Lord,
how excellent is your name in all the earth!
You set your glory above the heavens!
2Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies
you have established strength
on account of your adversaries,
in order to silence the enemy and vengeful foe.
Claim #35: Jesus quoted Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4 as referring to himself.

In the Gospel of John, the Apostle whom Jesus kept on loving cites Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4, claiming that these psalms refer to himself. John 15:23-25 records Jesus the Messiah as saying:

23“The person who hates me also hates my Father. 24If I hadn’t done among them the actions that no one else did, they wouldn’t have any sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25But this happened so that what has been written in their Law might be fulfilled: ‘They hated me for no reason.’”

Claim #36: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 41, using its authority to bolster his claim to be God incarnate.

Jesus depended on the fulfillment of Psalm 41:9 in his life to demonstrate that he was, in fact, God incarnate. John 13:18-19 tells us:

18“I’m not talking about all of you. I know the ones I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: ‘The one who ate bread with me has turned against me.’ 19I’m telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you may believe that I AM.“

Claim #37: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 110, and used a quotation from it to demonstrate how David’s Messiah was also God incarnate.

Jesus attributed authorship of Psalm 110 to King David. Matthew 22:41-46 records a dialog in which he engaged the Pharisees in a debate so profound that his reply could not be rebutted:

41While the Pharisees were still gathered, Jesus asked them, 42“What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

They told him, “David’s.”
He asked them, “Then how can David by the Spirit call him ‘Lord’ when he says,

44 The Lord told my Lord,
   “Sit at my right hand,
   until I put your enemies under your feet.”?

45 If David calls him ‘Lord’, how can he be his son?”

46 No one could answer him at all, and from that day on no one dared to ask him another question.

Mark’s Gospel records the event, also. Mark 12:35-37 tells us:

35 While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he asked,
   “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is David’s son?
36 David himself said by the Holy Spirit,
   ‘The Lord told my Lord,
   “Sit at my right hand,
   until I put your enemies under your feet.”’

37 David himself calls him ‘Lord,’ so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd kept listening to him with delight.

Luke 20:41-43 sets forth an identical reference to Jesus the Messiah’s claim that David is the author of Psalm 110:

41 Then he asked them, “How can people say that the Messiah is David’s son?
42 Because David himself in the book of Psalms says,
   ‘The Lord told my Lord,
   “Sit at my right hand,
   until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’

43 So David calls him ‘Lord.’ Then how can he be his son?”
Claim #38: Jesus demonstrated that his admission to be the Messiah was linked to statements from King David and the prophet Daniel contained in the Hebrew Scriptures of his day.

When the time came for Jesus to endure his trial before the religious authorities of first century Israel, Matthew 26:63-64 records how Jesus confessed to being the Messiah by citing the Hebrew Scriptures. He cited a portion of the Chetubim (the Psalms and the book of Daniel):

63But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest told him, “I command you by the living God to tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God!”

64Jesus told him, “You have said so. Nevertheless I tell you, from now on you will see ‘the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power’ and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’”

The reply of Jesus recorded by the Apostle Matthew consists of citations from the book of Psalms and from the book of Daniel. Both books were grouped together by the Jews as part of the Chetubim, the third division of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Gospel of Mark also contains these quotations. Mark 14:62 reads:

61But he kept silent and didn’t answer at all. The high priest asked him again, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

62Jesus said, “I AM, and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power’

62….and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

The first quotation is from Psalm 110:1. The larger context in which this quotation occurs is an extended set of promises from God to his Messiah about what will happen in the future when he comes to conquer the earth, as you can tell by reading the entirety of Psalm 110:1-7:

1A declaration from the LORD to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

2 When the LORD extends your mighty scepter
from Zion,
rule in the midst of your enemies.

3 Your soldiers are willing volunteers on your day of
battle;
in majestic holiness, from the womb,
from the dawn, the dew of your youth belongs
to you.

4 The LORD took an oath and will never recant:
“You are a priest forever,
after the manner of Melchizedek.”

5 The Lord is at your right hand;
he will utterly destroy kings in the time of his
wrath.

6 He will execute judgment against the nations,
filling graves with corpses.
He will utterly destroy leaders far and wide.

7 He will drink from a stream on the way,
then hold his head high.

The first four verses of Psalm 110 describe God’s promises to his Messiah. By ascribing David’s psalm to himself, Jesus is confessing to the high priests of Israel at his trial that he is the priest who lives forever, after the manner of Melchizedek (verse 4). Frankly, this identification by Jesus of himself with God’s Messiah is a claim that because he lives forever, he is, in fact, the eternal living God of Israel incarnate as the rightful descendant of David and the rightful heir to David’s throne.

Verses 5-7 of this psalm consist of a promise from David’s Lord, the Messiah, that as David’s protector, he will remain at David’s side (referred to as David’s “right hand” in the psalm). The Messiah tells David that on a future day, acting as Messiah, he will “execute judgment against the nations,” destroying the enemies of God “far and wide”.

The second citation from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus provides by way of answer to the high priests is from Daniel 7:13:
“I continued to observe the night vision—and look!—someone like the Son of Man was coming, accompanied by heavenly clouds. He approached the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. To him dominion was bestowed, along with glory and a kingdom, so that all peoples, nations, and languages are to serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion—it will never pass away—and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”

For Jesus to cite this portion of Daniel’s prophecy about the culmination of world history is for Jesus to claim that he is the one whose “kingdom is one that will never be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14). But in order for his dominion to be everlasting, as Daniel 7:14 claims it will be, that ruler must live forever. It is this individual that Jesus claims to be as he stands before Israel’s leaders. Therefore, not only does Jesus refer to Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:14’s authority as referring to himself, he uses these verses to bolster his claim to be the Messiah of Israel’s past great King David.

Claim #39: Jesus attributed authorship of Psalm 118 to King David.

Psalms 118:22-23 contains a reference to the rejection of the Messiah, according to a rather embarrassing question asked by Jesus to the Jewish leadership of his day in Matthew 21:42-44:

42Jesus asked them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures,
‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This was the Lord’s doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes.’?

43That is why I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce fruit for it. 44The person who falls over this stone will be broken to pieces, but it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”
The statement is repeated in Mark 12:10-11’s version of the event:

10 Haven’t you ever read this Scripture:
   ‘The stone that the builders rejected
   has become the cornerstone.
11 This was the Lord’s doing,
   and it is amazing in our eyes’?”

Luke 20:17-18 also records Jesus as having made this statement:

17 But Jesus looked at them and asked, “What does this text mean:
   ‘The stone that the builders rejected
   has become the cornerstone’?
18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken
   to pieces,
   and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

**Claim #40: Jesus cites Psalm 118, claiming that King David’s psalm is predictive of his second coming.**


**Matthew 23:37-39**

37 “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones to death those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling! 38 Look! Your house is left abandoned! 39 I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘How blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

**Luke 13:35**

35 Look! Your house is left vacant to you. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘How blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’”
Claim #41: Jesus cites Psalm 118, claiming that King David’s psalm is predictive of his rejection by Israel and subsequent exaltation.


17But Jesus looked at them and asked, “What does this text mean:

‘The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone’?

18Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken
to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

Claim #42: Jesus believed that King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were real figures in the history of Israel, and that they both would have a place with him at the resurrection of the dead.

Jesus of Nazareth defended the future reality of the coming resurrection of the dead by citing the historical reality of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. He claimed that they would have a part in the resurrection of the dead. Matthew 12:42 records the admonition:

42The queen of the south will stand up and condemn the people living today, because she came from so far away to hear the wisdom of Solomon. But look! Something greater than Solomon is here!”

The Queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon is discussed in First Kings 10:1-10 and Second Chronicles 9:1-12:

1When the queen of Sheba heard about Solomon’s reputation with the LORD, she came to test him with difficult questions. 2She brought along a large retinue, camels laden with spices, and lots of gold and precious stones. Upon her arrival, she spoke with Solomon about everything that was on her mind. 3Solomon answered all of her questions. Nothing was hidden from Solomon that
he did not explain to her. 4 When the queen of Sheba had seen all of Solomon’s wisdom for herself, the palace that he had built, 5 the food set at his table, his servants who sat with him, his ministers in attendance and how they were dressed, his personal staff and how they were dressed, and even his personal stairway by which he went up to the LORD’s Temple, she was breathless!

6 “Everything I heard about your wisdom and what you have to say is true!” she gasped, 7 “but I didn’t believe it at first! But then I came here and I’ve seen it for myself! It’s amazing! I wasn’t told half of what’s really great about your wisdom. You’re far better in person than what the reports have said about you! 8 How blessed are your staff! And how blessed are your employees, who serve you continuously and get to listen to your wisdom! 9 And blessed be the LORD your God, who is delighted with you! He set you in place on the throne of Israel because the Lord loved Israel forever. That’s why he made you to be king, so you could carry out justice and implement righteousness.”

10 Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, a vast quantity of spices, and precious stones. No spices ever came again that were comparable to those that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

**Second Chronicles 9:1-12**

1 When the queen of Sheba heard about Solomon’s reputation, she traveled to Jerusalem and tested him with difficult questions. She brought along a large retinue, camels laden with spices, and lots of gold and precious stones. Upon her arrival, she spoke with Solomon about everything that was on her mind. 2 Solomon answered all of her questions. Because nothing was hidden from Solomon, he hid nothing from her. 3 When the queen of Sheba had seen Solomon’s wisdom for herself, the palace
that he had built, the food set at his table, his servants who waited on him, his ministers in attendance and how they were dressed, his personal staff and how they were dressed, and even his personal stairway by which he went up to the LORD’s Temple, she was breathless!

“Everything I heard about your wisdom and what you have to say is true!” she gasped, “but I didn’t believe it at first! But then I came here and I’ve seen it for myself! It’s amazing! I wasn’t told half of what’s really great about your wisdom. You’re far better in person than what the reports have said about you! How blessed are your staff! And how blessed are your employees, who serve you continually and get to listen to your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who is delighted with you! He set you in place on his throne to be king for the LORD your God. He made you king over them so you could carry out justice and implement righteousness, because your God loves Israel and intends to establish them forever.”

Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, a vast quantity of spices, and precious stones. There were no spices comparable to those that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Hiram’s servants and Solomon’s servants, who brought gold from Ophir, also presented algum wood and other precious stones. The king used the algum wood to have steps made for the LORD’s Temple and for the royal palace, as well as lyres and harps for the choir, and nothing like that wood had been seen before in the territory of Judah. In return, King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she wanted and requested in addition to what she had brought for the king. Afterward, she returned to her own land, accompanied by her servants.

The accounts recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures are filled with extraordinary detail, and both passages are assumed by Jesus the Messiah
to be accurate and dependable records of an event that actually occurred during the lifetime of King David’s son Solomon. The Queen of Sheba is known in non-biblical history as Makeda (Ethiopian), Nicaula (Roman), and Bilquis (Arabic), She ruled an ancient kingdom that was located in the area of the Middle East that today we call Ethiopia and Yemen.

She remains unnamed in the biblical accounts, and Jesus does not refer to her by name. She is mentioned by the famous Jewish historian Flavius Josephus as the queen of both Egypt and Ethiopia. Recent archaeological discoveries in the Mahram Bilqis (Mahram Bilkees, “Temple of the Moon Deity”) in Mareb, Yemen, support the view that the Queen Sheba ruled over southern Arabia, with evidence suggesting the area to be the capital of the Kingdom of Sheba.34

Virtually all modern scholars agree that Sheba was the South Arabian kingdom of Saba, centered around the oasis of Marib, in present-day Yemen. Sheba was quite known in the classical world, and its country was called Arabia Felix.35 Around the middle of the first millennium B.C., there were Sabaeans also in the Horn of Africa, in the area that later became the realm of Aksum.36 There are five places in the Bible where the writer distinguishes the apparently Yemenite Sheba (शबा), the Yemenite Sabaeans, from Seba (סבא), the African Sabaeans. In Psalm 72:10b they are mentioned together: “May … the kings of Sheba and Seba offer tribute.”37 This spelling differentiation, however, may be purely factitious; the indigenous inscriptions make no such difference, and both Yemenite and African Sabaeans are spelled identically.38

34 For further reading, see http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Queen_of_Sheba.
37 John McClintock; James Strong, eds. (1894), "Seba", Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature 9, Harper & Brothers, pp. 495–496
38 Beeston, pp. 663–665.
Despite all of the above evidence, liberal higher critics and non-evangelical archaeologists deny the existence of the Queen of Sheba and of her kingdom. Furthermore, liberal bias denying the historicity of the Queen of Sheba and of the kingdom of Sheba pervades today’s research media. For example, the common on-line encyclopedia Wikipedia rather confidently declares:

Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman write that “the Sabaean kingdom began to flourish only from the eighth century BCE onward” and that the story of Solomon and Sheba is “an anachronistic seventh-century set piece meant to legitimize the participation of Judah in the lucrative Arabian trade.”\(^{39}\) The British Museum states that there is no archaeological evidence for such a queen but that the kingdom described as hers was Saba, “the oldest and most important of the South Arabian kingdoms”\(^{40,41}\)

In rebuttal to these liberal higher critical views, Dr. Robert Dick Wilson said this:

My readers will note, also, that the correctness of the English version of the original text of all these passages cannot be denied; and that the manuscripts and versions agree as to the accuracy of the text that has been transmitted to us. Then, let my readers bestir themselves and think what they would decide, if they were serving on a jury, as to the evidence of documents, regarding whose text and obvious meaning there could be no doubt on the ground of evidence except only that suggested by the lawyer who wanted to impugn the veracity of the documents. We know that these passages of the Old Testament were the same in the time of Jesus that they are

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\(^{39}\) Israel Finkelstein, Neil Asher Silberman, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible’s Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition* p. 171


now. .. No textual variants of any moment are found in any of the manuscripts or versions. There is no serious dispute as to the meaning of any clause in any of the passages.42

That Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated high confidence in the authenticity, reliability, and accuracy of the Hebrew Scriptures can be seen in how he referred to the historicity of various biblical characters and in his citations of the prophetic literature. We invite the reader to consider, for example, the following direct quotes from the New Testament:
Claim #43: Jesus believed that Jonah existed and was swallowed by a sea creature. He employed that historical fact as a comparative to explain his coming resurrection.

Jesus of Nazareth defended the reality of his coming resurrection of the dead by citing the historical reality of the prophet Jonah. By extension, his reference to the historical existence of Jonah and the validity of Jonah’s time in the sea creature requires that he also recognized the historical reality of Jonah’s admonition to Nineveh and the historical existence of the city of Nineveh itself. Luke 11:29-32 recounts the incident:

29Now as the crowds continued to throng around Jesus, he went on to say, “This people living today are an evil generation. It craves a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah, 30because just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be a sign to this generation. 31The queen of the south will stand up at the judgment and condemn the people living today, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. But look, something greater than Solomon is here! 32The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment and condemn the people living today, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah. But look, something greater than Jonah is here!”

Matthew 12:38-41 also contains a version of this incident:

38Then some of the scribes and Pharisees told Jesus, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

39But he replied to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign. Yet no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah, 40because just as Jonah was in the stomach of the sea creature for three days and three nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. 41The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment and condemn the people living today, because they repented at the
preaching of Jonah. But look—something greater than Jonah is here!

Later in Matthew’s Gospel, a secondary incident is recorded in which Jesus rather unceremoniously comments to the Pharisees and Sadducees that their request for a miraculous sign from God to vindicate Jesus’ claims will be refused, except for his resurrection from the dead, in keeping with Jonah’s time in the great fish.

**Matthew 16:1-4:**

1 When the Pharisees and Sadducees arrived, in order to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He replied to them, “You say, ‘Red sky at night, what a delight!’ 3 Red sky in the morning, cloudy and storming.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, yet you can’t interpret the signs of the times? 4 An evil and adulterous generation craves a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Then he left them and went away.

**ON THE HISTORICITY OF JONAH AND NINEVEH**

Jesus asserted that Jonah was a real person. He assumed that the man visited the city of Nineveh, which during Jonah’s lifetime was the capital of the ancient Assyrian empire. And he used the three days of Jonah’s time inside the great sea creature as a comparative to predict his own resurrection from the dead. In doing so, he assumed that the man’s three day experience paralleled exactly the duration of Jesus’ own time in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

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43 Hebrew: רַבָּה, dag gadol; Greek Septuagint: κῆτος μέγα, kētos mega. The words refer to any large sea creature. Ancient Hebrews did not distinguish between species of fish or whales. This linguistic ambiguity makes it impossible in our modern era to identify the specific genus of the creature involved.
Jewish tradition suggests that when he was just a young lad, Jonah was the little boy who was brought back to life by Elijah the prophet, who is described in First Kings 17 as having been a guest in the household of his mother, the single parent of Zarephath, but this tradition is not supported by any textual evidence within the Tanakh, and Jesus himself never commented one way or another regarding this tradition. Even to this day, the canonicity of the book of Jonah is so highly respected that all four chapters of the work are read in the original Hebrew (!) as the Haftarah Bible reading portion at the afternoon mincha prayer on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

The Hebrew Scriptures mention the ancient city of Nineveh several times outside of the book of Jonah. For example, the first mention of the city may be found in Genesis 10:11, where Nineveh is described as having been founded by Nimrod. King Sennacherib reigned over Assyria from Nineveh, according to Second Kings 19:39 and Isaiah 37:37. The entire book written by the prophet Nahum is devoted to prophetic statements regarding its dismal future. Zephaniah 2:13 describes its destruction, as well. Nineveh was located near the junction of the Tigris and the Khosr.
Rivers on a set of ruins measuring approximately 1,900 acres, circumscribed by a 7.5 mile long brick rampart located near the modern city of Mosul, Iraq.

Under King Sennacherib, who located his capital city in Nineveh, the region became one of the most important cities. For many years, though, liberal higher critics of the Bible maintained that the city never existed. This denial sprang from a deliberate ignoring of the archaeological evidence. As early as the mid-1700’s the Danish explorer Carsten Niebuhr had visited the area.

A century later, French Consul General Paul-Émile Botta began to excavate the area, as did British adventurer Sir Austen Henry Layard, who discovered the lost palace of Sennacherib, with its 71 rooms, and the library of Ashurbanipal, with its 22,000 cuneiform tablets. Unfortunately, many of the ruins of ancient Nineveh were destroyed in late 2014 and early 2015 by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), who considered those ruins to be idolatrous.

The book of Jonah is named after the person whose experiences are the subject of its historical record. Jonah is one of only a few individuals whose ministry and message was solely to non-Jews. His book contains no direct claim of authorship, either by the prophet Jonah or by anyone else. Even Jesus never quite gets around to saying the book was authored by Jonah. But he does cite the man’s experiences as having actually occurred during the history of Israel.

The only biblical clue about Jonah or the historical context of his ministry is contained in Second Kings 14:25. The clearly miraculous preservation of Jonah inside the marine creature for three days has led some to suggest that the record of Jonah’s ill-fated journey was a late-dated allegorical myth.

However, no history of textual transmission, rabbinic tradition, or early Christian tradition supports this presumption. Furthermore, as we have noted above, because Jesus himself referred to Jonah’s experiences inside the creature as an actual event that occurred in history, and because Jesus claimed that those experiences were a
precursor to his own death and return from the tomb, there’s no reason not to doubt Jesus’ high view of the man’s book.

At any rate, no chronological setting that could assist the reader in dating the book appears anywhere in the text of Jonah’s work. The earliest possible date for the events described in this book would be during the first half of the eighth century BC, judging by a reference to the time of Jonah’s ministry recorded in Second Kings 14:25. A number of modern scholars favor an exilic or post-exilic date (i.e., between the sixth and fourth centuries BC) for the composition of this work.

To sum up, Jesus the Messiah cited Jonah’s experiences as authentic history.

**Claim #44:** Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Jeremiah the prophet and his quote from his book demonstrated that he took it for granted that Jeremiah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus of Nazareth cited the book of Jeremiah in a quiet discussion with his disciples one day. Matthew 13:10-13 recounts the incident in which this occurred:

10 Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, “Why do you speak to people in parables?”

11 He answered them, “You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom from heaven, but it hasn’t been given to them, 12 because to anyone who has something, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who doesn’t have anything, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 That’s why I speak to them in parables, because they look but don’t see,

and they listen but don’t hear or understand.’

This quotation is a direct citation from Jeremiah 5:21. Here’s how the passage reads in the *Nevi’im* portion of the *Tanakh*:

20 “Declare this to the descendants of Jacob,
and proclaim it in Judah:
21‘Hear this, you foolish and stupid people:
   They have eyes, but don’t see;
   they have ears, but don’t hear.
22‘You don’t fear me, do you?’ declares the Lord.
   ‘You don’t tremble before me, do you?
I’m the one who put the sand as a boundary for the sea,
   a perpetual barrier that it cannot cross.
Though the waves toss, they cannot prevail against it,
   though they roar, they cannot cross it.’
23But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts.
24They don’t say to themselves,
   ‘Let’s fear the Lord our God,
who gives rain in its season,
   both the autumn and the spring rain.
   He sets aside for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.’
25Your iniquities have turned these things away,
   and your sins have held back from you what is good.
26“Evil men are found among my people.
   They lie in wait like someone who traps birds.
They set a trap,
   but they do so to catch people.
27Like a cage full of birds,
   so their houses are filled with treachery.
This is how they have become prominent and rich,
   and have grown fat and sleek.
There is no limit to their evil deeds.
   They don’t argue the case of the orphan to secure justice.
   They don’t defend the rights of the poor.
‘Should I not punish them for this?’
asks the Lord.

‘Should I not avenge myself
on a nation like this?’

‘An appalling and horrible thing
has happened in the land:

The prophets prophesy falsely,
the priests rule by their own authority,
and my people love it this way.
But what will you do in the end?’

By citing Jeremiah’s salient rebuke to national Israel of that prophet’s generation, Jesus assumes that the man actually lived and that he was the author of the prophetic book that bears his name. Also, Jesus is citing the rebuke of God himself, thus identifying himself as the same speaker who called Israel to return to him. In citing Jeremiah, Jesus the Messiah was letting his disciples know that from his own standpoint, just as God rebuked ancient Israel, Jesus was rebuking first century Israel. Furthermore, as we’ll see below with respect to what Jesus said about how he quoted Isaiah, Jesus is claiming to be the same God who inspired Jeremiah back in the years before the exile to Babylon occurred.

The book that Jeremiah wrote is named after the ministry and prophetic messages of the priest who recorded them over a period of more than 40 years. Rabbinic and conservative Christian tradition assign authorship to this book to Jeremiah, whose father Hilkiah may have been the same person who played a significant role under Judah’s reformation (ca. 621 BC) described in Second Chronicles 34:9.

Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry and writing career extended from his early teenage years, commencing in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (ca. 627 BC) and continuing through the beginning of the Babylonian captivity of Nebuchadnezzar (c 586 BC). Jeremiah continued his predictive and exhortative ministry well into his forced exile to Tahpanez, Egypt, which is recorded in Jeremiah 44:7.

By citing Jeremiah’s work, Jesus authenticated the man’s historical existence and the validity of his prophetic ministry.
Claim #45: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Isaiah the prophet and his extensive quotes from his book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Isaiah had been a real person and that his written works were authoritative.

Jesus of Nazareth cited the book of Isaiah with astonishing regularity during his public ministry. Matthew 13:10-15 recounts an incident in which this occurred:

10 Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, “Why do you speak to people in parables?”
11 He answered them, “You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom from heaven, but it hasn’t been given to them, because to anyone who has something, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who doesn’t have anything, even what he has will be taken away from him. 12 That’s why I speak to them in parables, because ‘they look but don’t see, and they listen but don’t hear or understand.’
14 “With them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says: ‘You will listen and listen but never understand. You will look and look but never comprehend, for this people’s heart has become dull, and their ears are hard of hearing. They have shut their eyes so that they might not see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’

The prophecy by Isaiah to which Jesus the Messiah refers in verses 14-15, above, is found in Isaiah 6:9-10:

9 “Go!” he responded. “Tell this people: “ ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;”
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

10 Dull the mind of this people,
deafen their ears,
and blind their eyes.
By doing so, they won’t see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
turn back,
and be healed.”

An observant reader will note that Jesus’ quote from Isaiah 9:6-10 is not, strictly speaking a direct citation from the Hebrew language original of Isaiah’s work. It reads more like a paraphrase. I believe there were two reasons why Jesus did not quote the original Hebrew of Isaiah’s prediction in this particular instance.

**Jesus’ Use of Targums in Teaching**

*First,* it’s highly likely that Jesus was employing the Jewish equivalent of a *targum* of this passage. The Encyclopedia Britannica provides this information about targums:

**Targum,** (Aramaic: “Translation,” or “Interpretation”), any of several translations of the Hebrew Bible or portions of it into the Aramaic language. The word originally indicated a translation of the Old Testament in any language but later came to refer specifically to an Aramaic translation.

The earliest Targums date from the time after the Babylonian Exile when Aramaic had superseded Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews in Palestine. It is impossible to give more than a rough estimate as to the period in which Hebrew was displaced by Aramaic as a spoken language. It is certain, however, that Aramaic was firmly established in Palestine by the 1st century AD, although Hebrew still remained the learned and sacred language. Thus the Targums were designed to meet the
needs of unlearned Jews to whom the Hebrew of the Old Testament was unintelligible.

The status and influence of the Targums became assured after the Second Temple was destroyed in AD 70, when synagogues replaced the Temple as houses of worship. For it was in the synagogue that the practice of

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Figure 17: 11\textsuperscript{th} century Hebrew Bible with Targum, probably from Tunisia originally. Part of the Schøyen Collection.
reading from the Old Testament became widely observed, along with the custom of providing these readings with a translation into Aramaic. When Scripture was read aloud in the synagogue, it was translated aloud by a meturgeman, or professional interpreter (hence the name Targum), for the benefit of the congregation. The translator tried to reproduce the original text as closely as possible, but since his object was to give an intelligible rendering of the biblical text, the Targums eventually took on the character of paraphrase and commentary, leaving literal translation behind.

To prevent misconceptions, a meturgeman expanded and explained what was obscure, adjusted the incidents of the past to the ideas of later times, emphasized the moral lessons to be learned from the biblical narratives, and adapted the rules and regulations of the Scriptures to the conditions and requirements of the current age. The method by which the text was thus utilized as a vehicle for conveying homiletic discourses, traditional sayings, legends, and allegories is abundantly illustrated by the later Targums, as opposed to the more literal translations of the earlier Targums.

Though written Targums gradually came into being, it was the living tradition of oral translation and exposition that was recognized as authoritative throughout the Talmudic period of the early centuries of the Christian Era. The official recognition of a written Targum, and therefore the final fixing of its text, belongs to the post-Talmudic period of the 5th century ad. The best known, most literal, and possibly the earliest Targum is the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, which appeared in its final revision in the 3rd century ad. Other Targums
include the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan, the Samaritan Targum, and the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel.\textsuperscript{44}

In other words, by the first century, AD, Hebrew had been eclipsed by Aramaic as the common \textit{lingua franca} of Jesus day. Since he knew the common people were hanging on every word of Jesus’ rebuttal to the Jewish leaders who were constantly attempting to oppose him, it’s probable that Jesus, at least in this instance, cited his own off-the-cuff translation of the Hebrew into Aramaic so his general audience could follow his logic.

**JESUS’ USE OF PARAPHRASE TO HIGHLIGHT HIS DIVINE NATURE**

But there’s a \textit{second} possibility regarding why Jesus may have paraphrased Isaiah 6:9-10, and there’s no particular reason why Jesus may have had both possibilities in mind while speaking to the Jewish leaders. That reason can be clearly seen when you compare Isaiah 9:10 as Isaiah wrote the words with how Jesus quoted Isaiah’s prophetic writing. Take a good look, if you would, please, at the not-so-subtle difference between Isaiah’s original and Jesus’ quote:

\textit{Isaiah’s original:}

\begin{quote}
understand with their minds,  
turn back, and be healed.”
\end{quote}

\textit{Jesus’ paraphrase:}

\begin{quote}
and understand with their heart and turn,  
and I would heal them.
\end{quote}

In Isaiah’s original prophecy, the actual speaker is God himself. Isaiah is communicating to unrepentant Israel on behalf of God. But in Jesus’ paraphrase, he changes the voice of the verb from the passive “be healed” to the active “I would heal them”. In other words, Jesus is using the quote from Isaiah to accomplish three objectives:

- \textit{First,} to rebuke the Jewish leaders; and,
- \textit{Second,} to show that Isaiah wrote about him; and,

\textsuperscript{44} Cited from \url{http://www.britannica.com/topic/Targum}.
Third, to equate himself with God.

And it’s not like Jesus didn’t know what the Hebrew original actually said, like some liberal higher critics contend. Isaiah 6:9-10 is quoted by Jesus, and **not** as a paraphrase, in Mark 4:10-12:

> When he was alone with the Twelve and those around him, they began to ask him about the parables. He told them, “The secret about the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside, everything comes in parables so that
> ‘they may see clearly but not perceive,
> and they may hear clearly but not understand,
> otherwise they might turn around and be forgiven.’”

Notice, if you would please, how closely Jesus’ citation of Isaiah 9:6-10 adheres to the Hebrew, since on this occasion Jesus isn’t emphasizing his divine nature:

**Isaiah’s original:**

> turn back, and be healed.

**Jesus’ paraphrase:**

> and turn around and be forgiven.

The main difference between Jesus’ quotation and Jeremiah’s Hebrew is that Jesus uses the Aramaic **synonym** for repentance, emphasizing the **effect** of the turning back rather than the action.

Luke’s edition of this incident, apparently given on another occasion, cites Isaiah without making any reference to his deity. Luke 8:4-10 presents the larger context of Jesus the Messiah’s explanation to his disciples.

> Now while a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from every city, he said in a parable:
> “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path, were trampled on, and birds from the sky ate them up. Others fell on stony ground, and as soon as they came up, they dried up
because they had no moisture. 7Others fell among thorn bushes, and the thorn bushes grew with them and choked them. 8But others fell on good soil, and when they came up, they produced 100 times as much as was planted.” As he said this, he called out, “Let the person who has ears to hear, listen!”

9Then his disciples began to ask him what this parable meant. 10So he said, “You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom of God. But to others they are given in parables, so that ‘they might look but not see, and they might listen but not understand.’”

ON THE unity of Isaiah’s book: the Apostle John’s view

Many liberal higher critics of Scripture claim that Isaiah wasn’t the real author of the book that is attributed to him in the Tanakh. These doubters of the claimed authors of the Hebrew Scriptures have posited the existence of at least two different writers. The usual division is that the first author of Isaiah, who is usually called Proto-Isaiah, wrote chapters 1-39 of the book, while chapters 40-66 were penned by an unknown writer whom the critics have labeled Deutero-Isaiah. Over the years, other scholars have suggested that there were three different Isaiahs, not two. The basis upon which these theories of diverse authorship was crafted is the a priori assumption that predictive prophecy is impossible and that all allegations of these phenomena were vaticinia ex eventu, or prophecies created after the fact to create the deceptive illusion that biblical prophets such as Isaiah were prognosticators with credibility. There exists, of course, absolutely no textual or manuscript evidence for this theory. Neither the Masoretic Text, the Dead Sea Scrolls, nor any extant editions of the Greek language Septuagint demonstrate even the slightest heritage of dual authorship of the book of Isaiah.

Instead, the overwhelming testimony of the New Testament is that all 66 chapters of the book of Isaiah were written by a single author. His name was Isaiah. Notice, if you would please, how the Apostle John in John
12:38-39 describes the ministry and life of Jesus the Messiah as having been fulfilled by and mentioned in the writings of Isaiah:

37 Although he had performed numerous signs in their presence, they did not believe in him, 38 so that what the prophet Isaiah spoke might be fulfilled when he said: “Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the Lord’s power been revealed?”

In making these citations, notice how the statement is made from Isaiah 53:1, commonly called by the liberal higher critics “Deutero-Isaiah”:

1 “Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 For he grew up before him like a tender plant, and like a root out of a dry ground; he had no form and he had no majesty that we should look at him, and there is no attractiveness that we should desire him.

Notice also the second statement made by the Apostle John:

39 This is why they could not believe: Isaiah also said, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not perceive with their eyes, and understand with their mind and turn, and I would heal them.”

41 Isaiah said this when he saw his glory and spoke about him. 42 Yet many people, even some of the authorities, believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not admit it so they would not be thrown out of the synagogue. 43 For they loved the praise of human beings more than the praise of God.

Verse 40 is a direct citation from Isaiah 6:9, which is commonly called by the liberal higher critics “Proto-Isaiah”. The writer of this Gospel says that
a single Isaiah wrote both chapters of his book. Furthermore, the Apostle John specifically claims that Isaiah saw his glory and spoke about him. This incident to which Matthew referred is described only a few verses earlier in Isaiah 6:2-5:

1"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and exalted. The train of his robe filled the Temple. 2The seraphim stood above him. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he was flying. 3They kept on calling to each other:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of the Heavenly Armies! The whole earth is full of his glory!”

4The foundations of the thresholds quaked at the sound of those who kept calling out, and the Temple was filled with smoke.

5“How terrible it will be for me!” I cried, “because I am ruined! I’m a man with unclean lips, and I live among a people with unclean lips! And my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of the Heavenly Armies!”

This vision is commonly considered by conservative scholars to be a reference to the pre-Incarnate Jesus the Messiah, seen by Isaiah as he was being called by God to be a prophet to eighth century Israel. To sum up our thoughts regarding the multiple author view of Isaiah, we cite Darren Slade’s excellent work, The Unity and Authorship of Isaiah:

…the literary context of Isaiah does not provide evidence that pseudo-writers compiled the text centuries after the “predicted” events. Likewise, it is apparent that critics take an undue prejudice against predictive prophecy on account of its relevancy to the historical context. Those who deny a single author approach the book with a presupposition regarding Isaiah’s geographical location. They do not consider the fact that predictive prophecy can occur outside the context of the
Arguably the most elegant and beautifully composed prophetic writings of the entire Bible, this book that Jesus quotes so authoritatively derives its name from its primary author and prophet whose materials are recorded in it. Many see this book as naturally divided into two sections.


Rabbinic and early church tradition assign authorship to the prophet Isaiah. The distinct differences in literary style between these two major sections described above, coupled with Isaiah’s supernatural prediction (made ca. 710 BC) about King Cyrus of Persia (cf. 44:28-45:6), whom the prophet identified by name about 150 years before he was born, has led some modern critics to suggest that chapters 40-66 of the book were composed (or, at the very least, edited) by a different individual who lived at a later time.

However, conservative scholars suggest that the stylistic variances are explained by differences in purpose and target audience and that Isaiah’s forecast about of the coming of Cyrus was a genuine, supernatural prediction. The Gospel of Matthew attributes its citations from the two allegedly different sections Isaiah 9:1-2 (cf. Matthew 4:16) and Isaiah 40:3 (cf. Matthew 3:3) as having been written by Isaiah himself without attributing the quotations to different authors, as does the Gospel of John’s citations from Isaiah 6:9-10 (cf. John 12:40) and Isaiah 53:1 (cf. John 12:38).

Isaiah’s prophecies touch upon the administrations of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah over a period of about 60 years, during the ascendancy of the Assyrian empire and predicting both its demise and also the rise of the Chaldeans and Persians as successors. He also served as a historiographer of King Uzziah “from first to last” (2 Chronicles 26:22), though Isaiah 6:1 records that his prophetic ministry began the same year in which Uzziah died (i.e., ca. 739 BC). He appears to have been martyred early in the reign of the wicked King Manasseh. Some see an allusion to Isaiah’s martyrdom in Heb. 11:37.

At any rate, the last dated event in the book of Isaiah was the fourteenth year of Hezekiah (ca. 701 BC). The Assyrian King Esarhaddon (ca. 681–669 BC) is mentioned in Isaiah 37:38.

Claim #46: Jesus cites Isaiah the prophet to link the apostasy of his generation to Isaiah’s mention of him.

Jesus of Nazareth cited the authority of the book of Isaiah in one of his rebukes to the Pharisees in Matthew 15:7-9:
7You hypocrites! How well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said,
8“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
9Their worship of me is empty, because they teach human rules as doctrines.’”

Claim #47: Jesus links the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Joel as predictions relating to his second coming.

Jesus of Nazareth also cited the authority of the book of Isaiah and the book of Joel in his Olivet Discourse regarding the end of the age. Matthew 24:29, Mark 13:24-25 record his statement where he quotes Isaiah 13:10, 34:4, and Joel 2:10:

Matthew 24:29
29“Now immediately after the troubles of those days, ‘The sun will be darkened, the moon will not reflect its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers from the heavens will be disrupted.’

Mark 13:24-25
24“But after the troubles of those days, ‘The sun will be darkened, the moon will not reflect its light, 25the stars will be falling out of the sky, and the powers that are in the heavens will be disrupted.’

Claim #48: Jesus cites the prophet Isaiah as applying to the rejection by Israel’s first century leaders in their rejection of the righteous requirements of the Law in deference to their oral traditions.

We’ve already noted earlier in this work how Jesus of Nazareth cited the authority of the book of Isaiah in referring to himself as the
Messiah of Israel. But he also cited the book of Isaiah in reference to the hypocritical leaders of Israel. Mark 7:5-8 records a rebuke to the Pharisees and the scribes regarding how their actions fulfill Isaiah 29:13:

So the Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders? Instead, they eat with unclean hands.”

He told them, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites. As it is written,

“These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is worthless, because they teach human rules as doctrines.’

“You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

The larger context of Isaiah’s prophecy that is being quoted by Jesus the Messiah is God’s rebuke to the hypocrites of eighth century BC Israel. Isaiah 29:13-21 reads like this:

Then the LORD said:

“Because these people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, worship of me has become merely like rules taught by human beings.

Therefore, watch out!

“As for me, I will once again do amazing things with this people, wonder upon wonder. The wisdom of their wise men will perish, and the insights of their discerning men will stay hidden.”

“How terrible it will be for you who go to great depths to hide your plans from the Lord,
you whose deeds have been done in the dark,
and who say, ‘Who can see us?
Who has recognized us?’

16 He has turned the tables on you—
as if the potter were thought to be like heat.
Can what is made say of the one who made it,
‘He did not make me?’
Or can what is formed say of the ones who formed it,
‘He has no skill?’

17 “In a very little while, 
will not Lebanon be turned into a garden of fruit,
and the garden of fruit seem like a forest?

18 On that day the deaf will hear
the words of a scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.

19 The humble will again experience joy in the Lord,
and the poorest people will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

20 For the ruthless will vanish,
and mockers will disappear,
and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—

21 those who make a person appear to be the offender in a lawsuit,
who set a trap for someone who is making his defense in court,
and push aside the innocent with specious arguments.
Claim #49: Jesus cites the authority of the prophet Isaiah to explain the necessity of all prophecies written about him in the Hebrew Scriptures being fulfilled.

Isaiah 53:12 contains a prophecy about how Messiah will be numbered among criminals and condemned. In writing about how Jesus reminded his disciples about the necessity of the biblical prophecies being fulfilled in his life, the Apostle Luke records the following warning to his followers in Luke 22:36:

36Then he told them, “But now whoever has a wallet must take it along, and his traveling bag, too. And the one who has no sword must sell his coat and buy one. 37Because I tell you, what has been written about me must be fulfilled: ‘He was counted among the criminals.’ Indeed, what is written about me must be fulfilled.”

The larger context of Isaiah 53:12 is the famous prediction by Isaiah of the Suffering Servant, who dies on behalf of his people. In describing the reward obtained by the Messiah from God the Father for accomplishing the redemption of his people, Isaiah 53:12 proclaims:

12Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong; because he poured out his life to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he carried the sins of many, and made intercession for their transgressions.

Claim #50: Jesus cites the authority of the prophet Isaiah to explain what life will be like under his reign during his Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 54:13 contains a prophecy about how Messiah will be numbered among criminals and condemned. In writing about how Jesus reminded his disciples about the necessity of the biblical prophecies being fulfilled in his life, the Apostle Luke records the following warning to his followers in John 6:44-45:
No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him to life on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, ‘And all of them will be taught by God.’

This remarkable claim by Jesus the Messiah contains the startling promise by him that everyone who trusts in him will be raised to life on the last day. As proof of the reality of this promise, and the certainty of it coming to pass, Jesus cites a verse from Isaiah 54:10-14:

10 For the mountains may collapse and the hills may reel, but my gracious love will not depart from you, neither will my covenant of peace totter,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

11 “O afflicted one, passed back and forth, and not comforted, Look! I am about to set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires.

12 And I’ll make your battlements of rubies, and your gates of jewels, and all your walls of precious stones.

13 Then all your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children’s prosperity.

14 “In righteousness you’ll be established; you will be far from tyranny, for you won’t be afraid, and from terror, for it won’t come near you.

Claim #51: Jesus cites the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to explain why he expelled merchants from the Temple.

The Synoptic Gospels (the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke) contain a record of an incident late in Jesus’ ministry during which he expelled various merchants and their customers from the grounds of the
Temple in Jerusalem. Here are their records, which demonstrate how Jesus used the authority of Isaiah and Jeremiah to explain why he did this:

**Mark 11:15-17**

15When they came to Jerusalem, he went into the Temple and began to throw out those who were selling and those who were buying in the Temple. He overturned the moneychangers’ tables and the chairs of those who sold doves. 16He wouldn’t even let anyone carry a vessel through the Temple. 17Then he began to teach them: “It is written, is it not, ‘My house is to be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you’ve turned it into a hideout for bandits!”

**Matthew 21:12-13**

12Then Jesus went into the Temple, threw out everyone who was selling and buying in the Temple, and overturned the moneychangers’ tables and the chairs of those who sold doves. 13He told them, “It is written, ‘My house is to be called a house of prayer,’ but you are turning it into a hideout for bandits!”

**Luke 19:45-46**

45Then Jesus went into the Temple and began to throw out those who were selling things. 46He told them, “It is written, ‘My house is to be called a house of prayer,’ but you have turned it into a hideout for bandits!”

Each of these three accounts cite the authority of Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. Jesus’ quotation that “My house is to be called a house of prayer” is a direct allusion to Isaiah 56:7, the larger context of which reads:

6“Also, the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him,
to love the name of the Lord,
to be his servants,
and to bless the LORD’s name,
observing the Sabbath without profaning it,
and who hold fast my covenant—
these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer.
Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices
will rise up to be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called a house of prayer
for everyone.”

By citing this verse from Isaiah, Jesus is citing a section of the prophecies of Isaiah that deal with the future inclusion into Israel’s covenant with God of the Gentiles. Furthermore, one of the more subtle implications of this citation from Isaiah 56 is that it is the LORD himself who is speaking as the covenant God of Israel to his stubborn nation in the eighth century, BC. Yet in this citation of the verse, Jesus is unmistakably identifying himself as being that God.

Jesus’ citation of Jeremiah 7:11 as the basis for his authority and reason for expelling the merchants and their customers from the Temple is the more ominous of the two quotes that he makes from the Hebrew Scriptures. By reading the larger context of Jeremiah 7:11, which is Jeremiah 7:8-15, you can see why this is so:

8“Look, you’re trusting in deceptive words that cannot benefit. 9Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear by false gods, burn incense to Baal, follow other gods that you don’t know, 10and then come to stand before me in this house that is called by my name and say, ‘We’re delivered’ so we can continue to do all these things that are repugnant to God? 11Has this house that is called by my name become a hideout for bandits in your eyes? Look, I’m watching,” declares the LORD.

12“Go to my place that was in Shiloh, where I first caused my name to dwell. See what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. 13Now, because you have done all these things,” declares the LORD, “I spoke to you over and over again, but you didn’t listen. I called to you, but
you didn’t answer. \(^{14}\)Just as I did to Shiloh, I’ll do to the house in which you trust and which is called by my name, the place that I gave to you and your ancestors. \(^{15}\)I’ll cast you out of my sight, just as I cast out all your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.

The immediate context of Jeremiah 7:11, which Jesus quotes \textit{word for word} from the Hebrew text, is a threat to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem. “Just as I did to Shiloh, I’ll do to the house in which you trust and which is called by my name.” As a point of historical fact, as we noted in our section entitled \textit{The Destruction of Jerusalem} on page 133, above, the same generation that witnessed the death of Jesus also witnessed the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem under Roman General Titus Vespasian in 70 AD.

John’s Gospel contains a record of an earlier similar incident that occurred a few years earlier, right at the beginning of Jesus the Messiah’s ministry:

\(^{13}\)The Jewish Passover was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. \(^{14}\)In the Temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as moneychangers sitting at their tables. \(^{15}\)After making a whip out of cords, he drove all of them out of the Temple, including the sheep and the cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and knocked over their tables.

\(^{16}\)Then he told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” \(^{17}\)His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

This incident from the early ministry of Jesus does not, strictly speaking, record him as citing Psalm 69:9 as explaining what motivated him to clear the Temple of merchants, their merchandize, and their customers. But it does record the disciples as understanding why he did the expelling.
Claim #52: Jesus quoted the work of the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming to his generation that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1-2.

The Synoptic Gospels each contain a record of an incident when Jesus the Messiah returned to his home town of Nazareth where he had grown up following his family’s return from Egypt. The New Testament record is clear that he was rejected in his hometown by those who heard him. Here is how Matthew and Mark record the incident:

**Matthew 13:53-58**

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place. 54 He went to his hometown and began teaching the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were amazed and asked, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miracles? 55 This is the builder’s son, isn’t it? His mother is named Mary, isn’t she? His brothers are James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, aren’t they? 56 And his sisters are all with us, aren’t they? So where did this man get all these things?” 57 And they were offended by him.

But Jesus told them, “A prophet is without honor only in his hometown and in his own home.” 58 He did not perform many miracles there because of their unbelief.

**Mark 6:1-6**

1 Jesus left that place and went back to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were utterly amazed. “Where did this man get all these things?” they asked. “What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What great miracles are being done by his hands! 3 This is the builder, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon, isn’t it? His sisters are here with us, aren’t they?” And they were offended by him.
Jesus had been telling them, “A prophet is without honor only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own home.” He couldn’t perform a miracle there except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. He was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went around to the villages and continued teaching.

We invite you to notice, however, that neither Matthew’s nor Mark’s rendition of this event give the reader even the slightest hint as to why Jesus was rejected by them. We’re only told that he was rejected, and we’re told in Mark’s version (at verse 6) that Jesus was surprised by their unbelief. We don’t find out the reason why he was rejected in his hometown until we read through Luke’s edition of the incident. This inclusion of the reasons for the Messiah’s rejection is to be expected, given how Luke’s focus in his writings is on the relationship people had with Jesus and the reactions they had to him. You’ll find his record of the encounter at Nazareth in Luke 4:16-21:

Luke 4:16

16 Then Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been raised. As was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. When he stood up to read, 17 the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written,

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me to tell the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to announce release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind,

to set oppressed people free,

19 and to announce the year of the Lord’s favor.”

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. While the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him, 21 he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled, as you’ve heard it read aloud.”
Since He Wrote about Me

William P. Welty, Ph.D.

“22 All the people began to speak well of him and to wonder at the gracious words that flowed from his mouth. They said, “This is Joseph’s son, isn’t it?”

23 So he told them, “You will probably quote this proverb to me, ‘Doctor, heal yourself! Do everything here in your hometown that we hear you did in Capernaum.’”

24 He added, “I tell all of you with certainty, a prophet is not accepted in his hometown. 25 I’m telling you the truth—there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when it didn’t rain for three years and six months and there was a severe famine everywhere in the land. 26 Yet Elijah wasn’t sent to a single one of those widows except to one at Zarephath in Sidon. 27 There were also many lepers in Israel in the prophet Elisha’s time, yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”

28 All the people in the synagogue became furious when they heard this. 29 They got up, forced Jesus out of the city, and led him to the edge of the hill on which their city was built, intending to throw him off. 30 But he walked right through the middle of them and went away.

Claim #53: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Daniel the prophet and his quote from his book demonstrated that he took it for granted that Daniel had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

The book of Daniel is a favorite of the liberal higher critics. So striking are its prophecies of the coming centuries after Daniel’s time that the enemies of conservative biblical truth naturally assumed that no one has the ability to predict the future. Therefore the majority of Daniel’s work not only had to have been written after the man died, but the book had to have been composed centuries later, perhaps about the mid-second century, BC. Of course, the higher critics didn’t consider that there is not a shred of textual evidence that the book of Daniel was written after the time of Daniel. Furthermore, we have the testimony of Jesus the Messiah as to who wrote
the prophetic book that bears his name: Daniel. Notice, if you would please, how Jesus assumes that Daniel was a historic figure, taking it for granted that the man lived just as the Hebrew Scriptures testify that he did. Consider, for example, the following citations from Daniel’s writings:

**Matthew 24:15-18**

15“So when you see the destructive desecration, mentioned by the prophet Daniel, standing in the Holy Place (let the reader take note), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 16Anyone who’s on the housetop must not come down to get what is in his house, 17and anyone who’s in the field must not turn back to get his coat."

Citing Daniel 9:27; 11:31; and 12:1, Mark 13:14-19 reads:

14“So when you see the destructive desecration standing where it should not be (let the reader take note), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 15Anyone who’s on his housetop must not come down and go into his house to take anything out of it, 16and the one who’s in the field must not turn back to get his coat.

17“How terrible it will be for women who are pregnant or who are nursing babies in those days! 18Pray that it may not be in winter, 19because those days will be a time of suffering, a kind that has not happened from the beginning of creation—which God himself created—until now, and certainly will never happen again.

Mark 13:26 reads:

26Then people will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory.

Jesus the Messiah’s citation of the book of Daniel, which is named after its author (who was taken captive to Babylon while he was a teenager by King Nebuchadnezzar in ca. 605 BC), contains some of the most strikingly supernatural prophecies of the entire Tanakh.
Rabbinic and conservative Christian tradition assign authorship to this book to Daniel, viewing the prophecies contained within it as supernatural, accurate, and historically trustworthy. Some modern scholars, who deny that the remarkable details contained in the work’s prophetic corpus could have been the product of supernatural revelation, claim that the book was produced in its present form during the second century, BC, (i.e., after the events predicted came to pass).

However, modern conservative scholars point to Daniel’s remarkably accurate prediction concerning the date of Messiah’s appearance to Israel (9:1-27) and his foundation of the Church as the Rock that fills the earth (8:1-27) as incontrovertible evidence that the work was written many decades or centuries before their fulfillment. Daniel’s prophetic ministry and writing career of about 70 years encompassed the captivity administrations of both Babylon and Medo-Persia, stretching from the first years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, through the fall of Babylon (ca. 539 BC), and into the early years of Darius the Mede (ca. 535 BC). Portions of this book were composed in Aramaic, a language with which first century Israeli were quite familiar.

Claim #54: Jesus’ quotation of the prophet Micah from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Micah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus the Messiah quotes Micah 7:6 in Matthew 10:34-36

34"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword! 35I came to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36A person’s enemies will include members of his own family.’"

The book of Micah that Jesus the Messiah quotes is named after its author, who was from Moresheth (Micah 1:1), which is probably
Moresheth Gath (1:14), an obscure village located about six miles north-northeast of the ancient military fortress of Lachish and about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem. By citing Micah 7:6 in this passage from Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus declares that he believes the prophet’s work to be authoritative and binding on his followers.

Some scholars who deny the possibility of supernatural, predictive prophecy reject the presuppositions contained in this book regarding the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity (cf. 1:8-16; 2:12-13; 4:10; 7:7-20) and thus deny authorship to this book to Micah. But the people of Jeremiah’s day quoted Micah 3:12 exactly, ascribing its authorship to him and noting how King Hezekiah averted the wrath of God to save Jeremiah’s life (Jeremiah 26:24).

Conservative scholars cite supernatural predictions in the Sinai Covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 28:31-53), claiming that Micah’s prophecies are the culmination of God’s righteous punishments set forth therein. Also, Micah’s prophesied inclusion of non-Jews in the salvation plan of God (4:1-3; 7:12, 16-17) were as much in the future with respect to Micah’s day as the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities were, but no serious scholar questions the prophetic nature of gentile inclusion in the plan of God. Also, prophecies regarding the future Messianic era (2:13; 4:1-8; 5:2-8) were likewise prophetic for Micah’s day, as they are for ours, and the legitimacy of these predictions is not questioned except by those who deny the future literal reign on the earth by the Messiah.

The earliest possible dates for the prophecies contained in this book would have commenced during the early days of Isaiah’s prophecies and continued throughout the reigns of the Judean Kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (1:1), who lived ca. 750-686 BC. Micah’s ministry overlapped that of Hosea. As we’ll see below, Jesus also cited Hosea’s work to validate what he was telling his audience.
Claim #55: Jesus’ mention of the prophet Zechariah and his quote from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Zechariah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus the Messiah quotes Zechariah 12:12 and Daniel 7:13 in Matthew 24:30:

30 Then the sign that is the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all ‘the tribes of the land will mourn’ as they see ‘the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven’ with power and great glory.

Furthermore, Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7 in Matthew 26:31:

31 Then Jesus told them, “All of you will turn against me this very night, because it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”

Mark 14:27, 48-50

27 Then Jesus told them, “All of you will turn against me, because it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” ....

48 Jesus asked them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as if I were a bandit? 49 Day after day I was with you in the Temple teaching, yet you didn’t arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.” 50 Then all the disciples deserted Jesus and ran away.

The book of Zechariah is named after the prophet who composed it. He is identified by this book introduction itself (1:1-6) as having been the son of Berechiah, who was the son of Iddo (cf. Matthew 23:35). Other than these references, the Bible contains virtually no other information about this individual (who is mentioned along with Haggai, in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14). Even extra-biblical writings say little about him.

Some scholars see the writer of this book as a successor to the older prophet Haggai, who is thought to have died before the Temple
reconstruction project that he envisioned was completed. This book claims (1:1-6) that its introductory vision was received by Zechariah sometime during the eighth month of the second year of the reign of Darius the Great (i.e., ca. November – October 520 BC).

By citing Zechariah’s works, Jesus asserts the fundamental veracity of the man’s work and its authoritative reliability to serve as supporting arguments for his discourses.

Claim #56: Jesus’ quotation from the prophet Hosea’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Hosea had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus the Messiah cites the writings of the prophet Hosea in Luke 22:30-31, taking it for granted that Hosea not only lived, but that his writings were authentic and authoritative:

29 because the time is surely coming when people will say, ‘How blessed are the women who couldn’t bear children and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ 30 Then people will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us up!’ 31 And if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

According to the first verse of the first chapter of Hosea’s book, Hosea’s prophetic ministry and writing career encompassed the administrations of Uzziah (ca. 792-740 BC), Jotham (coregent with Uzziah ca. 750 BC), Ahaz and Hezekiah (ca. 753-683 BC), and Jeroboam (ca. 793-753 BC). The book is named after its author, and Jesus quoted from it, informing his hearers that those who will be calling out to the mountains to cover them in Hosea 10:8 are those living in the latter days.

Rabbinic and conservative Christian tradition assign authorship to this book to Hosea, who composed the work in one of the most complex Hebrew language styles of the Bible. Some argue that the book contains a significant number of later interpolations that have proved
extraordinarily difficult to outline into a coherent structure. This complexity, when coupled with modern day ignorance of his regional dialect, and the deliberately obscure nature of the book, result in a few scholars concluding that this book sustained numerous redactions over the centuries.

However, no evidence of textual transmission supports such redactions or editing of the book of Hosea, and internal evidence within the text demonstrates that the writer of this book held the historicity of the Torah in high regard. Hosea’s work does not address the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, or Hoshea. Some conservative scholars account for this omission on the grounds that Hosea considered these latter kings to be ambitious usurpers unworthy of address in the heritage of David’s line (cf. 7:1-7).

Claim #57: Jesus’ mention of the prophet Malachi and his quote from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Malachi had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus the Messiah refers to the prophet Malachi in his discussion with his disciples recorded in Mark 9:11-12:

11So they asked him, “Don’t the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”
12He told them, “Elijah is indeed coming first and will restore all things…”

Jesus also quoted Malachi 3:1 and Exodus 23:20 in Luke 7:26-27:

26Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and even more than a prophet! 27This is the man about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

This book, which is named after the prophet who composed it, is written in the form of a series of legal complaints by the God of Israel, who acts as a prosecuting attorney as he pursues justice in court:
First Complaint: His People’s Despised Love (1:1-5)
God’s Second Complaint: Despised Offerings by His Priests (1:6-14),
Third Complaint: His Priests Fail to Honor Him (2:1-12),
Fourth Complaint: Marital Abuses by His Priests (2:13-16),
Fifth Complaint: People who Complain (2:17),
The Coming of the Messenger (3:1-6),
Sixth Complaint: Gifts and Offerings (3:7-12),
Seventh Complaint: Slandering God (3:13-15),
The Restoration of the Righteous (3:16-18),
The Coming Day of the Lord (4:1-6).

This book is named after its author (1:1), about whom nothing is known and whom Jesus makes no mention by name. However, Jesus the Messiah’s citation of Malachi’s book to authenticate the validity of John the Baptizer’s public ministry demonstrates the seriousness with which he regarded the work. Rabbinic and Christian traditions hold that Malachi’s book was the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures to have been written before the beginning of the 400 year silent period that came to a close with the ministry of John the Baptist.
We have demonstrated in this work that Jesus the Messiah trusted the Hebrew Scriptures of his day. Christians have claimed for centuries that the collection of 66 books we call The Bible is reliable with respect to what it affirms, correct in its history of God’s dealings with his universe and with humanity, historically accurate regarding its doctrinal teachings, and an utterly trustworthy guide for day-to-day life. But frankly, every generation has had its share of doubters. Maybe you’re one of them...

So we’ve provided this book for your reading in order to demonstrate to you what Jesus the Messiah believed about the Bible. Specifically, we counted 57 separate claims he made about the Hebrew
Scriptures that existed as of the early part of the first century AD. Here's our summary of each of them:

**JESUS' HIGH VIEW OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES**

Claim #1: Jesus claimed that Moses specifically mentioned him, even though the Torah had been written about 1,400 years before Jesus had been born.

Claim #2: Jesus linked his claim that he would judge the dead at the Day of Resurrection to him having been written about by Moses in the Torah.

Claim #3: Jesus claimed that the Hebrew Scriptures in general spoke of him, even though the last book of the Tanakh had been written about 430 years before he had been born.

Claim #4: Jesus endorsed the absolute reliability and enduring nature of the Hebrew Scriptures so emphatically that he claimed not a single letter or portion of a letter would fail.

Claim #5: Jesus considered the laws contained in the Torah to have been authored by Moses.

Claim #6: Jesus considered circumcision to have been handed down from the days of the Patriarchs through the authority of Moses.

Claim #7: Jesus had little respect for the traditions handed down about how to obey the Torah, but he had high respect for the authority of the Torah itself.

Claim #8: Jesus believed that the authority of the Torah originated from the earliest days of humanity, not merely from Mount Sinai.

Claim #9: Jesus believed that the book of Genesis was written by Moses.

Claim #10: Jesus believed that Moses also authored the books of Leviticus, Exodus, and Deuteronomy.

Claim #11: Jesus believed that the Ten Commandments were authoritative and binding upon national Israel.
Claim #12: Jesus linked his claim to have been the only person to have
gone to heaven with the historical reality of the incident of the
serpent in the wilderness.

Claim #13: Jesus assumed that the claim of ancient Israel that Moses
delivered the Law to the nation had historical validity.

Claim #14: Jesus assumed that the Torah continued in full immutable
force and effect through the completion of the life ministry of
John the Baptist.

Claim #15: Jesus claimed that throughout the entirety of the Hebrew
Scriptures, its writers mentioned him.

Claim #16: Jesus certified that the feeding of national Israel in the
wilderness with manna actually occurred.

Claim #17: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the Scripture cannot be
disregarded or broken.

Claim #18: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the authority of Moses
should be respected and obeyed.

Claim #19: Jesus believed and stated publicly that the suffering and
betrayal that he would undergo was predicted in the Hebrew
Scriptures by the Prophets.

Claim #20: Jesus held the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in such
high esteem that he linked the entirety of the Law and the
Prophets to their integrity.

Claim #21: Jesus held conversations from time to time with Satan, which
demonstrated that he believed this creature existed and had
influence in the world.

Claim #22: Jesus held the book of Deuteronomy in such high esteem that
he used it to rebut the temptations of Satan during his time in
the wilderness.

Claim #23: Jesus held Deuteronomy in such high esteem that he cited it as
the basis for Church discipline.

Claim #24: Jesus' publicly stated belief that Adam and Eve existed formed
the basis of his high view of marriage.
Claim #25: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abel and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his rebuke and warning that judgment was coming to national Israel.

Claim #26: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Able and Zechariah existed formed the basis of his warning about how Israel would soon be destroyed as a nation, an event that occurred in 70 AD.

Claim #27: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Noah existed and that the flood of his day affected the entire world formed the basis of his warning about how his return to earth would affect the entire world.

Claim #28: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob actually lived formed the basis of his warning to and rebuke of Israel’s leaders about their threatened exclusion from eternal life.

Claim #29: Jesus’ publicly stated belief that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob actually lived formed the basis of his defense of the resurrection of the dead.

Claim #30: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Abraham in his dialogue with Zacchaeus demonstrated that he took it for granted that Abraham had been a real person.

Claim #31: Jesus publicly stated and believed that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a real, historical event and referred to it as the foundation of his warning about the coming judgment at the end of the world.

Claim #32: Jesus believed that Moses and Elijah were real figures in the history of Israel, and claimed to have spoken with both of them.

Claim #33: Jesus demonstrated that he believed King David existed by affirming the man’s existence and by citing many Psalms, all the while attributing their authorship to David.

Claim #34: Jesus quoted Psalm 8:2 as a basis for his rebuke to the high priests and scribes of Jerusalem.
Claim #35: Jesus quoted Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4 as referring to himself.

Claim #36: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 41, using its authority to bolster his claim to be God incarnate.

Claim #37: Jesus said that King David authored Psalm 110, and used a quotation from it to demonstrate how David’s Messiah was also God incarnate.

Claim #38: Jesus demonstrated that his admission to be the Messiah was linked to statements from King David and the prophet Daniel contained in the Hebrew Scriptures of his day.

Claim #39: Jesus attributed authorship of Psalm 118 to King David.

Claim #40: Jesus cites Psalm 118, claiming that King David’s psalm is predictive of his second coming.

Claim #41: Jesus cites Psalm 118, claiming that King David’s psalm is predictive of his rejection by Israel and subsequent exaltation.

Claim #42: Jesus believed that King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba were real figures in the history of Israel, and that they both would have a place with him at the resurrection of the dead.

Claim #43: Jesus believed that Jonah existed and was swallowed by a sea creature. He employed that historical fact as a comparative to explain his coming resurrection.

Claim #44: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Jeremiah the prophet and his quote from his book demonstrated that he took it for granted that Jeremiah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Claim #45: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Isaiah the prophet and his extensive quotes from his book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Isaiah had been a real person and that his written works were authoritative.

Claim #46: Jesus cites Isaiah the prophet to link the apostasy of his generation to Isaiah’s mention of him.
Claim #47: Jesus links the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Joel as predictions relating to his second coming.

Claim #48: Jesus cites the prophet Isaiah as applying to the rejection by Israel’s first century leaders in their rejection of the righteous requirements of the Law in deference to their oral traditions.

Claim #49: Jesus cites the authority of the prophet Isaiah to explain the necessity of all prophecies written about him in the Hebrew Scriptures being fulfilled.

Claim #50: Jesus cites the authority of the prophet Isaiah to explain what life will be like under his reign during his Millennial Kingdom.

Claim #51: Jesus cites the authority of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to explain why he expelled merchants from the Temple.

Claim #52: Jesus quoted the work of the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming to his generation that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1-2.

Claim #53: Jesus’ matter-of-fact mention of Daniel the prophet and his quote from his book demonstrated that he took it for granted that Daniel had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Claim #54: Jesus’ quotation of the prophet Micah from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Micah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Claim #55: Jesus’ mention of the prophet Zechariah and his quote from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Zechariah had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Claim #56: Jesus’ quotation from the prophet Hosea’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Hosea had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.
Claim #57: Jesus’ mention of the prophet Malachi and his quote from the man’s book demonstrate that he took it for granted that Malachi had been a real person and that his book was authoritative.

Jesus of Nazareth trusted the historical validity of the Tanakh. Every single person, without exception, who is mentioned by Jesus as having lived during Israel’s previous centuries is recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, and Jesus considered those records to be accurate and trustworthy accounts of actual events.

As we have demonstrated within this work, Jesus displayed an unwavering confidence in the historical reliability and internal integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures. His respect for the Word of God even extended to the regulations about divorce and Sabbath rests, as Robert Dick Wilson observed:

> Jesus recognizes the verbal accuracy and the authority of the Biblical texts bearing upon the Sabbath and divorce; and, then, as the Lord of both Sabbath and of man, He makes known a higher and better Law.⁴⁶

Regarding Jesus’ use of Old Testament quotations, Wilson also noted:

> One of the most noteworthy facts in the consideration of the New Testament citations from the Old Testament is the marvelous manner in which the citations attributed by the evangelists to Jesus Himself agree with the Textus Receptus of our Hebrew Bibles. In most of these citations by Jesus, we have exactly the same text in the Gospels as we find in the Hebrew, e.g., Matt. iv. 4. 7, v. 5, 21, 27, 31, 38, 43, viii. 17, ix. 13 (?), xv. 4. 27, xvii. 16, xix. 4. 7, 19, xxi. 13, 16, 42, xxii. 32, 44, xxvii. 46. In Matt t. iv. 10 and Luke iv. 8 the word “only” is added in accordance with the Septuagint and with the sense. In Matt. xi. 10, xiii. 14. IS, 35, xxvi. 37 the text is substantially the same. In xv. 8, 9,

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⁴⁶ Op cit. p. 637.
there is a slight variation by way of adaptation and in xix. 5 an “unimportant variation.” In xxvi. 31, there is an interpretation by way of adaptation; and in xxiv. 21 a “free citation.”

How, then, is it with the statements of the Old Testament to which Jesus refers and which from the *prima facie* evidence of the Gospels He seems to have believed to be true? Can these statements be accepted as true or can they not?

Furthermore, when it came time for Jesus to defend his person, nature, and his mission, he cited the Bible of his day to authenticate his own authority and identity. To Jesus, the Hebrew Scriptures were the inerrant, infallible, and plenary inspired Word of God. If Jesus displayed such unwavering confidence in the integrity and inerrancy of the Scriptures, considering every word, letter, and stroke of a letter to be valid and reliable, should not all of us express the very same confidence in the entire record of the completed Old and New Testaments, as well?

Let us, in closing, remember Dr. Robert Dick Wilson’s summary of the issues involved in Jesus’ use of and trust in the Hebrew Scriptures of his day:

Further, anyone who professes to believe that the New Testament teaches that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were “of divine origin and excellence”, that every Scripture is inspired of God (2 Tim. iii. 16), that Jesus found in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, things that concerned Himself (Luke xxiv. 27, 44), and that Jesus, the evangelists, and all the writers of the books of the New Testament, show their faith in the veracity of the Old Testament records, must hesitate to place his opinion over against that of the founders of Christianity. Lastly, those of us who believe that Jesus was the Messiah sent

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from God, the prophet that was to come into the world, the Logos, the only begotten Son of God, will be pardoned for thinking that it is little short of blasphemy for a professing Christian to assert that Jesus did not know. If we believe not Him when He has spoken of earthly things, which we can more or less investigate and test, how can we believe Him when He speaks of heavenly things?49

49 Ibid. p. 661.
Soon or later, all school times end. Academicians call the graduation exercises that take place at the end of class work *commencement* for a good reason: It’s because once the lessons have been completed, the time comes for the theoretical to become the practical. Serious life must now begin. Training exercises fade into memories, and the purpose for those lessons becomes manifest.

This study in the remarkable trustworthiness of the Scriptures is like those class lessons. Our examination is a theoretical exercise. But for us to allow these studies to remain theoretical exercises only is to waste—perhaps eternally—the opportunity and potential presented to us through those lessons. In much the same way, the pain and suffering of life should be allowed to bear their proper fruit. And so the necessity of putting the theoretical to work in the realm of the practical brings up the common question asked on so many levels of sincerity by those who are skeptical about the claims of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. The question usually runs something like this:
If the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be God incarnate are true, what proof can you present of the practical reality of God’s love being demonstrated through him?

In essence, the question is “If God exists, prove it.” Or better yet, the question is: “So what? How can this possibly matter to me?” The answers to questions like these are anything but theoretical.

The main thing is this: the Bible makes it clear that everyone will have questions like those articulated above answered with undeniable certainty at the end of days. Everyone gets the opportunity to confront God with their objections to life. But there will be surprises. Most notably, most of humanity will discover that the accusers will become the accused. As the New Testament phrases things, we all have an appointment to appear before the judgment seat of the Messiah. As Jesus put it, “All judgment has been given to the Son of Man.”

At that time, the stage play we call “real life” will be over, and the Director will come on stage to reward all of the players according to their works. That day will not be the time to choose which side to serve. It will be the time to demonstrate what side has already been chosen.

And so we pose this question: What shall we do when that focus of our deepest hunger and yearnings (or, perhaps, the object of our greatest fears and terrors…) comes undeniably and unavoidably close, enveloped in light unbearable and full of glory, holiness, and righteousness? What shall we do when heaven and earth fly away from the presence of the Lamb? What is to be our response when our greatest fear or our greatest hope invades us and our self-centered tranquility and separateness from all that is truly eternal? In a word, will we be prepared? Will we be caught:

- Settled down in our contentment apart from God, or
- Suffering in the miseries created for us by those who have oppressed us, or
- Full of anger because of harvests reaped by us through the consequences of our own unwise choices in life, or
Faithful and content, having been reconciled to absolute holiness by the one who claimed that he came to redeem his elect when we come face-to-face with a real-time experience of sovereign holiness, righteousness, and unconquerable power?

Better yet, what will the response be to us from God himself, when he meets us face-to-face at that last day? Will he respond to us as he did to Job, when that long-suffering servant finally had the opportunity to confront God about the troubles which had afflicted him? In Job 38:1-3:

1The LORD responded to Job from the whirlwind and said:
2“Who is this who keeps darkening my counsel without knowing what he’s talking about?
3Stand up like a man!
   I’ll ask you some questions,
   and you give me some answers!”

Or shall God respond to us, not with questions such as the above, but with an approving comment? Perhaps as the Master responded to his faithful followers in the parable told by Jesus in Matthew 25:21: “Well done, good and trustworthy servant!”

The importance of preparing for eternity should not be overlooked by the Christian community, either. We Christians address Jesus the Messiah by the term “Lord,” but all too often we ignore the implications of how that term should affect our day-to-day responses to life and circumstances. As a famous inscription located on a painting inside the Lübeck Cathedral (German: Dom zu Lübeck, or colloquially Lübecker Dom) in Lübeck, Germany phrases our obligations to Jesus the Messiah:

This Ye Call Me
Ye call Me Eternal, then seek Me not.
Ye call Me Fair, then love Me not.
Ye call Me Gracious, then trust Me not.
Ye call Me Just, then fear Me not.
Ye call Me Life, then choose Me not.
Ye call Me Light, then see Me not.
Ye call Me Lord, then respect Me not.  
Ye call Me Master, then obey Me not.  
Ye call Me Merciful, then thank Me not.  
Ye call Me Mighty, then honor Me not.  
Ye call Me Noble, then serve Me not.  
Ye call Me Rich, then ask Me not.  
Ye call Me Savior, then praise Me not.  
Ye call Me Shepherd, then follow Me not.  
Ye call Me Way, then walk with Me not.  
Ye call Me Wise, then heed Me not.  
Ye call Me Son of God, then worship Me not.  
When I condemn you, then blame Me not.

To those who haven’t yet met Jesus of Nazareth in his post-resurrection fullness, we ask you this respectful question: Are you looking for proof that God exists, and that he intervenes sovereignly to his greater glory and your great good? If so, you cannot do much better than to invite him to reveal himself to you. To prepare you for this meeting, we invite you to read through the material below, which you can use to begin your journey on what we call the Grand Adventure, and by which you can discover from firsthand experience that when Jesus said “I am the light of the world,” he meant precisely what he claimed.

**HOW TO MEET THE MOST AMAZING MAN WHO EVER LIVED …**

If you’re ready to meet the most amazing man who ever walked the face of the earth, it’s best to begin with the basics. In Matthew 5:3-11, you’ll find the basic instructions you need to meet him set forth in remarkable simplicity and succinctness within the opening phrases of the first public statement that Jesus the Messiah made before a large group of people.

**STEP 1: ADMIT YOUR SPIRITUAL POVERTY**

This is what he told the crowd that had assembled to listen to him:

3“How blessed are those who are destitute in spirit, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to them!
In making this statement, Jesus of Nazareth informs us that the riches of God’s kingdom belong only to the bankrupt in spirit. The first step to meeting God in the person of Jesus the Messiah is to admit that your own personal positive characteristics have no value when it comes to meeting God’s requirements. Human beauty, wealth, wisdom, intellect, abilities, cleverness, and anything else that qualifies us to be a part of the merely human condition are useless criteria by which to define our eligibility to enter the Kingdom of God.

**STEP 2: BEGIN TO MOURN**

If coming to God in the midst of spiritual poverty and bankruptcy is your first step to spiritual redemption, please be advised that taking this first step will immediately take you to your second step: you will begin to experience deep grief.

4“How blessed are those who mourn, because it is they who will be comforted!

“The truth will set you free,” Jesus once promised his followers, but before it does that, it’s going to make you miserable for a short season. God will use your personal poverty of spirit to draw you to himself, and the clearest proof that this drawing process is underway will be that you begin to mourn. You’ll grieve over how your behavior and attitudes toward life have offended God and have resulted in endless lost opportunities to enjoy what could have been. Maybe you’ll also grieve about those whom you have hurt, betrayed, defrauded, or sinned against.

**STEP 3: BE BROUGHT TO A STATE OF HUMILITY**

One of the most immediate results of this mourning will be that it causes you to see your true state before him.

5“How blessed are those who are humble, because it is they who will inherit the earth!
You will be made humble, which comes about by beginning to know Jesus the Messiah well enough that you see yourself in perspective. In taking this third step toward salvation you will be made qualified to inherit your place that God made you to enjoy for the rest of eternity.

**STEP 4: BEGIN TO HUNGER TO KNOW HIM**

After you’ve realized your own poverty of spirit, after you’ve begun to mourn because of what has been lost, and after you’ve begun to see yourself in perspective, compared to his pristine purity and holiness, you will begin to hunger to be like him with respect to righteousness:

> “How blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness, because it is they who will be satisfied!

You will begin to want to spend time getting acquainted with God’s word, the Bible, because within that book you’ll find a road map to personal maturity. You’ll seek out the company of like-minded Christian believers, and you’ll look for a local church that can encourage you in your new Christian life.

**STEP 5: TREAT OTHERS THE WAY JESUS HAS TREATED YOU**

God will begin to work deep within you, creating a righteous state before him in which you will take your seat as God continues his work of directing every detail of your life to come. That ongoing process of personal growth will express itself in how you treat others:

> “How blessed are those who are merciful, because it is they who will receive mercy!

You will have been shown mercy, and as a result, you’ll begin to show mercy to others after you’ve realized your own poverty of spirit, after you’ve begun to mourn because of what has been lost, and after you’ve begun to see yourself in perspective, compared to his pristine purity and holiness. You will begin to hunger to be like him with respect to righteousness.
STEP 6: LET YOUR HEART BE TRANSFORMED FROM THE INSIDE OUT

As God continues his work deep within you to conform your heart and mind to the image of his son, the Lord Jesus the Messiah, others around you will begin to notice the change you’ll have been going through. Some of your friends and acquaintances might even tell you that there’s something new about you. Maybe they won’t exactly have the words to describe what they see, but see it they will. The truth is, they’ll be seeing your purity of heart that has been rooted deep within you:

8“How blessed are those who are pure in heart, because it is they who will see God!

And you’ll begin to see God at work, using you to bring a testimony of how God can change the lives of anyone who comes to him, bringing salvation from sin, deliverance from all sorts of bondage, and hope to the hopeless. Jesus the Messiah will have transformed your life, and now you’ll see him at work changing others.

STEP 7: LET YOUR LIFE BEGIN TO BE PRODUCTIVE FOR GOD’S GLORY

You will become a peace maker. That is, you’ll begin to be known as one who brings peace and security to the lives of those who have neither of these valuable qualities. You’ll be given wisdom, whenever you ask for it, to fashion peace out of conflict, serenity out of confrontation, and tranquility out of disruptive relationships.

9“How blessed are those who make peace, because it is they who will be called God’s children!

Some of those to whom you minister will begin to tell you that they’ve finally met one of God’s genuine children. “Finally, a true Christian!” could well be what they say about you.

STEP 8: WATCH SOME PEOPLE HATE YOU FOR YOUR NEW LIFE

Be prepared, though, and forewarned: some people will react with animosity, anger, and hatred. The reason for this is that most people
are opposed, not only to their own salvation, but to the salvation of others. Not wanting to know God, they won’t want you to know him, either, and so you’ll find yourself being opposed.

10“How blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, because the kingdom from heaven belongs to them!

Be prepared for it, because people like this will surely come into your life, and you’ll need to learn how to give an answer to these people whom you will find opposing you.

STEP 9: VIEW YOURSELF IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY, NOT PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES

Keep in mind as you begin your new relationship with God that you aren’t the first person who chooses to follow Jesus of Nazareth and then comes into a world of trouble:

11“How blessed are you whenever people insult you, persecute you, and say all sorts of evil things against you falsely because of me! 12Rejoice and be extremely glad, because your reward in heaven is great! That’s how they persecuted the prophets who came before you.”

HOW TO BEGIN TO RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN POVERTY OF SPIRIT

You have broken God’s holy Law. Realizing that this is true is the first step to learning the true state of your standing before God, which is that of spiritual bankruptcy in his perfect, holy, and righteous presence.

You don’t think so?
“I’m not so bad,” you tell yourself.
Really?
Ask yourself some questions:

- Have you ever lied? Yes, you have. You’ve broken the ninth commandment.
- Have you ever stolen anything? Yes, you have. You’ve broken the eighth commandment.
Have you ever committed adultery? Yes, you have, because Jesus said that to even lust after someone is the same as committing adultery. So you’ve broken the seventh commandment.

My friend, you have broken three out of ten of God’s commandments. And by desiring her or him in the first place, you are coveting someone’s wife or daughter, or husband or son. So you’ve broken the tenth commandment. So far, you’ve broken four out of ten.

Shall we try for five out of ten? Jesus said to hate someone is to commit the sin of murder in your heart. And that’s where sin starts. So you’ve broken the sixth commandment.

Now let’s check the balance sheet: You have admitted that you are a lying, thieving, covetous, murdering, adulterer—and we’ve only looked at five of the ten.

Shall we go for six? By doing all these things, you have dishonored your father and mother. My friend, you’ve broken the fifth commandment. Now you’ve broken six out of the Ten Commandments.

If you will be honest with yourself, you have broken all the others, too. And these are just a summary of God’s holy Law.

You’ve got a problem, my friend.

And it’s a serious problem, because the penalty for breaking God’s Law is severe indeed. But it’s not just your problem. In fact, it’s everybody’s problem.

The penalty is death, and not just physical death. The penalty is eternal death, separation from God in a place that you really don’t want to go to.

But there’s some good news. In fact, it’s great news. That eternal penalty has already been paid. God Himself paid it and paved the road for our salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the only road, the only means by which we may be saved. Why? Because his sinless life and his death at Calvary are the perfect substitute for you, satisfying the demands of a holy God.
The road to salvation through Jesus Christ is clearly presented in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans teaches us some principles about this that will help solve the problem we all face.

1. **All People are Born Sinners**

   We are all unrighteous people.
   
   As it is written, “Not even one person is righteous. No one understands. No one searches for God. All have turned away. Together they have become completely worthless.”
   
   (Romans 3:10-12)

   This means that no one is righteous before God and, in fact, no one is even searching for Him.

2. **All People Sin**

   Our best efforts will never measure up.
   
   … since all have sinned and continue to fall short of God’s glory. (Romans 3:23)

   This means that you have sinned. You have not earned, and do not deserve, eternal life. There are two things you need to know to be saved: **First**, you need to know that you are a sinner who has violated God’s laws. **Second**, you need to know that there is a terrible and eternal price for sin.

3. **The Price of Sin is Death**

   Adam sinned and gave Satan a foothold in the world. By nature, we are all separated from God.
   
   Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death from sin, therefore everyone dies, because everyone has sinned. (Romans 5:12)

   We are all born in sin. We deserve death and hell.

4. **Jesus Paid Your Debt**

   He did this by dying in your place.
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in union with the Messiah Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

5. **YOU HAVE EARNED DEATH, NOT ETERNAL LIFE**

So Jesus, in effect, went to the “Bank of Heaven” and paid your debt for you. Jesus paid the price for you to obtain salvation and eternal life. You cannot earn this payment. Eternal life must be accepted as a free gift from God.

6. **CHRIST DIED IN YOUR PLACE**

He paid your price, suffering so that you would not have to suffer eternally.

But God demonstrates his love for us by the fact that the Messiah died for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8)

Due to unconditional love, Christ died in your place, paying a debt He did not owe. We all have an unpaid debt of sin that Christ is willing to pay for us. How do we get our debts paid by Christ? If you accept His payment of your debt by receiving Him as your Lord and Savior, He will make you His child and take you to heaven when you die.

His invitation is open to anyone... even you.

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

The word “everyone” includes you. The word “saved” means to be delivered from the guilt and penalty of sin. That includes the present guilt you’ve incurred. One day in the next life it will include permanent deliverance from the power and presence of it. How do you “call on the name of the Lord” to be saved?

7. **YOU MUST CONFESSION YOUR SIN AND DECLARE HIS LORDSHIP**

You declare his Lordship over your life by believing in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead.
If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with his heart and is justified, and declares with his mouth and is saved. — Romans 10:9-10

The Bible promises us that God forgives our sin when we accept the work that Christ did for us when He died on Calvary. You can do this by praying this short, simple prayer:

“Lord, Jesus, I have broken God’s holy Law. I know that I am a sinner and I need you. I know that you paid the price for my sins by dying on the cross. I ask that you forgive my sins; and I receive you as my Savior and Lord. I thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.”

Look to God’s Word for encouragement as you begin your new life in Christ. Remember these simple truths:

- If we make it our habit to confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us those sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)
- The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. (Romans 8:16)
- For by such grace you have been saved through faith. This does not come from you; it is the gift of God and not the result of works, lest anyone boast. (Ephesians 2:8)
- For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)
- I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and—look!—all things have become new! All of this comes from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ... (2 Corinthians 5:17-18a)

Be sure to read a portion of God’s Word every day and look for a local church to attend so you can be equipped to grow in your new life.
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William Welty is Executive Director of the ISV Foundation, producers of the *Holy Bible: International Standard Version*. He is a graduate (M.Div., 1978) of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School of Deerfield, Illinois and holds a Ph.D. from Louisiana Baptist University.