

BASIC BELIEFS OF MAJOR RELIGIONS

Religion	Beliefs About God	Beliefs About Salvation	Beliefs About Other Religions
Buddhism	No God	Enlightenment	False
Hinduism	Many Gods	Reincarnation	All True*
Islam	Unitarian (Allah)	The Five Pillars	False
Judaism	Unitarian (Yahweh)	The Law	False
Christianity	Trinitarian (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)	Grace	False

* Hindus will often claim that all religions are true, but this can only be the case when other religions are subsumed within Hinduism. When taken on their own merits, all other religions are false, according to Hinduism.

But what Hindus *don't* mean is that Christianity is true on its own terms. So, like adherents of all other religions, Hindus actually believe Christianity is false, thereby joining every other religious group (including atheists and agnostics) in the belief that only their own worldview is true.

And yet, in another sense, Christianity is not exclusive at all, but is the most inclusive religion. Christ invites all unto himself. Unlike Mithraism, which apparently excluded women, or Mormonism, which formerly excluded black people from the priesthood, the message of Jesus has always been for *everyone*.

Colossians 3:11 says, "In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us" (NLT). Christ makes no human distinctions—he died and rose again so that all people could have a personal relationship with the living God.

Christianity excludes no one who will believe, yet Christ himself offers the only way to be reconciled with God. As philosopher Stephen Davis explains, "The resurrection of Jesus, then, is God's decisive proof that Jesus is not just a great religious teacher among

all the great religious teachers in history. It is God's sign that Jesus is not a religious charlatan among all the religious charlatans in the world. The resurrection is God's way of pointing to Jesus and saying that *he* is the one in whom you are to believe. *He* is your savior. *He* alone is Lord." (Davis, RI, 197)

The resurrection demonstrated the truth of what God the Father had said about Jesus at his baptism: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). If you are an honest enquirer into the truth of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus is a great place to begin.

Misconception #6: "Christianity and science are at war."

Many believe science and religion are at war with each other. In fact, the belief that Christianity is opposed to modern science is one of the top reasons young people cite for leaving the church. (Kinnaman, YLM, 135–136)

But where did this idea come from? Is it accurate? In 1896 Cornell University president Andrew Dickson White released a book entitled *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. White is largely credited with inventing and

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bestseller list, selling a few hundred thousand copies, rarely do we come across books that have sold more than a million copies. Even more rarely do we find books that have passed the ten-million mark in sales. However, the number of Bibles sold reaches into the billions, and when one considers the freely distributed copies of biblical literature, the numbers likely reach into the tens of billions. According to the United Bible Societies' 2012 statistics, in that year alone member organizations were responsible for distributing 405 million Bibles or portions thereof (of which 32.1 million were full Bibles). One interesting fact to note is that in 2012 (a year in which a record number of full Bibles was distributed), there was a dramatic increase in the distribution of Bibles or portions of the Bible in countries where persecution of Christians is widespread.

The numbers of translations of the Bible are every bit as impressive as its distribution numbers. Most books are never translated into another language. If a book is translated, it is normally published in just two or three languages at the most. Very few books are available in more than ten languages. But according to the Wycliffe Global Alliance's 2014 Scripture and Language Statistics, the

Bible or portions of it have been translated into 2,883 languages! (SLS) Although this is only about 42 percent of the world's 6,901 known languages, these languages represent the primary vehicle of communication for about 80 percent (5.8 billion) of the estimated 7.26 billion people worldwide. Several languages were first committed to writing solely to transmit Scripture, including Gothic, Armenian, and Georgian. (SLS; USWPC) Perhaps more astounding was the work of the monk brothers, Cyril and Methodius, to create the Cyrillic alphabet in the ninth century AD; as a result, they extended the gospel message to the empire of the Moravians. This alphabet provided the basis for contemporary languages such as Russian, Ukrainian, Serbo-Croatian, and Bulgarian. (Geisler and Nix, GIB, 519–522)

In addition to the printed copies of biblical literature, the Internet and digital media expose even more people to the Bible. Two examples of these are directly downloadable digital texts and audio versions of every book of the Bible. One example of a digital text is YouVersion, a Bible app that has been translated into 799 languages and downloaded over 200 million times at the time of this writing. Another example: *Faith Comes by*

DISTRIBUTION OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Country	Rank	2011 Distribution	2012 Distribution	% Increase
Syria	4	19,000	163,105	758%
Laos	28	7,985	20,743	159%
Iraq	3	28,518	66,175	132%
Egypt	23	2,261,236	2,824,504	25%
India	21	22,790,001	27,220,467	19%
Nigeria	10	7,695,853	8,121,452	5%

Chart information adapted from WWL; SDIPH

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remain. There are no exact numbers because not all the manuscripts have been carefully catalogued.” (Wallace, correspondence to J. McDowell and M. J. Tingblad, June 3, 2016)

C. The New and Old Testament Manuscript Attestations

Influential biblical scholar F. F. Bruce writes: “There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament.” (Bruce, BP, 178)

In the chart “Number of Biblical Manuscripts,” the second and third columns compare

both “old” and “new” dates determined for the earliest manuscript in each language. The two columns at the far right compare the “old” and “new” number of manuscripts estimated to be catalogued for that language. For each language, the data labeled “old” was tabulated in 2012. The columns labeled “new” show the data for each language as of August, 2014—with the exception of the new number of Greek manuscripts which reflects the official number as of January 2017.

This comparison reveals the change, if any, in dating and numbers of manuscripts that have occurred in that two-year interval,

NUMBER OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Language*	Earliest MS (old)	Earliest MS (new)	Number of MSS (old)	Number of MSS (new)
Armenian	AD 887	AD 862	2000+	2000+
Coptic	Late 3rd c. AD	Late 3rd c. AD	Around 975	Around 975
Gothic	5th or 6th c. AD	5th or 6th c. AD	6	6
Ethiopian	10th c. AD	6th c. AD	600+	600+
Total Latin Translations Old Latin Vulgate	N/A 4th c. AD 4th c. AD	N/A 4th c. AD 4th c. AD	50 10,000+	110 10,000+
Syriac	5th c. AD	Late 4th or Early 5th c. AD	350+	350+
Georgian	Late 9th c. AD	5th c. AD	43+	89
Slavic	10th c. AD	10th c. AD	4,000+	4,000+
Total Non-Greek manuscripts				18,130+
Greek	AD 130 (or earlier)	AD 130 (or earlier)	5838	5,856
TOTAL GREEK AND NON-GREEK MANUSCRIPTS				23,986
Biblical Manuscripts, Scrolls, and Translations				
New Testament Greek Manuscripts				5,856
New Testament Early Translations				18,130
Old Testament Scrolls, Codices				42,300**
TOTAL BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCES				66,286

Chart adapted from Cowe, AVNT, 256.

* Many of these languages are not catalogued regularly.

** 25,000 are relatively recent, dated to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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through the discovery of earlier manuscripts in a particular language or by the addition of newly discovered or catalogued manuscripts. Current research continues to change these totals. And we must realize that every day, marvelous new discoveries are being made. That is why the numbers of scroll and manuscript discoveries are out-of-date as soon as you print them. We recognize how astonishingly rapid is the increase of information and even the development of new methods to recover that data from manuscripts that had been thought to be forever illegible.

D. Visualizing the Number of Biblical Manuscripts

1. The New Testament Manuscripts

How high do you think the stack of New Testament manuscripts would be? Think about this: of just the 5,800+ Greek New Testament manuscripts, there are more than 2.6 million pages. Combining both the Old and New Testament, there are more than 66,000 manuscripts and scrolls.

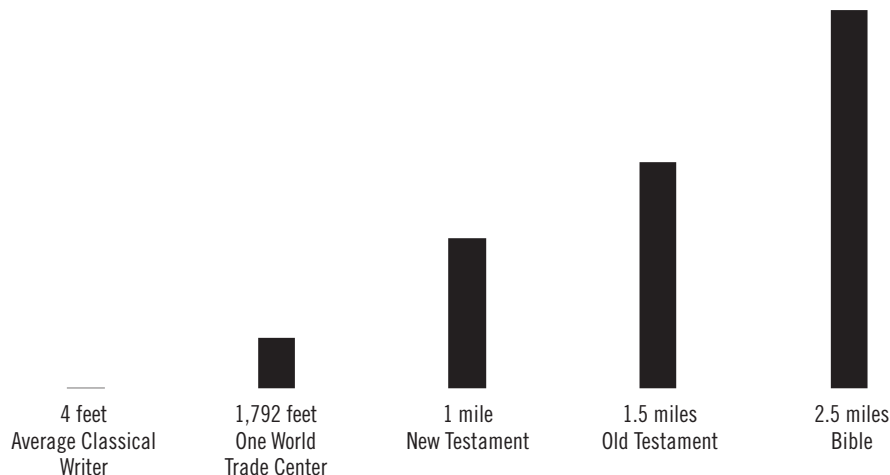
A stack of extant manuscripts for the average classical writer would measure about

four feet high; this just cannot compare to the more than one mile of New Testament manuscripts and two-and-a-half-miles for the entire Bible. (Wallace, lecture at Discover the Evidence, Dec. 6, 2013)

2. The Old Testament Scrolls

We have added Old Testament scrolls into the mix of the total numbers of manuscripts to represent the Bible as a whole and not just the New Testament. If you do not include both the Old Testament and New Testament manuscripts and scrolls when you compare the dates and totals of biblical manuscripts with those of classical literature, then you are comparing apples to oranges. The classical works, such as the *Iliad*, are complete works and need to be compared with the Bible as a complete work, not with just a part of it. In fact, the great proliferation of New Testament manuscript discoveries has been accompanied by additional discoveries of Old Testament manuscripts (sometimes as glued papyrus scrolls or sewn parchment scrolls but also as single sheets and even as small fragments that have been recovered

VISUALIZING THE NUMBER OF BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS



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from phylacteries—the leather cases holding scripture to be tied to the hands or forehead during prayer). The Old Testament manuscripts not only enhance our awareness that many more manuscript copies are likely waiting to be found, but they help to verify the authenticity of New Testament manuscripts that quote them. Further, the scrupulous exactness that Jewish scribes devoted to their copying reinforces our awareness of the tradition in which the New Testament copyists worked—a tradition of precise care for accuracy. (We get a glimpse of that climate of reverence for the word in Acts and in the epistles, for Paul had been trained in rabbinic scholarship, and Luke’s writing also shows a scholarly care for precise detail and exact language.)

In the field of Old Testament apologetics, what has been overlooked in tabulating numbers of Old Testament manuscripts is the usage of scrolls and codices. Many worn-out scrolls were carefully copied for replacement and set aside, protected but unsought, and so never entered catalogs. As seen in the chart “Number of Extant Old Testament Scrolls,” the majority of extant scrolls are not in museums but in ongoing use in synagogues or seminaries, and many are in private collections. Also, codices of Hebrew texts tend to be rarer and written later than those prepared with Greek texts. I (Josh) and my wife own four complete Torah scrolls, one of which is very old and very rare. We also possess three fragments of scrolls. None of these has been recorded or registered. The numbers and dates for the Old Testament scrolls (as well as the numbers of biblical and classical manuscripts and scrolls more broadly) are constantly shifting. For example, nine small Dead Sea Scrolls have recently been rediscovered. They had been deposited in the vaults of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). (NUDSSF) As said before,

it is very difficult to estimate accurately the number of extant scrolls, but Scott Carroll, director and senior research scholar at the Manuscript Research Group, suggests the following totals (correspondence to J. McDowell, November 15, 2013):

NUMBER OF EXTANT OLD TESTAMENT SCROLLS

Source	Number
The Dead Sea Scrolls	300
Green Collection	5,000
Synagogues	20,000
Museums	1,000
Private family collections	5,000
Codices	3,000
Jewish Seminaries	5,000
Individuals	3,000
TOTAL	42,300

3. Old Torah Scrolls, Additional Discoveries, and New Technologies

As with the New Testament manuscripts, the Old Testament manuscripts—especially in scroll form—are being found and identified with earlier dates. In 2013, a Torah scroll created headlines: “In 1889, an Italian librarian’s faulty identification sentenced to archival obscurity an antique Torah scroll that has turned out to be the oldest complete such scroll in existence.” (Cole, CDCW, website) “This week, University of Bologna professor Mauro Perani announced the results of carbon-14 tests authenticating the scroll’s age as roughly 800 years old. . . . The scroll (a sheep-skin document, i.e., parchment) dates to between 1155 and 1225, making it the oldest complete Torah scroll on record. . . . Like all Torah scrolls, this one contains the full text of the five Books of

SUMMARY CHART OF SELECTED SURVIVING MSS OF MAJOR CLASSICAL WORKS

Work	Earliest MS (old)	Earliest MS (new)	Number of MSS (old)	Number of MSS (new)
Homer's Iliad	About 400 BC	About 415 BC	1,800+	1,900+
Herodotus—History	1st c. AD	150–50 BC	109	About 106
Sophocles' Plays	3rd c. BC	3rd c. BC	193	About 226
Plato's Tetralogies	AD 895	3rd c. BC	210	238
Caesar's Gallic Wars	9th c. AD	9th c. AD	251	251
Livy's History of Rome	Early 5th c. AD	4th c. AD	150	About 473
Tacitus's Annals	1st half: AD 850 2nd half: AD 1050	1st half: AD 850 2nd half: AD 1050	33	36
Pliny the Elder's Natural History	One 5th c. AD fragment. Others in 14th and 15th c.	5th c. AD	200	200+
Thucydides' History	3rd c. BC	3rd c. BC	96	188
Demosthenes' Speeches	Fragments from 1st c. BC	1st c. BC, possibly earlier	340	444
TOTAL				4,062+

1. A Caution When Comparing Surviving Biblical and Classical Manuscripts

One needs to be careful in comparing the survival and dating of an abundance of biblical manuscripts with classical works. Yes, we believe that God has superintended the preservation of such an abundance of biblical manuscripts. But, there are good historical reasons for the paucity of classical manuscripts. Carroll comments on the importance of caution here, lest we draw the wrong conclusions:

It is implied that an unspoken reason for the preservation of manuscripts is supernatural over against the loss of non-inspired works, but it is a bit more involved. Most classical works were in a region that could promise preservation on papyrus and were then recopied in Egypt and disseminated (not like the Christian monastic system).

These texts were systematically copied and studied at the library in Alexandria which burned partially in the first century BC, and then the texts were also systematically destroyed by Christians in the fourth century and Muslims in the seventh and eighth centuries. Christians are in part to blame for destroying around 1 million classical scrolls, and the fact that any classical texts survive in large numbers is remarkable. Centuries later, we often use the dearth of evidence [for classical works] to show the superior preservation of the Bible.

Early classical works were written primarily on papyrus, a highly perishable medium, as was the scroll format. Christians quickly transitioned to the codex [book format] and to parchment and vellum, which were much more durable and suitable for the codex and thus, these factors hastened the decline of classical works.

We also keep in mind that classical works were copied, only if by chance, by monks after the

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that their quotations were often loose (although in the case of some church fathers they were very accurate), but they do at least reproduce the substantial content of the original text. Further, their quotations are so numerous and widespread that at least an outline of the New Testament and many of its crucial details could be reconstructed from their writings if we had no manuscripts of the text itself.

2. Early Citations of the New Testament by the Church Fathers

Although quotations of Scripture among the church fathers up through the thirteenth century number well over one million, of particular significance are the quotations that date prior to (roughly) AD 325.

Porter and Pitts observe:

Quotations of the NT from early church fathers . . . play an important role in reconstructing the NT text in that they give us insight into what text types were available and in use when and where they wrote. In some cases, this makes the church fathers a more certain source than Greek manuscripts since the date and geographical location of the

church fathers are usually easy to ascertain. (Porter and Pitts, FNTTC, 69)

However, biblical scholar Joseph Angus offers these cautions concerning the early patristic writings:

- Quotes are sometimes inaccurate.
- Some copyists were prone to mistakes or made intentional alterations. (Angus, BH, 56)

Here is a selection of important early witnesses to the New Testament manuscripts among the church fathers:

a. *Clement of Rome (AD 95)*

Origen, in *De Principis*, II.3, calls Clement a disciple of the apostles. (Anderson, BWG, 28) Tertullian, in *Against Heresies*, chapter 23, writes that Peter appointed Clement. Irenaeus adds in his own *Against Heresies*, III.3, that Clement “had the preaching of the Apostles still echoing in his ears and their doctrine in front of his eyes.” Clement quotes from the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, 1 Corinthians, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 Peter.

SCRIPTURE CITATIONS FROM SELECTED EARLY CHURCH FATHERS

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3 (266 allusions)	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex.)	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,496
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,268	211	1,592	88	27	5,186
Grand Totals	19,468	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,389

Chart's content adapted from Geisler and Nix, FGTU, 138

KNOWN BIBLICAL SCROLLS

Book	Qumran	Other	Total
Deuteronomy	39	3	42
Psalms	39	3	42
Genesis	30	4	34
Exodus	30	1	31
Isaiah	22	1	23
Leviticus	22	2	24
Numbers	15	3	18
Daniel	11	0	11
12 Minor Prophets	13	2	15
Jeremiah	9	0	9
Ezekiel	6	0	6
1 and 2 Samuel	7	0	7
Job	6	0	6
Ruth	5	0	5
Song of Songs	4	0	4
Lamentations	4	0	4
Judges	5	0	5
1 and 2 Kings	5	0	5
Joshua	3	0	3
Proverbs	3	0	3
Ecclesiastes	2	0	2
Nehemiah	2	0	2
1 and 2 Chronicles	1	0	1
Ezra	1	0	1
Esther	0	0	0
(Total)	284	19	303
Adjusted Total	252	18	270
"On the Market"	48	0	48
Grand Total	300	18	318

Chart adapted from Flint, DSS, 75.

Flint developed a chart that lists the biblical scrolls (see "Known Biblical Scrolls"). He further clarifies that "the 270 total has been adjusted down from 303, since 11 scrolls

from Qumran and one from Muraba'at [*sic*] preserve parts of more than one book in 33 cases. These can only be counted once." (Flint, DSS 74) Aside from biblical manuscripts, other types of manuscripts found at the Judean Desert sites include documents concerning the life of the community (e.g., *The Community Rule*), commentaries on biblical books (e.g., *Habakkuk Peshar*), works contained in the Apocrypha (e.g., *Tobit*) and Pseudepigrapha (e.g., *Assumption of Moses*), and other sectarian writings (e.g., *The War Scrolls*). A closer examination of each site highlights the richness of this historical find:

1. *Qumran*. Located on the shores of the Dead Sea, and considered by most scholars to be the dwelling of a religious sectarian community known as the Essenes (possibly meaning "doers of the Torah"), the caves at Qumran provide the majority of the manuscripts found in the Judean Desert. (See VanderKam, DSS, 101–104) Among the eleven caves at Qumran, approximately 1,050 manuscripts were discovered, all of which were written in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. Roughly three hundred of those are classified as biblical manuscripts, and constitute our earliest witness to the biblical text. (Wegner, SGTC, 151–153)

- *Cave 1*. The most outstanding of all the manuscripts, due to its near complete preservation, is the *Great Isaiah Scroll* (1QIsa^a), which was found in Cave 1. Fragments of other biblical works found in Cave 1 include Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Judges, Samuel, Ezekiel, Psalms, and Daniel. Cave 1 also yielded many nonbiblical fragments such as *Jubilees*, *A Lamech Apocalypse*, *A Testament of Levi*, *Words of*

JESUS IS DECLARED TO BE JEHOVAH GOD

Said of Jehovah	Mutual Title or Act	Said of Jesus
Gen. 1:1–3; Ps. 102:25; Isa. 44:24	Creator	John 1:3; Heb. 1:2—3:10
Isa. 45:15, 21, 22; 43:11	Savior	John 4:42
Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6	Raising the Dead	John 5:28, 29; 10:27, 28
Ps. 62:12; Joel 3:12	Judge	Matt. 25:31–46; John 5:22, 23
Isa. 60:19, 20	Light	John 8:12
Ex. 3:14; Deut. 32:39; Isa. 43:10	I Am	John 8:24, 28, 58; 18:5–8
Ps. 23:1	Shepherd	John 10:11
Isa. 42:8; cf. 48:11	Glory of God	John 17:1, 5
Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12	First and Last	Rev. 1:7–8, 17–18; 2:8; 22:12–13
Hos. 13:14	Redeemer	Rev. 5:9
Isa. 62:5; Hos. 2:16	Bridegroom	Rev. 21:2, cf. Matt. 25:1ff.
Ps. 18:2	Rock	1 Cor. 10:4
Ex. 34:6, 7; Jer. 31:34	Forgiver of Sins	Mark 2:7, 10; Acts 5:31
Ps. 97:7; 148:2	Worshiped by Angels	Heb. 1:6
Joel 2:32; throughout O. T.	Addressed in Prayer	Acts 7:59, 60; Rom. 10:12, 13
Ps. 148:5	Creator of Angels	Col. 1:16
Isa. 45:23	Confessed as Lord (Jehovah)	Phil. 2:9–11

This chart originally appeared in Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 148.

III. Jesus' Indirect Claims to Deity

In addition to the direct claims to deity outlined above, Jesus did and said many other things that implied his divinity. In other words, even when he did not overtly declare that he was God, his actions and words were often consistent only with his being God. Listed below are several examples of his indirect claims to deity.

A. Jesus Forgave Sins

And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak

like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" — Mark 2:5–7 ESV

To the Jewish scribes steeped in the law of God, the idea that a man could forgive sins committed against God was inconceivable. Forgiveness, in that sense, was a prerogative of God alone. Stott writes, "We may forgive the injuries which others do to us; but the sins we commit against God only God himself can forgive." (Stott, BC, 29)

Some of Jesus' critics questioned whether Jesus really had the divine authority to forgive sins. He knew his audience had doubts about this, so he demonstrated his authority to them:

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Others agree that the claims Jesus made as to his identity are central to the Person that he was and is. Famed biblical scholar F. J. A. Hort points out that whatever we think about Jesus, we cannot divorce his identity from his words, which “were so completely parts and utterances of Himself, that they had no meaning as abstract statements. . . . Take away Himself as the primary (though not the ultimate) subject of every statement, and they all fall to pieces.” (Hort, WTL, 207)

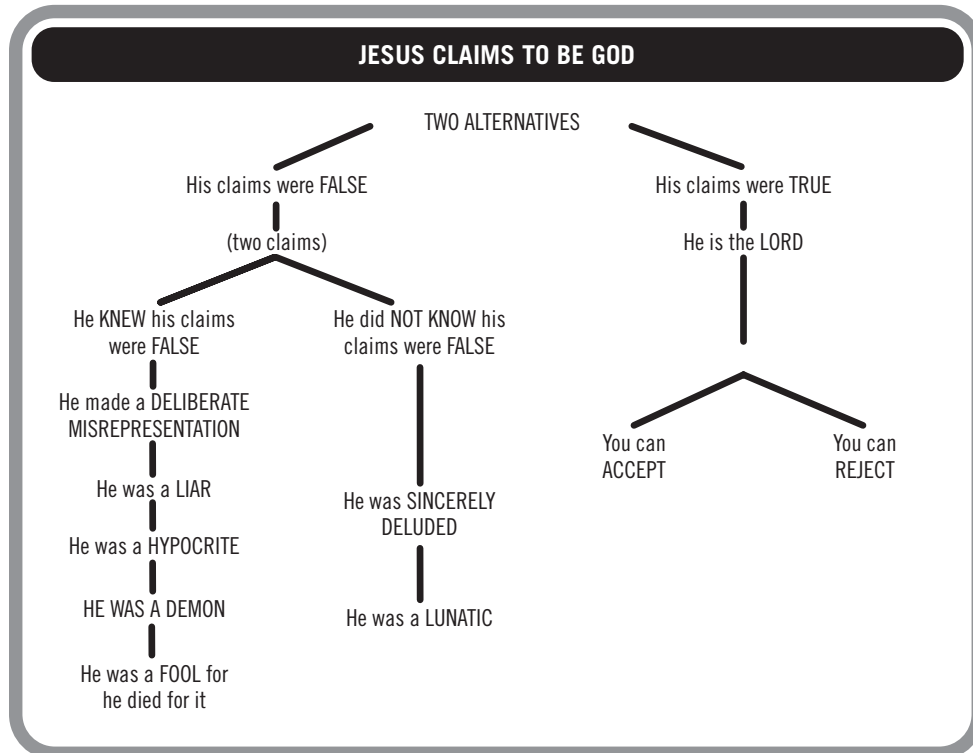
Kenneth Scott Latourette, the late great historian of Christianity at Yale University, echoes Hort’s observation when he states: “It is not his teachings which make Jesus so remarkable, although these would be enough to give him distinction. It is a combination of the teachings with the man himself. The two cannot be separated.” (Latourette, HC, 44) He adds, “It must be obvious to any

thoughtful reader of the Gospel records that Jesus regarded himself and his message as inseparable. He was a great teacher, but He was more. His teachings about the kingdom of God, about human conduct, and about God were important, but they could not be divorced from him without, from his standpoint, being vitiated.” (Latourette, HC, 48)

III. Three Alternatives

Some people believe Jesus is God because they believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, which teaches that Jesus is God. While we, too, believe the Bible is the wholly inspired Word of God, we do not think one *needs* to hold that belief in order to conclude that Jesus is God.

If, as we have seen, the New Testament books are historically accurate and



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And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel'"
— (Matt. 2:4–6 esv; cf. Mic. 5:2).

3. The Levitical Feasts Foreshadow the Work and Person of Christ

The Feast	The Fulfillment in Christ
Passover (April)	Death of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7)
Unleavened Bread (April)	Holy Walk (1 Cor. 5:8)
First Fruits (April)	Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:23)
Pentecost (June)	Outpouring of Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:4)
Trumpets (September)	Israel's Regathering (Matt. 24:31)
Atonement (September)	Cleansing by Christ (Rom. 11:26)
Tabernacles (September)	Establishing the Messianic Kingdom and the Ingathering of the Nations (Zech. 13:1; 14:16–18)

4. Significance of Predictive Prophecy

The Old Testament contains numerous prophecies, types, and foreshadowings that were fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. One such coincidence may not individually compel one to accept the Messianic credentials of Jesus. However, taken together, the numerous fulfillments of Old Testament Scripture form a tapestry, a cumulative case, for the divine inspiration of Scripture and for the Messianic credentials of Jesus.

III. Objections and Answers Regarding Predictive Prophecy

Those who object to the claim that numerous passages in the Old Testament foreshadow events in the life of Jesus advance their counterclaims by arguing that the New Testament writers purposefully shaped their material to match passages in the Old Testament, or that they stretched the meanings of obscure references, or that they took those references out of context by adopting a word or detail and inserting it into an event in the gospel. As we consider answers to these objections, it is worth remembering the account of Jesus' conversation with those who were walking to the village of Emmaus just after the resurrection, for Jesus referred to "all that the prophets have spoken" and "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:25, 27)

A. Objection #1

The gospel authors deliberately crafted their biographies of Jesus so as to make Jesus appear to fulfill the Old Testament Scriptures.

Answer: There are several reasons to believe that the gospel authors reported Jesus' life and words accurately. They wrote the truth even at risk of persecution, and they did not play to what their audience might expect.

- At the time the Gospels were written, the Christian church was undergoing considerable persecution. Many Christians were martyred for their faith in excruciating and inhumane ways, such as by crucifixion, being burned alive, or being fed to wild animals. Since the gospel writers had nothing obvious to gain from inventing a new religion, and everything to lose, this suggests they

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differed from the prevailing view in that (1) it happened in history, not at the end of history, and (2) it happened to one individual, not to the entire human race. Given this, the early church could not have derived their idea of Jesus' singular resurrection in history from prevailing Jewish ideas. Thus if Jesus' followers (or others) had only visionary or apparitional experiences of Jesus, these would not have supported the claim that he was alive. . . . They could at best claim that Jesus' disembodied spirit was making various appearances on earth. But the New Testament nowhere makes this claim, since it emphasizes the physical resurrection of Jesus and the empty tomb. (Groothuis, CA, 547)

N. T. Wright agrees with and echoes Groothuis's above statement:

[If] a first-century Jew said that someone had been "raised from the dead," the one thing they did *not* mean was that such a person had gone to a state of disembodied bliss, there either to

rest forever or to wait until the great day of reembodiment. (Wright, CORJ, website)

Both Groothuis and Wright are getting at the same point. If Jesus was indeed resurrected, it then was a physical Jesus that the disciples saw and interacted with in some physical way. It was radically different from the disembodied continuation after death that appears in other ancient documents known in the Greek and Roman world that the New Testament writers (especially Paul and Luke) faced. Examples of that disembodied view of "immortality" appear in Plato, Homer, and Virgil, among others. But the New Testament insists in a bold and historically reliable way upon a resurrection that is bodily. He was not just a spirit, and the term "resurrection" is not just a figure of speech.

Norman Geisler offers a very handy chart to help analyze both the appearances and the physical nature of Jesus and his interactions with his disciples (Geisler, REF, 655)

Person or Group with Scripture Reference	Saw	Heard	Touched	Other Evidence
Mary Magdalene [John 20:10–18]	X	X	X	empty tomb
Mary with women [Matthew 28:1–10]	X	X	X	empty tomb
Peter [1 Corinthians 15:5]	X	X		empty tomb, clothes
Two disciples [Luke 24:13–35]	X	X		ate with him*
Ten disciples [Luke 24:36–49; John 20:19–23]	X	X	X**	ate food
Eleven disciples [John 20:24–31]	X	X	X**	saw wounds
Seven disciples [John 21]	X	X		ate food*
All disciples—commissioning [Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:14–18]	X	X		
500 brethren [1 Corinthians 15:6]	X	X		
James [1 Corinthians 15:7]	X	X		
All apostles—Ascension [Acts 1:4–8]	X	X		ate food
Paul [Acts 9:1–9; 1 Corinthians 15:8]	X	X		

* Implied

** Offered himself to be touched

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to the young virgin Mary that she will have a child despite not having consummated her marriage. Luke then narrates Mary’s visit to see Elizabeth and John’s birth. Next, he tells about Joseph taking Mary to Bethlehem, where she gave birth to Jesus, and about the shepherds coming to see the child. They then went to Jerusalem, where Jesus was circumcised, and where a prophet named Simeon and a prophetess named Anna recognized the child as the Messiah. The family went home to Nazareth but returned to Jerusalem every Passover; when Jesus was twelve, he stayed behind while his parents left, talking to the teachers in the temple. After his account of John’s baptism of Jesus when they were both adults, Luke gives a very different genealogy, tracing Jesus’ ancestry backward from Joseph to Adam (see the table “Differences Between Matthew’s and Luke’s Infancy Narratives”).

As one can see by comparing these outlines of the two narratives, they do not have a single passage or unit of material in common. The differences are especially noteworthy

because elsewhere the gospels of Matthew and Luke do have a considerable amount of material in common. For example, both give very similar (though not identical) accounts of Jesus’ baptism by John (Matt. 3:1–17; Luke 3:3–9, 15–17, 21, 22) and of Jesus’ three temptations by the devil after fasting in the wilderness for forty days (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13).

The complete lack of parallel units of material in the infancy narratives makes it all but certain that neither gospel writer drew on the other’s narrative in composing his own. As one somewhat skeptical scholar puts it: “The opinion favored by most scholars is that the two infancy accounts are independent of each other.” (Robinson, MNS, 111)*

At this point, one might suppose that Matthew and Luke independently made up their stories. However, besides considering the differences between the two accounts, we must also consider their similarities. Biblical scholars, including some who are skeptical about the virgin birth or at least

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MATTHEW’S AND LUKE’S INFANCY NARRATIVES

Matthew 1–2	Luke 1–2
Genealogy of forty-two generations from Abraham to Joseph (1:1–17)	Gabriel told Zechariah and Mary that they would each have a son (1:5–38)
Mary found with child; Joseph told by angel in a dream to take her as his wife (1:18–25)	Mary visited Elizabeth and returned home, after which Elizabeth had her son John (1:39–80)
Magi visited the child in Bethlehem after first speaking with Herod (2:1–12)	Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born and visited by shepherds (2:1–20)
Joseph, warned in a dream, took Mary and Jesus to Egypt (2:13–15)	Jesus was circumcised and seen by Simeon and Anna; later they went home to Nazareth (2:21–40)
Herod had male babies in Bethlehem two years and younger killed (2:16–18)	When Jesus was twelve, he stayed behind in Jerusalem talking in the temple (2:41–52)
After Herod died, Joseph took his family back to Israel, and they lived in Nazareth (2:19–23)	Genealogy of about seventy generations from Joseph back to Adam (3:23–38)

* Robinson, a British biblical scholar, is inclined to be skeptical about the historicity of the accounts “except perhaps in respect of the details that they share” (p. 112).

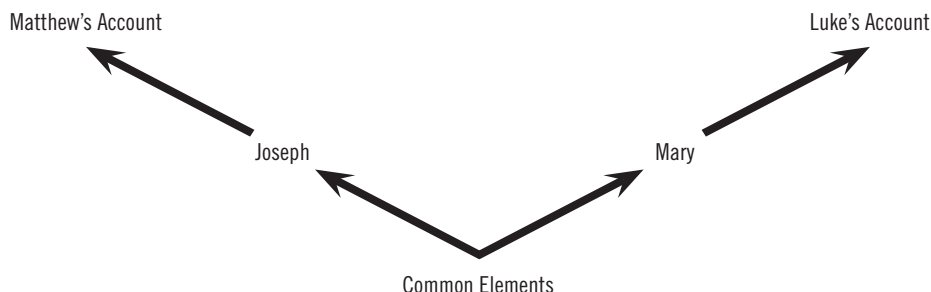
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the two gospels have in common originated earlier than either of the gospels. In short, *the idea that Jesus was conceived of a virgin predated both Matthew and Luke*. Moreover, this idea was understood in the context of a number of specific details about how this came about: that his mother Mary became pregnant with Jesus when she was betrothed to Joseph but had not yet begun living with him as his wife; that Joseph took Mary as his wife despite not being her child's biological father; that Jesus was born in Bethlehem but raised in Nazareth; and so forth. Mark Roberts, a popular author, pastor, and gospel scholar, explains the implications this way:

Contrary to what is sometimes stated by hyper-critical scholars, *you can tell the whole Christmas story with all the key facts by using only what is common to both Matthew and Luke*. This means that we have two, relatively early, independent accounts of the birth of Jesus that confirm each other's reliability. They agree on the major characters, the major timing, the major places, and the major miracles of the Christmas story. Both accounts were written within about fifty years of Jesus's death, maybe quite a bit less. And both, it is most likely, utilized older sources, written and oral, in their writing. Thus we have good reason to believe that Matthew and Luke were telling the story of what really happened in

the birth of Jesus, at least in the main flow of their narratives. It's therefore highly unlikely that either gospel writer made up the main elements of the story, even if you believe that they were creative about the details. (Roberts, BJ, website, emphasis in original)

What were those different sources from which Matthew and Luke drew their infancy narratives? The authors don't tell us outright, but in comparing the differences in the accounts we find a telltale clue. Leaving aside the genealogies, Matthew's infancy narrative (Matt. 1:18–2:23) mentions Joseph by name six times and Mary only three times, whereas Luke mentions Joseph by name three times and Mary *twelve* times. (In addition, both Matthew and Luke refer to Mary simply as Jesus' "mother" four times.) If we read the two narratives with these contrasting numbers in view, we can see that *Matthew's account is told from Joseph's point of view, whereas Luke's account is told from Mary's point of view*. This is why Matthew tells about the angel appearing in Joseph's dreams and about Joseph taking the family to Egypt and then to Nazareth, while Luke tells about Mary's relatives Elizabeth and Zechariah, about Mary's experience of seeing the angel Gabriel, and about events in Jesus' childhood that made a strong impression on Mary (Jesus' circumcision and his temple visit at age twelve).



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scholars have begun to turn their attention to these accounts and their relationship to the OT. Currid provides a brief summary background on the various Egyptian creation accounts:

There are a variety of accounts of how Re created the other gods who are personified in the various parts of creation. One account pictures him squatting on a primeval hillock, pondering and inventing names for various parts of his own body. As he named each part, a new god sprang into existence. Another legend portrays Re as violently expelling other gods from his own body, possibly by sneezing or spitting. A third myth describes him creating the gods Shu and

Tefnut by an act of masturbation. These gods in turn gave birth to other gods. Re, however, is not the only god portrayed as creator in ancient Egypt. For example, the Memphite Theology depicts Ptah as a potter creating the universe. In another text, the “Great Hymn to Khnum,” the god Khnum is pictured as forming everything—man, gods, land animals, fish, and birds—on his potter’s wheel. (Currid, AG, 38–39)

Because ancient Egypt produced multiple creation accounts, we need to take pieces from each individual story to understand their overall depiction of creation. When we put these various pieces of the Egyptian creation stories

PARALLELS BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND BIBLICAL CREATION ACCOUNTS

Egyptian Sources	Genesis 1:1—2:3
Watery, unlimited, darkness, imperceptibility	The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters (1:2)
Atum (or Ptah) speaks creation into existence	God creates by divine command (1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 24)
Light created before the sun is in place	Light created before the sun is in place
The gods create by separating the waters to create an atmosphere	God creates by separating the waters to create an atmosphere (1:6, 7)
Initially in creation, the first little hillock of land (primordial mound) rises out of the water	God creates by separating the land from the waters (1:9)
Creation of vegetation	God creates plants (1:11, 12)
The sun rises on the first day	God creates the sun (day four) after the light (day one) (1:14–18)
The gods create plants, fish, birds, and animal life	God creates fish, birds, and animal life (1:20–25)
The gods create man in their image, formed out of clay	God creates mankind in his image (1:26–28)
Ptah rests after completing his work of creation (Memphite Theology)	After completing creation, God rests (2:1–3)
Out of unlimited, imperceptible, dark waters, the god creates himself (including light), atmosphere, land, and luminaries in the heavens (the sun rises), followed by plants, creatures, and man; then he rests	Out of desolate, empty, dark waters, God creates light, atmosphere, land, plants, the luminaries in the heavens, creatures, and man; then he rests (1:2—2:3)
The creator god claims sovereign rule of state	God as creator claims sovereignty over all creation and so all nations (1:2—2:3)

Adapted from Miller and Soden, IB, 78.

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humans. . . . This functional nuance of “good” in the biblical text is confirmed by a comparison of what is not good—that is, it is not good for man to be alone (2:18). (Walton, ANET, 187)

The OT not only differs from its ANE counterparts in the status of mankind in creation but also in its portrayal of the human progenitors of the race, as Walton points out:

The ancient Near East texts typically speak of human origins in collective terms (polygenesis). There is no indication of an original human pair that became progenitors of the entire human race (monogenesis). This is one of the distinctives of the Genesis account. (Walton, ANET, 187)

This distinctive emphasizes the value of persons, reinforcing the biblical theme of

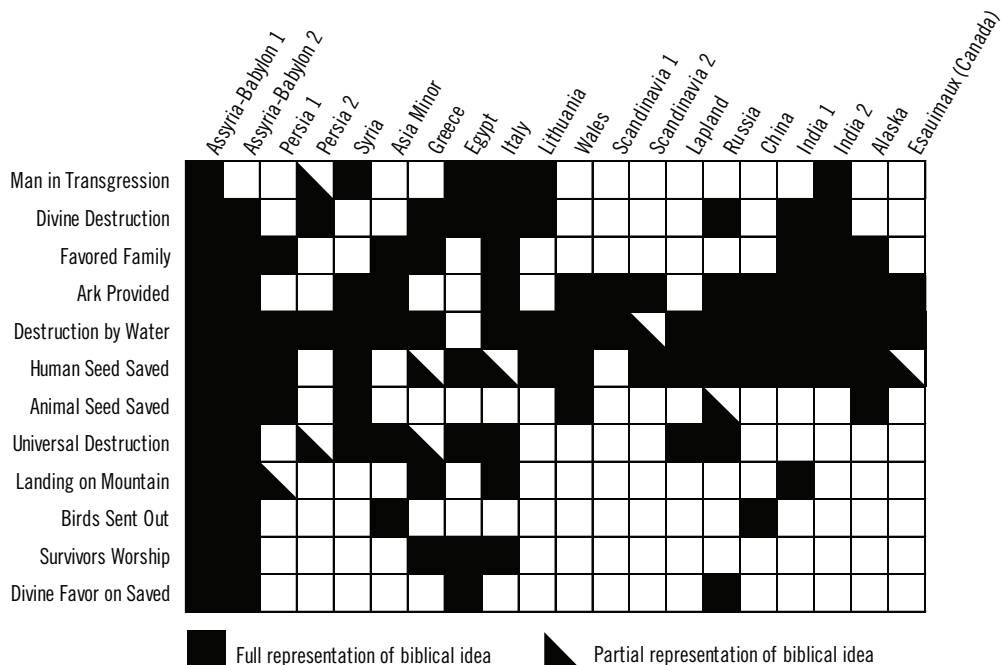
God’s love for his creatures; instead of the ANE collective anonymity, the OT presents a complementary pair, male and female, in a relationship of individual persons.

6. A Comparison of the Creator

Without a doubt the biggest difference between the OT and ANE literature is the nature of the creator. Currid compares God and the deities of the ANE as they directly relate to creation:

The creation account of Genesis . . . presents God as all-powerful, incomparable, and sovereign. He owes nothing to the agency of another. In addition, creation did not occur as the result of a contest or a struggle between gods, as it did in Mesopotamian myths. In the Enuma Elish myth, creation was a mere consequence of a war aimed at determining

PRINCIPLE FEATURES OF THE BIBLICAL RECORD



who would be the main god. In Genesis 1–2, this is a question not even asked or worthy of consideration because there exists only one God, and he is all powerful. (Currid, AG, 41)

The deity expresses his will, and it comes to be—so different from ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies in which creation is always a form of procreation, the combination of male and female principles. (Hayes, IB, 34)

7. A Final Thought on Cosmogony

In highlighting the difference of the OT from the cosmogony of the ancient Near East, Christine Hayes, the Robert F. and Patricia Ross Weis Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, states that the first chapter of Genesis

reflects the view that there is one supreme god who is creator and sovereign of the world. He simply exists. He appears to be incorporeal, and the realm of nature is subservient to him. He has no life story (mythology), and his will is absolute. This god creates through the simple expression of his will. “Elohim said, ‘let there be light’ and there was light” (Gen 1:3).

C. Flood Accounts

This section compares the OT story of the Flood with the various flood accounts of the ANE.

1. Similarities in the Flood Accounts

Numerous accounts of flood stories exist within the ancient Near East and throughout the rest of the world. Anyone who makes an effort to study these texts finds parallels in the details, structure, and flow of these stories, as seen in the chart “A Comparison of the Epic of Gilgamesh and the OT.” (adapted from Nelson, DST, Fig. 38)

PRINCIPLE FEATURES OF THE BIBLICAL RECORD (CONTINUED)

Thiinkut 1 (Canada)	Thiinkut 2 (Canada)	Cree (Canada)	Cherokee (USA)	Mandan (USA)	Lenni Lenape (USA)	Takoe (USA)	Papagos (Mexico)	Pimas (Mexico)	Toltecs (Mexico)	Aztecs (Mexico)	Wichooan (Mexico)	Nicaragua	Peru	Brazil	Leward Islands	Fiji Islands 1	Fiji Islands 2	Andaman Island	Hawaii	Sumatra	
																					Man in Transgression
																					Divine Destruction
																					Favored Family
																					Ark Provided
																					Destruction by Water
																					Human Seed Saved
																					Animal Seed Saved
																					Universal Destruction
																					Landing on Mountain
																					Birds Sent Out
																					Survivors Worship
																					Divine Favor on Saved



Full representation of biblical idea



Partial representation of biblical idea

A COMPARISON OF THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH AND THE OT

Epic of Gilgamesh	Genesis
Divine warning of doom (lines 20–26)	Divine warning of doom (6:12, 13)
Command to build ship (lines 24–31)	Command to build ark (6:14–16)
Hero constructs ship (lines 54–76)	Noah builds ark (6:22)
Utnapishtim loads ark, including his relations and animals (lines 80–85)	Noah loads ark, including his family and animals (7:1–5)
The gods send torrential rains (lines 90–128)	Yahweh sends torrential rains (6:17; 7:1–12)
The flood destroys humanity (line 133)	The Flood destroys humanity (7:21, 22)
The flood subsides (lines 129–132)	The Flood abates (8:1–3)
The ship lands on Mount Nisir (lines 140–144)	The ark settles on Mount Ararat (8:4)
Utnapishtim sends forth birds (lines 146–154)	Noah sends forth birds (8:6–12)
Sacrifice to the gods (lines 155–161)	Sacrifice to Yahweh (8:20–22)
Deities bless hero (line 194)	Yahweh blesses Noah (9:1)

Adapted from Currid, AG, 55.

This chart shows that the Epic of Gilgamesh holds one of the largest numbers of flood details that are the same or similar to those in the Genesis account.

George Smith, who discovered the Epic of Gilgamesh tablets in 1872, says this: “On reviewing the evidence it is apparent that the events of the flood narrated in the Bible and the Inscription are the same, and occur in the same order.” (Smith, TSBA, 232) The similarities of the texts are also observed by Currid:

Not only are many of the details parallel, but the structure and flow of the stories are the same. Such overwhelming similitude cannot be explained as a result of mere chance or simultaneous invention. . . . How do we account for the many similarities between the biblical narrative of the flood and the other ancient Near Eastern stories? Clearly there is a relationship, but the question is one of defining the nature of that connection. (Currid, AG, 55)

2. Do These Similarities Suggest a Common Source?

There are three general positions OT scholars adopt to explain the similarities in flood accounts.

a. *Common Origin*

As noted by Peter Enns in his book *Inspiration and Incarnation*, it seems entirely possible that the flood stories may simply have a common origin:

As with Enuma Elish, one should not conclude that the biblical account is directly dependent on these flood stories. Still, the obvious similarities between them indicate a connection on some level. Perhaps one borrowed from the other; or perhaps all of the stories have older precursors. The second option is quite possible, since, as mentioned above, there exists a Sumerian flood story that is considered older than either the Akkadian or biblical versions. (Enns, II, 29)

CHAPTER 18

THE HISTORICITY OF THE PATRIARCHS

OVERVIEW

I. Introduction: The Problem of the Patriarchs The Problem of the Patriarchs Explained Changing Views on the Historicity of the Patriarchs	III. The Evidence for the Patriarchs Nomadic and Settled Civilizations Laws and Covenant Customs Western Semitic Name Types Archaeology Alleged Anachronisms in the Patriarchal Narratives
II. Investigating the Patriarchal Narratives Developing a Historical Framework The Ancient World of the Patriarchs	IV. Conclusion

TIMELINE

Early Bronze Age	Middle Bronze Age	Late Bronze Age	Iron Age I	Iron Age II
3000–2100 BC	2100–1550 BC	1550–1200 BC	1200–650 BC	650–150 BC

I. Introduction: The Problem of the Patriarchs

Many current Old Testament scholars would say that the stories regarding the patriarchs found in Genesis do not record accurate history. They reach this conclusion in part because up to this point no direct archaeological or extrabiblical evidence has

been discovered to prove absolutely that the patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, actually existed. Yet even without the walled settlements that usually draw the attention of archaeology, the biblical record of the patriarchs’ nomadic life can be confidently investigated and compared with what is known of customs and artifacts from their historical era.

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for Ai. David Livingston has excavated the site at Khirbet Nisya, which he proposes is a more viable alternative, while Bryant Wood and Scott Stripling have proposed the site at Khirbet el-Maqatir as a better match.

The chart below shows the geographical and archaeological comparisons of et-Tell and Khirbet el-Maqatir and how they align with the biblical references in Joshua. It is important to note that identification of Ai depends in part on the identification and location of

the city of Bethel. Albright identifies Bethel as the site at Beitin, while Wood and Stripling identify Beitin as the city of Beth-aven, with Bethel actually located at el-Bira. Based upon their analysis, Wood and Stripling point out that Khirbet el-Maqatir is a much better match for the biblical description of Ai.

In addition to being a good match geographically, archeological evidence at Khirbet el-Maqatir also supports the possibility that this is the site of the city of Ai.

Biblical Reference	et-Tell	Khirbet el-Maqatir
	William Albright proposed et-Tell in 1924 and it is the currently accepted site for Ai.	Bryant Wood and Scott Stripling proposed this alternative in 2008.
Adjacent to Beth-aven (Josh. 7:2)	Several nearby sites have been proposed as Beth-aven, but none has Late Bronze Age occupation.	Site is 1.5 km from Beitin/Beth-aven and separated by a narrow valley. The sites are visible to each other.
East of Bethel (Josh. 7:2)	The site is 2.4 km southeast of Beitin/Bethel and 5 km northeast of el-Bira.	Site is 3.5 km northeast of el-Bira/Bethel.
An ambush site between Bethel and Ai (Josh. 8:9, 12)	There is a small hill 0.7 km northwest of et-Tell that could hide a small force, but would still be visible from Beitin/Bethel.	The Wadi Sheban Valley is a very deep valley running between the sites and could easily hide a large ambush force.
A militarily significant hill north of Ai (Josh. 8:11)	The hill to the northwest could provide a command post for the attack.	Jebel Abu Ammar is 1.5 km north and the highest hill in the region, providing a strategic view of the surrounding area.
A shallow valley north of Ai (Josh. 8:13, 14)	The valley Wadi el-Gayeh to the north is deep and narrow and does not match the biblical description or purpose.	Here the valley Wadi Gayeh is shallow and easily visible from the site.
Smaller than Gibeon (Josh. 10:2)	At 27 acres, et-Tell is more than twice the size of Gibeon.	The fortress from the conquest period is approximately three acres in size.
Occupation at the time of the conquest	Unoccupied during the conquest time period	Abundant amounts of pottery from the fifteenth century BC have been found at the site.
Fortified at the time of the conquest (Josh. 7:5; 8:29)	Unoccupied during the conquest time period	A small Late Bronze Age fortress with 4m thick walls has been uncovered at the site.
Gate on the north side of the site (Josh. 8:11)	No construction during the conquest time period	The gate of the Late Bronze Age fortress is on the north side.
Destroyed by fire at the time of the conquest (Josh. 8:19, 28)	Unoccupied during the conquest time period	Evidence of destruction by fire at the site including ash, refired pottery, burned building stones, and calcined bedrock.
Left in ruins after 1400 BCE (Josh. 8:28)	Unoccupied during the conquest time period	While parts of the site were robbed out to build later structures, some of the fortress ruins remain today.

A TWOFOLD STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH

Part 1	Part 2
A. 1–5 Judgment and restoration	A. 34–35 Desolation and restoration
B. 6–8 Biographical/historical and oracles	B. 36–39 Historical/biographical accounts
C. 9–12 Words of blessing and judgment	C. 40–45 Words of blessing and judgment
D. 13–23 Oracles on foreign nations (and one on Jerusalem)	D. 46–48 Oracles on foreign nations (and on Babylon)
E. 24–27 Destruction, restoration, deliverance	E. 49–55 Restoration, destruction, deliverance
F. 28–31 Social and ethical justice	F. 56–59 Social and ethical justice
G. 32–33 Restoration of the nation	G. 60–66 Restoration of the nation

Adapted from Kitchen, OROT, 379.

OROT, 379; see chart “A Twofold Structure of Isaiah”)

Allis’s final argument is that the historical record found within the New Testament gives no indication or acknowledgment of multiple authors within Isaiah:

Isaiah is quoted *by name* about twenty times, which is more often than all the other “writing prophets” taken together. Furthermore, in those books where he is so quoted most frequently, citations are made from both parts of the book. Matthew quotes Isaiah by name six times, three times from the first part and three from the second. Paul in Romans quotes Isaiah five times by name, and from both parts of the book. . . . Such evidence indicates with sufficient clearness that none of the New Testament writers “dreamt” that the name Isaiah was of doubtful or ambiguous meaning. (Allis, UI, 42, emphasis in original)

Taken together, Allis’s evidences cannot be easily dismissed. For any nonbiblical text an ascription, manuscript evidence, and book citation would likely be considered as significant evidence in favor of there being one author. If so, shouldn’t the same apply to Isaiah?

A. The Consequences of Dividing Isaiah

Allis’s arguments did not, however, prevent critical scholars and even some conservative scholars from rejecting them as incompatible with evidence provided by higher criticism. Seitz comments on the traditional view of Isaiah: “Once critical judgment was able to operate with principles external to the literature itself, defense of the older view began to look strained, idiosyncratic, and suspiciously defensive.” (Seitz, OI, 17)

Sparks believes, regarding higher criticism, that “the critical consensus on the Bible is essentially correct and reasonably justified.” (Sparks, GWHW, 76) This blanket acceptance of higher criticism leads Sparks to conclude:

Evangelical arguments against biblical criticism vary widely in quality, ranging from simple and unsophisticated critiques that seem to hang in epistemological thin air, to more complex and nuanced critiques that should be taken more seriously. Nevertheless, in the end, I do not believe that any of these arguments resolve the essential conflict between biblical criticism and traditional readings of Scripture. So, while there is much to be valued in these conservative theological critiques of biblical

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literally and figuratively); (2) that a prophet would not reuse, allude to, or elaborate upon his own (earlier) oracles (i.e., that any such action must be the work of another); and (3) that a prophet would not proclaim anything that was not clearly relevant and perspicuous for his contemporaries (i.e., that any such texts must be dated to a later date when they would be pertinent and clear). Furthermore, since the prophets are uniformly presented in the Bible as divine spokespersons, one is, in effect, presupposing what God could or would communicate to a particular prophet in a particular era. (Schultz, IICS, 256)

C. Recent Evidences of Single Authorship

Recent conservative scholarship has worked to demonstrate the faulty assumptions underlying many of the ideas that drove critics such as Driver and Torrey to

assume only a later author could have written particular sections of Isaiah. Several scholars point to the structure and content of passages assigned to later authors as having a message pertinent to those who would have lived at the time of Isaiah ben Amoz. We consider three of these arguments in brief.

As noted above, many of the critical assumptions about the division of Isaiah rest upon perceived content in chapters 40–66 that is believed could not have been written in a preexilic setting. Biblical scholar Gary V. Smith has recently examined seven particular passages within Isaiah 40–55 that he believes point to a preexilic audience rather than an exilic or postexilic audience. The passages and the relevant points concerning the intended audience are summarized in the chart “Analysis of the Intended Audience in Isaiah 40–55.” (Smith, *Isaiah 40–55*, 705–712)

ANALYSIS OF THE INTENDED AUDIENCE IN ISAIAH 40–55

Passage	Content	Reason for Preexilic Audience
Isaiah 41:8–16	Declaration of God's protection from those who wage war on Israel	There are no references to any nation making war on Israel in any of the exilic books: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; best reference would be Nebuchadnezzar attacking Jerusalem prior to the exile.
Isaiah 42:22–25	Reference to Israelites being kept hidden away in caves and pits from their enemies and God causing a great victory	No evidence of this occurring during the exile; fits well into the events of the Assyrian attack upon Jerusalem in 701 BC.
Isaiah 43:3	God promises to use Egypt, Seba, and Cush as a ransom to redeem his people	Does not fit the evidence of Cyrus's conquests; matches the Assyrian attacks under Sennacherib against these countries prior to the exile.
Isaiah 43:14	A violent overthrow of Babylon	Does not match the peaceful conquest by Cyrus of Babylon; does match the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib in 689 BC.
Isaiah 43:28	The coming destruction of the temple	Verse uses future tense verbs to speak of the destruction of the temple; indicates the verse was written prior to the exile.
Isaiah 46–47	The fall of Babylon and her gods	Cyrus did not overthrow Babylon and her false gods when he conquered it; Babylon was overthrown and her idols destroyed under Sennacherib's conquest in 689 BC.
Isaiah 52:3–5	Oppression by Egypt and Assyria mentioned, but no oppression by Babylon	Does not match the events of the exile with Israel being subjugated to Babylon; does match the events of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 BC.

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Smith comments on these and other passages:

Some of these texts include enough historical hints (war, future destruction of the temple) to demonstrate that pre-exilic setting is not just possible, but a likely understanding of the audience's setting in Isaiah 40–55. It is also interesting that a couple places suggest a location in Judah. . . . For example, (a) the repeated reference to Palestinian trees rather than Babylonian trees (Isa. 41:19); (b) the statement that the location of Ur was “at the far ends of the earth” (Isa. 41:9) and not just next door, suggesting that the Israelites were not a few miles away from Babylon; and (c) the repeated condemnation of making and worshiping idols which was a pre-exilic problem in Judah, but not a problem for the exiles in Babylon. (Smith, *Isaiah 40–55*, 712)

Old Testament scholar Eric Ortlund has addressed the charge that Isaiah 1–39 evidences insertions by a later redactor. He specifically addresses charges that “passages making up these chapters [Isa. 11; 30; 2] were written centuries apart, later passages being inserted in order to fill out putative gaps in the prophetic message of those chapters.”

(Ortlund, RCLSI, 211) He finds that proposed interpolations by later redactors can more easily be attributed to the author purposefully placing imagery and events out of the expected order as a literary technique. Such reversed chronologies are used to highlight particular aspects of God's salvation or coming kingdom. (See chart below, which was formulated from information appearing in Ortlund, RCLSI, 211–221)

Ortlund contends that these passages do not evidence a later redaction. Rather, they are intentionally reversed for “both literary and theological reasons” to have “the effect of highlighting divine mercy.” (Ortlund, RCLSI, 222–223) Further, such an approach to these texts “posits a relatively simple prehistory to the text . . . and a more complex literary relationship between the passages making up these chapters,” rather than a more complex, and less evidenced, redactional history. (Ortlund, RCLSI, 223)

Finally, Kitchen has drawn attention to prophetic traditions in the ancient Near East in Mari and Assyria to demonstrate that prophecies in religious contexts were recorded early and accurately so as to be later verified. Within these areas “an accurate, independent, and permanent record of

Passage	Out of Order Chronology Supposing Later Redactor	Literary Reason for Earlier Author to Place Out of Order
Isaiah 11:1–9, 11–16	Peace occurs <i>before</i> Israel is restored to the promised land by the actions of the root of Jesse judging the nations.	Imagery of the root of Jesse is juxtaposed closely against the trees (nations) felled by YHWH in punishment in Isaiah 10:33–34.
Isaiah 30:1–17, 18–26, 27–33	Judgment is declared against Israel; Israel is presented as being in proper relationship to God/creation is renewed; Assyria is judged and destroyed. (Restoration occurs after an enemy's destruction, not before.)	Restoration is placed in the midst of judgment to highlight YHWH's gracious intervention for his people.
Isaiah 2:1–5, 6–22	Mount Zion is exalted as a beacon to draw in the nations for worship of YHWH; Israel is then condemned for its idolatry and YHWH's destruction of idols is promised.	Passage implies that the nations will come to Zion to worship but will only do so after they are humbled and their idols destroyed.

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BC would be closest to that of the Qumran community, and “there are clear differences between this and the Hebrew of Daniel; for instance at Qumran there is a much greater use of pseudo-cohortative forms and vowel letters.” (Lucas, AOTC, 307) When these two characteristics are taken together, he argues, “the character of the Hebrew and Aramaic could support a date in the fifth or fourth century for the extant written form of the book, but does not demand a second-century date.” (Lucas, AOTC, 308)

Lucas’s conclusion is not a recent one. Kitchen notes:

The word-order of the Aramaic of Daniel (and Ezra) places it squarely in full blooded Imperial Aramaic—and in striking contrast with *real* Palestinian post-Imperial Aramaic of the second and first centuries BC as illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

If proper allowance be made for attested scribal usage in the Biblical Near East (including orthographical and morphological change, both official and unofficial), then there is nothing to decide the date of composition of the Aramaic of Daniel *on the grounds of* Aramaic anywhere between the late sixth and

the second century BC. Some points hint at an early (especially pre-300), not late, date. . . . The date of the book of Daniel, in short, cannot be decided upon linguistic grounds alone. (Kitchen, AD, 78–79, emphasis in original)

Steinmann provides a similar analysis of the Hebrew portions of Daniel:

Given our fragmentary state of knowledge about the history of linguistic developments in Biblical Hebrew, use of linguistic evidence to argue for a late date of Daniel’s Hebrew is unwarranted since the linguistic evidence is, at best, mixed. The most that can be said is that Daniel’s Hebrew is much more like the Hebrew of other acknowledged exilic books of the OT than like the Hebrew of the Qumran documents, making Daniel unlikely to be a composition from the Hellenistic era as higher critics contend. (Steinmann, CC, 8)

Steinmann also addresses the second response to the critical evaluation of Daniel’s language split. He argues that the structure of the language division results in two interlocking chiasms (see chart below taken from Steinmann, CC, 22):

Chiastic Structure	Genre	Language
Introduction 1: Prologue 1:1–21	Narrative	Hebrew
A Nebuchadnezzar dreams of four kingdoms and the kingdom of God (2:1–49)	Narrative	Aramaic
B Nebuchadnezzar sees God’s servants rescued (3:1–30).	Narrative	Aramaic
C Nebuchadnezzar is judged (3:31–4:34 [ET 4:1–37]).	Narrative	Aramaic
C’ Belshazzar is judged (5:1–6:1 [ET 5:1–31]).	Narrative	Aramaic
B’ Darius sees Daniel rescued (6:2–29 [ET 6:1–28]).	Narrative	Aramaic
A’ Introduction 2: Daniel has a vision of four kingdoms and the kingdom of God (7:1–28).	Vision	Aramaic
D Details on the post-Babylonian kingdoms (8:1–27)	Vision	Hebrew
E Jerusalem restored (9:1–27)	Vision	Hebrew
D’ More details on the post-Babylonian kingdoms (10:1–12:13)	Vision	Hebrew

When	Who	What
4th century	Eusebius of Caesarea	<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
5th century	Augustine of Hippo	<i>Harmony of the Gospels</i>
1527–1st ed. 1582–16th ed.	Andreas Althamer	<i>Conciliationes Locorum Scripturae, qui specie tenus inter se pugnare videntur, Centuriae duae</i>
1662	Joannes Thaddaeus, Thomas Man	<i>The Reconciler of the Bible Inlarged [sic]</i>
1791	Oliver St. John Cooper	<i>Four Hundred Texts of Holy Scripture with their corresponding passages explained</i>
1843	Samuel Davidson	<i>Sacred Hermeneutics, Developed and Applied</i>
1874	John W. Haley	<i>An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*</i>
1950	George W. DeHoff	<i>Alleged Bible Contradictions</i>
1952	Martin Ralph De Haan	<i>508 Answers to Bible Questions</i>
1965	J. Carter Swaim	<i>Answers to Your Questions About the Bible</i>
1972	F. F. Bruce	<i>Answers to Questions</i>
1979	Robert H. Mounce	<i>Answers to Questions About the Bible</i>
1980	Paul R. Van Gorder	<i>Since You Asked</i>
1982	Gleason L. Archer	<i>Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties</i>
1987	David C. Downing	<i>What You Know Might Not Be So: 220 Misinterpretations of Bible Texts Explained</i>
1992	Norman L. Geisler, Thomas Howe	<i>The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation</i>
1996	Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, Manfred T. Brauch	<i>Hard Sayings of the Bible</i>
2001	Gleason L. Archer	<i>Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties (updated)</i>
2013	Josh McDowell, Sean McDowell	<i>The Bible Handbook of Difficult Verses: A Complete Guide to Answering Tough Questions</i>
2016	Michael R. Licona	<i>Why Are There Differences in the Gospels?</i>

* Haley's treatise cites forty-two works from the Reformation or post-Reformation era that are not listed here. (Kaiser et al., HSB, 32)

III. Approaching Contradictions

A. What Is a Contradiction?

Logically speaking, a contradiction arises when two or more statements affirm and deny a truth-claim at the same time and in the same way. For example, the statement,

“The Old Testament does contain contradictions,” and its negation, “The Old Testament does not contain contradictions,” are logically contradictory because one affirms and the other denies the claim that the Old Testament contains contradictions. Clearly both statements cannot be true. But the key