

Why You Should Believe the Bible

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Introduction

There can be no doubt that the Bible is the most highly studied, scrutinized and criticized piece of literature in the history of man. Notwithstanding the fact that the book was written over a span of 1,500 to 2,000 years, and by a multitude of authors, all deriving from primitive societies abounding with every conceivable form of superstition and ignorance, the Bible is expected by many to rise to the standard of absolute perfection. Such high demands would never be made of anything else. It is readily understood that even the greatest geniuses of world history could never withstand such scrutiny, and all Bible critics would themselves appear as fools were they held to the same standard.

Be sure it is my conviction that the Bible is in fact a divinely-inspired and inerrant book, but suppose it were not this, and rated no better than the greatest and most consequential book ever written by uninspired man. What could be more culpable of prejudicial ignorance than to reject such a book? But this is exactly what is seen in many Bible critics of today, who seem all to ready to lay the book aside upon finding what they *think* to be a mere handful of faults. Further, it is typically the case that these fault-finders will be exposed under qualified scrutiny as having very little knowledge of the Bible. Indeed, one could reasonably question whether many of them have ever even read the book. Rather, the appearance is that many of them did at most read a book by a man, who read a book by a man, who read a book by a man... who supposedly read the Bible. Such ignorance can even be seen in purported Bible authorities on so-called "Bible shows" on television. In fact, I am tempted to say it can *especially* be seen in them.

Now the question implied in our title is: Why should you believe the Bible? However, it would be fairer to ask: Why should you *not* believe the Bible? With any other purportedly factual record of men, it would be assumed as true unless given strong reason to conclude otherwise. In pursuit of this question, we surely cannot reject the Bible on the basis that there exists a competing religious book having a higher degree of credibility. There may be religious books better suited to the carnal palates of men, or in greater conformity to their preconceived notions, but if judged on the basis of verifiable, objective fact, no religious book can even exist in the same galaxy with the Bible. Most religions of the world are palpably superstitions, either lacking corroboration in reason and experience, or else being outright contradicted by it. This is why the Bible is the only religious book that is seriously targeted by purported intellectuals. They realize other religious books represent little challenge to them, and this is why one will seldom find them scrutinizing any such books other than the Bible. They know their position stands if the Bible falls, and falls if the Bible stands.

Hence, the only reasons for not believing the Bible are that it does not accord with certain claims of so-called science, including especially these two:

- 1) The claim that life originated by an evolutionary process rather than Divine creation.
- 2) The common scientific denial of all miracles, whereas the Bible claims many.

As to (1), many scientists agree there is not *any* credible evidence that life evolved on this planet when facts are considered with usual scientific precaution. Evolution is a *philosophy* commonly believed by scientists, but is not itself a science. It is way of interpreting natural phenomena, but is not itself proven by those phenomena. It cannot even be replicated in a laboratory, and even this would not prove that it actually accounted for the origin of life. Mathematicians have shown that the probability of it is so low that, under *any* scientifically-plausible estimate of the age of the Universe, it is utterly naive to believe it. Creation by an Intelligent Being remains the most plausible explanation for the origin of life, and none would question this were they not absolutely committed to the preconceived, unscientific premise that science can never concede a God.

The truth is that science offers no theory of origins at all, and therefore has nothing to truly compete against what the Bible has said. The driving force of evolution is the ability of animals to give birth to improved mutants. Now this cannot simultaneously be both the cause and the effect of evolution, and any claim to the contrary surely cannot promote itself as science. Evolution *must* in the initial stages be the product of pure-chance organization entailing adverse odds that are insane, then what was organized by chance must overcome natural forces of disorganization whose odds are inevitable. The same predicament exists for the Big Bang theory. It is not a theory of origins since it must commence from a cosmic egg whose origin is unaccounted, and then must assume that, for inexplicable reasons, this egg suddenly inflated into a Universe. Years ago, an attempt was made to circumvent some of these problems by postulating a Big Crunch, or the idea that the Universe will eventually collapse back into the cosmic egg from which it came, only then to bang again, thus producing a perpetual cycle. However, scientists have mostly relinquished their hope in Big Crunch, partly because the evidence says the Universe is actually expanding at an accelerated pace. Now without Big Crunch, Big Bang cannot be a true theory of origins.

Several mathematicians, both Christian and non-Christian, have attempted to compute the probability of evolution. Their computations widely vary, but all of them I have seen that give serious consideration to the problem arrive at outrageous numbers. Most have odds against producing life even in the first stage (where natural selection cannot contribute) being greater than the number of atoms in the entire Universe. In fact, even if there were as many Universes as there are atoms, and were all their atoms summed up, one still would not have a number large enough to represent common estimates of those odds. One readily available source on Internet presenting such analysis is "Introduction to the Mathematics of Evolution" by R. Webster Kehr, but numerous other sources can also be found, including some quoted by Kehr. It is a remarkable thing that evolution is considered scientific when anything else confronted with such odds would be promptly dismissed as mere superstition. The numbers against it are sufficiently

enormous to make numbers like 4.5 billion (presumed age of the earth) or 13.8 billion (presumed age of the Universe) appear laughably small.

In the last several years, evolutionists appear to have put increased emphasis upon criteria they construe as implying an extremely old Universe, and delude themselves and others with the notion that if an extreme age could be proven, then the case for evolution would be settled. It is the strongest card they have in a weak hand, so they seem very eager to play it. As already noted, even if one thinks time to be a friend to evolution, many scientists claim there are no reasonable estimates of the age of the Universe that are sufficiently large to make the theory mathematically plausible. But even the notion that time is a friend to evolution cannot be taken as given. The facts of experience are that it is far more probable that a species will go extinct than evolve to a higher level. Extinction has been observed in hundreds of cases but undisputed evolution has not been observed in a single one. Add to this the fact that deleterious mutations far outnumber beneficial ones. Given all this, it is no foregone conclusion that evolution is in fact favored by time. If we interpret fossils in terms of what we see ongoing in the world, we would never conclude that it is a record of the *origin* of life; rather, it would be interpreted as a disturbing record of its *termination*.

Oftentimes the same scientists who promote evolution will emphasize, and even exaggerate, the fragility of life and the ecosystem. These are inconsistent claims. Consider their recently formed and well-publicized beliefs concerning the vulnerability of our planet. Comets, asteroids, supernovas, rogue planets, black holes, etc. are now thought to present risks of sufficient severity to decimate life on Earth, and scientists say cataclysms caused by them have been frequent in the past. Yet in spite of this, we are expected to believe that life has been evolving on this planet for billions of years. If such cataclysms were to occur only once per hundred thousand years (a figure sometimes given by those who study such things), this would mean that in 4.6 billion years the Earth has been decimated by them 46,000 times! Now if evolution is a fortuitous process, and if destruction and extinction are the more probable path, then it would follow that protracted time is an enemy of evolution and not its friend.

As would be expected, there is also an attempt on the part of evolutionists to discredit the Bible on account of the fact that it suggests a young age for the Earth. The truth is that the Bible never actually states the age of the Earth, and whatever conclusion one draws on this will depend upon their method of interpretation. While the intuitive interpretation would indeed imply a young Earth, even here one must account for the fact that creation is a miraculous process which cannot be completely explained or measured in terms of ordinary physical criteria. Even if the Lord had mostly used the naturalistic process assumed by scientists when He formed the Universe, it is possible, and even likely, that He vastly accelerated those processes beyond what we ordinarily observe. This would produce a Universe that would appear very old when measured by some criteria but very young when measured by others. While the Bible explains creation in simple terms, it surely was not its intent to insult the Creator by suggesting that creation was simple.

Now with regard to (2), or the idea that we should reject the Bible because it makes claims of miracles, this is an argument that begs the question rather than answering it. To claim that nothing preempts or supersedes known laws of nature is essentially the same as claiming there is no God, and therefore merely restates the atheistic position rather than proves it. While science must always *begin* its analysis with the assumption of a naturalistic explanation, it need not *end* its analysis this way. To insist otherwise is to leave the realm of science and to venture into the realm of philosophy. It is also a conceited and presumptuous claim. A believer in miracles need not insist upon contradiction of natural law, but only upon contradiction of natural law *as we understand it*. It may be that God always acts in accordance with law, but not necessarily law we know and understand. But a man who rejects claims of any event that *appears* to contradict natural law is taking the position that he completely knows and understands all natural law. This is not science; rather, it is conceit.

Nor is it reasonable that anyone should reject the Bible for failure to observe or perceive miracles in their own experience. This follows from the fact that even in the Bible itself miracles are extremely rare. Indeed, the vast majority of the miracles recorded in that book can be accounted in the works of only four men: Moses, Elijah, Elisha and Christ. So in a book that spans over 4,000 years of history, most of its miracles could be accounted in generations accumulating to less than 150 years, and there would be nothing unusual about the book spanning several consecutive centuries with no miracles at all. The Bible is therefore consistent with the observed rarity of miracles, but it does record enough of them to put the skeptics on precarious ground. If even one of these miracles is true, then the very foundation of their reasoning is fractured.

Some Simple Rules of Probability

Most people seem to have an aversion for math, and this likely helps to explain why so many of them have been duped by evolutionary superstition, and why so many more, including even professed Christians, lack a proper respect for the Bible. Anyone who applies the laws of probability to the Bible will at least give serious consideration to the claim the book is inspired. Anyone who applies the laws of probability to the theory of evolution will at least have serious doubts, but are more apt to be astounded that anyone claiming to be a scientist could be so naïve as to espouse such a theory. In this section, I will present some simple rules of probability that will be necessary to understand what follows.

The first of these rules is commonly called the “multiplicative law.” Suppose we have two independent chance events, A and B, with respective probabilities of P(A) and P(B), then the multiplicative law states that the probability that *both* events will occur is P(A) multiplied times P(B). This is oftentimes written as:

$$P(A \cap B) = P(A)P(B)$$

P(A∩B) is read as “the probability of A *and* B.” To illustrate this law, suppose you were to toss a coin with one hand and a six-sided die with the other. What are chances of getting a head on

the coin and a three on the die? The odds of the first are one in two. The odds of the second are one in six. So the odds of both are 1 in 12, or $1/2$ multiplied by $1/6$.

Pardon my use of gaming examples. These, of course, are not intended to endorse gambling. In fact, there is no better way to teach people *not* to gamble than to present them with the probabilities governing such games.

Now the multiplicative law assumes independent events. If the events are dependent, then an adjustment must be made to our computations. To illustrate dependent events, suppose you were to draw two cards from a full deck of 52. What are chances that both will be aces? These are dependent events, because if the first card happens to be an ace, this leaves fewer aces in the remaining deck, thereby reducing the probability that the second card will be an ace also. As a second example, suppose you must compute chances that it will be cloudy tomorrow *and* that it will rain, then you must make allowance for the fact that these events are not independent. The occurrence of clouds will have bearing on the probability there is rain.

To compute the probability of a pair of dependent events, one must multiply the probability of the first by the probability of the second *given that* the first has occurred. This is commonly written as:

$$P(A \cap B) = P(A)P(B|A)$$

$P(B|A)$ is commonly called a “conditional probability,” and is read as “the probability of A given B.” To illustrate the above formula, consider our first example of dependent events. Odds of getting an ace on the first draw are 1 in 13. Odds of getting an ace on the second, given that an ace was gotten on the first, are 3 in 51 (3 aces left in a deck that now has only 51 cards). So the probability of getting aces on both draws is $1/13 \times 3/51 = 3/663 = 1/221$.

The next rule we will need to consider is known as “Bayes’ Rule.” It says:

$$P(A \cap B) = P(A|B)P(B) = P(B|A)P(A)$$

An important effect of this rule is that we can multiply the probabilities of dependent events in any order provided that the probability of any given event in the sequence is conditioned on all prior events in the sequence. This is important because for purposes of determining the joint probability of multiple events, it may be easier to put the events in one order than in another.

Finally, we will discuss the distinction between “objective” probabilities and “subjective” probabilities. An objective probability is simply one that is strictly measurable. All of the example probabilities we have used thus far are objective. As another example, consider the probability that, other things equal, any future Texan will be born in the city of Tyler. This is an objective probability because it can be measured as the population of Tyler divided by the population of Texas. However, not all probabilities are strictly measurable. For example, what are odds that John and Jane Doe will remain married till death do they part? To estimate this,

measurable factors might be taken into account, but these will fall short of enabling an exact probability for the specific event being considered. Consequently, a degree of “guess-work” must be done to arrive at a final figure. Such probabilities are said to be “subjective.” Objective probabilities are obviously preferable, but subjective ones are sometimes the best we can do.

The Evidence of Science

Had infidels not been bent on discrediting the Bible, they would have been astounded at the scientific accuracy of the book. Any other ancient book likely would have been heaped with praise for containing so much wisdom before its time, and some would even assert that such a book must have been written under the guidance of extraterrestrials! In what follows, I present numerous points wherein modern scientists must concede agreement with the Bible. The reader should understand that I may endorse the conclusion of the scientist without endorsing the reasoning by which he arrived at that conclusion. However, I think it fair to hold him accountable to the fact that Bible arrived at his conclusion long before he did. Consider:

- 1) The Bible asserts that the Universe had a beginning (Gn 1:1). Modern science claims the same with its Big Bang Theory. A few decades ago, many scientists believed in a “Steady State Hypothesis,” which essentially said the Universe is eternal, but this has now been almost unanimously rejected in favor of Big Bang, so scientists have moved toward the Biblical position that the Universe must have had a beginning.
- 2) The Bible asserts that the Universe came from things that do not appear (Heb 11:3). The Big Bang Theory comes very near to asserting the same since its presumed cosmic egg is thought to have been even smaller than an atom.
- 3) The Bible claims the Earth was initially “without form and void” (Gn 1:2). Again, science agrees.
- 4) The Bible describes the Earth as being a spherical body long before science is assumed to have discovered this fact (Isa 40:22, Eccl 1:6, Ps 103:12).
- 5) The Bible claims the Earth hangs on nothing in space (Job 26:7). Only in recent centuries did scientists understand this fact.
- 6) The Bible claims the early Earth was covered in water (Gn 1:2 & 1:9). Scientists commonly agree the planet was covered in water at points in the so-called “Pre-Cambrian Era.”
- 7) Twice Paul referred to God as creating the “worlds” (Heb 1:2 & 11:3), as though there were not one but many. Bear in mind that during these times men had a concept of planets, but only knew them as wandering stars in the sky (“planet” means “wanderer”). Being without telescopes, they had no ability to know these planets are spherical masses like the Earth.

8) The Bible repeatedly describes God as “stretching” out the heavens (Job 26:7, Isa 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, 51:13, Jer 10:12, 51:15). Science agrees that the heavens are being stretched in a perpetual expansion, which they of course claim was initiated in the Big Bang.

9) The Bible claims that God created innumerable stars (Gn 15:5, 22:17, Heb 11:12). This claim is made notwithstanding the fact that not even 3,000 can be seen by the unaided eye under the typical conditions. However, modern astronomy has revealed that stars are of incomprehensible number (some estimate 10^{22} to 10^{24} of them).

10) The Bible describes God as putting a “firmament” (i.e. space) in the midst of the waters, dividing the waters on the Earth from the waters above the heavens (Gn 1:6-8). Until recent decades, this claim seemed to derive from superstition. However, science now believes the entire Solar System is surrounded by an “Oort Cloud” (See also the “Kuiper Belt”) consisting of large and numerous icy bodies, with the ice being significantly composed of water. Many comets (including the famous Halley’s) are believed to have originated in this cloud. Further, it is claimed that the water on the Earth came from such comets crashing into it. Hence, science agrees there is water both under and above the firmament, and also agrees the two are connected.

11) The Bible says God brought forth life from the oceans (Gn 1:20). Again, many scientists assert that life originated in the oceans.

12) The Bible presents the order in which life was created, beginning with plants, then to simpler animals, then to complex animals and ending with man. Science agrees with this order.

13) The Bible describes the early Earth as being very accommodative to life, beginning of course with Eden, but even thereafter, the long average lifespan of people would be indicative of very favorable conditions. The Bible also speaks of the early Earth as possessing both giant men (Gn 6:4) and giant trees (Ezek 31:9-18). Science agrees that earlier eras of the Earth were lush in vegetation and supported both huge plants and animals.

14) The Bible implies that the early Earth contained a single continent, which was thereafter divided into the continents of today (Gn 10:25). Scientists agree there was once a single continent which they call “Pangea.”

15) The Bible says all humans derived from the same parents. Science has in recent decades approached the same conclusion.

16) The Bible attributes the path of the Sun across the sky to the fact that the Earth is being spun by God as “clay to the seal,” or as a potter rotates clay to form a vessel (Job 38:12-14). This is actually recorded in what is thought to be the oldest book in the Bible, whereas science supposedly did not understand the rotation of the Earth until long after.

17) The Bible describes the winds of the Earth as being driven by the Sun (Job 38:24), which is yet another fact that science did not understand until many centuries later.

18) The Bible places earliest man either in Northeast Africa or in adjacent regions of Asia. Science claims the same.

19) Genesis 1:21 describes God as creating great “whales” but the underlying Hebrew word is more commonly translated as “dragons,” or what we would call “dinosaurs.” God is also described as creating dinosaurs in Job 40:15-41:34. Modern science did not come to recognize the existence of dinosaurs before 1841, when a British scientist named Richard Owen discovered them and coined the term.

20) The Bible demonstrated a clear understanding of the hydrological cycle long before uninspired man seemed to do so (Eccl 1:7, Job 36:27-28, Amos 9:6).

While we could add more to this list, 20 items will suffice. To appreciate the significance of this biblical knowledge, suppose one were given an exam with 20 multiple-choice questions pertaining to the 20 points just covered, with an average (or geometric mean) of three choices per question. Using the multiplicative law, the odds that a completely ignorant man could get all 20 questions right by sheer luck would be approximately one in a 3.5 billion.

The Evidence of General Prophecy

The Bible is so replete with prophecy that even many Bible readers themselves likely do not appreciate the sheer volume of them. They are recorded on the vast majority of the pages in the New Testament, and oftentimes there are multiple prophecies per page. Most of these prophecies have already been fulfilled. Few people appreciate the extent to which these fulfilled prophecies demand the conclusion that the Bible is inspired. Part of the reason for this lack of appreciation is failure to understand the multiplicative law of probability and its implications. As prophecies increase in number or detail, the probability of chance fulfillment diminishes much more rapidly than most people suppose. But another reason for this ignorance is that men habitually delude themselves with the notion that the future is an easy thing to predict. The truth is that most predictions are so difficult that almost anyone could become outrageously rich if they had any real ability to make them. Since purported prognosticators are almost never rich, prediction of the future obviously is not as easy as men commonly think it to be. Even where men have attained wealth for their presumed foresight, the truth is that they were also favored by a great deal of luck. Since nearly all men attempt predictions, it is no real marvel, nor proof of ability, if some of them happen to get it right. So this raises the question: What are chances that the Bible itself simply got lucky in the prophecies it made?

For purposes of answering this question, I will divide the prophecies of the Bible into two classes. The first I will call “general” prophecies, and the other will contain only prophecies dealing specifically with the Lord Jesus Christ. The very nature of the Bible is such that these prophecies must be put in a class of their own. In this section, I will consider only one of the general prophecies. This is contained in Ezek 26 where a prophecy was given of the destruction of the ancient city of Tyre. I will present various details of this prophecy, assigning a subjective

probability to each, and then compute the probability that the entire prophecy could be coincidentally fulfilled.

Tyre was a wealthy city of the ancient world, being one its most important seaports. It was well-fortified and considered to be near- indestructible. Part of this city existed on an island that was in view of the mainland, and part of the city was on the mainland itself. Naturally, the island part was considered to be particularly difficult for an invader to overtake, yet the Bible predicted it would fall, giving details as to how it would happen, all of which have come to pass.

Details of the prophecy include:

1) Tyre will be initially attacked by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (vs 7). I will give to this the subjective odds of 1 in 5.

2) But multiple nations will participate in the attacks, which are described as coming in series like the pounding waves of the sea (vs 3). Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the mainland part of the city, but failed to take the island; yet, the latter fell to Alexander many years later. Both armies contained multiple nationalities. Since an attack against the island would be a formidable undertaking, I will give this the odds of 1 in 10.

3) The city will be totally overthrown (vs 4). Overthrow of the city would have been considered near impossible by people of those times; however, since we have already taken it as given that the city will have multiple attackers, I will give its overthrow the odds of 1 in 2.

4) Women will not be spared (vs 6). I will give this the odds of 1 in 2.

5) The city will be cast into the water (vs 12). Alexander scraped up the ruins of the mainland city left by Nebuchadnezzar and used them to create a causeway in the ocean to access the island part. This was a very unusual and drastic measure. I will therefore give it odds of 1 in 1000.

6) The city will be scraped flat (vss 4 & 14). Since we have already taken it as given that the city would be scraped and cast into the water, the unique part of this prophecy is that the city will be so thoroughly scraped as to leave it flat. I will give this the odds of 1 in 5.

7) The site of the city will thereafter become a place where fishermen will spread their nets to dry (vss 5 & 14). I will give this the odds of 1 in 10.

8) The city will never be rebuilt (vs 14). It is unusual for destroyed cities to remain desolate. I will therefore give this the odds of 1 in 10.

Using the multiplicative law, the odds of all these eight details coming to pass by chance are: 1 in $5 \times 10 \times 2 \times 2 \times 1000 \times 5 \times 10 \times 10 = 100,000,000$.

This should be sufficient to demonstrate how quickly that probabilities get out of hand as detail is added to a prophecy. Now the Bible has many prophecies such as the above, and some having

an even greater degree of detail. Consider for example Daniel 11, a chapter of prophecy that literally contains over 100 details, but I will skip it and other such prophecies here, choosing rather to move on to the greatest and most improbable prophecy of all time.

The Evidence of Prophecy Concerning Jesus Christ

While several evidences of the inspiration of the Bible can be given, one need not look any further than Jesus Christ to find absolute proof. It is the belief of all sound Christians that Christ is the ultimate author of the Bible. He therefore defines for us what is to be considered as Bible. The books contained in the Bible were put there because they were honored by Christ and His Apostles as being inspired. The numerous Jewish writings not contained in the Bible were omitted because there is no proof that Christ approved them as being the word of God. Further, He has verified the book in a powerful way by inspiring prophecies concerning Himself and then bringing those prophecies to pass.

Much of the Bible was written in anticipation of His first coming, which is now of course past, and these are the parts that are by themselves sufficient to establish beyond all reasonable doubt that the book must be inspired. With this being established, we are left without any reasonable basis to doubt what the book says about the role of Christ in our future.

In what follows, I will present 40 different prophecies concerning Christ that have already been fulfilled. I will assign subjective probabilities to each of these events, attempting to condition these probabilities on all prior assumptions, then compute the probability that all these prophecies could come to pass at once. The subjective probabilities are placed in () after descriptions and comments on the prophecies.

Use of subjective probabilities may be judged as pseudoscience by some, but such methods are sometimes used by statisticians in other areas, and some branches of statistical theory are actually designed to accommodate them. The reader will doubtlessly disagree with some of the subjective probabilities I assign, but hopefully will not judge me as being chronically biased toward setting them to favor my conclusion. To the contrary, I have attempted to be conservative, and anticipate that some Christians will actually be offended at the high probabilities I have put on certain events. The reader is welcome to replace my estimates with their own. I am confident that under any remotely-reasonable set of numbers, the implications will be so clear that only a fool would deny them.

Prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ include:

1) He will be of the lineage of Abraham (Gn 12:3, 18:18, 22:18), Isaac (Gn 17:19, 21:12, 26:4), Jacob (Gn 28:4, 28:14), Judah (Gn 49:10), David (1Chr 17:12-15, 2Sam 7:16, Ps 89:36, Jer 23:5-6, 30:7-9, 33:15-26, Ezek 34:23-24, 37:24-25, Isa 9:6-7, Hos 3:5, Zech 12:8) and Solomon (1Chr 22:7-10). We here have overlapping events. If a man is a descendent of Solomon, then he is automatically a descendent of all other men named. However, it must be considered that the

prophecies were made at each level of the family tree when the remainder of the tree could not be known. So the odds of any of these prophecies becoming true must be measured in terms of what was known, and what was not known, at the time the prophecies were made. For example, suppose Abraham was one of 10 men in his world, but that because of highly adverse circumstances, the population was reduced to only two men as of the times of Christ, with only Christ Himself being a descendent of Abraham. Now a prophecy made *as of the time* of Abraham that Christ would descend from him has odds of one in 10, not one in two, and certainly not one in one.

To illustrate the math further, suppose you were presented with the challenge of picking the lineage of a specific American president of the future, and that only his great-grandfather is presently alive. You must prophecy his great-grandfather, grandfather and father. Now if there are 100 million men in American today, then you have odds of 1 in 100,000,000 of picking the right great-grandfather. Now suppose this man has four sons, then your odds of correctly picking the grandfather given that you correctly picked the great-grandfather are one in four. Next suppose the grandfather has two sons, then you have odds of one in two of picking the correct father given that your former picks were true. The odds of correctly prophesying the entire lineage are the odds of correctly picking the great-grandfather (1 in 100,000,000) times the odds of picking the grandfather given that you have correctly picked the great grandfather (1 in 4) times the odds of picking the father given that your two previous picks were correct (1 in 2). This means you are up against odds of 1 in 800,000,000.

To begin computation of our estimate for Christ, the first question will be: How many men lived in the world during the time of Abraham? We can have radically different estimates of this depending upon whether we choose the computations of Bible believers or of Bible skeptics. If Bible believers, then the number will be vastly smaller, because they assume the human population had been reduced by the flood to four men and four women only eight generations before Abraham. But since the Bible is itself on trial in this analysis, I think it fair to hold Bible skeptics to their own numbers, which, according to various estimates made by them, would have world population in the times of Abraham (approximately 2,000 BC) at around 30 million. Approximately half of these were male, so we will put odds on the prophecy concerning Abraham at one in 15 million. Isaac was one of eight sons (counting the sons by Keturah). Jacob was one of two sons. Judah was one of 12 sons. Because of the census taken by David in 2Sam 24, we know there were in those times 500,000 men in Judah, which would have included David and Solomon. Multiplying all these, we have 1.44 quadrillion. We believe it would be fair to say the Bible also correctly prophesied that Christ would descend from Zerubbabel (Hag 2:21-23, Zech 4:6-10), in which event this huge number should be considerably larger, but we will be conservative and merely round the number up to an even 2 quadrillion. (1 in 2,000,000,000,000,000).

[The reader is welcome to skip this paragraph, but I have included it to answer likely objections from skeptics that have more mathematical ability than most: Ordinarily when computing the

odds of predicting a family lineage, the final calculation would be approximately equal to the population of the terminal generation. To see this, suppose the first generation had population of M men, and that the birthrate in all generations were S sons per man, and suppose there were g generations after the first. This would place the terminal population at MS^g men. Now this calculation happens to be exactly the same formula for computing the odds of predicting the family lineage. So, ordinarily, the odds of picking the entire lineage of Christ would be equal to the population of the world at the time of Christ – a number that could not be any greater than a few hundred million. So how is it that we arrive at the outrageous figure of quadrillions instead? The reason is the astronomical growth rate of the Jews from the times of Judah until Solomon. In only 11 generations (Ruth 4:18-22), the population went from 1 man (Judah) to 500,000. This would mean men each man had an average of about 3.3 sons or 6.6 children. Had that growth rate continued until the times of Christ, then assuming a few more than 40 generations from Judah until Christ, this would have put the terminal population at roughly equal to the estimated number of stars in the known Universe! (10^{22} to 10^{24}). Of course such a growth rate could not continue since the Earth could not bear it, and it did in fact cease when the Jews rebelled against God, beginning with Solomon and continuing thereafter. But these facts give skeptics yet more prophecy with which to contend, namely, the repeated promises of God to multiply the Jews as the stars of heaven (Gn 15:5, 22:17, 26:4, etc.)]

2) An unbroken lineage of Judean kings would exist until Christ came (Gn 49:10, Ezek 21:25-27). There were in fact 22 consecutive kings from the tribe of Judah ranging from David to Zedekiah. These were all documented in the Bible. This was followed by the Hasmonean Dynasty, which ruled past the range of Old Testament history (though not OT prophecy). However, as of the times of Christ, the Judean lineage had ceased, as implied by the prophecy, and the Jews were instead under an Edomite king named Herod (a Roman puppet). Of course, any Judean king would tend to be followed by another Judean king because of the habit of kings to appoint their own sons as successors. But even if we put the probability of one Judean king being followed by another at 90%, the probability of 21 consecutive Judean kings after the first would still be only around 10%, and we are not even considering the Judean succession outside the purview of OT history. (1 in 10)

3) His ministry will begin 483 years after the Persian decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Dn 9:24-27). Approximately 2,500 years have elapsed since this prophecy was made, and since some still look for the Messiah even today, all these years must be put into play. (1 in 2,500)

4) He will be preceded by another prophet (John the Baptist) who will herald his coming (Isa 40:3-17, Mal 3:1-3). This must be considered a rare thing as it did not occur with any other prophet, priest or preacher in the Bible. (1 in 100)

5) The heralding prophet will preach in the country as opposed to the cities (Isa 40:3). (1 in 2)

6) The heralding prophet will fade into relative obscurity, being vastly eclipsed by the one he precedes (Mk 1:7-8, Jn 3:27-32). Here it must be considered that John was a highly-acknowledged and respected prophet in his own times, to the extent that Jewish leaders dared not malign him for fear of being stoned by their own people (Lk 20:4-6). John found it necessary to convince the Jews that he was not the Messiah, claiming rather that he was not even worthy to remove the shoes of the Messiah, though even Christ Himself said that not a greater man had ever lived than John (Mt 11:11). Even the contemporary historian, Flavius Josephus, while mentioning both John and Jesus, gave a more detailed account of John. Yet today, it is sad but true that, many professed Christians cannot even distinguish John the Baptist from John the Apostle. On the other hand, Jesus is famous among both Christians and non-Christians. So what are odds that a highly respected prophet would be immediately and vastly eclipsed by another? (1 in 4)

7) The Christ will be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic 5:2). Some have estimated the Jewish population in the times of Christ at approximately three million, though none can truly know. The same can be said of Bethlehem, which is known to have been a small town, but no definite figure can be put on its population. We will assume 3,000, and assume the descendents of David were geographically distributed the same as other Jews. (1 in 1,000)

8) He will be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14, Jer 31:22, Gn 3:15). The probability of this is obviously nil under natural law. Skeptics will therefore object to it even being included in our list. However, it is reasonable that we at least consider the probability that such a *claim* would be made of Jesus by billions of people (including even Moslems). While claims of virgin births were common to ancient religions, they were rare in comparison to the number of acknowledged ordinary births. It would probably be safe to say that not one in a billion people born in this world were claimed to have been born of a virgin. Nonetheless, we will accommodate the skeptics, who will complain that the prophecy was too disposed toward self-fulfillment in that it provided a convenient means for any pregnant woman to exonerate or exalt herself or her child. This concession is made notwithstanding the fact there is nothing in the Bible suggesting that Mary ever made use of this prophecy, nor even that she had knowledge of it. (1 in 1,000)

9) He will spend a significant part of his life in Galilee, and bring the people of that region to great light (Isa 9:1-7). This event was more unlikely than may seem. The Jews living in the times of Jesus had such a low opinion of Galilee that they attempted to discredit Him on this very account. The Pharisees considered it impossible that the Messiah could come out of Galilee (Jn 7:52), and even the disciple Nathaniel initially had doubts about Jesus because of His connections to that region (Jn 1:46). (1 in 10)

10) He will have distinguishing similarities to Moses (Dt 18:15-19, Acts 3:22-23, 7:37). Objectors will complain that similarities can be seen between almost any two men by those who wish to see them. This is a valid complaint. However, before hastily dismissing the prophecy on this account, first consider what some of these similarities happen to be: a) Evil men sought to

destroy both while in their infancy, and many infants died in both attempts. b) Both were distinguished by being drawn out from water. Moses literally means “drawn out,” as he was drawn from the water as an infant, whereas the most distinguishing ritual of Christianity is baptism, to which Christ Himself submitted, His ministry beginning with immersion by John. c) Both relinquished royalty to deliver their impoverished people. d) Both were initially rejected by their people. e) Both found approval with the Gentiles after being rejected of their own, and indeed, from the biblical point of view, both took Gentile brides. f) Both were unsurpassed workers of miracles. g) Both were transfigured in a mountain. h) Both had authority far surpassing that of ordinary prophets, as may be seen in the fact that both initiated orders of worship that all other prophets, priests, preachers, etc. were obliged to follow. i) The Bible claims the bodies of neither were ever found. In nearly all these points, Moses and Christ possessed similarities not shared with any other prophet, nor did the Bible draw such comparisons; rather, the same book in which this prophecy is stated concludes with: “*And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face,*” (Dt 34:10). Now in light of all these points, the relevant question then becomes: What are the odds that Jesus would have exceptional similarities to Moses that even skeptics would be compelled to concede? (1 in 10)

11) He will have an extraordinary ability to read the minds and hearts of others (Lk 2:35). This ability was really without precedent in the Bible. The enemies of Israel were paranoid that Elisha was privy to their strategies (2Ki 6:12), but this hardly compares with the feats of Christ. Gospel writers covered different miracles performed by Christ with very few miracles being related in every account, but none failed to emphasize His ability to know the minds of both friend and foe. (1 in 1,000,000)

12) He will be a harmless man having nothing to do with war or violence (Isa 42:3). This surely would have seemed unlikely to the Jews of those times, who expected the Messiah to be a destructive force against their Gentile oppressors. (1 in 2)

13) He will be a worker of great wonders (Isa 9:6). While being a worker of wonders would be an expected claim of anyone fitting the prior criteria, consideration must be given to the fact that the prophecy anticipates one who will be unsurpassed even among other miracle-workers in the Bible. (1 in 10)

14) He will be joyously acclaimed while humbly riding into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass (Zech 9:9). This would be highly improbable in our own times, and it must be considered that the Jews are still looking for the Messiah today. However, because we have already taken as given the prophecy of Daniel concerning the timing of His life, we will assume such an event, though improbable even then, would not be as improbable as today. But we must also make allowance for the fact that the prophecy not only calls for an ass, but for a colt, the foal of an ass, which in fact proved to be an unbroken animal that had never been ridden (Mk 11:2). I will set odds on all this at one in one hundred, but am being generous to the skeptics, because I am

making no allowance for the fact that Jesus gave a detailed prophecy to his disciples as to where this animal would be found (Mt 21:2, Mk 11:2). These sorts of short-term prophecies, though effortlessly made by Jesus, are far more difficult than might seem. Any man can prophesy that the stock market will go up, that it will rain, that there will be earthquakes, etc, but can he prophesy these things when they are going to happen *tomorrow*? (1 in 100)

15) He will be rejected of the Jews (Ps 2:1-3, Ps 69:20-26, Isa 53:1-6, Zech 11, etc). Though the Jews commonly rejected prophets, the relevant question here is the probability of them rejecting this particular prophet notwithstanding the multitude of reasons they should have accepted Him. (1 in 10)

16) He will be betrayed by a friend who ate of his own bread (Ps 41:7-9). This was fulfilled in Judas, who literally betrayed Him immediately after eating bread with Him (Jn 13:21-30). (1 in 100)

17) He will be sold in betrayal for exactly 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12-13). I will put odds on Him being sold at one in one hundred, and consider all possible prices to be in a range from one to one hundred, and will consider each of these prices to be equally likely. (1 in 10,000)

18) This silver will be disdained and cast into house of the Lord. This happened when Judas attempted to return his ill-gotten gain, but when those who paid him refused to take the money, Judas cast it into the temple (Mt 27:3-8). The specifics of this prophecy seem to call for a very unlikely scenario. (1 in 1,000)

19) This silver will be used in such a way that will involve a potter. (1 in 1,000)

20) His betrayer will be replaced by another (Ps 109:8). This was fulfilled with the appointment of Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). (1 in 2)

21) He will be deserted by all others and face His persecutors alone (Ps 22:11 & 69:20, Isa 63:5, Zech 13:6-7, Mt 26:31, Mk 14:50). This happened notwithstanding the willingness of his disciples to fight (Lk 22:49, Jn 18:36). (1 in 5)

22) He will be tried and punished (Isa 53:7-12). We have already taken as given that the Jews will reject Him, but here we must consider that they will go well beyond this in fabricating charges against Him, and that they will prevail against Him notwithstanding His innocence. (1 in 100)

23) Though innocent, He will offer no defense for Himself in trial (Isa 53:7). (1 in 20)

24) He will be crucified by nailing. Though Old Testament prophecy does not actually use the word "crucified," it is strongly implied throughout, beginning with the placement of blood on the doorposts during the Passover (Ex 12:7), then including details of prophecies to follow, such as His hands, feet and side being pierced (Ps 22:16, Zech 12:10); Him dying in such a way that His

bones (ribs) could be counted (Ps 22:17), and Him dying as a spectacle before mocking observers. Jesus also spoke of taking up the “cross” long before ever being put on it Himself (Mt 10:38, 16:24, etc). Crucifixion was a Roman method of execution. The Jews used stoning. So this prophecy carries the implicit prediction that circumstances would then be such that the Jews would be constrained to resort to an execution methodology never used by them before. This came to pass when the Romans subdued the Jews and then denied them the right to administer capital punishment (Jn 18:31). Assessment of this prophecy must also consider that the Romans did not always use nails in crucifixions. (1 in 1,000)

25) He will be mocked in a specific way (Ps 22:8). While being generally mocked does not seem improbable given that He is to be tried, condemned and punished, we must consider that the prophecy had specific accuracy about what the mockery would be (Mt 27:43). (1 in 10)

26) He will be beaten with stripes (Isa 53:5), spit upon (Isa 50:6) and otherwise abused such that His face will be extremely marred (Is 52:14). The odds of these things must be tempered by the fact we have already assumed He is to be crucified. However, these things do not automatically follow from that fact. Jesus was actually beaten by Pilate under hopes the Jews would be pacified by it and not demand His crucifixion (Lk 23:13-22, Jn 19:1-18). The marring of His face derived from the crown of thorns placed on His head – a thing not ordinarily done in crucifixions. (1 in 10)

27) Notwithstanding this abuse, none of his bones will be broken. This prophecy might be inferred from Ps 34:20, but perhaps an even stronger statement of it is in the specifications of the Passover lamb (Ex 12:46). The Roman soldiers were intent upon breaking His bones to hasten His death until they were surprised to find Him already dead (Jn 19:31- 37). (1 in 2)

28) His garments will be parted among his crucifiers (Ps 22:18, Jn 19:23-24). (1 in 2)

29) They will cast lots for His garments (Ps 22:18). (1 in 20)

30) He will thirst (Ps 69:61, Ps 22:15). While thirsting may seem inevitable to anyone being crucified, the prophecy implies that not only will He thirst, but will actually complain of thirst. (1 in 2)

31) He will be given vinegar to drink (Ps 69:61). (1 in 5)

32) The vinegar will be given in combination with gall (Ps 69:21, Mt 27:34). There is much debate over the intents of this concoction, with some claiming it was commonly given to alleviate pain, which might explain why Jesus refused it. Though this explanation is far from certain, we will assign a conservative probability on account of it. (1 in 2)

33) He will be numbered with other transgressors (Isa 53:12). (1 in 2)

34) Yet, He will be buried in the tomb of a rich man who was a dissenting part of the very wicked counsel that condemned Him (Isa 53:9, Lk 23:50-56). (1 in 1,000)

35) He will rise from the dead (Ps 16:10, Ps 41:8-10, Isa 53:10). As with His virgin birth, we will not measure the probability of this actually happening (which is nil) but only the probability of people *claiming* it to have happened, with such claims being made by over 500 alleged witnesses (1Cor 15:1-8). This is of course a very rare thing. While skeptics will complain that His disciples invented this claim being inspired by the prophecy itself, we will not be generous to accommodate them here given that we have multiple witnesses attesting that His resurrection took everyone by surprise. Also, none of His Apostles ever recanted their testimony, but tenaciously and energetically preached it to the world, and all but John died in martyrdom because they would not relinquish their claim. (1 in 1,000,000)

36) Though rejected of the Jews, He will thereafter be of worldwide fame and honor among others. The likelihood of this must consider that we have already taken it as given that men will claim He rose from the dead. Yet we must also consider that worldwide fame entails that this highly improbable claim will be widely believed, which is itself an improbable thing. (1 in 5)

37) The path along which this news will be accepted will begin with Jerusalem, then through Judea, then to Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the Earth (Acts 1:8). There is nothing unlikely about what is here said of Jerusalem and Judea, and we have already accounted for the gospel ultimately spreading throughout the earth, but it was an unlikely claim that the Samaritans would be the first non-Jews to whom the gospel would be preached. This is because of the contempt that Jews held for them (Jn 4:9). (1 in 5)

38) The Jews will thereafter be scattered and have an extreme and protracted period of darkness and suffering (Ps 69:22-28, Dn 9:26-27, Zech 11:9-17, Lk 21:24, Rom 11:25, etc). Indeed, God has denied the Jews the very vain glories they demanded in Christ, and has imposed upon them the humiliation and suffering for which they rejected Christ. (1 in 100)

39) During this protracted period, the Jews will be without a king or prince, without a sacrifice, etc. (Hos 3:4-5). Though most nations of the world continued under monarchy for another two thousand years, the Jews have not had a single king since Jesus, nor have they had sacrifices since their dispersal by the Romans. (1 in 100)

40) Finally, the teachings of the Messiah are repeatedly represented as infallible and pure (Ps 45:1-2, Isa 11:1-5, Zech 3:8-10, etc). Unbelievers will object to the inclusion of this criterion to the list, yet they themselves serve as witness to it. All of them want to be treated exactly as Jesus said men should be treated. They approve of His bold stand against racism and His teaching that all men should be considered as neighbors. They approve of His kindness and regard to women and children. They approve His rejection of monarchy and totalitarianism. They approve His principle that leaders should be those that serve the people rather than those that serve themselves of the people. They agree with His high standards of forgiveness, forbearance and

peace. They agree with His opposition to violence, and with His claim that those who take the sword will perish by it. Verily, they even find common ground with Him in their contempt for religion, because no man ever scathed humanly-contrived, superstitious, vain, inconsistent and impractical religion more than Jesus Christ. In all these points, advancing societies have moved from former views toward positions taught by Jesus Christ. Not a man will be found expressing regret for living as Jesus commanded men to live. Multitudes will be found expressing regret for living otherwise. In all these respects, even unbelievers will find not a single fault with His teachings, but find them in every respect to be practical, consistent and in accordance with conscience. The complaints of such unbelievers are more commonly against hypocritical Christianity than against these teachings of Christ. Contrast this to the teachings of multitudes of philosophers, religious teachers, political leaders, etc, who have left behind them a trail of regretful followers, and these oftentimes accompanied by numerous of their victims, and even in the best cases, at least some degree of fault could be found in what was taught. What are odds that a man could attain to this unsurpassed standard even in the view of those who otherwise reject Him and His Book? We will put odds on this at one in one hundred and be ashamed for not making them higher. (1 in 100).

What then are the odds of all these things happening together given the subjective probabilities assigned to each? It is 1.28 times 10 to the 82nd power. This number is so massive that there is no comprehensible way to illustrate it. It exceeds the estimated number of atoms in the entire Universe (commonly set at 10^{80}). Contrast this to the 4.5 billion years which evolutionists vainly suppose as being a sufficient time for their theory to work. Were one to take a sharp pencil and put a tiny dot on a sheet of paper, that dot is apt to contain more than 4.5 billion atoms. To quote the late Dr. Gish, "It is unbelievable what an unbeliever must believe to be an unbeliever."

The Testimony of Jesus Christ Himself

It is a remarkable thing that large numbers of people in the modern world claim to be Christian yet do not truly submit to the accuracy and authority of the Bible. It is impossible to reconcile these two positions. A true "Christian" is necessarily a follower of Jesus Christ as this is what the name implies. However, there can be no doubt that Jesus Christ Himself esteemed scripture to the highest possible degree, always treating it as absolutely inerrant and authoritative.

In particular, He said scripture cannot be broken (Jn 10:35); that it was inspired by the Spirit (Mt 22:43), and that not so much as a jot or tittle of it could fail (Mt 5:18), but that it must be completely fulfilled (Mk 14:49). Both He and His Apostles habitually spoke of scripture being fulfilled, always stating or implying that no other outcome could have been the case. Indeed, immediately before His abduction, He claimed to have power to call upon legions of angels for His deliverance, but rejected this alternative because it would contradict what scripture had foretold (Mt 26:53-54). It follows then that the Son of God takes personal responsibility to ensure that scripture is fulfilled, and would sooner die than suffer it to fail. He Himself expressly

stated that one could more easily destroy the Universe than obstruct the word of God: “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,*” (Mt 24:35).

In nearly all disputes with His adversaries, Jesus replied with scripture, and both He and His adversaries understood that a scriptural answer was a final answer to all matters. Even when challenged by satan, three times did Christ answer him from scripture (Lk 4:1-13). Now if Jesus Christ is what all Christians claim, He need not appeal to any authority to establish His point. He could act and speak entirely upon his own authority. Notwithstanding this, Jesus repeatedly referred to scripture in His defense, which plainly shows He considered scripture to be nothing short of the very word of God, and it is a vain and culpable claim to be His follower without taking exactly the same resolute position.

While the scriptures used by Jesus Christ were of course from the Old Testament, His own testimony would imply that the New Testament falls nothing short in being absolutely reliable and authoritative. He promised that the Holy Spirit would guide His Apostles in all truth and bring all things He had commanded to their remembrance (Jn 14:26). Consequently, He elsewhere said that what those Apostles would bind on earth would be bound in Heaven, and what they loosed on earth would be loosed in Heaven (Mt 16:19 & 18:18). No Old Testament writer was given authority greater than this. Since all of the New Testament was either written by Apostles or men under their supervision, it follows that it too is absolutely authoritative.

Belief in the Bible is therefore not a choice that professing Christians are truly free to make. It is a choice only for non-Christians to make. The choice to be a Christian is simultaneously a choice to believe the Bible, and choice to believe the Bible is simultaneously a choice to be a Christian. All claiming to be Christians but denying the reliability or authority of the Bible are in fact pseudo-Christians because their claim of being followers of Jesus Christ cannot possibly be true. Further, when Jesus gave His repeated and emphatic commandments to have faith in God, He did not mean faith in humanly-fabricated notions of what God is, or what God should do, or what God will do, but He meant faith in God *as He is revealed in the Bible*. Jesus *never* recognized any book or any man as being worthy of our faith apart from the Bible and its inspired authors. Faith in the Bible implies faith in God and Jesus Christ, and faith in God and Jesus Christ imply faith in the Bible.