

# THE HOLY BIBLE:

HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT IT IS  
TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE?

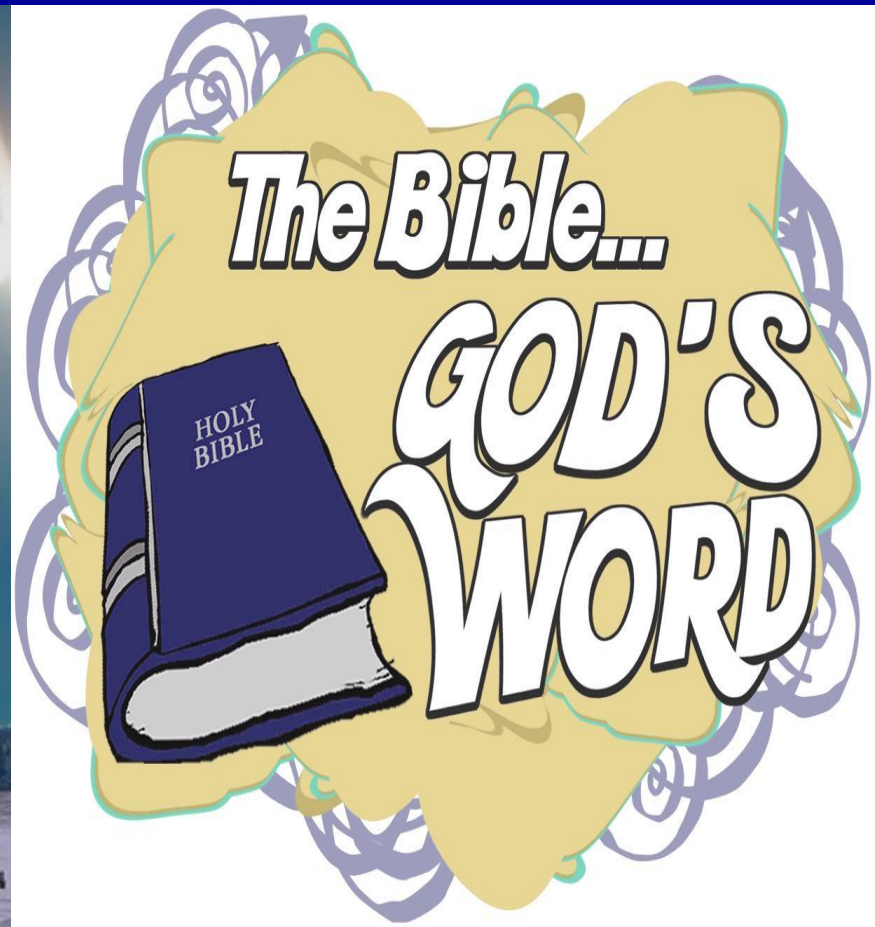


*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Genesis 1:1*





*And with a mighty Hand and outstretched Arm,  
He gave us the Bible to tell us about it*

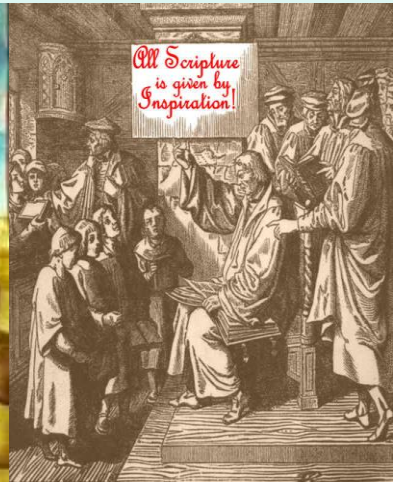
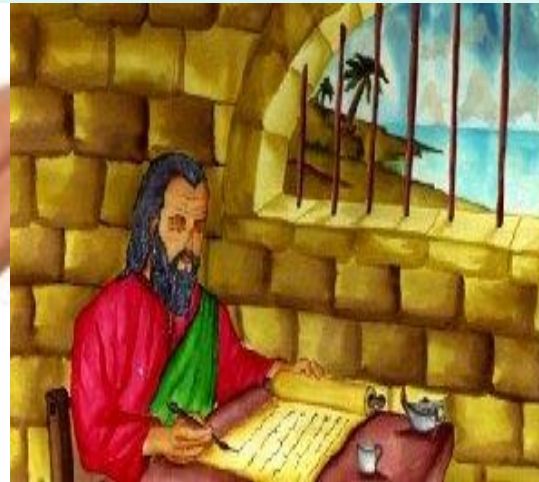
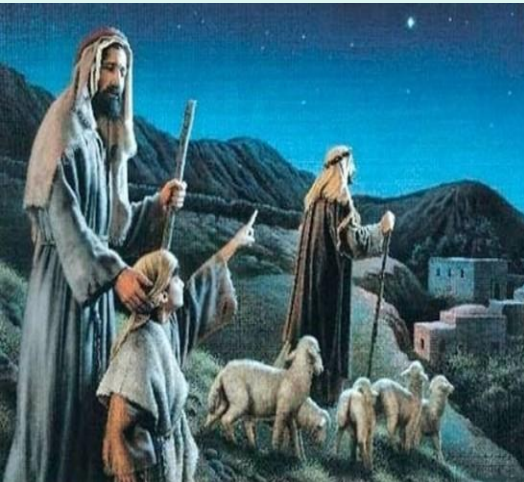


# The Bible was written:

- The Bible was written on three continents – Asia, Africa and Europe
- In three languages – Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic
- In different places – in the wilderness, in a palace, in a prison, and on an island
- In different environments – during war and peace



And by over 40 different authors, including kings, philosophers, fishermen, poets, scholars, peasants, shepherds, and a tax collector!





BETWEEN THE  
OLD AND NEW  
TESTAMENTS, THE  
BIBLE WAS WRITTEN  
OVER A PERIOD OF  
1,500 YEARS!

To put that in perspective, in just the last 100 years, we have gone from horse and buggies





# *To cars and airplanes*





# TO PUTTING A MAN ON THE MOON!

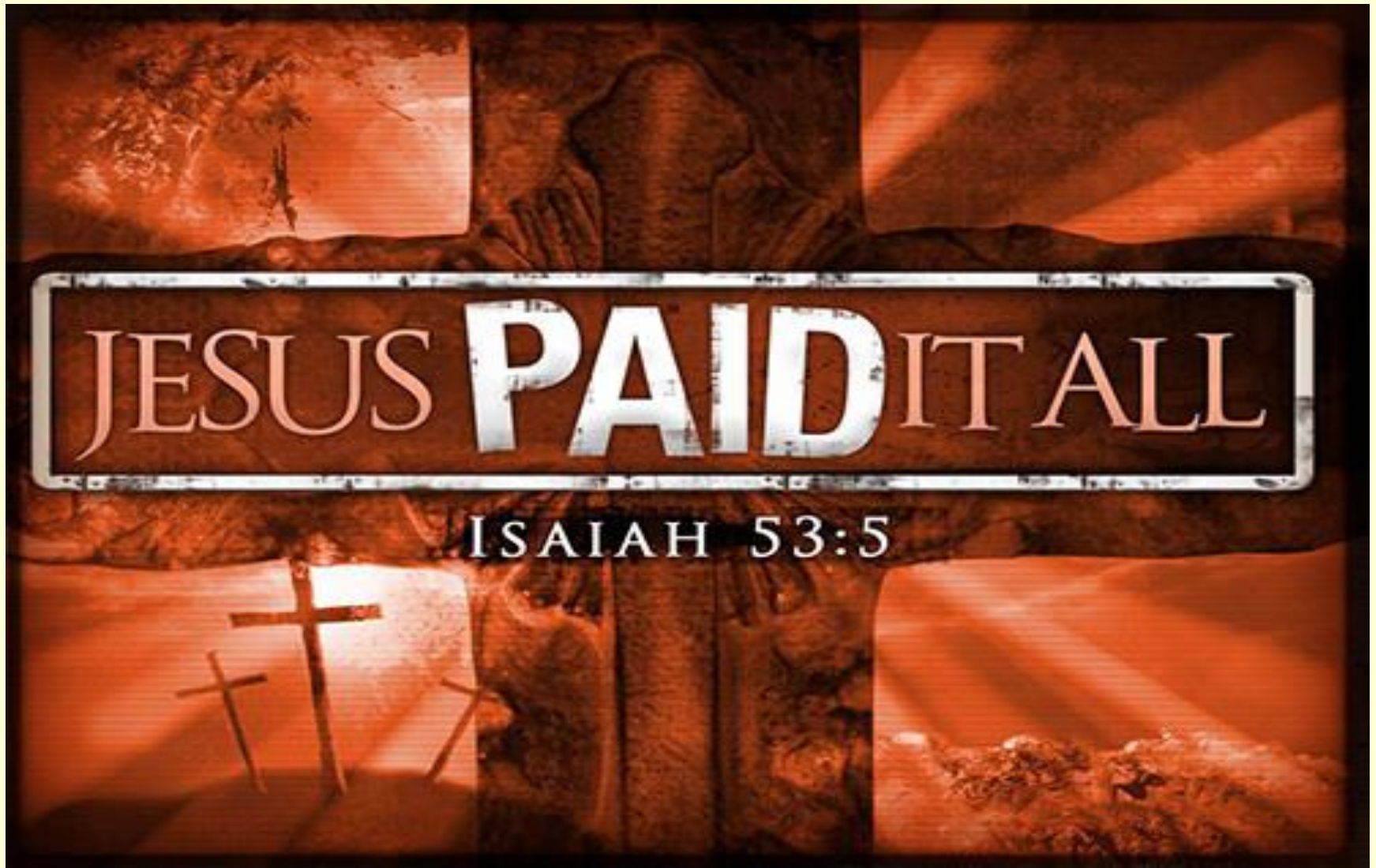


*Yet despite being  
written over  
1,500 years  
by 40 people  
in 66 books,*



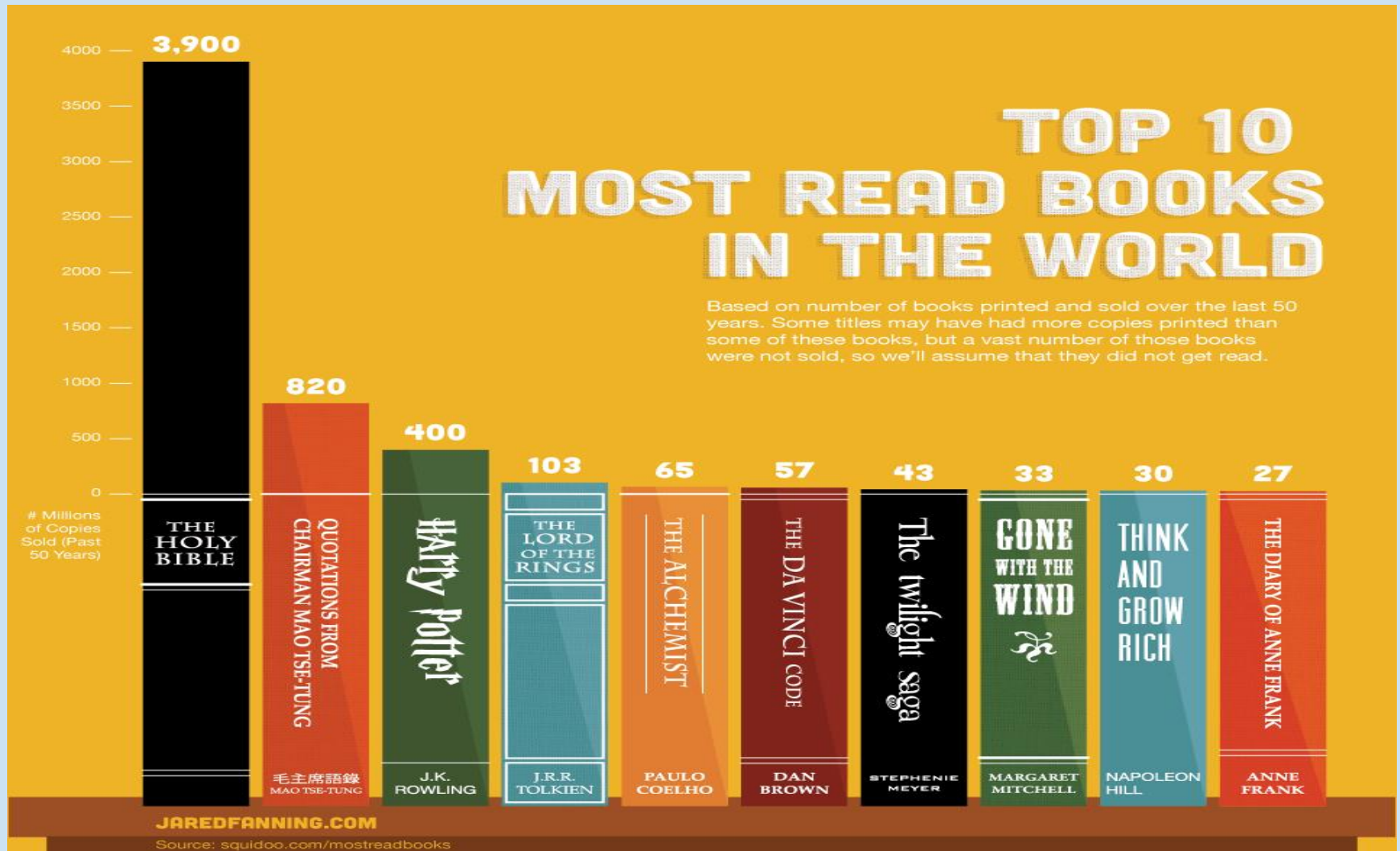
The Bible amazingly  
tells a cohesive and  
consistent story that  
never changes

Which is God's love and plan of salvation for a lost and sinful world

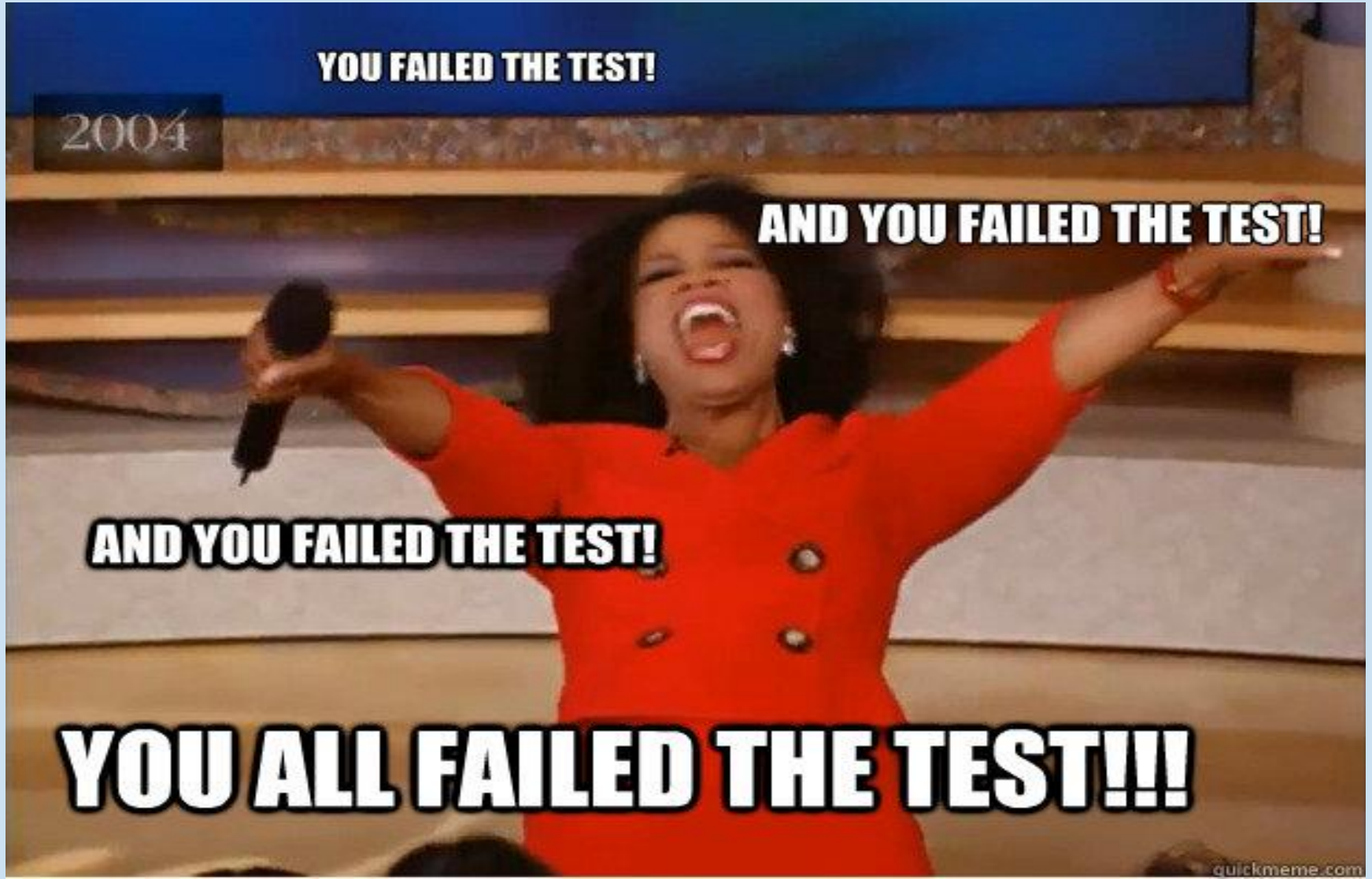




So it should come as no surprise that the Bible is by far the most read book in history. But why? What is it that makes the Bible so special?



Well how would you feel if you got all the answers on a test right but the teacher flunked you because she didn't like you.  
Would that be okay or would you say "Hey, that's not fair!"





Or how would you feel if someone stole your bike because they decided they deserved it more than you. Would you shrug it off, or would you say “Hey, that’s not right!”



## The Moral Law:

- We live in culture that says all truth is relative, that all opinions are equally valid, and therefore people can just do whatever they want
- So a teacher can flunk you for no reason at all simply because that is her version of truth, and a thief can steal your bike because that is his version of what's right
- But we all know that's just gibberish. Anyone who has ever been treated unfairly or been a victim knows that truth is not relative, but rather that there is absolute truth and absolute right and wrong
- And we instinctively know without needing to be told that there are a lot of things that are just flat out always wrong (for example, things like hurting little children or kicking helpless dogs are always wrong)

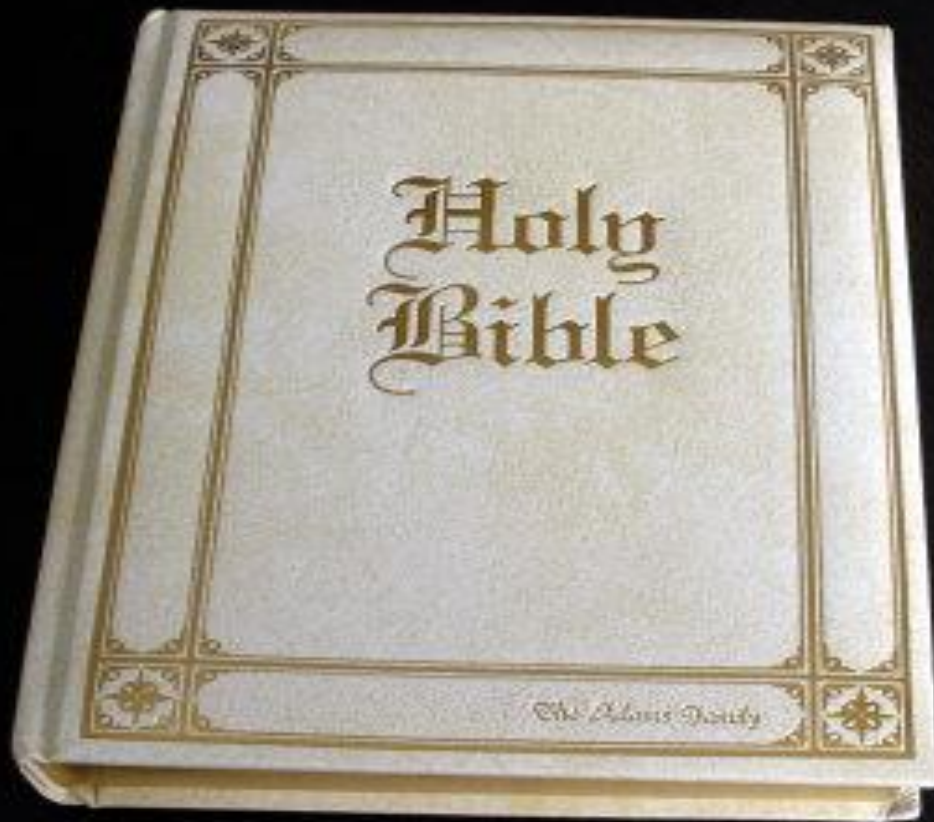
## Absolute Truth:

- And if there is absolute truth, an absolute moral law of right and wrong, then there must be a law giver, someone who never changes
- We can't be the source of the moral law since our opinions constantly change, so if we were in charge, then we'd all be living in quicksand, never knowing from day to day what is right and what is wrong
- So the lawgiver must be unchanging since the moral law of what's right and wrong must be unchanging, which means the lawgiver has to be God (the only one who never changes)
- But how do we know what God's law is? Well, that's why the Bible is so special, because the Bible is how God has revealed his law to us and, even better, how he has revealed the person (Jesus) who is the source of all truth

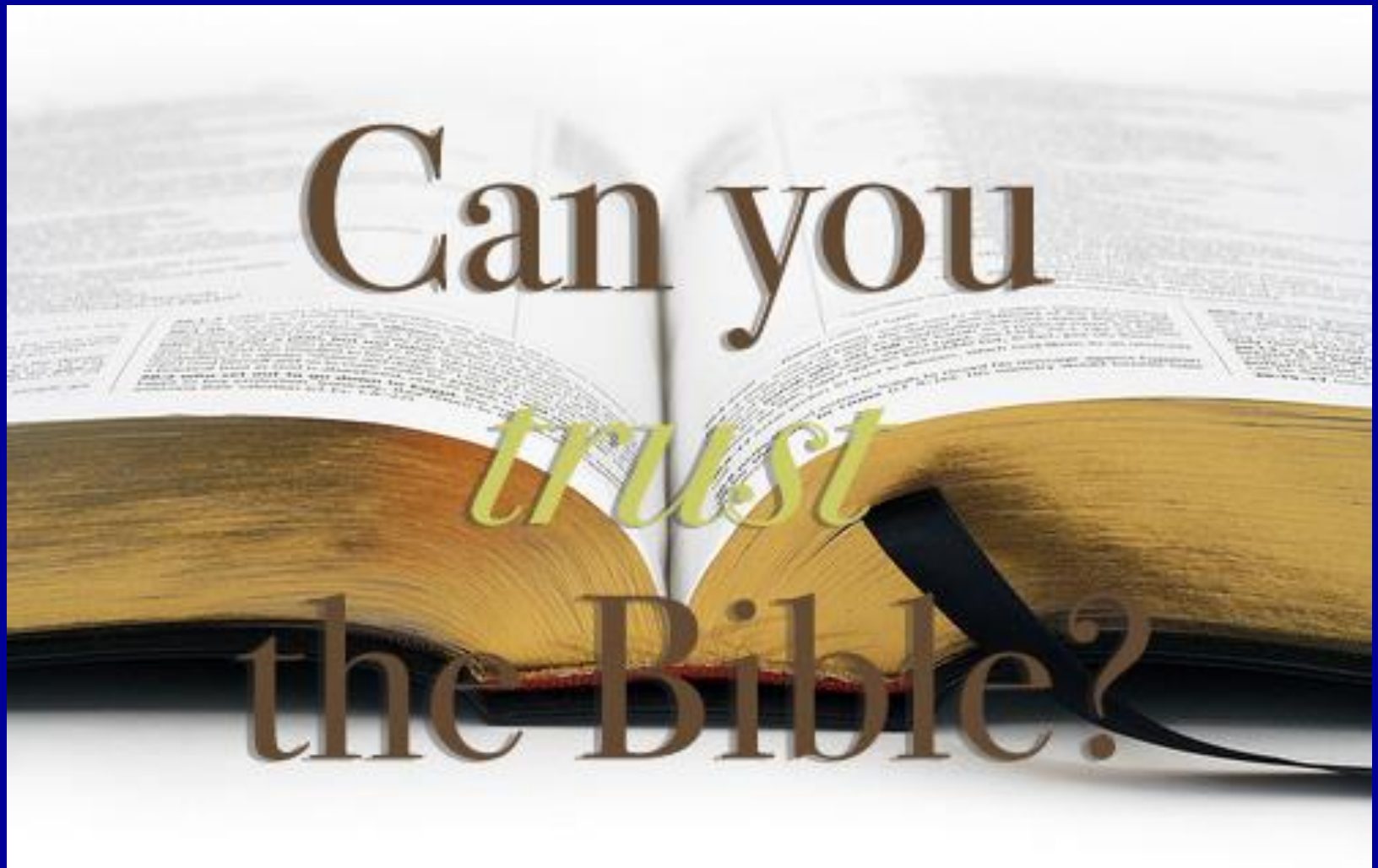


The Apostle Paul certainly believed that was true,  
which is why he says in 2 Timothy 3:16 that:

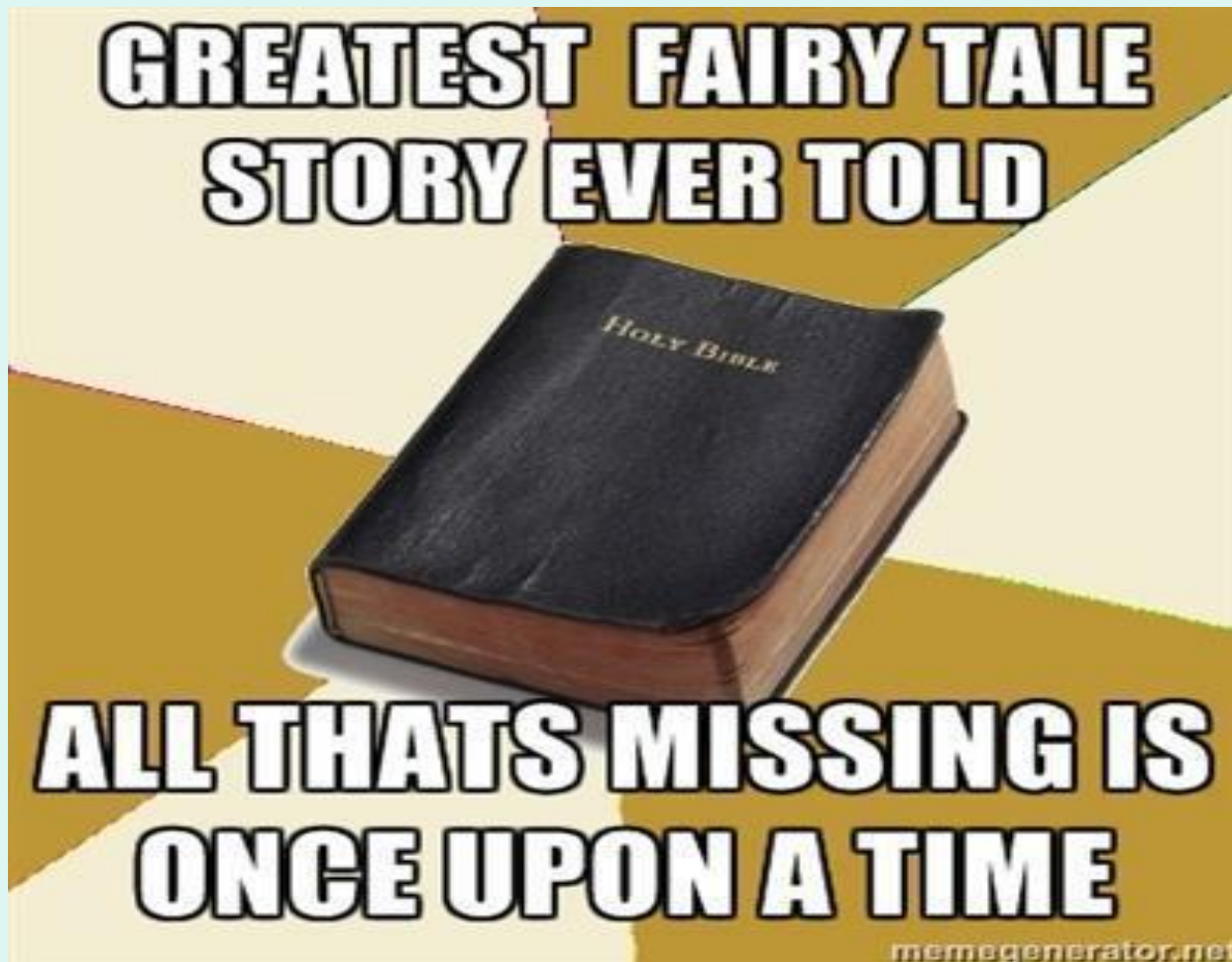
*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful  
for teaching, rebuking, correcting and  
training in righteousness”*



But how do we know if the  
Apostle Paul is right?



After all, the world tells us that the Bible is just a collection of ancient stories and fairy tales





And is nothing more than man's feeble attempt to explain his surroundings by appealing to a higher power

In the beginning,  
man made GOD,  
and then the  
problems started

So how do we know if we can  
actually trust the Bible?

The  
**Bible** Fact  
or Fiction?



# Well let's take a closer look at the Bible to see if the Apostle Paul is right, starting with the Old Testament





The **39 books** of our Old Testament were originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic between **1,450 B.C.** and **450 B.C.**

## Books of the Old Testament

Genesis	Ecclesiastes
Exodus	Song of Solomon
Leviticus	Isaiah
Numbers	Jeremiah
Deuteronomy	Lamentations
Joshua	Ezekiel
Judges	Daniel
Ruth	Hosea
First Samuel	Joel
Second Samuel	Amos
First Kings	Obadiah
Second Kings	Jonah
First Chronicles	Micah
Second Chronicles	Nahum
Ezra	Habakkuk
Nehemiah	Zephaniah
Esther	Haggai
Job	Zechariah
Psalms	Malachi
Proverbs	

# Old Testament (con't):

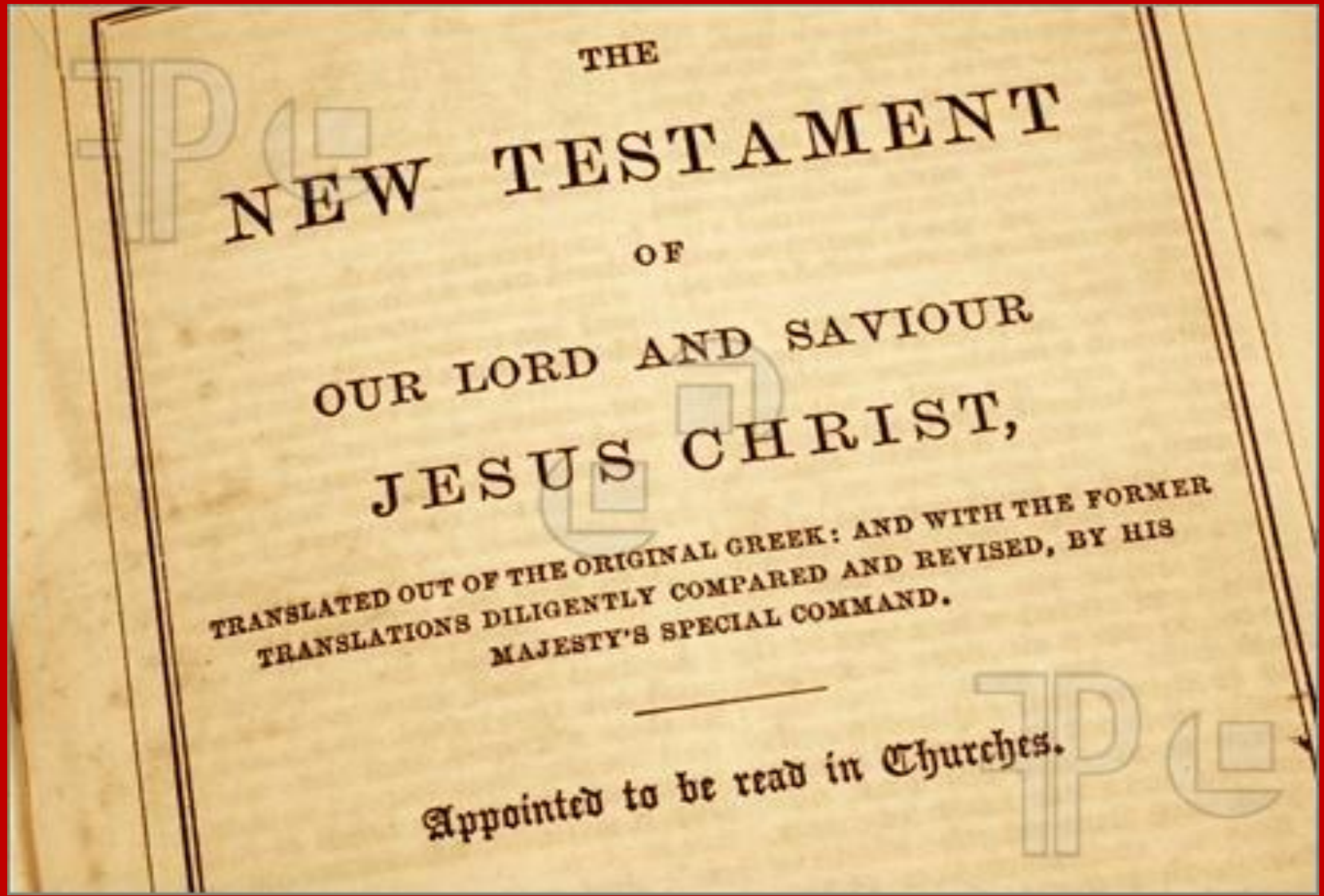
- By 300-400 B.C., the Jews recognized these books as God's inspired word and they were considered the Hebrew Bible
- Remember this is before the time of Jesus (after Jesus, the Hebrew Bible became our Old Testament)
- About 250 B.C., Jewish scholars translated the Hebrew Bible from Hebrew into Greek, which was the main language of the ancient world (like English is today)
- This translation was called the Septuagint (meaning "70" in reference to the 70-72 scholars on the translation team)

The Greek translation allowed the Hebrew Bible to spread throughout the known world and, as a result, it became an important resource for the New Testament writers





Now let's talk about the New Testament



The 27 books of the New Testament were written in Greek over 45 years ranging from 48 A.D. (only 15 years after the crucifixion) to the early 90's A.D. (60 years after the crucifixion)

## Books of the New Testament

Matthew	First Timothy
Mark	Second Timothy
Luke	Titus
John	Philemon
Acts	Hebrews
Romans	James
First Corinthians	First Peter
Second Corinthians	Second Peter
Galatians	First John
Ephesians	Second John
Philippians	Third John
Colossians	Jude
First Thessalonians	Revelation
Second Thessalonians	

## New Testament (con't):

- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were written around 55 - 65 A.D. and the Gospel of John was written around 90 A.D.
- Around 180 A.D., the New Testament began to be translated into other languages, including Latin (which eventually replaced Greek as the main language of the Roman Empire)
- The Latin Vulgate (a Latin translation done by St. Jerome around 400 A.D.) became the official church Bible for a 1,000 years, and the Bible was first translated into English in 1382 A.D. by Wycliffe
- The Bible was first printed (in Latin) for commoners like us in 1454 A.D. by Johannes Gutenberg (before then, only priests and church leaders had easy access to Bibles)



Now I want to focus for a bit on the Gospels, since they are our main source of information about Jesus (“Gospel” is a Greek word that means the “good news”)

# THE GOSPEL

## THE GOOD NEWS

“BIBLE TELLS ALL! READ ALL ABOUT IT!”

ACTS 1:9-11

AC A AFTER HE SAID  
TKI AC THIS, HE WAS TAKEN  
UP UP BEFORE THEIR  
VRI TK VERY EYES, AND A  
OLO TK CLOUD HID HIM FROM  
TKR VE THEIR SIGHT. 10 THEY  
WERE VE WERE LOOKING IN-  
SKY WK TENDLY UP INTO THE  
WHIT SK SKY AS HE WAS GOING.  
TKRM ME WHEN SUDDENLY TWO  
GALIL WH MEN DRESSED IN  
WHI SK WHITE STOOD BESIDE  
TKR GA THEM. 11 “MEN OF  
TKR GA GALILEE,” THEY SAID,  
WHI GA “WHY DO YOU STAND  
TKR GA HERE LOOKING INTO  
TKR GA THE SKY? THIS SAME  
TKR GA JESUS, WHO HAS BEEN  
TKR GA TAKEN FROM YOU  
TKR GA INTO HEAVEN, WILL  
TKR GA COME BACK IN THE  
TKR GA SAME WAY YOU HAVE  
TKR GA SEEN HIM GO INTO  
TKR GA HEAVEN.”



17 THE SEVENTY-TWO RETURNED WITH JOY AND SAID, “LORD, EVEN THE DEMONS  
SUBMITTED TO US IN YOUR NAME.”

18 HE REPLIED, “I SAW SATAN FALL LIKE LIGHTNING FROM HEAVEN. 19 BUT  
IF YOU DO NOT REPENT, YOU WILL PERISH. 20 I HAVE SENT YOU  
AS WITNESSES TO ALL NATIONS, TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.  
21 WHOEVER BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED, AS I HAVE SAID  
BEFORE. 22 WHOEVER DOES NOT BELIEVE WILL BE DAMNED. 23 I HAVE SENT  
YOU WITH THIS AUTHORITY: IN MY NAME YOU WILL DRIVE OUT DEMONS,  
AND YOU WILL HEAL THE SICK AND PARALYZED. 24 BUT DO NOT  
WONDER AT THIS, FOR THE SON OF MAN WILL SIT ON HIS SEAT OF  
POWER, AND ALL NATIONS WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE HIM. 25 WHOEVER  
REJECTS HIM WILL BE DESTROYED, BUT WHOEVER RECEIVES HIM  
AND BELIEVES IN HIS NAME WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. 26 WHOEVER  
REJECTS HIM WILL BE DESTROYED.”

If something happens, the first thing the police want to know is whether there were any eyewitnesses





We know that eyewitnesses are good. Since they were there, they can tell the judge what really happened





On the other hand, we know that when there are no eyewitnesses, then it's harder to figure out who did what



Who  
Dunnit?

A cartoon illustration of a detective character with a yellow face, wearing a brown trench coat and hat, holding a magnifying glass. The character is standing on a black background.

Also, when we have eyewitnesses, we want their testimony written down as soon as possible so we'll have an accurate record of what they saw



Failure to complete this form in its entirety may result in a delay in processing this claim.

# ACCIDENT REPORT

**FILING CLAIM FOR (check all that apply):**

<input type="checkbox"/> Accidental Injury Only	<input type="checkbox"/> No Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> General	<input type="checkbox"/> Disabling
<input type="checkbox"/> No Fault Only	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance Claim	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Injury Protection
<input type="checkbox"/> Accident Policy Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance Policy Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance Policy Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance Policy Number

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Complete Section A, Policyholder/Person Information.
- Have your doctor complete Section B, Physician's Statement. If you are unable to see your doctor, have your employer complete and sign Section C, Employer's Statement.
- Physician's Disability Statement.
- If you are filing for disability, have your employer complete and sign Section D, Employer's Statement.
- Sign your claim form at the bottom of Page 1.



Well, the same way written eyewitness testimony is important for police work, it's also critical when investigating the reliability of ancient books





# The Gospels (con't):

- For example, when looking at ancient books, historians first look at who wrote the book
- Was the author an eyewitness to the event or someone who knew an eyewitness, or did he live hundreds of years later and just write a legend or a fairy tale
- Historians also look at when the book was written.
- Historians say that the sooner a book is written after an event occurs, the more likely it is that the book accurately describes what happened

It turns out that the Gospels do outstanding  
under both the “when was it written” and  
the “who wrote it” tests



# The Gospels (con't):

- Matthew, Mark and Luke were written only 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus
- There is even some evidence that either Matthew or Mark may have been written as early as 20 years after Jesus
- And the Gospel of John (the last written gospel) was written within 60 years after Jesus
- Most importantly, all of the Gospels were written either by eyewitnesses who knew Jesus personally or by someone who knew and spent a lot of time with an eyewitness



# The disciples or other eyewitnesses either wrote or were the sources for all of the Gospels:

- The **Gospel of Matthew** was written by Matthew the tax collector, who was one of the disciples
- The **Gospel of Mark** was written by John Mark, a traveling companion of Peter (the leader of the disciples and the main source of that Gospel)
- The **Gospel of Luke** was written by Luke, a traveling companion and physician of the Apostle Paul (who wrote half the New Testament). Luke himself states that his Gospel is based on his personal investigation, including through eyewitness testimony, of the events of Jesus's life
- The **Gospel of John** was written by John, the disciple who was Jesus's best friend during Jesus's ministry

## Eyewitness sources of the Gospels (con't):

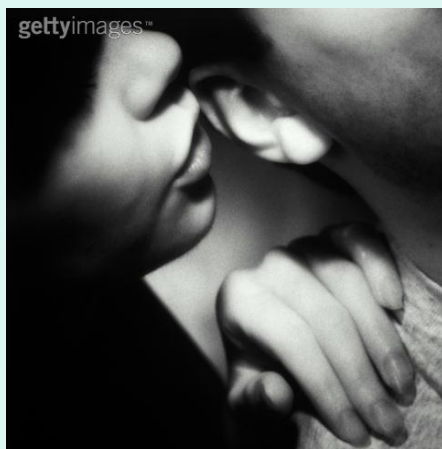
- So the Gospels of Matthew and John were written by disciples themselves, which demonstrates their strong historical reliability
- And while Mark and Luke were not written by disciples, both were written while Peter and Paul and other eyewitnesses were still alive (which means Peter and Paul and others could have easily voiced their disagreement if they disputed what Mark or Luke wrote)
- However, there is no historical evidence that Peter or Paul (or any other eyewitnesses) ever disputed the factual accuracy of the Gospels of Mark or Luke (which shows the reliability of those Gospels too)
- And which basically makes the Gospels a police report of eyewitness testimony about Jesus that's been handed down to us through history

Okay, I like the fact that we  
have eyewitness testimony about  
Jesus's life that was written down for us

But doesn't 30 years seem like an awfully  
long time for Christians to tell stories  
about Jesus before someone  
wrote them down?



Well sure, 30 years may seem like a long time when everyone is whispering to each other and pretty soon no one is really sure what was first said



**But historians say 30 years is actually a very short period of time when people are talking loud and clear and everyone hears the same message**





And Jesus had a very public ministry. Much of his time was spent speaking to large crowds where everyone would have heard the same message





Also, it's not like the disciples saw something then went back to living their everyday lives and 30 years later couldn't remember what they saw in the first place

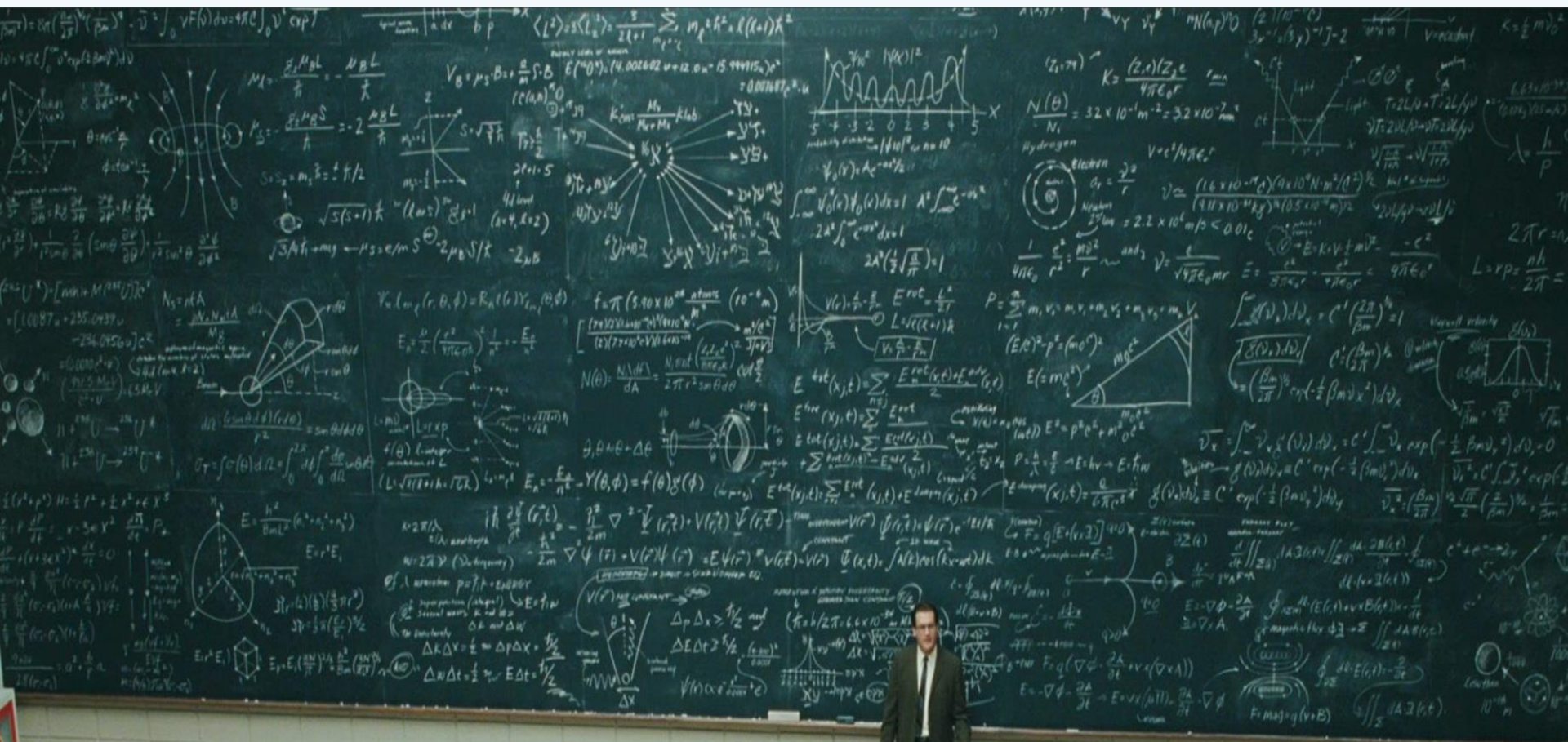


Rather they didn't immediately write down what they saw because for years they were too busy going around telling everyone the Good News about Jesus





And while remembering something accurately for 30 years may seem difficult, it's not so hard when you consider the amazing things the human mind can do



Plus the disciples weren't trying to remember what they had for breakfast 30 years ago; rather they were remembering miraculous things that had never been seen before (which is much easier to do)





Finally, Jesus's style of teaching would have made it easy for the disciples to remember what he said

- Jesus followed the style of teaching used by Jewish rabbis (i.e., teachers), such as picturesque speech, alliteration, rhythmic phrases, parallelisms and above all, parables
- This style of teaching allowed listeners to remember and verbally share with others what they heard with great accuracy
- And disciples of Jewish teachers were taught to memorize and repeat their master's teaching exactly without making changes
- All of this would have enabled the disciples to clearly remember the amazing things they witnessed (even after 30 years) so they could be written down for future generations to know about Jesus

But despite this, some skeptics still claim that the Gospel accounts (including Jesus's miracles) are just legends, myths, and fairy tales made up by later generations

Was Jesus just a myth or legend or a fairy tale?



But historians say 30 years is far too soon for myths or legends about an event to develop, especially when there are so many eyewitnesses to the event who are still alive





After all, no matter how impossible something 30-40 years in the past might seem (like the fact the Cowboys actually used to win Super Bowls), it's hard to deny when thousands of people saw it





And when 3 of the 4 Gospels  
(and maybe even all 4 Gospels)  
were written, there were still  
thousands of eyewitnesses  
to the events described in  
the Gospels who  
were still alive

These eyewitnesses could have disputed the Gospel accounts, but there is absolutely no evidence that any of them ever did



Which means that the Gospels should be taken seriously as an accurate record of what the disciples saw, and not treated as the figment of someone's imagination

**Not Real**



**Totally Real!**



In fact, the reason the Gospels were immediately accepted as inspired by God is that so many people were still alive who read them and knew they described exactly what really happened!

MADE

★ BY ★

GOD





This means that we can trust the Bible when it tells us about Jesus, the miracles he performed and his resurrection



# Let's check out the Gospels against some competition:

- **Jesus**: first New Testament books written within **15-20** years after the resurrection. The Gospels written within **30-60** years and record Jesus performing many miracles
- **Mohammed**: the Koran itself does not record any miracles being performed by Mohammed. The first time anything written down claiming he performed miracles was first written **150 to 200** years after his death (not by eyewitnesses!)
- **Alexander the Great**: Alexander the Great was a famous military conqueror before the time of Jesus. His earliest biographies were first written **400** years after his death

Okay, this is starting to makes sense, but I still have one super important question:

If we don't have any originals of the Gospels, then how do we know that Matthew, Mark and Luke were all written within 30 years after the resurrection?



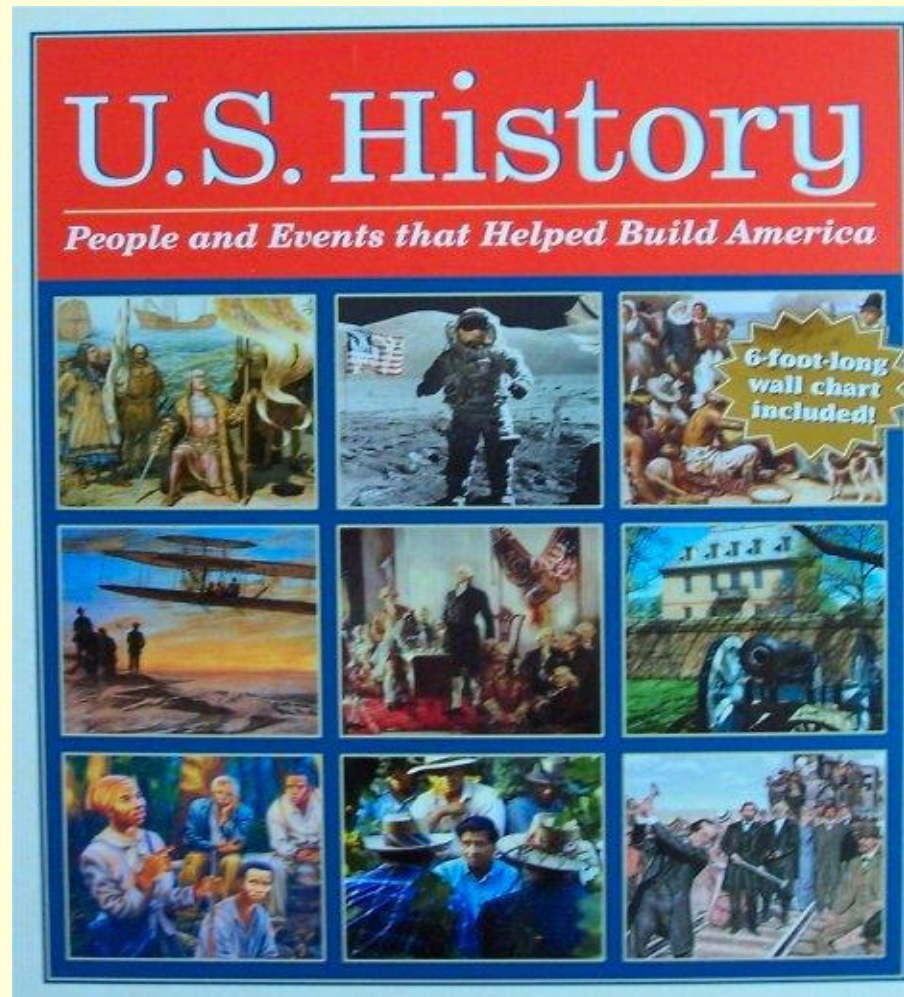
# That's a great question, and luckily I have a great answer!

- First, remember that we don't have the originals of ANY books from thousands of years ago (more on that later)
- But the historians who study this for a living have tests and analyses for being able to determine with a very high level of accuracy when a book was written
- Here, let's take a look at just one way they do it

I'm assuming you all know about 9-11 when terrorists blew up the World Trade Centers



Now let's assume that 100 years from now (in 2100 A.D.) a future generation finds a book that claims to be a history book of the U.S.





Let's also assume that  
this history book claims to  
have been written around the year  
2000 A.D., but it's not exactly  
clear when, it could have  
been 1995 or 2005 A.D.  
or some date  
in between

But then the person reads the history book and realizes that something is missing, that there is no mention anywhere in the history book of 9-11 or the War on Terror that came afterwards



Something

Missing??



## So when was the history book written?

- I think everyone can agree that our future person would realize that the most likely reason the history book makes no mention of 9-11 is that it was written **before** 9-11 happened
- In other words, this person a 100 years from now might not know the exact day on which the history book was first published
- But this person would be able to say with a very high level of confidence that the book was written **before** September 11, 2001





## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- The Apostle Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts
- In the Gospel of Luke, Luke claimed to be giving a historical account of the public ministry of Jesus (which was around 30-33 A.D.)
- In the Book of Acts, Luke gave a historical account of the acts of the Apostles and the Apostle Paul's three missionary journeys (which were over a 20-year period)



In fact, one prominent archaeologist carefully examined Luke's detailed references to 32 countries, 54 cities and 9 islands, and did not find a single mistake





## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- Because of this, modern historians consider Luke to be one of the **finest** historians of ancient times
- Well, in the Gospel of Luke, Luke records that Jesus clearly claimed to be the **Son of God**
- To support that, Luke records the miracles that Jesus performed, the parables he taught, and the predictions about the future that Jesus made

## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- Specifically, Luke recorded that Jesus predicted that Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple would soon be destroyed because the Israelites had turned away from God
- Jesus's predictions were made around **30-33** A.D. and are recorded **three** times in the Gospel of Luke (see Luke 19:41-44 and 21:5-24)
- Jesus's predictions included specific details regarding the desolation of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple
- Amazingly, this very thing happened in **70 A.D.**, less than **40 years** after Jesus, when the Israelites rebelled against the Romans and the Romans crushed them.

While putting down the rebellion, thousands of Roman soldiers laid siege to and invaded and sacked Jerusalem





They also slaughtered over  
1,000,000 Jews!





# AND TOTALLY DESTROYED THE JEWISH TEMPLE





Below is an artist's rendition of what the Second Temple looked like at that time (notice how long the outside wall surrounding the courtyard is)





After the Romans, all that was left was a small section of the outer wall on the west side of the Temple courtyard (known as the Western Wall) and a whole lot of rubble



## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- The destruction of the Jewish Temple was like an enemy army razing every house in your neighborhood to the ground
- And leaving nothing still standing but a small section of your backyard fence!
- The impact this had on the Israelites can not be overstated. It destroyed the very center of their religion, their culture, their entire way of life
- It was one of the worst events in their entire 4,000 year history and was hundreds of times worse for them than 9-11 was for America



AND YOU KNOW THAT WE WILL  
ALWAYS REMEMBER 9-11

*We Will Never Forget!*



*September 11, 2001*



## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- But despite recording Jesus's predictions, the Gospel of Luke says absolutely **nothing** about the destruction of the Jewish Temple actually occurring in **70 A.D.**
- Think about that for a second
- If having predictions about the future come true would show that Jesus was the Son of God, then why didn't Luke mention the most important part
- Why didn't Luke mention that Jesus's predictions had, you know, **actually come true!**

Did Luke, a first-class historian, have a brain cramp and just forget?



**OH NO!  
I FORGOT ...  
SOMETHING ...  
... BUT WHAT ?**

## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- Or maybe there is a much simpler answer?
- In fact, historians have concluded that the most obvious answer is that the Gospel of Luke was written **BEFORE** Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in **70 A.D.**
- Even more, Jesus's predictions about the destruction of the Temple are also in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark
- And like Luke, neither Matthew or Mark ever recorded the actual destruction of the Temple in their Gospels, so there is great reason to believe they were also written **before** 70 A.D.



## Gospel of Luke (con't):

- What we just went over is one type of historical analysis that historians have used to date the Gospels
- By using other historical analyses, many historians have “fine tuned” the dating of the Gospels and believe that all three were written by 63 A.D.
- In other words, all three were written within 30 years after the time of Jesus

Okay, you have convinced me that the Gospels were written practically right after the time of Jesus, but I still have one last question:

“If we don’t have any originals of the Gospels today, then how do we know that the copies that we do have are the same as the originals that we don’t have?”

In other words, how do we know that what we have now, is what they wrote back then?

# The Bibliography Test:

To answer that question, historians employ something called the “Bibliography Test”





# The Bibliography Test:

- The Bibliography Test looks at two things to determine whether copies match the originals even when we don't have the originals.
- First, historians look at the dates of the oldest surviving handwritten copies of an ancient writing
- Second, historians look at how many handwritten copies we have of the originals (i.e., just a few vs. thousands of copies)

# Importance of Date of Earliest Copies:

- This test looks at the **date** of the oldest surviving handwritten copies of an ancient manuscript
- Specifically, historians want to know **how soon** were the oldest surviving copies written after the originals were written
- Back in those times, there weren't any photocopy machines (the first printing press was not invented until around **1440 A.D.** by Johannes Gutenberg)
- Therefore, when someone made a copy of an original or a copy of a copy, they had to **do it by hand**

And mistakes can be made when copying by hand, especially when the copying goes on for hundreds or thousands of years





## Date of Earliest Copies (con't):

- For example, one guy first makes a copy of an original
- Then 100 years later someone makes a copy of a copy
- Then 200 years later someone makes a copy of a copy of a copy and so on and so forth for hundreds of years
- So the shorter the time between when the originals were written and when the oldest surviving copies were written, the fewer mistakes there will be

## Date of Earliest Copies (con't):

- For books written 2,000 to 3,000 years ago, on average, the oldest surviving copies were written around **1,000 years after** the originals were written
- In other words, the oldest surviving copies are not copies of originals or even copies of copies, but are copies of copies of copies of copies of copies etc.
- For the New Testament, however, we have fragments of Gospels that date to as early as **120 A.D.** and whole copies of the Bible that date to **325-350 A.D.**

This includes the John Rylands fragment, a handwritten fragment of the Gospel of John that dates to 120 A.D., only 30 years after the Gospel of John was written by the Apostle John himself





And it also includes the Bodmer papyrus II that contains fragments of the Gospels of John and Luke and dates to 150-200 A.D.



And it also includes the Codex Vaticanus (maintained in the Vatican library), which is a copy of almost the entire Bible and dates to 325 A.D.



## Date of Earliest Copies (con't):

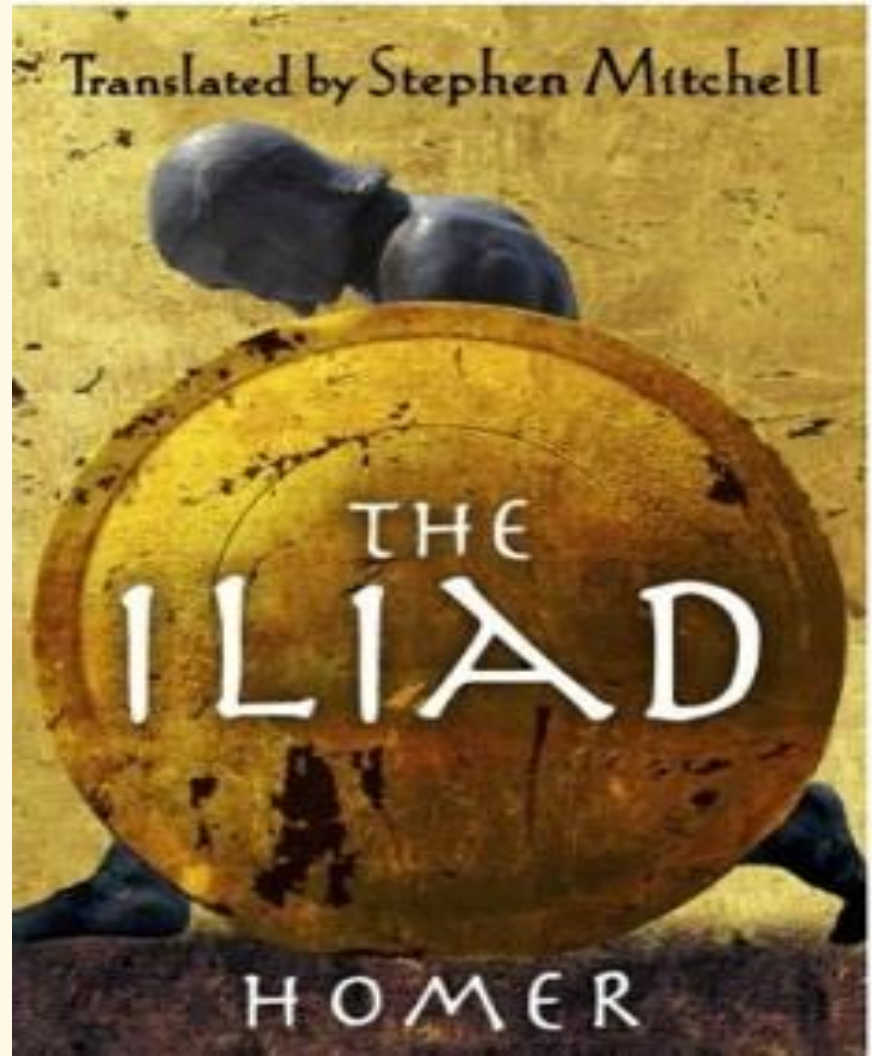
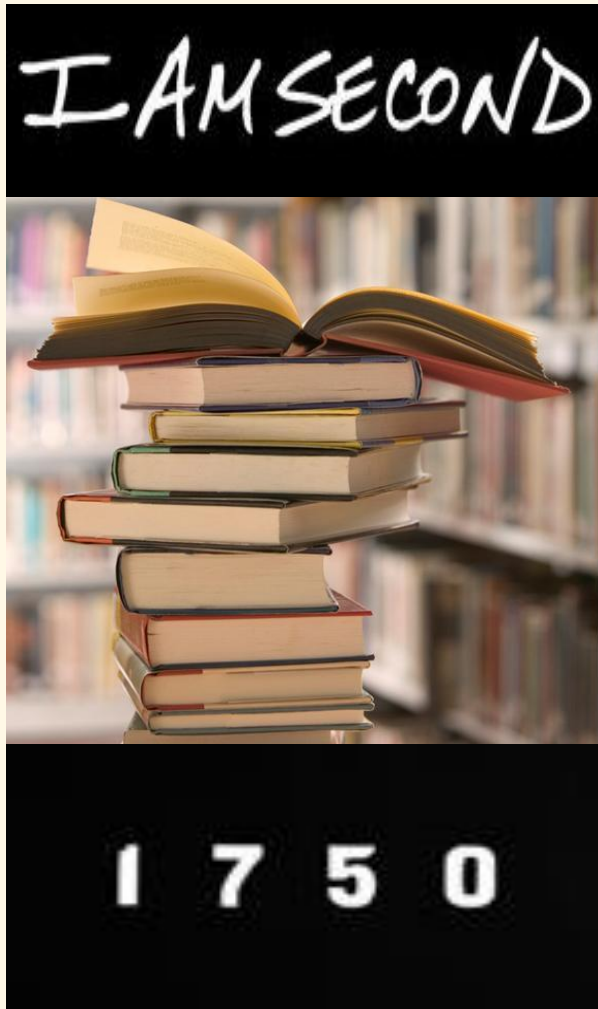
- So we have fragments of handwritten copies of some Gospels that are within 30 to 130 years of the date of the originals
- And we have an entire handwritten copy of the Bible that dates to approximately 250 years after the originals
- This means the time difference between the originals and oldest surviving handwritten copies of the New Testament ranges from only 30 years to 250 years
- Which is extremely important because historians have determined this is not enough time for major changes to occur during the copy process



# Importance of Number of Copies:

- Now let's switch from looking at the dates of copies to see why the number of copies we have of ancient writings is also very important
- Again, we're not talking about printed copies like when books get printed nowadays, but rather handwritten copies that are in most cases over a 1,000 years old
- For most ancient books, we have very few old surviving copies, with most ancient works having less than 20 copies
- In fact, let's have a little competition and see how the New Testament does against other well-known non-Christian books of ancient times

Let's start by counting down the top two ancient books. In 2nd place we have Homer's "Iliad" (a famous Greek poem) with 1,750 ancient handwritten copies



Any guesses as to who is in first place (for extra credit, try to also guess how many old handwritten copies our first place finisher has?)

AND THE  
WINNER IS!.....





The first place finisher is the New Testament, which amazingly has over 25,000 old handwritten copies!



**As you can see, asking the competition to stand up against the New Testament isn't exactly a fair fight!**

**Iliad**  
**(1,750)**



**New Testament**  
**(over 25,000)**



**Others**  
**(under 300)**



## Number of Copies (con't):

- This large collection of New Testament copies include copies in Greek (the language that the New Testament was originally written in) plus copies translated into other languages
- We have 5,800 handwritten partial and complete copies of the New Testament in the original Greek from the 2nd to the 15th centuries (with more being discovered each year)
- We also have 10,000 copies in Latin (after Greek, Latin became the main language of the Roman Empire)
- Plus, we have over 10,000 copies in various other languages (Coptic, Syriac, Georgian, Armenian, etc.) for over 25,000 old handwritten copies in total



## Number of Copies (con't):

- Now let's look at why having so many copies is important, starting with the 5,800 old handwritten Greek copies we have
- First, because of all these copies, we have complete early copies of every book of the New Testament (most copies of other ancient works have significant portions missing)
- Also, some Biblical scholars have compared the copies to each other and found that they are over 97% the same (with other scholars saying that they are up to 99.5% the same)
- This means that copies of the New Testament made by different people, hundreds of years and thousands of miles apart, are almost identical

Okay, but for those few times where the ancient Greek copies of the New Testament disagree with each other, how do we know what the originals actually said?



## Number of Copies (con't):

- Surprisingly, it's actually not that hard to figure out
- First off, the differences in the surviving copies of the New Testament are only minor differences in a word here or there
- In other words, it's not like some copies say Jesus is the Son of God and some say he isn't
- And figuring out what the originals said is actually pretty easy since we have so many old surviving handwritten copies. Let's take a look at an example



Suppose that in one of our 5,800 ancient Greek copies, John 3:16 starts off by saying:

*“For God so loved the word that ..”*



But then we notice that in all of the other 5,800  
ancient Greek copies, John 3:16 says:

*“For God so loved the world that .. ”*



Hmmm, I wonder who won that one?

5,799

>

1



Heads! We lose!



# Number of Copies (con't):

- It's pretty easy to see that the person who made that one copy by hand made a slight mistake and forgot the letter "L" when writing down the "World"
- And it's also pretty obvious that the original John 3:16 (written by John himself) read the same way the other 5,800 Greek copies had it written down
- So having 5,800 Greek handwritten copies and 20,000 copies in other languages lets us correct the minor mistakes between copies of the New Testament and clearly know what the originals said
- In other words, all of these ancient manuscript copies effectively serve as "photographs" that give us a snapshot of what the original books of the New Testament actually looked like

It's no different than using all the pictures (the "copies") of the World Trade Centers to remember what the actual World Trade Centers (the "originals") looked like even though they don't exist anymore



Okay, now that we know  
how the Bibliography Test works,  
let's go back and see how the New  
Testament compares against other  
major ancient writings in the  
final rankings



Once again, we see that the New Testament is #1 and absolutely dominates the competition

<b>Work/Author</b>	<b>Date Written</b>	<b>Earliest Copy</b>	<b>Years Elapsed</b>	<b>Number of Copies</b>
Tacitus	100 AD	850-1050 AD	750-950	33
Herodotus	480-425 BC	100 AD	525	110
Plato	400 BC	900 AD	1300	210
Caesar	100-44 BC	900 AD	950	251
Iliad (Homer)	800 BC	400 BC	400	1,750
<b>New Testament</b>	<b>40-95 AD</b>	<b>125 AD</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Over 25,000</b>

# What about the Old Testament?

- The accuracy of the New Testament is not surprising since the Gospel writers and most early Christians were Jewish, and Jewish culture has always placed a big emphasis on education (including attention to detail)
- In fact, to understand the importance of this **attention to detail**, let's switch gears for a second and briefly discuss the accuracy of the ancient copies of the **Hebrew Bible** (i.e., our Old Testament)
- First, to be clear, the originals and earliest copies of the Old Testament have been lost or destroyed over time due to wars and Israel's turbulent history, especially the destruction of their First and Second Temples
- As a result, the dates between the originals and the oldest surviving copies is much longer than in the case of the New Testament

Despite that, there is clear evidence that the Old Testament (which was written from 1,450 B.C. to 450 B.C.) has been more accurately copied over time than any other ancient writing of similar age





# Accuracy of Old Testament Copies:

- To ensure accuracy when making copies of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), the Jewish scribes (i.e., teachers and lawyers) making the copies would **count** the number of occurrences of every **single letter**
- The scribe would then compare the letter count for his copy to the **official count** for that book of the Hebrew Bible
- In addition, after a copy was completed, a master examiner would then painstakingly count every individual letter to confirm that there were no errors in the newly copied manuscript
- If a **single error** was found, the entire manuscript **was destroyed** to ensure that it could never be used as a master copy in the future

# Accuracy of Old Testament Copies (con't):

- To see how accurate this copying process was, let's look at the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in a cave by the Dead Sea in 1947 and which contained two handwritten copies of the Book of Isaiah
- Thanks to carbon dating, we know that the two copies of Isaiah that were discovered as part of the Dead Sea Scrolls were written 1,000 years earlier than the next oldest handwritten copies of Isaiah
- When the Dead Sea Scroll copies of Isaiah were compared to the copies of Isaiah that were 1,000 years older, they were found to be more than 95% the same
- And, just like with the New Testament, the minor 5% of differences consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and minor variations in spelling

This means the Jewish process of copying the Hebrew Bible was so accurate that there are books of the Hebrew Bible that were copied over a 1,000 years apart that are virtually identical!

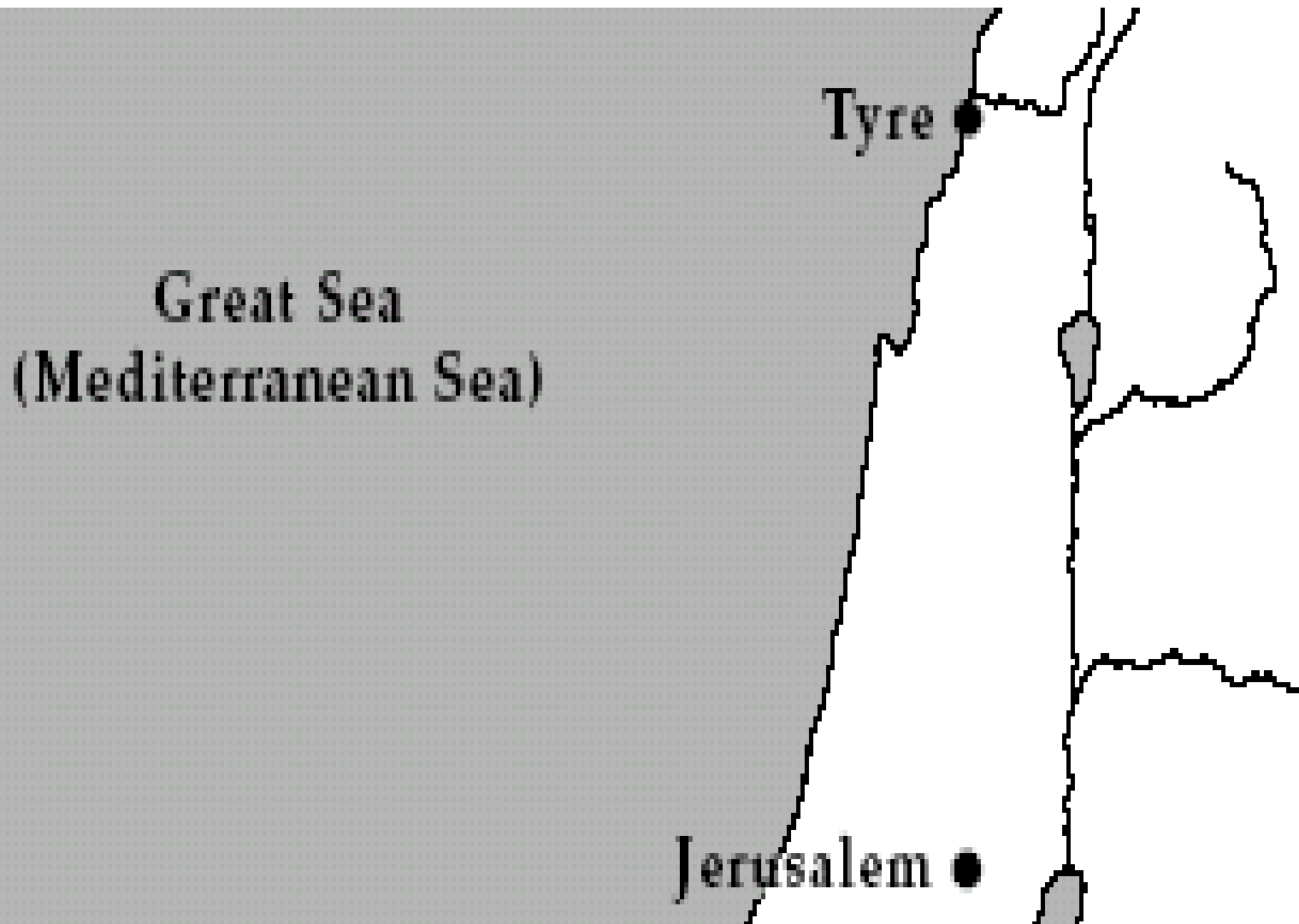




# Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecies:

- In addition to the precision of its copying process, the Old Testament also has something no other book of ancient times has to prove its reliability, which is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies
- By “Old Testament prophecies”, we mean the hundreds and hundreds of predictions in the Old Testament that came true even though most were made hundreds (sometimes thousands) of years ahead of time
- In fact, there are so many prophecies in the Old Testament that I’ve done a separate power point just for them (which we will see another time)
- So for today we are going to just take a quick look at one example so we can get a sense of why the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies is so important

Specifically, let's look at the prophecies about the ancient city of Tyre, which was a high-traffic port city on the Mediterranean Sea 100 miles north of Jerusalem (what is now modern day Lebanon)



# Tyre

- The city of Tyre is mentioned many times in the Old Testament
- For example, around 970 B.C., Hiram (the king of Tyre) played a major role in providing King Solomon with building materials for King Solomon's palace and the First Temple
- The Bible states that Hiram sent cedar trees, carpenters, masons, and builders to Israel (2 Samuel 5:11) because of the Tyrians' renowned skill in timber cutting (1 Kings 5:1-18)
- The Tyrians were also very skilled sailors, and 2 Chronicles 8:18 states that Hiram sent ships and "servants who knew the sea" to work with Solomon's men in acquiring gold from foreign lands



Also, Tyre had an interesting geographical arrangement, with part of the city being located on the mainland and part of it on a small rocky island about half a mile off the coast



## Tyre (con't)

- Tyre's geography gave it key defensive advantages that made it almost impossible to attack the city, especially the island part of the city
- The walls on the island that faced the mainland were 150 feet high and rose straight up above the sea, and the channel between the island and the mainland was over twenty feet deep with frequent violent winds
- So putting battering rams on a ship being hit by violent winds wouldn't work, and attacking the island with artillery (such as catapults) from the shore of the mainland would be useless at such a range
- And since the walls of the island city dropped straight into the sea, using ladders or approaching by foot wouldn't work either, so as early as 1400 B.C., Tyre was considered unconquerable

## Tyre (con't)

- Along with its natural defenses, historians say that Tyre's advantageous position on the coast and good ports also enabled Tyre to become an extremely wealthy trading city
- Which brings us to the Prophet Ezekiel, who lived from approximately 622 B.C. to 570 B.C.
- At this time, while Tyre was well established and renowned for its profitable trading, its wealth had done little good for its spiritual condition
- In fact, Ezekiel notes that the riches of the city had caused widespread spiritual decay (Ezekiel 28:16-18)

## Tyre (con't)

- This led Ezekiel (in Ezekiel 26) to predict that the following events were going to happen to Tyre as punishment for its arrogance:
  - Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, would attack and build a siege wall around Tyre and plunder the city;
  - Many nations would come against Tyre;
  - The walls of Tyre would be broken down;
  - The stones, timber and soil of Tyre would be cast into the sea;
  - Dust would be scraped from her, and she would be left like a bare rock; and
  - Tyre would be a place for spreading nets



Evidence from the Bible and other ancient writings show that Ezekiel made these predictions around 586 B.C., so starting there, let's move forward in time and see how he did



# How Did We Do?



With respect to the prediction that “many nations” would come against Tyre, this began when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Tyre



## Tyre (con't)

- Historical records show that the attack and siege by Nebuchadnezzar began within a couple of years after Ezekiel's prophecy and lasted for 13 years, ending around 573 B.C.
- Nebuchadnezzar built siege mounds during the attack and destroyed mainland Tyre, which were both predicted by Ezekiel
- However, many inhabitants of mainland Tyre fled to the island part of Tyre, so while Nebuchadnezzar conquered mainland Tyre (as predicted), historians agree he was not able to conquer island Tyre
- But island Tyre did not escape destruction forever



In fact, in **332 B.C.**, when Alexander the Great was leading his Macedonian (Greek) troops towards Egypt, he laid siege to island Tyre when they refused to accept a peace treaty with him





To defeat the island city, Alexander the Great did something never done before and built a land bridge from the mainland to the island to attack its supposedly impregnable defenses



## Tyre (con't)

- Alexander the Great had tens of thousands of men carry timber, stones, rubble and even dirt from the ruins of the mainland city and throw them into the sea to construct the land bridge (or causeway)
- The causeway was then used for stone throwers, light catapults, archers and naval battering rams to smash through the walls of island Tyre after a seven month siege
- The Tyrians were no match for Alexander's troops and, as a result, the island city of Tyre was conquered and suffered heavy damage
- 7,000-8,000 Tyrians died while only 400 Macedonians were killed, and as many as 30,000 remaining survivors were sold into slavery while 2,000 men of military age were crucified



And so much rubble and stones were thrown into the water that, including ocean sediment, **7.5 million** square feet of new land was created that formed a broad peninsula that still exists today



## Tyre (con't)

- Therefore, in clear fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy, tons and tons of the very foundation stones, timbers and dirt of the mainland city were cast into the sea (to build the land bridge)
- Also, the walls of Tyre were knocked down and scraping the area of mainland Tyre to get all that stone and rubble for the land bridge left that area like a bare rock, also just as Ezekiel predicted
- But we're not done yet. When Ezekiel said “many nations” would come against Tyre, he didn't mean just one or two, he meant many as in a lot, lot more
- Soon after Alexander the Great, Ptolemy of Egypt conquered and subjugated Tyre until about 315 B.C., at which time Antigonus of Syria besieged Tyre for 15 months and captured it



## Tyre (con't)

- Then around 193 A.D., Tyre was plundered by the Romans and many of her citizens were slaughtered, and around 1098 A.D., the Vizier of Egypt entered the city and massacred a large number of people
- The city was besieged again in 1111 A.D. and again in 1124 A.D., and then around the year 1155 A.D., the Egyptians entered Tyre and plundered it and carried off many prisoners
- Finally, in 1291 A.D., Muslims attacked the city and massacred the inhabitants of Tyre and subjected the city to utter ruin, and with that the prophecy of “many” nations attacking Tyre was clearly fulfilled
- Also, one historian reports that several hundred years after the Muslim destruction of Tyre, the only people in the area were a few poor citizens who survived chiefly by fishing

## Tyre (con't)

- Therefore these fishermen, who would lay out their fishing nets each day, fulfilled Ezekiel's prediction about the spreading of nets
- With the spreading of the nets, we see that all of the prophecies from Ezekiel mentioned above were fulfilled in precise detail
- Since most of the prophecies were fulfilled hundreds of years or more after Ezekiel's death, there is no way anyone can say the events happened first and Ezekiel only made the predictions after the fact
- And if anyone thinks the Prophet Ezekiel just made a bunch of lucky guesses, a well-known mathematician has calculated the odds of all of those prophecies coming true to be just one chance in 75,000,000



That would be the same as standing waist deep in a massive room with 75 million balls where there is only one magic ball and you have just one guess to find the right ball





## Tyre (con't)

- Or to put it another way, it means ordinary people like us would need 75,000,000 guesses to get those predictions right, but Ezekiel got them right the very first time! Can an ordinary person really be that lucky?
- Also, keep in mind that there are hundreds and hundreds of other prophecies in the Old Testament made about other countries, places and peoples (including Jesus) that also came true in precise detail
- The odds all these prophecies came true by luck are so incredibly low, these prophecies (and the Old Testament, which gives us these prophecies) must have come from God since only He knows the future
- So, thanks to Old Testament prophecies along with a rigorous copying process, we see that the evidence for the reliability of the Old Testament is every bit as compelling as the evidence for the New Testament

# The Early Church Fathers help too

- In fact, as we finish up, let's switch back to the New Testament (our primary source of information about Jesus) and look at some additional evidence we have for the New Testament from the early Church fathers
- First, thanks to the early Church fathers (who were the pastors and priests of the early Church), we have written evidence that New Testament books were in use by the early Church less than 100 years after Jesus
- For example, Polycarp (who lived from 69-156 A.D.) was a student of the Apostle John and was appointed by John to be the bishop of Smyrna, and Irenaeus (who lived from 120-202 A.D.) was a student of Polycarp
- Polycarp and Irenaeus, along with Justin Martyr (110-168 A.D.), all clearly mentioned books of the Bible as being divinely inspired in their writings

# The Early Church Fathers (con't)

- In addition to Polycarp, Irenaeus and Justin Martyr, the early Church leaders also included Ignatius (50-110 A.D.), Tertullian (145-220 A.D.), Hippolytus (170-235 A.D.) and Novatian (210-280 A.D.), among others
- Some of the writings of the early Church leaders date to as early as 90 to 125 A.D., which is less than 100 years after Jesus
- In addition, one Biblical scholar says the early Church leaders in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries quoted the New Testament 36,289 times in their written sermons, letters and other writings
- Another Biblical scholar catalogued 86,000 references to the Bible made by the early Church leaders by 325 A.D.



The early Church leaders quoted the New Testament so much in their writings during the first few hundred years after Jesus, that like pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle . . .

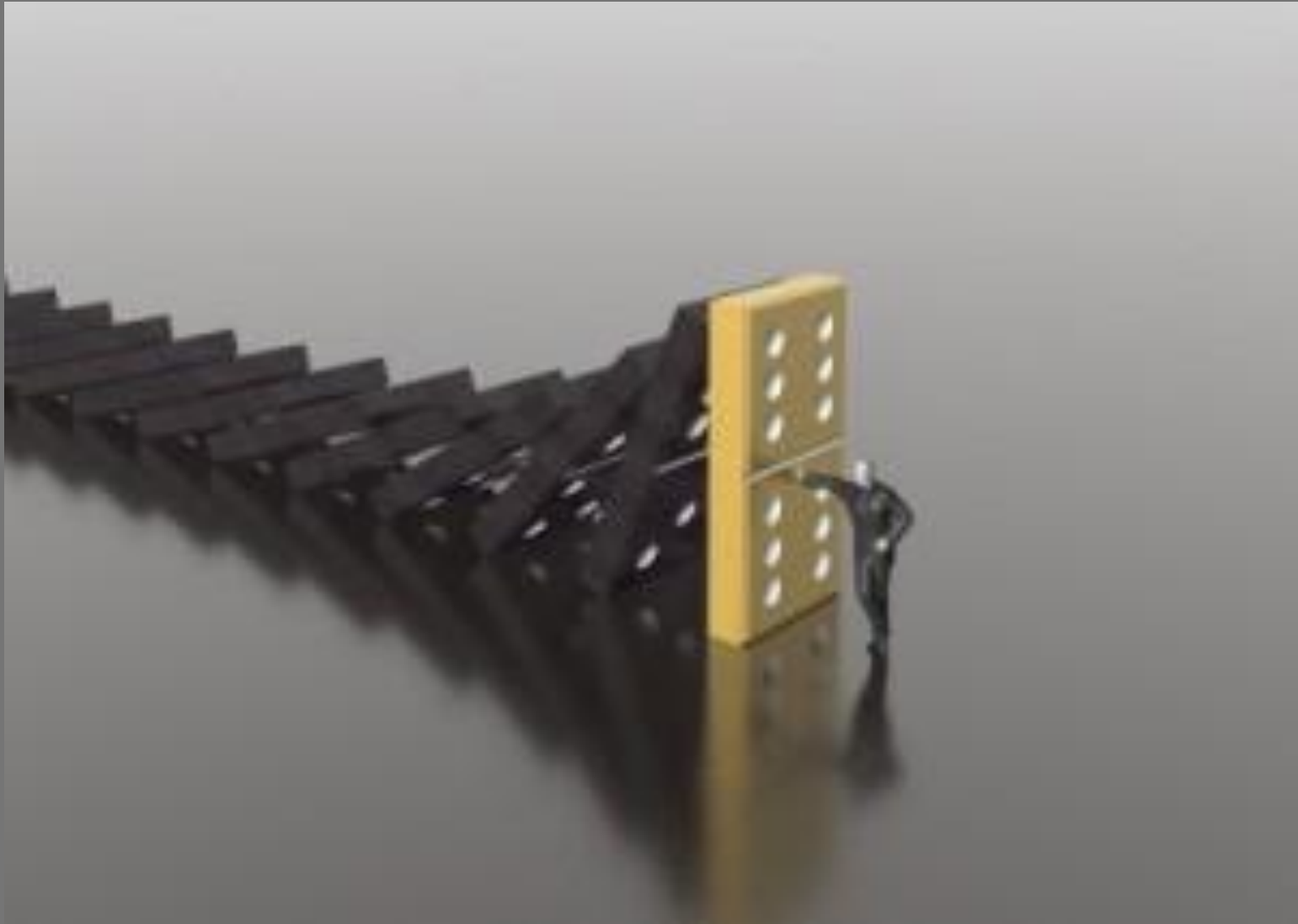




Even if we had no surviving copies of the Bible, we could still reconstruct almost half the New Testament and all of the Gospel of John (except for only 11 verses) just from their written quotes!



**In fact, all the old copies of the New Testament we have along with so many early Church writings give us a continuous and unbroken line of testimony all the way from Jesus to us**





which is why historians  
along with Biblical scholars,  
after looking at all this evidence, have  
concluded that the Bible (especially  
the New Testament) is the most  
*trustworthy, reliable, verified,*  
*attested* and *supported* book  
of all ancient writings

In other words,  
you can trust with  
certainty that what you are  
reading right now, perfectly  
describes what they saw  
and wrote about Jesus  
back then

WHICH IS EXACTLY  
WHAT GOD INTENDED!

