

Hope U: The Bible's Authority

Week 2

The Bible is God's Word. You can confidently respond to skeptics, "The Bible says so," when defending your faith. More specifically, why can you say this?

Because of the Bible's:

1. Amazing unity and message (last week: The Bible was written during a 1500 year time span, with dozens of authors, in three different languages, on three different continents, with an incredible unity and one message: Jesus saves us from our sins and gives us eternal life.
2. Predictive prophecies.

Predictive Prophecies

The first prophecy of the coming of the Messiah:

Genesis 3:15: *I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^[a] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

Romans 16:20: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Messiah as the Passover Lamb

Exodus 12:21: *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

John 1:29: *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

1 Corinthians 5:7: *Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

Messiah born in Bethlehem

Micah 5:2: *But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Matthew 2:1: *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem.*

A great prophet would be given to Israel

Deuteronomy 18:18: *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*

Matthew 21:11: *And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."*

Messiah would come from King David

Isaiah 11:1-3: *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear.*

Romans 1:1-3: *Paul, a servant^[a] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David^[b] according to the flesh.*

Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey

Zechariah 9:9: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Luke 19:35-37: ³⁵ *And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.*

Messiah would be born of a virgin

Isaiah 7:14: ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.^[a]*

Matthew 1:22-23: ²² *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).*

Messiah would be from the line of Abraham

Genesis 12:3: ³ *I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.^[a]*

Matthew 1:1: *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah

Genesis 49:10: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him;^[a] and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*

Luke 3:33: ³³ *the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,*

Messiah would be called Immanuel

Isaiah 7:14: ¹⁴ *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*^[a]

Matthew 1:23: *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

Messiah would be preceded by Elijah

Malachi 4:4-5: ⁴ *“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules^[a] that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*

Matthew 11:13-14: ¹³ *For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come.*

Messiah would spend a season in Egypt

Hosea 11:1: *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*

Matthew 2:16-18: ¹⁶ *Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”*

Messiah would be rejected by his own people

Isaiah 53:3: *He was despised and rejected^[a] by men, a man of sorrows^[b] and acquainted with^[c] grief;^[d] and as one from whom men hide their faces^[e] he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

John 1:11: ¹¹ *He came to his own,^[a] and his own people^[b] did not receive him.*

Messiah would be praised by little children

Psalms 8:2: *Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.*

Matthew 21:16: ¹⁶ *and they said to him, “Do you hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes; have you never read, ““Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise’?”*

Messiah would be betrayed

Psalms 41:9: *Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.*

Luke 22:47-48: ⁴⁷ *While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸ but Jesus said to him, “Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?”*

Messiah would be given vinegar to drink

Psalm 69:21: *They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.*
Matthew 27:34: ³⁴ *they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.*

Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced

Psalm 22:16: *For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet^[a]*

John 20:25-27: ²⁵ *So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."* ²⁶ *Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."* ²⁷ *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."*

Messiah would have soldiers gamble for his garments

Psalm 22:18: *they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

Matthew 27:35-36: ³⁵ *And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.* ³⁶ *Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.*

Most profoundly, let's simply read together Isaiah 53

53 Who has believed what he has heard from us?^[a] And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ *He was despised and rejected^[b] by men, a man of sorrows^[c] and acquainted with^[d] grief;^[e] and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

⁴ *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.*

⁶ *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.*

⁸ *By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief;^[a] when his soul makes^[h] an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see^[i] and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,^[j] and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,^[k] because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Final points:

1. Over 300 Old Testament prophecies about Jesus
2. Fulfilled in specificity
3. The probability factor of this occurring
4. The early church authors saw Jesus throughout the Old Testament

Therefore: Predictive prophecies prove the reliability of the Bible.

You can confidently say to spiritual skeptics, “The Bible says so.” Why?

1. The Bible’s unity.
2. Predictive Prophecies
3. Archeology

Archeology began as a serious, systematic, scientific discipline in the mid-1850’s. It primarily started as a way to locate biblical places and dates. It has been an evolving tool of effectiveness.

It has been used primarily to validate Hebrew and Egyptian written and utensil/pottery finds.

Bottom line: Concerning the reliability of the Old and New Testament texts and other discoveries, time and time again, every find has supported, confirms, and authenticates the biblical record.

The New Testament discoveries are particularly accurate because the discoveries are closer in antiquity. The findings regarding the early church and the life of Jesus only support the historical reliability of the biblical record.

This is especially true of the Manuscript Evidence:

“The Bible says so.” Why is this a confident statement?

1. The Bible’s unity
2. Predictive Prophecies
3. Archeology
4. The Manuscript Evidence

Final thoughts: Always remember:

1. You interpret the Old Testament with the New Testament
2. You interpret the gospels with the epistles
3. To take a text out of context is pretext

Manuscripts, Archaeological Evidence, Prophecies

What is a manuscript?

- a book, document, or piece of music written by hand rather than typed or printed.
 - Manu - by hand
 - Scriptus - written

The Bible was primarily written on parchment (animal skin) with ink, or in some cases on papyrus. Many of these ancient Biblical texts have been discovered through archaeological excavations in Egypt and in caves near the Dead Sea, while others were handed down and preserved in libraries of monasteries.

Old Testament

- The English translations of the Old Testament that most people had in their Bibles was until recently based on the “Masoretic Text,” which is represented by very old Hebrew manuscripts that were preserved by dedicated followers of Judaism.
- For a long time, the oldest of these Masoretic Text manuscripts were only from the 10th century AD, so the oldest copies of the Old Testament were from the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament done in the 3rd century BC.

Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls

- In 1946 the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by accident in a cave near the Dead Sea by a Bedouin shepherd.

- Hundreds of ancient manuscripts dating back to as early as about 300 BC were discovered.
- In fact, every book of the Old Testament except Esther has been discovered so far among the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- These scrolls, primarily written in Hebrew, are extremely significant because they contain copies of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament from over 1100 years before the Masoretic text, and yet are about 95% identical in most books.
- Over 800 fragmentary documents, mainly consisting of Hebrew writings on leather (with a few on parchment), including fragments of 190 biblical scrolls. Most of these are small, containing no more than one-tenth of a book; however, a complete Isaiah scroll has been found
- Overall, the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate that the text of the Old Testament has been accurately copied and preserved over thousands of years.
- It appears that between 3rd century BC and 10th century AD the copying tradition was so stringent, even with the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple in 70 AD, and the ensuing Jewish Diaspora, what we now know to be the Old Testament has been accurately copied and preserved over the centuries prior.
- It also suggests that there was a known Jewish canon of the Old Testament books considered authoritative by the Jewish people.

New Testament/Jesus

Do we have early testimony about Jesus?

Flavius Josephus (ca. 37 - ca.100)

- Became one of the greatest Jewish historians of his time.
- Josephus began his historical writings in Rome while serving as a historian for the Roman emperor Domitian.
- His works are considered to be undeniably accurate
- One of major works is his now famous Antiquities of the Jews, which he finished in about A.D. 93.
 - *“At this time [the time of Pilate] there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous and many people among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.*

- *Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned*

Significance:

- A first-century reference to Jesus
- Confirmation that he had a brother named James
- James was martyred, perhaps because he was the leader of the Jerusalem church, just as the New Testament records (Acts 12:2)

Other non-Christian sources?

- Including Josephus, there are ten known non-Christian writers who mention Jesus within 150 years of his life
- When you add those non-Christian writings to the Christian sources over the same 150 years, there are about as many sources who mention Jesus as Tiberius Caesar, the Roman emperor at the time of Jesus.

In other words, Jesus of Nazareth, who was not even a Roman official in the Roman Empire, is mentioned in ancient writings about as much as the emperor at that time.

To validate if the New Testament is a record of actual history, we need to answer two questions concerning the documents that comprise the New Testament”

1. Do we have an accurate copy?
 - a. Telephone game
 - b. Numerous people independently witnessed the New Testament events, many of them committed it to memory, and nine of those eyewitnesses/contemporaries put their observations in writing.
 - c. 27 different documents that were written on 27 different scrolls by nine different writers over a 20 to 50 year period.
 - d. It is not just one source, but a collection of sources.
 - e. None of the original written documents of the New Testament have been discovered. We only have copies of the original writings, called **manuscripts**.

Will this prevent us from knowing what the originals said?

- To reconstruct the original, it helps to have a large number of manuscripts that are written not long after the original.

- More manuscripts and earlier manuscripts usually provide more trustworthy testimony and enable a more accurate reconstruction.

How do the New Testament documents fare in this regard?

- Extremely well, and far better than other documents from the ancient world.
- In fact, the New Testament documents have more manuscripts, earlier manuscripts, and more abundantly supported manuscripts than the best ten pieces of classical literature... combined! And we never doubt their veracity.

More Manuscripts:

- At last count, there are nearly 5,800 hand-written Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.
- In addition, there are some 20,000 manuscripts in other languages (e.g., Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic).
- Some of these manuscripts are complete Bibles, others are books or pages, and a few are just fragments.

Earlier Manuscripts

- Not only does the New Testament enjoy abundant manuscript support, but it also has manuscripts that were written soon after the originals.

John Rylands Fragment

- The earliest undisputed manuscript is a segment of John 18:31-33, 37-38 known as the John Rylands fragment. Scholars date it between A.D. 117-138, but some say it is even earlier.
- It was found in Egypt - showing that John's Gospel was copied and had spread quite some distance by the early second century.

Nine disputed fragments that date from A.D. 50-70

- Found with the Dead Sea Scrolls
- The scholar who first identified these early fragments as New Testament books was Jose O'Callahan, a noted Spanish paleographer..
- The New York Times recognized the implications of O'Callahan's theory by admitting that if it is true "it would prove at least one of the Gospels - that of St. Mark - was written only a few years after the death of Jesus."

Even if they are not true fragments, and the John Rylands fragment is really the earliest, the time gap between the original and the first surviving copy is still vastly shorter than anything else in the ancient world

More Abundantly Supported Manuscripts

- Roman emperor Diocletian A.D. 303
- Edicts called for the destruction of churches, manuscripts, and books and the killings of Christians
- Even if he had succeeded in wiping every biblical manuscript off the face of the earth, he could not have destroyed our ability to recognize the New Testament
- Why?

The early church fathers - men of the second and third centuries such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and others - quoted the New Testament some 36,289 times.

Counting all the Fathers, there are some one million citations of the New Testament

Library examples - we can read the entire New Testament just from their quotes

Historically, Polycarp was discipled by the apostle John (from Irenaeus and Tertullian). Irenaeus also said that Papias and John knew each other. Therefore, two distinct church fathers (who lived in the mid-first century to the mid-second century) personally knew the apostle John. Could they have received early New Testament documents from him? Their personal friendship with a writer of five New Testament books gives credence to the authenticity and reliability of the early dated New Testament manuscripts.

“Well, if the New Testament really is the Word of God, then why didn’t God preserve the original?”

- His Word might be better protected through copies than through original documents.
- Because if the original were in someone’s possession, that person could change it.
- The process of reconstruction allows variants and changes from the copies to be identified and corrected rather easily. So, ironically, *not* having the originals may preserve God’s Word better than having them.
- If we possessed the originals, humans would most likely start to worship them, not the One who wrote them.
- Christians do believe that if we possessed these original manuscripts, they’d be without error in every way.

How accurate is the reconstruction?

- Some have estimated that there are about 200,000 errors in the New Testament manuscripts...
- 1) these are not “errors” but variant readings, the vast majority of which are strictly grammatical (i.e., punctuation and spelling)
- 2) These readings are spread throughout nearly 5,7000 manuscripts, so that a variant spelling of one letter of one word in one verse in 2,000 manuscripts is counted as 2,000 errors.

Textual scholars Westcott and Hort estimated that only one in sixty of these variants has significance. That would leave a text 98.33 percent pure.

Philip Schaff calculated that, of the 150,000 variants known in his day, only 400 changed the meaning of the passage, only fifty were of real significance, and not even one affected ‘an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching”

The great New Testament scholar and Princeton professor Bruce Metzger estimated that the *Mahabharata* of Hinduism is copied with only about 90 percent accuracy and Homer’s *Iliad* with about 95 percent. By comparison, he estimated the New Testament is about 99.5 percent accurate.

Again, the .5 percent does not affect a single doctrine of the Christian faith.

It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance, the text of the Bible is certain. Especially is this the case with the New Testament. The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations of it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world. - Ancient manuscript authority Fredric Kenyon

Is the New Testament Historically reliable

- **Said differently - did the major events described in the New Testament really happen?**

We are not talking about if the New Testament is without error but if it is the “Word of God”

What kind of records comprise the New Testament?

- Are the documents written soon after the events by eyewitnesses (or by those who interviewed eyewitnesses), or are they documents written later by biased followers who simply embellished details about the life of a real historical figure.

1. Do we have early testimony?

All New Testament books were written before A.D. 100 (About 70 years after the death of Jesus)

- a. In letters between A.D. 95 and 110, three early church fathers - Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp - quoted passages out of 25 of the 27 books in the New Testament.
- b. Clement was in Rome and Ignatius and Polycarp were hundreds of miles away in Smyrna, the original New Testament documents had to have been written significantly earlier, otherwise they could not have circulated across the ancient world in that time.

Most if not all of these books were written before A.D. 70 (about 40 years after the Death of Jesus)

- 40 years after Jesus's death, the Jewish temple is destroyed, just as Jesus had predicted, along with an estimated one million Jewish countrymen.
- The unprecedented national, human, economic, and religious tragedy were not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament writings, thus suggesting all must have been written pre-70 A.D..
- There is absolutely no mention of the fulfillment of this predicted strategy anywhere in the New Testament documents.
- 9/11 example
 - The disaster in A.D. 70 was many magnitudes greater than 9/11.
 - Marked the end of such a terrible war that Josephus called it the greatest war of all time.
 - Jews lost their entire country, their capital city, and their second temple which was the center for religious, political and economic life for a thousand years.
 - Tens of thousands of their countrymen were dead and hundreds of their villages burned to the ground.
 - People dispersed all over the world.

Many New testament books were composed before A.D. 62

- Luke, the medical doctor who meticulously records details in Acts which chronicles the early church
- Ends with Paul and James still living (James was martyred somewhere between 62 and 69 A.D.)
- Ex - Civil rights movement in the 1960s

- If Acts was written by 62, then the Gospel of Luke was before that because he mentions writing to Theophilus
- Mark must have been written before that because Luke says he got his facts by checking with eyewitness sources - Luke 1:1-4

Some New Testament books were penned in the 40s and 50s A.D., with Sources from the 30s (only a few years after the Death of Jesus)

- As certain as we are about Luke's records, there is no doubt from anyone - including the most liberal scholars - that Paul wrote his first letter to the church at Corinth between 55 and 56
- In his letter, Paul speaks about moral problems in the church, and then proceeds to discuss controversies over tongues, prophecies, and the Lord's Supper.
- This demonstrates that the church in Corinth was experiencing some kind of miraculous activity and was already observing the Lord's supper within 25 years of the Resurrection.
- The most significant aspect of his letter is that it contains the earliest and most authenticated testimony of the Resurrection itself.
- Paul writes down the testimony he received from others and the testimony that was authenticated when Christ appeared to him:
- 1 Cor. 15:3-8

Where did Paul get what he "received"? He probably received it from Peter and James when he visited them in Jerusalem three years after his conversion (Gal. 1:18)

Why is this important?

- Because, as Gary Habermas (historian and New Testament scholar) points out, most scholars (even liberals) believe that this testimony was part of an early creed that dates right back to the resurrection itself - eighteen months to eight years after Jesus's resurrection, but some say it could be even earlier.
- There's no possible way that such testimony could describe a legend, because it goes right back to the time and place of the event itself.
- If there was ever a place where a legendary resurrection could **not** occur, it was Jerusalem, because the Jews and the Romans were all too eager to squash Christianity and could have easily done so by parading Jesus' body around the city.
- Produce a body and the Christian movement is over. Finished. Squashed.
- Moreover, Paul cites fourteen eyewitnesses whose names are known: the twelve apostles, James, and Paul himself, and then references an appearance to more than 500 others at one time.

- Skeptic + Enemy
- By naming so many people who could verify what Paul was saying, Paul was, in effect, challenging his Corinthian readers to check him out. Go talk to them!
- Bible scholar William Lillie puts it this way.
 - *What gives a special authority to the list as historical evidence is the reference to most of the five hundred brethren being still alive. St Paul says in effect: "if you do not believe me, you can ask them." Such a statement in an admittedly genuine letter written within thirty years of the event is almost as strong of evidence as one could hope to get for something that happened nearly two thousand years ago.*
- If the Resurrection has not occurred, why would Paul give such a list of supposed eye witnesses? He would have immediately lost all credibility with his Corinthian readers by lying so blatantly.

There are numerous other New Testament documents that were written in the 50s or earlier

- We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80
- In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized into Christ Jew between the 40s and 80s of the first century (very probably sometime between A.D. 50-75).
- The great and once liberal archaeologist William F. Albright

Common objections

The documents are not early enough

- We don't object to writings now about events that happened 15-40 years ago - especially with writings that can be verified by eyewitnesses!
- We can easily recall events from 15-40 years ago

Furthermore, if the major events of the New Testament are eye witness accounts written within two generations of the events, then they are not likely to be a legend.

- Historical research indicates that a myth cannot begin to crowd out historical facts while the eyewitnesses are still alive.
- William Lane Craig "The tests show that even two generations is too short to allow legendary tendencies to wipe out the hard core historical fact.:"

- Holocaust examples
- People don't make up legends that will cost them their lives!

Why not earlier?

Why not more?

- We have more testimony that we might expect, and certainly more than enough to establish a reasonable doubt about what happened.
- Jesus is referenced by far more authors than the Roman emperor at the time (Jesus' 43 authors to Tiberius 10 within 150 years of their lives).

Do we have eyewitness testimony about Jesus?

Come back week 3!

Archeological Evidence for the Bible

Archaeologists have never located cities, persons, names, or places mentioned in the *Book of Mormon*.

The Tel Dan Stele

- In 1993, excavators at Tel Da uncovered an inscription with the word *BYTDWD* on it.
- They convincingly argued that the word means "house of David" and dates to the ninth century BC.
- The inscription had been sealed by a later Assyrian destruction layer firmly dated to 733/722 BC.
- Anything sealed beneath it must be dated earlier, because there is no possibility of intrusion by later artifacts. Pottery directly beneath the destruction level dates to the ninth and eighth centuries BC, and from this period the so-called House of David inscription must have come.
- the Hebrew expression "House of" a person is expression that means "dynasty,"

Gideon/Jerubbaal Inscription

For the first time ever, archaeologists excavating in southern Israel uncovered an inscription bearing the name of a biblical-era judge. The 3,100-year-old inked pottery inscription bears the name of Jerubbaal, the lesser-known name for Gideon (Judges 7:1).

Jerusalem's Earthquake—and piglet?

In excavations on the eastern slope of the City of David, close to the Gihon Spring, archaeologists uncovered evidence of the catastrophic eighth-century b.c.e. event dubbed "Amos's Earthquake."

Biblical Sodom

Around 1650 B.C.E., the Bronze Age city of Tall el-Hammam was wiped out by a blast 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb used at Hiroshima

Tall el-Hammam was the largest of three major cities in the valley. It likely acted as the region's political center

In a layer of ancient earth, archaeologists claim to have found evidence of a sudden high temperature apocalyptic event: Melted rooftops. Disintegrated pottery. Unusual patterns in the rock formations that can be associated with intense heat. For another three to six centuries after 1650 B.C., the settlement's 100 acres lay fallow.

based on the archaeological record. The researchers concluded that warfare, a fire, a volcanic eruption or an earthquake were unlikely culprits, as these events couldn't have produced heat intense enough to cause the melting recorded at the scene. That left a space rock as the most likely cause.

Because experts failed to find a crater at the site, they attributed the damage to an airburst created when a meteor or comet traveled through the atmosphere at high speed. It would have exploded about 2.5 miles above the city in a blast 1,000 times more powerful than the atomic bomb used at Hiroshima, writes study co-author Christopher R. Moore, an archaeologist at the University of South Carolina, for the Conversation.

“Air temperatures rapidly rose above 3,600 degrees Fahrenheit,” Moore explains. “Clothing and wood immediately burst into flames. Swords, spears, mudbricks and pottery began to melt. Almost immediately, the entire city was on fire.”

Seconds after the blast, a shockwave ripped through the city at a speed of roughly 740 miles per hour—faster than the worst tornado ever recorded. The cities’ buildings were reduced to foundations and rubble.

“None of the 8,000 people or any animals within the city survived,” Moore adds. “Their bodies were torn apart and their bones blasted into small fragments.”

Corroborating the idea that an airburst caused the destruction, the researchers found melted metals and unusual mineral fragments among the city’s ruins.

In the Book of Genesis, God “rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven,” and “the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.” According to the Gospel of Luke, “on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all of them.”

“All the observations stated in Genesis are consistent with a cosmic airburst,” says Kennett in the statement, “but there’s no scientific proof that this destroyed city is indeed the Sodom of the Old Testament.”