


“He was led like a lamb to the slaughter...” (Isaiah 53:7)

**Old
Testament
Prophecy:
Seeing the
Face of
God**



Many people today, especially when facing troubles and difficulties, struggle with believing in God



WHERE
ARE YOU
GOD?

After all, once we get to a certain age, we don't believe in the tooth fairy anymore



I also don't know anyone who still believes in the boogeyman (although you should probably check under your bed tonight just to be sure)



And while they are fun to watch, I'm pretty sure we all know the superheroes we see on the big screen aren't real either



So why then should we believe in God? After all, we can't see God, touch him or run tests on him, so maybe he's just a fairy tale like other fictional characters



But here's the big difference: we all know fairy tales are just fantasy make-believe, and there's no reason to believe in them since there is no evidence any of those characters ever existed



On the other hand, it's much easier to believe something when you can see it, feel it or touch it



In fact, even when we can't feel or touch something, we will still believe in it if we look hard enough and are able to find clues that it exists



For example, bear tracks in the snow tell us bears are real and a bear made the tracks (even if we didn't see it happen) since tracks don't magically create themselves



And if we see a **fingerprint** at a crime scene, then we know a person left it there (and not some fairy tale character) even if we didn't see them do it and don't know who it was yet



Evidence for God

- It's the same thing with God
- Even though we can't physically touch or see God, we have a tremendous amount of evidence that God really does exist
- Think of this evidence as the footprints (like bear tracks) and fingerprints of God
- God has left us this evidence all throughout creation (we call this the scientific evidence for God) and also in the Bible as clear and unmistakable clues of His existence

The scientific evidence that flows from the majesty of creation and testifies to the handiwork of its Creator is something I cover in a separate power point so we are not going to talk about that today

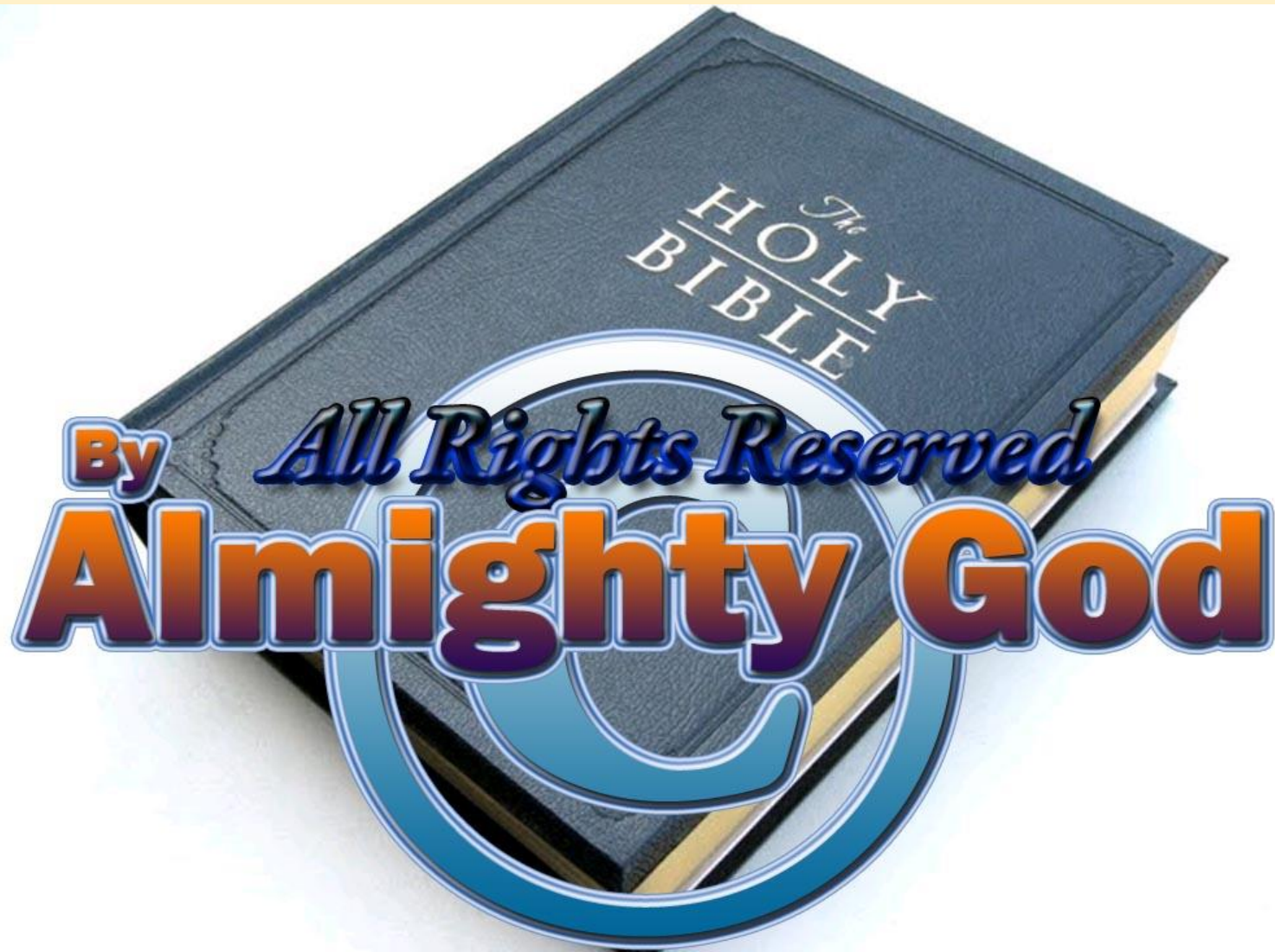


Instead, today we are going to look at other evidence, the evidence from the amazing fulfillment of prophecies made by prophets all throughout the Old Testament of the Bible

Prophecy Fulfilled: God's Hand in World Affairs



These prophecies are clues (the fingerprints and footprints of God) that God has left us that not only point to His existence, but also show that only He could have inspired the Bible



By a **prophet**, we mean a person who has been called by and speaks for God. As God's messenger, a prophet receives commandments, revelations and prophecies from God

And by Old Testament **prophecies**,
we mean predictions about the future
that were made by many different
prophets in numerous books
of the Old Testament over
hundreds of years

These Old Testament books include the five books written by the four Major Prophets, which are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel (Jeremiah wrote both Jeremiah and Lamentations)

Major Prophets

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
at pppst.com



And also include the 12 books written by the 12 Minor Prophets (they are not minor because they are less important, but because their books are shorter than the Major Prophet books)

MINOR PROPHETS

Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi



So all told, 17 of the 39 books of the Old Testament are considered books of prophecy, written by the 16 main prophets whose writings have come down to us through history

Major & Minor Prophets

NOTE: THE TWO CLASSIFICATIONS, "MAJOR" AND "MINOR" ARE BASED ON THE SIZE OF THE BOOKS AND NOT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS MESSAGE.

FOUR



MAJOR PROPHETS

ISAIAH

JEREMIAH

EZEKIEL

DANIEL



TWELVE



MINOR PROPHETS

HOSEA

JOEL

AMOS

OBADIAH

JONAH

MICAH

NAHUM

HABAKKUK

ZEPHANIAH

HAGGAI

ZECHARIAH

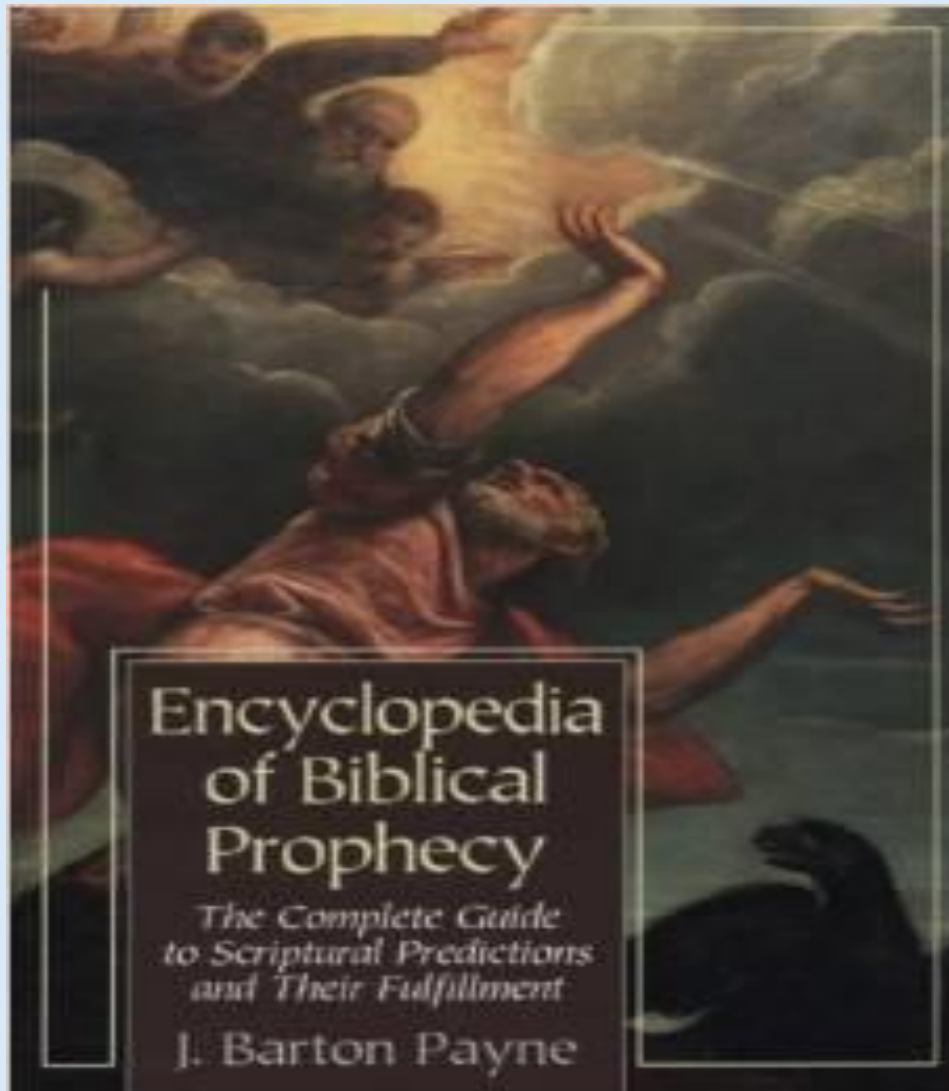
MALACHI

Also, the prophecies aren't limited to the Major and Minor Prophets. According to one estimate, there are 48 men and 7 women whose prophecies are recorded in the Old Testament

THE PROPHETS

OBADIAH
HABAKKUK
MALACHI
ZEPHANIAH
JEREMIAH
JOEL
AMOS
HAGGAI
MICAH
ISAIAH
NAHUM
ZECHARIAH
EZEKIEL
DANIEL
HOSEA
JONAH
LAMENTATIONS

And it's not just a few prophecies either. J. Barton Payne, in the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, estimates there are as many as 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament



Old Testament Prophecy

- Of the Old Testament's 23,210 verses, 6,641 contain some sort of predictions, over 28% of the entire Old Testament
- In fact, there are only two books in the Old Testament (Ruth and the Song of Solomon) that don't contain any prophecies
- Also, besides the 16 main prophets, the 48 men who made prophetic statements in the Old Testament include Noah, Abraham, Moses and King David
- The prophecies begin in Genesis 3:15, the first book of the Old Testament written around 1,450 B.C., and continue to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament written around 430 B.C.

Old Testament Prophecy

- So we have prophecies recorded over a 1,000 year period from over 50 people, people who range from uneducated farmers like Amos to sophisticated poets like Isaiah
- And who range from cowards like Jonah to men of great courage like Daniel
- And include little known people like Joel as well as famous people like King David
- But while the number of people making prophecies and the number of prophecies made definitely gets your attention

What's truly amazing is the way that so many of these prophecies came true in precise detail hundreds of years after they were made!



To understand just how amazing, let's dig in and see what evidence we can uncover as to what the prophecies were and how they were fulfilled



Old Testament Prophecy

- As we begin, keep in mind that with so many prophecies in the Old Testament, it's hard to generalize what they cover
- But from the reading I have done, it seems like many (not all but most) of the prophecies fall into one of three main categories:
 - Prophecies warning Israel and Judah to repent before God brings a nasty judgment on them (after King Solomon, the land of Israel was split into Israel in the north and Judah in the south)
 - Prophecies warning other countries to repent before God brings a nasty judgment on them
 - And prophecies about the Messiah, both his first coming and then also the Messiah's second coming (i.e., the “End Times”)

Old Testament Prophecy

- We're not going to talk about end time prophecies since the Second Coming obviously haven't happened yet (but make no mistake, that's just a matter of when not if!)
- Instead, we're going to spend some time today looking at prophecies about various countries in the Bible (including Judah) and then also prophecies about the first coming of the Messiah
- First, we know from the Bible that the northern kingdom of Israel was repeatedly warned by God to repent from its wickedness, but Israel ignored all the warnings
- Israel was then judged by God in 722 B.C. when the Assyrian empire conquered Israel and its capital city of Samaria and deported the people of Israel to other lands

Old Testament Prophecy

- After the capture of Israel, the prophets Isaiah and Micah (around 730-700 B.C.) warned Judah that it was on the same road to destruction that Israel faced at the hands of the Assyrians
- As Judah's sin got worse, other prophets warned Judah, including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah from around 650 B.C. to 587 B.C.
- All their prophecies came true when the Babylonians defeated the Assyrians in 612 B.C. and the Egyptians in 605 B.C. to become the number one power in the civilized world
- Following the defeat of the Egyptians, the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar then conquered Judah

This began the deportation of Jerusalem into exile in Babylon, which involved deportations in 605 B.C., 597 B.C. and then finally in 586 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar



While the people of Israel never returned from captivity in Assyria, Jeremiah prophesied around 580 B.C. that the Jews (“Jew” is short for “Judahite”) would start returning from Babylon after 70 years

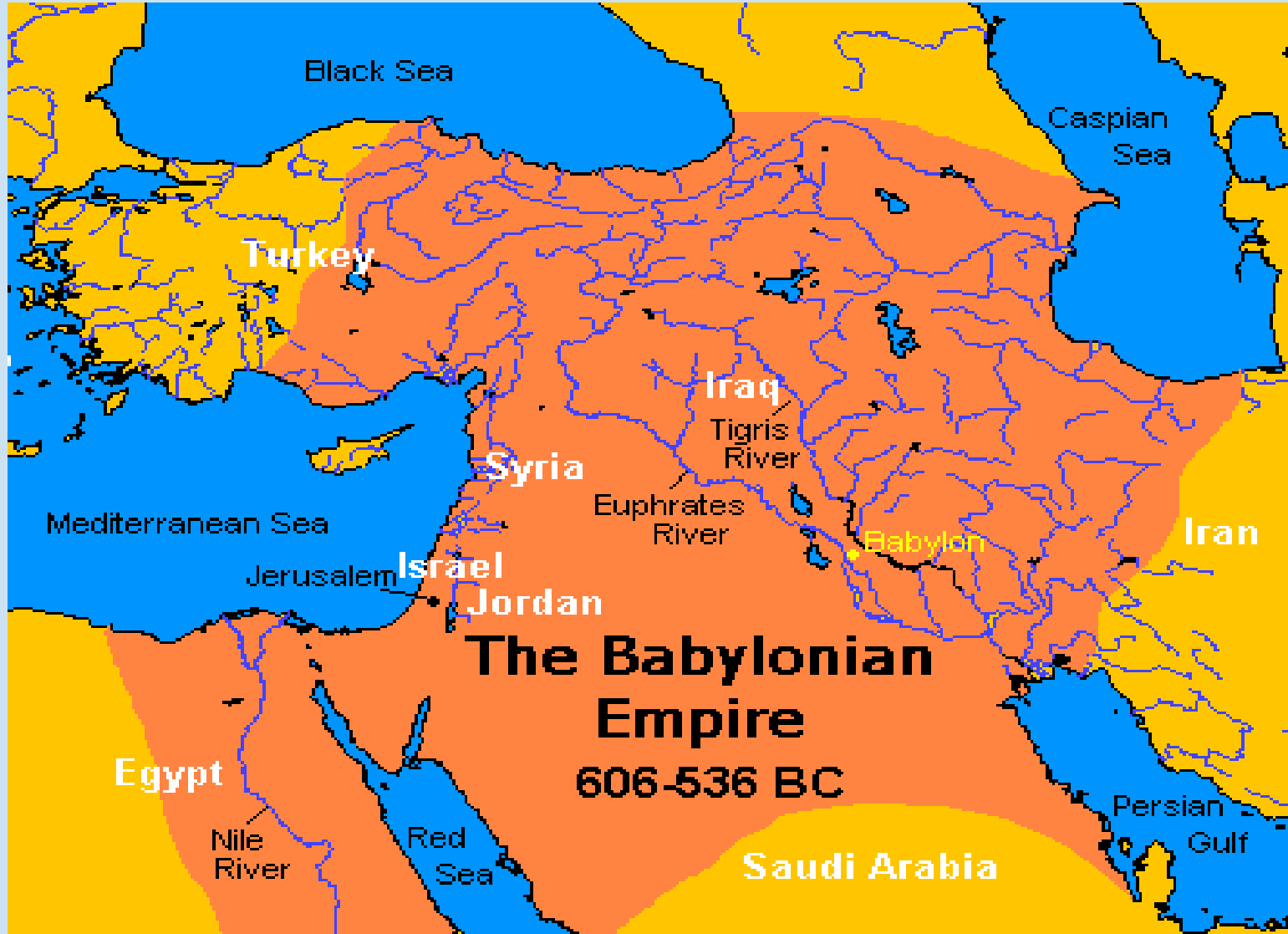


Old Testament Prophecy

- Jeremiah's prophecy came true in 537 B.C. when the first Jewish exiles began returning to Jerusalem from Babylon
- In fact, "Israel" today really refers to the old land of Judah and the descendants of the Jews who returned from exile
- So it's clear that all of the Old Testament prophecies about the judgment against Judah were fulfilled in precise detail
- And as we saw, the prophecies about Judah were made before (sometimes as much as 50 to 100 years before), not after, the attacks by the Babylonians occurred

**But while making predictions
50-100 years beforehand is impressive,
even more impressive is making predictions
that come true 500 to 1,000 years later so let's
take a look at Old Testament prophecies about
Babylon to get a better understanding of the
power of Old Testament Prophecies**

The Babylonian Empire was an empire that lasted for about 70 years from approximately 606 B.C. to approximately 536 B.C.



The center of the Babylonian Empire was the city of Babylon, which was located just over 50 miles south of where Baghdad is today in modern day Iraq



Babylon first shows up in the Bible with the Tower of Babel (the Hebrew name for Babylon) where mankind, after the Flood, tried to build a tower reaching up to Heaven until God confused their language so the people couldn't understand each other



Babylon (con't)

- Including New Testament references, the Bible mentions Babylon over 280 times (next to Jerusalem, Babylon is the second most frequently mentioned city in the Bible)
- And outside the Bible, we have a reference to the city of Babylon in a tablet that dates all the way back to approximately 2,300 B.C.
- So the city of Babylon had been around for a long, long time before the Babylonian Empire rose to prominence
- In terms of its prominence, we know the Babylonians became the leading power in the world after defeating the Assyrians and the Egyptians

Babylon (con't)

- And we also know that God used the Babylonians to bring judgment against Judah
- But at the same time, Babylon itself was a ruthless empire and had its own sin to account for, which is why there were a number of prophets who condemned Babylon in the Old Testament
- We have prophecies against Babylon from Isaiah (in Isaiah 13:1-22 and 14:3-23), which were written around 739-690 B.C.
- And we also have prophecies from Jeremiah (in Jeremiah 51:1-64), which were written right around the time that the Babylonians took the Jews into captivity around 586 B.C.

Babylon (con't)

- The prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah include the following:
 - Babylon will be destroyed (Isaiah and Jeremiah);
 - Babylon will be conquered by the Medes (Isaiah and Jeremiah);
 - Babylon will be desolate and never inhabited again (Isaiah and Jeremiah);
 - Wild beasts will occupy the ruins (Isaiah and Jeremiah);
 - The city's foundation stones will not be taken away for other buildings (Jeremiah); and
 - The ruins of the city will not be frequently visited (Jeremiah)

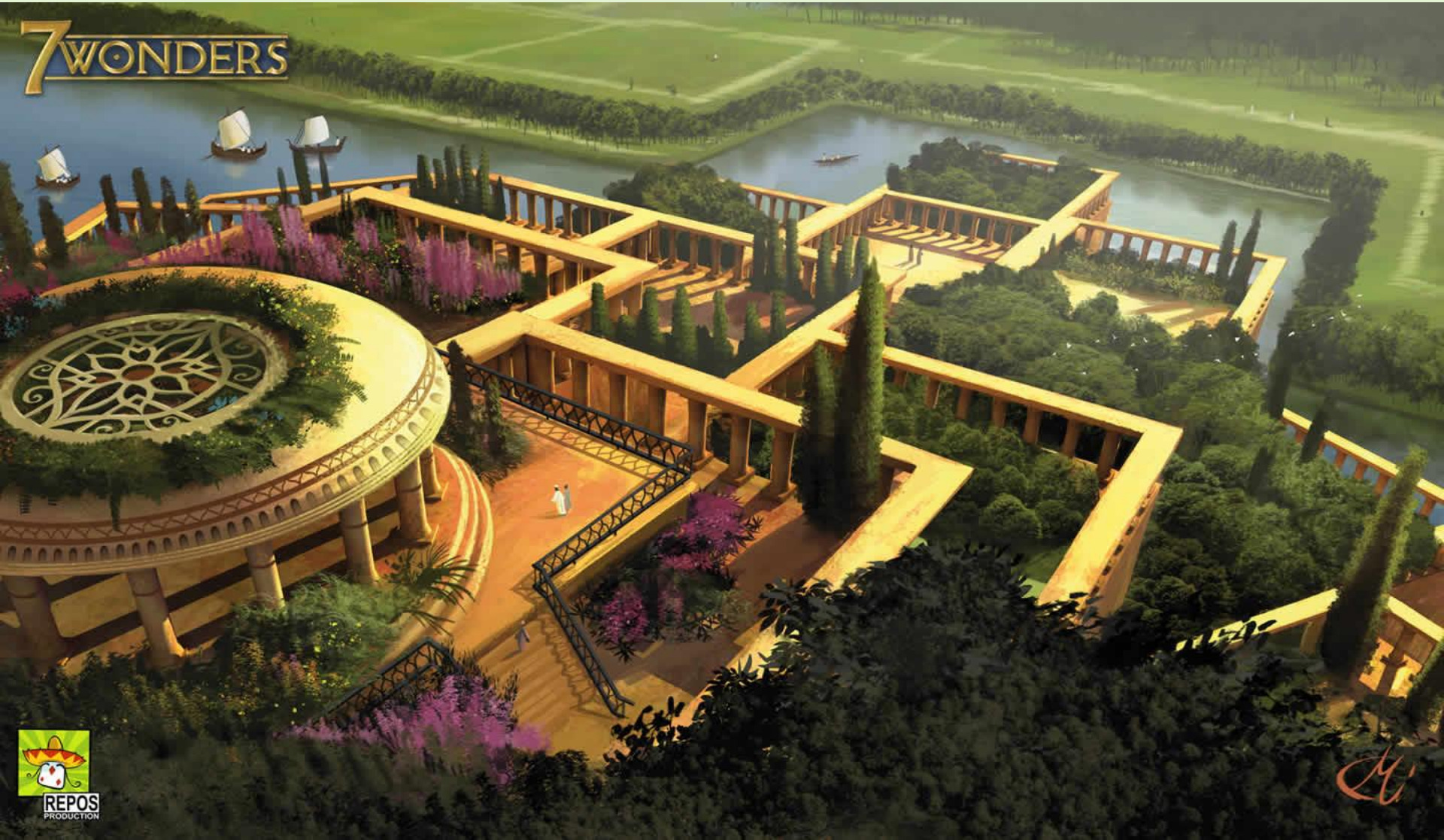
Keep in mind that back then (especially when Jeremiah made his prophecies), Babylon was the leading superpower in the world, the same way the United States is today



Babylon was surrounded by double walls (14 miles long on each side) and a 30-foot moat. The outer wall was 90 feet thick (11 cars could fit side by side), 300 feet high and went 35 feet deep into the ground



Along with being heavily fortified, Babylon was also the center of world culture in its day, and was home to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World



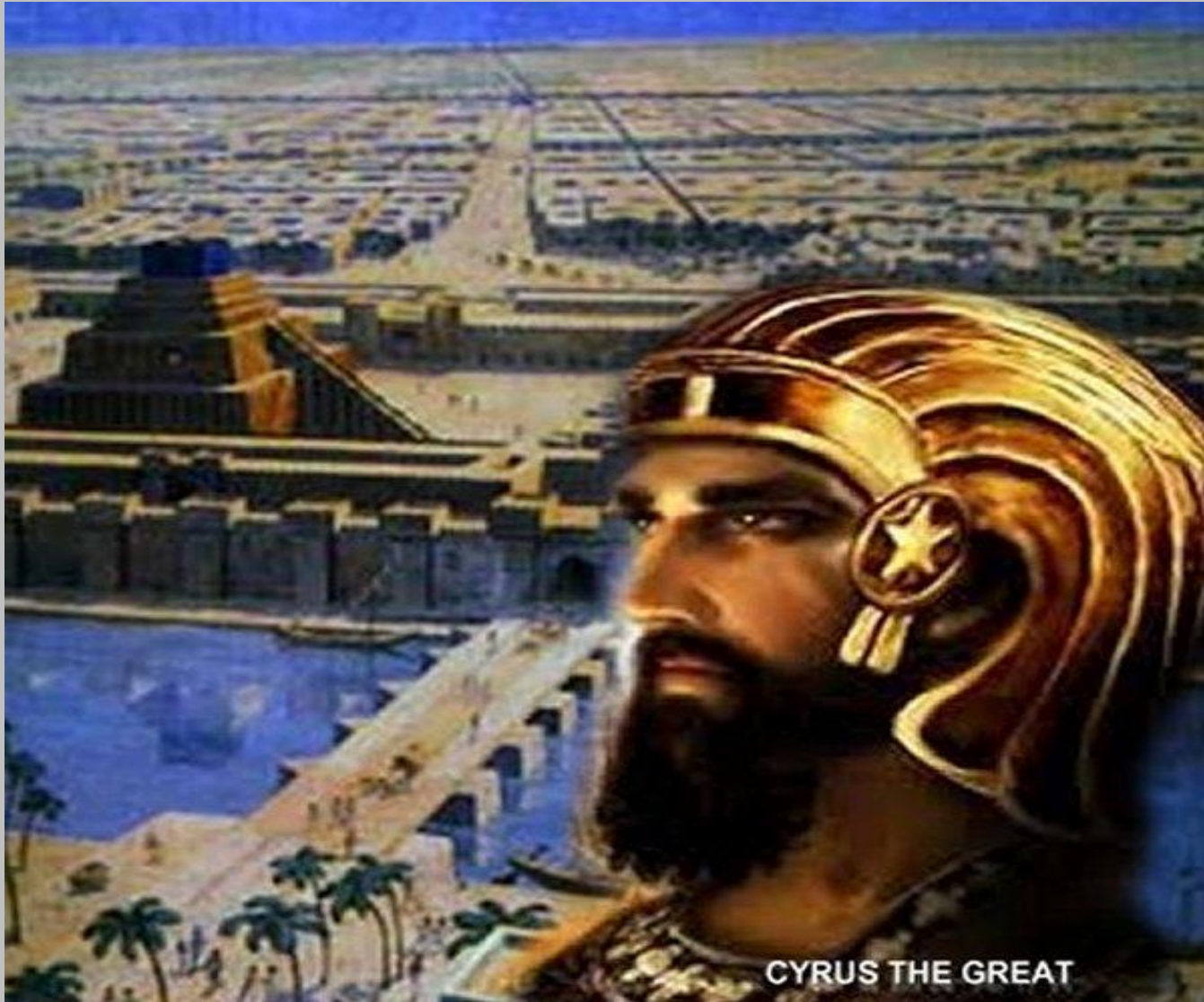
Babylon (con't)

- Also, the Euphrates river flowed through the middle of Babylon, and it had enough land (as much as 196 square miles) within its walls to guarantee its water and food supply
- As a result, Babylon had no fear of a siege and, therefore, had no fear of any enemies. Babylon thought it could survive any attacks
- So Babylon was not merely just one more thriving city of ancient times; rather it was the crown jewel, the most prosperous and fortified city in the world and the center of a world empire
- And even though Babylon had already survived for 2,000 years or more, Isaiah and Jeremiah said it would not only be attacked but would become desolate and then remain forevermore uninhabited

Talk about making Big Boy predictions! But's let go forward in time from when the prophecies were made to see how the prophets did and how many of their prophecies came true



First, even as the Babylonian Empire was reaching its peak, another empire was rising nearby and in 539 B.C., Cyrus the Great, leader of the Medes and Persians, conquered the city of Babylon



Babylon (con't)

- To do this, the Persians dug a **big canal** on the side of the Euphrates (a major river like the Mississippi river) to **divert** the water so the river, where it went under the massive city walls, was only **thigh level**
- The Medo-Persian soldiers were then able to **march** in the lowered river to get **under the walls** of Babylon and conquer the city. This ended the Babylonian Empire, but the Persians kept the city.
- The city was not damaged much when it was first conquered, but the Babylonians subsequently rebelled and twice, in **520 B.C.** and **514 B.C.**, the city suffered damage when the Persians retook the city
- Then later, under another Persian king (around **483 B.C.**), Babylon's main temple was destroyed and much of the city was turned into ruins

Next, Babylon was conquered in 331 B.C. by Alexander the Great, one of the most famous men in history who lived from 356 B.C. to 323 B.C.



Babylon (con't)

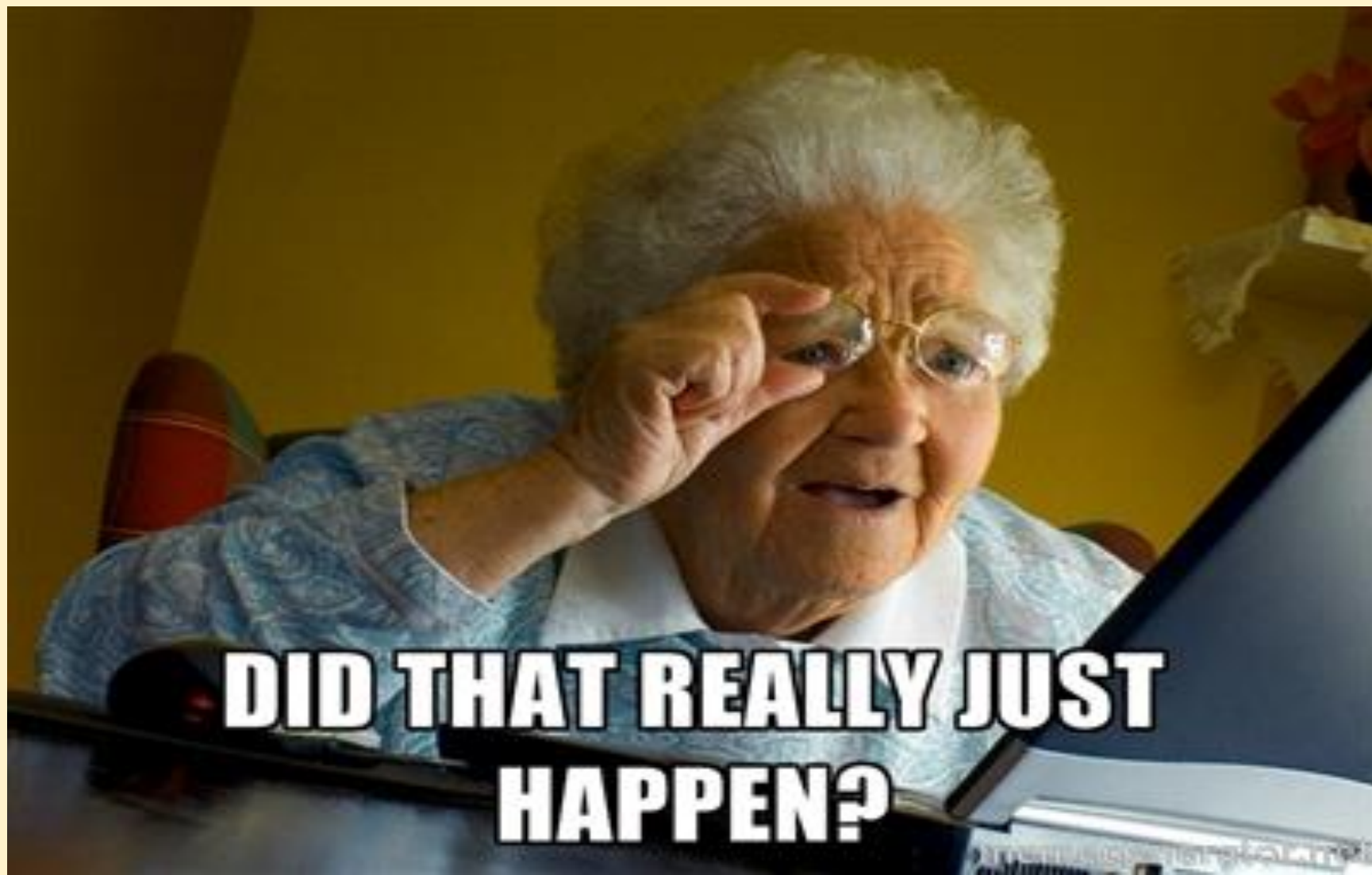
- After Alexander's death in 323 B.C., the Greek empire was divided among his generals, which lead to decades of fighting
- The fighting damaged Babylon so badly, it was easier to build a new city than to rebuild Babylon, and Seleucus (one of Alexander's former generals) built Seleucia as the new capital of the region
- According to a tablet dated 275 B.C., the population of Babylon was then relocated to Seleucia, at which time the city of Babylon practically came to an end
- When the Parthian Empire took over the region in 141 B.C., Babylon was said to be desolate, and when the Roman emperor Trajan visited the city in 116 A.D., he found nothing but stones and ruins

And it's stayed that way for over 2000 years (in fact, even as recently as 125 years ago, some parts of the city were still under 40 to 80 feet of rubble and sand)

Babylon as seen today from Google Earth



This means the prophecies that Babylon would be conquered by the Medes, would be destroyed and would remain uninhabited all came exactly true



But despite being conquered and abandoned for thousands of years, the foundation stones (i.e., the large stones used as major building blocks in large structures) still remain, which is also exactly as the prophecy said



Babylon (con't)

- Think about that. Often when cities are conquered, the big building stones will be taken for other building projects (and we have prophecies about cities besides Babylon where that's just what happened)
- But not so with Babylon. So the prophets said Babylon's ruins would remain, while at the same time making prophecies that other cities would be scraped bare, and **both times** that is exactly what happened!
- As for the prophecy about **wild animals**, a mid-1800's book recounted numerous travelers who said that mountain lions, jackals, hyenas, bats and other wild animals were living in or roaming through the ruins
- Which leaves us with one last prophecy to address, the prophecy about Babylon **not having many visitors**

Babylon (con't)

- While many ancient cities have successfully promoted themselves as tourist destinations, the same cannot be said for Babylon (which is located in modern day Iraq)
- For one, Iraq's constant involvement in Middle Eastern conflicts and the recent rise of terrorist groups like ISIS has made to travel to Iraq very dangerous, which discourages tourists from visiting
- Also, despite re-opening for tourism in 2009, Babylon has failed to make itself a desirable place to visit, with one recent visitor noting “after years of destruction there is not much left these days”
- So despite being one of the greatest cities of ancient times, Babylon still gets very few visitors, a perfect example of a 2600 year-old prophecy continuing to be precisely fulfilled to this very day

And if anyone thinks it was obvious Babylon would be desolate after so many attacks (and the prophecies, then, maybe aren't so impressive), **Jerusalem** has been attacked over **50** times in its history and yet it's still around and still the center of world news



Also, we can't just dismiss the prophecies about Babylon by thinking destruction was inevitable since all empires eventually end. Rome, which was founded in **753 B.C.**, has survived its share of attacks over the years along with the fall of the Roman Empire and it's still doing very well



When were the Prophecies written?

- But what about critics who say the prophecies don't count since they were really just historical accounts written after the fact?
- Well, historians believe the writings of the 16 main prophets covered 400 years from around 830 B.C. to 430 B.C., and these dates are clearly before the events they predicted
- One way historians came up with those dates is that almost all of the 16 main prophets made specific written references in their writings to the current kings of Judah, Israel, Assyria, Babylon and Persia along with other current events going on during their lifetimes
- Thanks to numerous ancient historical records along with other books of the Bible, historians know when those kings lived and other events happened, which helps them date when the prophecies were made

For example, let's say I write a book and I don't put a date in it, but then in the book I write:

“This book was written when Ronald Reagan was President”



When were the Prophecies written (con't)

- Historians will look at the thousands of historical records that tell us when Ronald Reagan was President and will know my book was written during the 1980's and not some other time like 1880 or 2080
- This same methodology of figuring out the dates of the events that happened when the prophets lived allows historians to determine with very good accuracy when the prophets wrote their prophecies
- In addition, all of the Old Testament books (including the prophetic books) were included when the Hebrew Bible (i.e., our Old Testament) was translated into Greek (known as the Septuagint)
- Historians agree that the Septuagint project began possibly as early as 285 B.C., with historians saying it was completed sometime between 250 B.C. and 130 B.C.

When were the Prophecies written (con't)

- Since something has to exist to be translated, we know that all of the Old Testament books (including all the prophecies) were definitely in existence by **130 B.C.** at the latest
- Plus we have the Dead Sea Scrolls (which we'll discuss later), which include copies of the Old Testament prophetic books that are **carbon dated** to before the time of Jesus
- And many of the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled **after**, not before, the time of Jesus, including prophecies such as the continuing desolation of Babylon that continue to be fulfilled to this very day
- So the historical evidence for the prophecies clearly shows they were written beforehand and are not historical accounts written after the fact

Peter Stoner (our math wiz)

- By the way, the prophecies discussed above about Babylon are just some of the Old Testament prophecies. There are many, many more
- In fact, years ago Peter Stoner (a well-known scientist and mathematician) wrote *Science Speaks*, a book that gives probability estimates and calculations for various Old Testament prophecies
- In his book, he examined prophecies about 11 different people groups, cities and nations. Besides Babylon, he also looked at Tyre (which I discussed in the Bible power point I previously presented)
- If you'll recall, part of Tyre was an island with walls 150 feet high that was considered unconquerable like Babylon but which suffered the same eventual destruction as Babylon

Peter Stoner (con't)

- In addition to Tyre, he also looked at prophecies about:
 - The destruction of Edom and its capital city of Petra, a rock fortress that had some of the best natural defenses in the world;
 - The desolation of Gaza and Askelon, the destruction of Samaria, and the rebuilding of the city of Jericho;
 - The lands of Moab and Ammon being conquered by foreigners and then being reinhabited by native peoples;
 - A part of Jerusalem (called Zion) being plowed as a field; and
 - The destruction of Jerusalem after Jesus, which occurred when the Romans put down Jewish rebellions in 70 A.D. and 135 A.D., after which Israel (then called Judea) was no longer a separate country

And finally he looked at prophecies that predicted that one day the nation of Israel would eventually be reborn

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STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As "Medinat Yisrael" (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews. At the

same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air. On Friday the United Nations Special Assembly adjourned after adopting a resolution to appoint a med-

iator but without taking any action on the Partition Evolution of November 29. Yesterday the battle for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was still under way, and two Arab villages were taken. In the north, Acre town was captured, and the Jewish Army consolidated its positions in Western Galilee.

Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

Between Thursday night and this morning Palestine went through what to all observers must be among the most crowded hours in its history.

For the Jewish population there was the urgent need to take the last few hundred thousands away from the land of the Holy Land before the British Mandate was terminated. This movement to a fully organized Jewish State was partially in line of a historic war of liberation. What could not be done, with its consequences, were Thursday morning, was achieved and for what name the Red Cross and the Three Comites would carry several thousands for protection and assistance, and proper respect for the Arab Shovels and more of these - some reports have now been received.

The Arab population, too, was in a state of confusion. The Jewish Council had called in a special session to discuss the situation at Palestine in the morning of the 14th.

In the afternoon, however, an attempt at reaching the agreement failed.

English troops throughout the country, including the West Bank, were ordered to leave Palestine, and the

JEWIS TAKE OVER SECURITY ZONES

The British, Tel Aviv, which began when the British forces withdrew on Friday morning, continued all the forces and supplies. The transfer of the zones was completed at midnight. The Jewish forces were in the zones by the time the British left.

At the same time, the Jewish forces were in the zones by the time the British left.

Egyptian Air Force Spitfires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

But tonight, the Tel Aviv authorities reported that a Spitfire was shot down by the Jewish forces. The Spitfire was shot down by the Jewish forces.

U.S. RECOGNIZES JEWISH STATE

WASHINGTON, Sunday.—The United States today announced that it would recognize the new Jewish State.

Proclamation by Head Of Government

The creation of "Medinat Yisrael," the State of Israel, was proclaimed at midnight on Friday by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, until then Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and now head of the State's Provisional Council of Government.



The first act of the Council of Government, as announced by Mr. Ben-Gurion, was to appoint a committee to investigate the situation in the State of Palestine.

Special Assembly Adjourns

The Special Assembly of the United Nations, which met in Jerusalem on Friday, adjourned after adopting a resolution to appoint a mediator to help settle the dispute over Palestine.

2 Columns Cross Southern Border

By WALTER FORBES


Etzion Settlers Taken P.O.W.

Fighting in the West Bank

Peter Stoner (con't)

- Amazingly, the rebirth of the nation of Israel happened in 1948 almost 1,900 years after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and more than 2,500 years after the prophecies were made
- All told, the prophecies Peter Stoner looked at were made over a 900 year period by 9 different prophets, ranging from Moses around 1450 B.C. to Ezekiel around 570 B.C.
- Peter Stoner then confirmed that all of the prophecies came true in precise detail (not just the ones about Babylon, but all of the ones about the other cities and countries too)
- And finally he then calculated the odds that all those prophecies, those numerous predictions about 11 different people groups and nations, could have just happened by pure random luck

Before I give you the answer, I want everyone to pick a number in their head as to how many guesses you think you would need to get all those predictions exactly right?

A black and white photograph of a woman with short, dark, curly hair and large, dark-rimmed glasses. She has a look of intense stress or anxiety, with her hands pressed against her cheeks and her mouth slightly open. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or a room with a lamp.

The suspense is killing me

Peter Stoner (con't)

- Got your number? Well Peter Stoner's calculations showed that the odds of all those predictions coming true to be one chance in 5.76×10^{59}
- By the way, 10^{59} is a one with 59 zeroes after it!
- Peter Stoner says if you had that many silver dollars, you could make 10 billion billion billion silver balls each the size of our sun
- In fact, with that many silver dollars you could fill up every star in the entire universe

That number is so big that an average person like us (without any special help) would need this many guesses to get all those prophecies right:

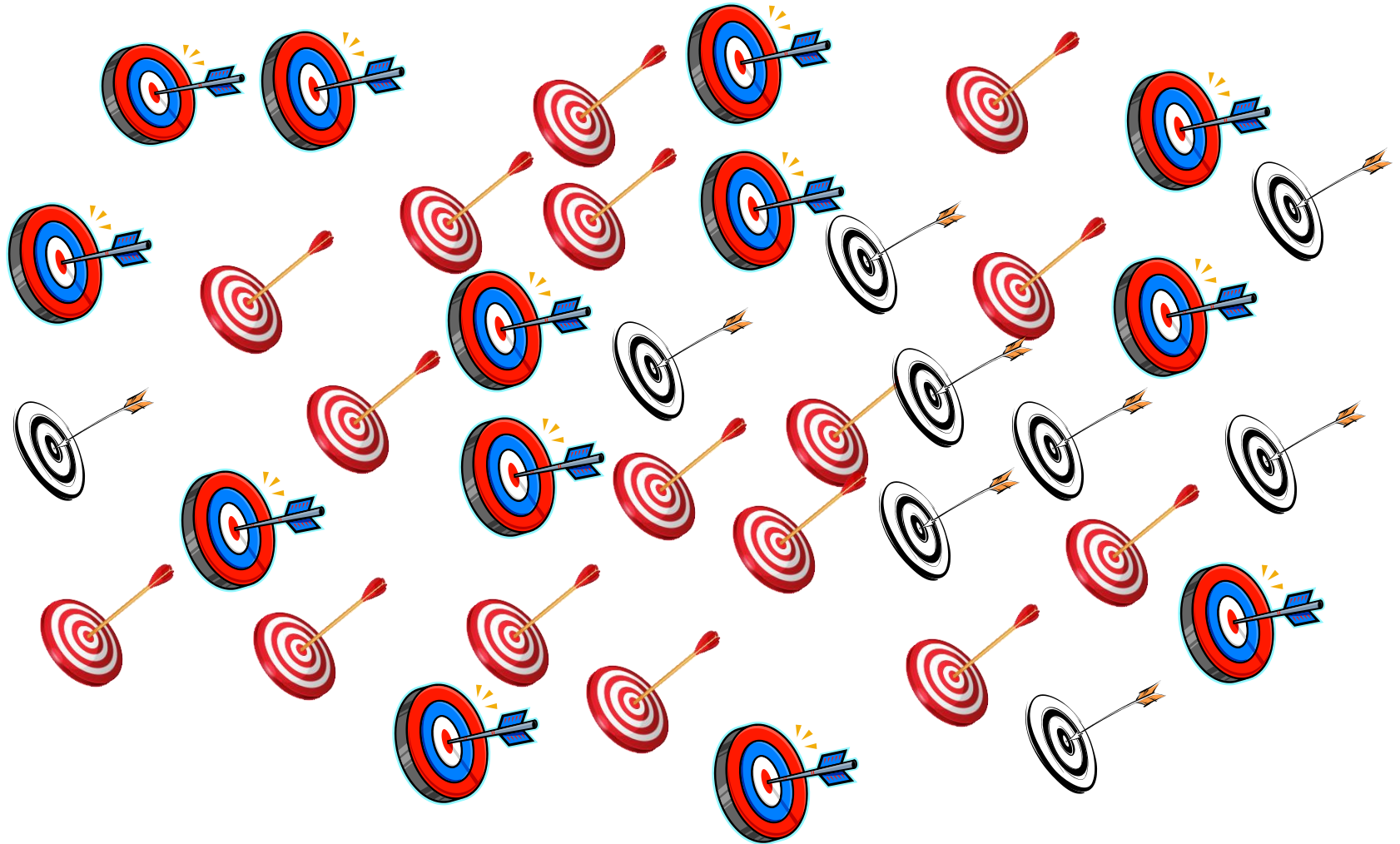
576,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000

But the Old Testament
prophets only had

one guess

to get it right each time

And they nailed it! Not just one, but hundreds of Bull's Eyes!



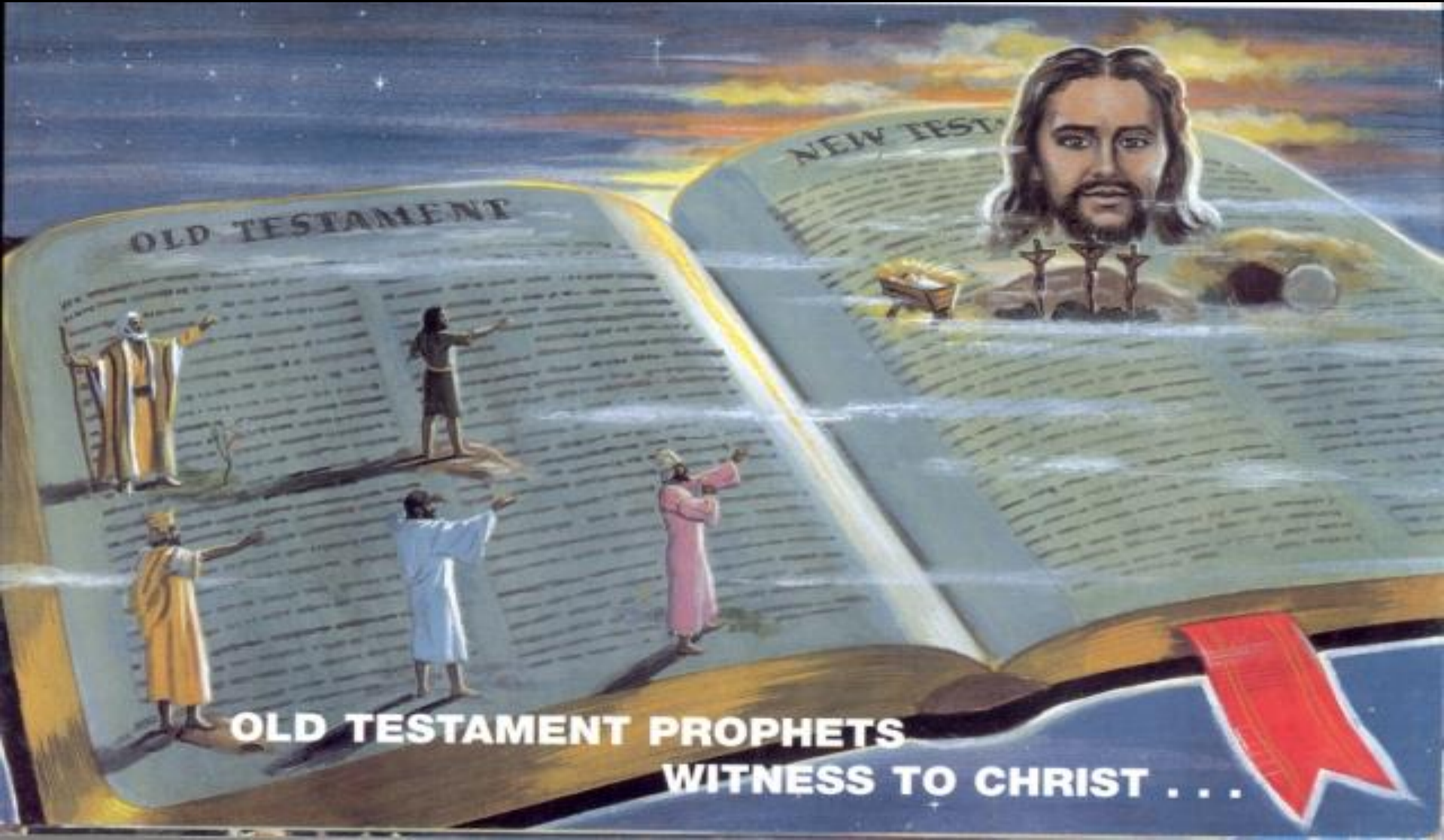
Which makes me wonder,
can anyone be that lucky?



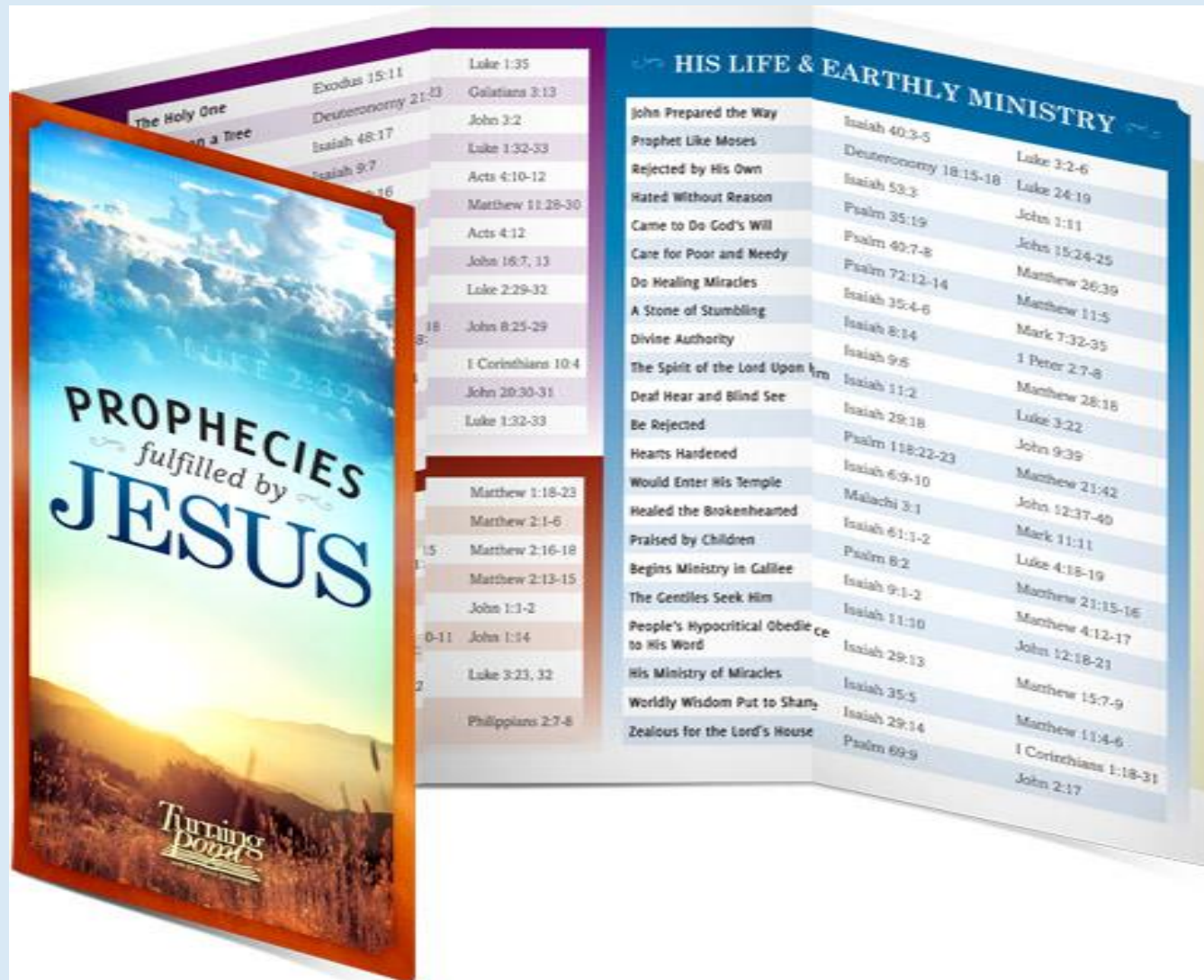
But maybe the better question is,
does God need luck?



And keep in mind, the prophecies we've seen so far deal with Old Testament cities and countries. We haven't even looked yet at the incredible Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah!



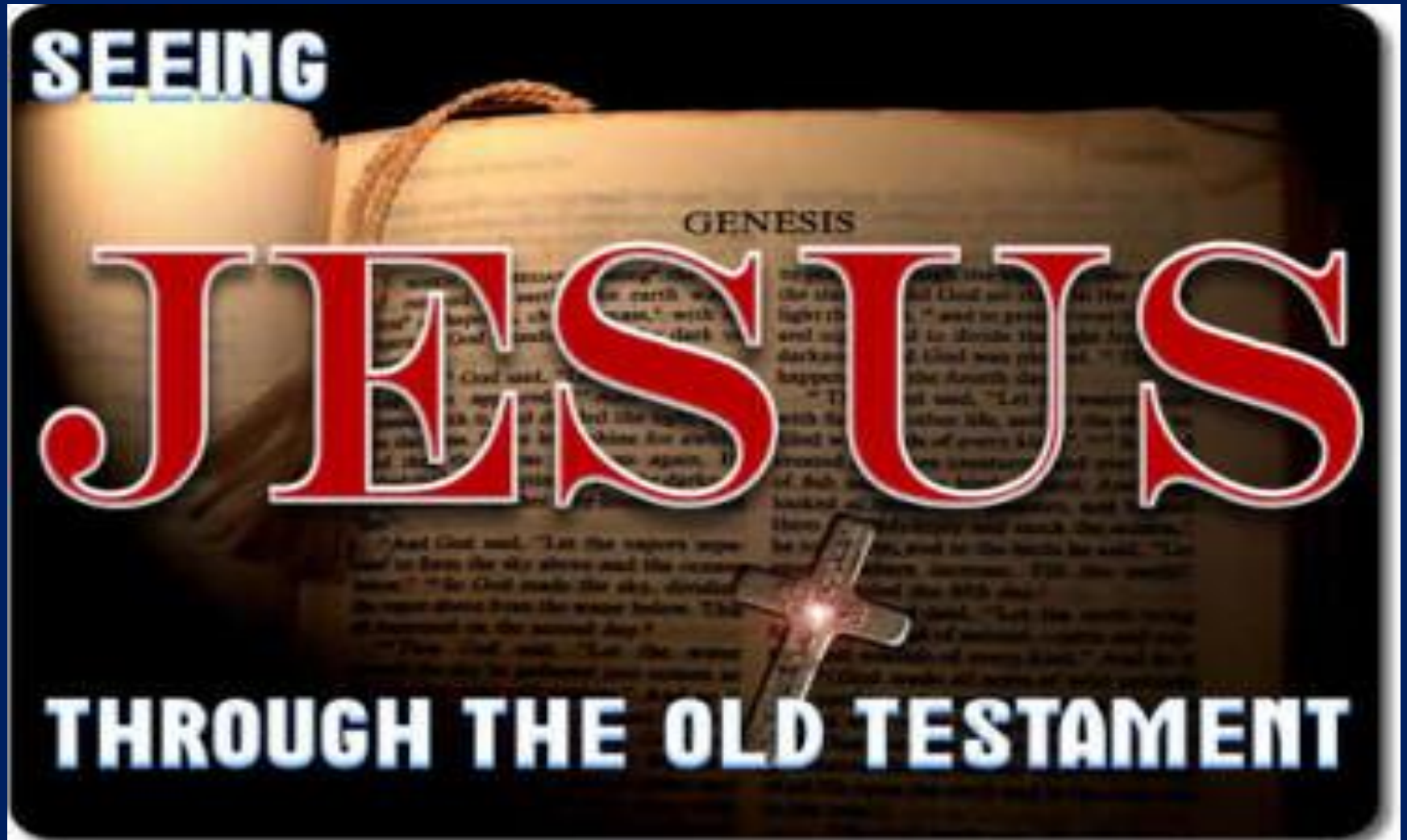
There are over **300 prophecies** about the Messiah in the Old Testament (the word “Messiah” refers to the savior promised by God)



They were all fulfilled by **ONLY ONE**
PERSON in all of human history



In case you haven't guessed it by now, His name is Jesus Christ



Messianic Prophecies

- The 300 plus prophecies about the Messiah were made over a 1,000 year period from Genesis (around 1450 B.C.) to Malachi (around 430 B.C.)
- All told, there are messianic prophecies in 26 of the 39 Old Testament books made 430 to 1450 years before Jesus was born, including prophecies from all the Major Prophets and half the Minor Prophets
- This includes 29 prophecies about the betrayal, trial, death and burial of Jesus made by many people over 500 years from 1,000 to 500 B.C. that were all literally fulfilled in one 24 hour period of Jesus' life
- Here, let's take a look at some of the more well-known prophecies about Jesus

The prophecies include that he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)



He would be descended from King David (Jeremiah 23:5-6)
and would come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10)



He would spend a season in Egypt
(Hosea 11:1), before living in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1)



He would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12), which would later be used to buy a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13)



He would be falsely accused (Psalm 35:11), and the disciples would abandon him (Zechariah 13:7)



He would eventually be rejected by his own people (Isaiah 53:3) and would be scourged (Isaiah 53:5)



His hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16
and Isaiah 53:5), but none of his bones would be
broken during the crucifixion (Psalm 34:20)



He would be killed with criminals
(Isaiah 53:12)



He would be given vinegar to drink for his thirst (Psalm 69:21) and would be mocked and ridiculed (Psalm 22:7-8)



The soldiers would gamble for his clothes
(Psalm 22:18)



And finally the prophecies include the date of his death (Daniel 9:25) and that he would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)



Objections to Messianic Prophecies

- But despite all these prophecies coming true, there have been lots of objections over the years by people who don't want to believe
- Some of the more common objections are:
 - Jesus didn't actually fulfill the prophecies;
 - Jesus went out of his way to fulfill the prophecies and manipulated things so he could claim he was Messiah;
 - The prophecies were made after, and not before, the time of Jesus (and therefore aren't even predictions at all);
 - People make predictions that come true all the time so what's the big deal; and
 - Even if the prophecies were made before Jesus and even if he fulfilled all of them, it was just pure random chance or luck

Objections to Messianic Prophecies

- Let's quickly run through these objections and see if any of them make any sense. First, any argument that Jesus didn't actually fulfill the prophecies is ridiculous
- The New Testament clearly records that Jesus fulfilled in exact detail all the prophecies about his first coming (including his birth, betrayal, trial, death and burial)
- And we already saw in the power point I did about the Bible that the New Testament is by far the most reliable book of ancient times so we have clear historical evidence that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies
- Also, any argument that Jesus tried to fulfill the prophecies on purpose makes no sense either. For example, there is prophecy that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9)

Now I suppose anyone could go get a donkey, take it for a quick test drive on the road leading into Jerusalem and then claim to be the Messiah



Objections to Messianic Prophecies

- But that would be just one prophecy! What about the other 300 prophecies? And what about the 29 prophecies about the betrayal, trial, death and burial of the Messiah?
- For every prophecy (like riding a donkey) that a normal person could control in the hopes of making it a self-fulfilling prophecy, there were dozens of prophecies totally outside the control of normal people
- This includes where the Messiah would be born and descended from, how he would spend his childhood, how he would be betrayed, how he would be scourged and crucified and how he would be buried
- So how could just a normal man intentionally make all those things happen since other people would control them (for example, none of us got to decide where we would be born or live as babies)

Objections to Messianic Prophecies

- So it's pretty clear that Jesus really did fulfill these prophecies and he did so in a way where it was more than just some regular guy trying to manipulate things for a moment of glory
- But what about the next objection, that the prophecies were written after the death of Jesus and aren't even predictions at all
- First, there is strong historical evidence that the last book of the Old Testament (Malachi) was written around 430 B.C., which means all the Old Testament prophecies were written by then
- And worst case, the Old Testament (including all prophecies) had to have been written no later than 130 B.C. since the Septuagint project to translate the Old Testament into Greek was completed by that date

And then there are the Dead Sea Scrolls, which include copies of Old Testament books found by Bedouin shepherds near Qumran on the shore of the Dead Sea about 13 miles east of Jerusalem



The Dead Sea Scrolls include around 230 scrolls of Biblical texts that were discovered beginning in 1947 in 11 different caves in the Qumran area



Dead Sea Scrolls

- The Dead Sea Scrolls include whole or partial copies of every Old Testament book (other than Esther) and are one of the oldest group of Old Testament manuscripts ever found
- This includes 39 copies of Psalms and 22 copies of Isaiah, which is important since Psalms and Isaiah contain more prophecies about the Messiah than any other books of the Old Testament
- Historians believe that a Jewish sect called the Essenes hid the scrolls in the caves during the Jewish revolt against the Romans around 70 A.D. as the Romans were advancing against the rebel Jews
- But the most important thing about the scrolls is that Biblical scholars (and scientists who have tested the scrolls) believe the majority of the scrolls were written before the time of Jesus

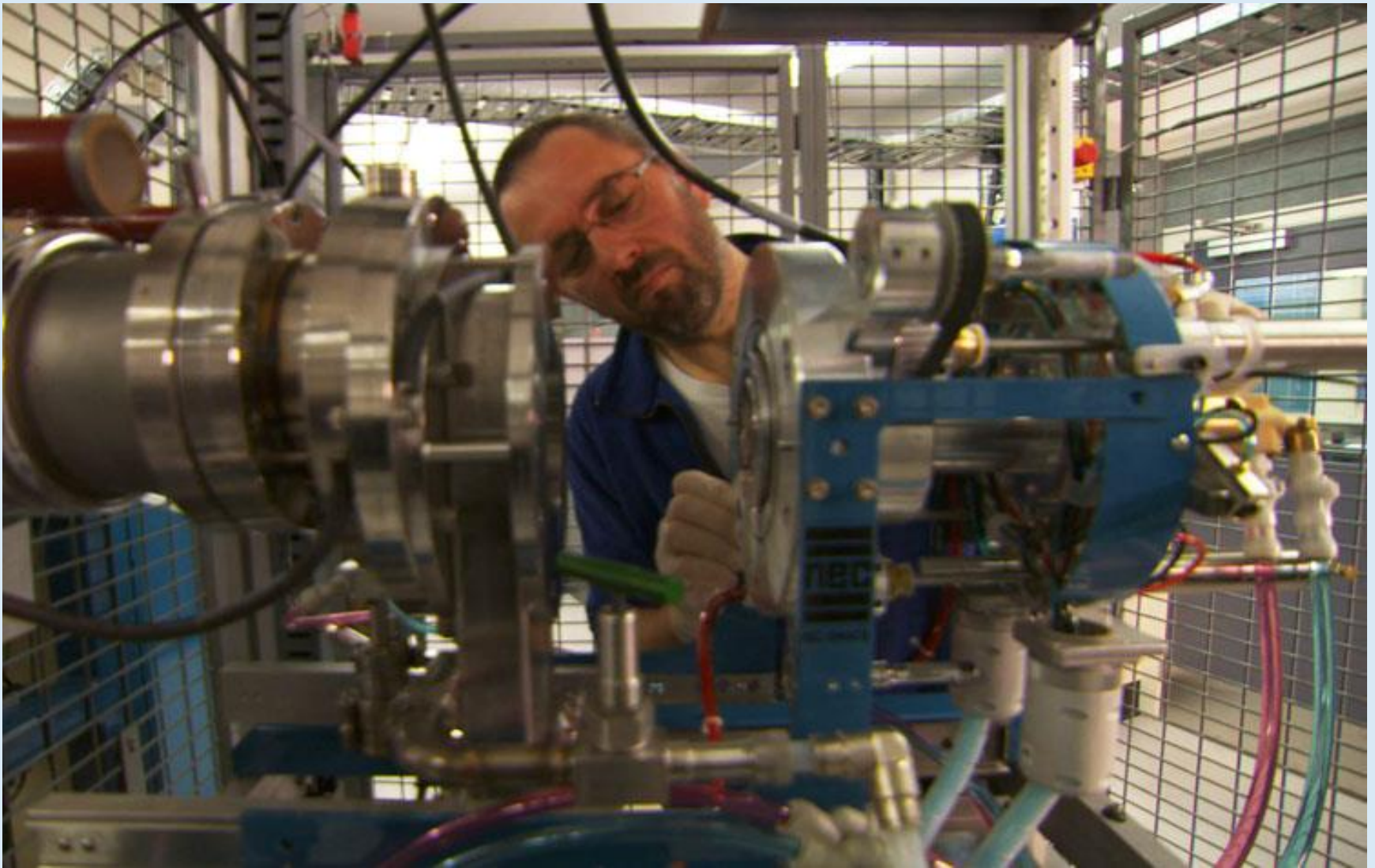
In fact, let's talk a minute about the Isaiah scroll, since some of the most famous prophecies about the Messiah are found in the Old Testament book of Isaiah



The Great Isaiah Scroll

- The Isaiah scroll (known as the Great Isaiah Scroll) is one of the copies of Isaiah found with the Dead Sea Scrolls and contains the entire Book of Isaiah apart from a few small damaged portions
- It is the oldest complete copy of the Book of Isaiah known to exist (it is 1,000 years older than the next oldest copy of Isaiah), and is the most complete scroll out of the 230 Biblical scrolls found at Qumran.
- Numerous Biblical scholars have dated the scroll to around 150 to 100 B.C. (by looking at the type of language, type of parchment used etc.)
- But even better, the Great Isaiah Scroll has also been carbon dated by scientists (carbon dating is a scientific method of determining the age of old objects such as archeological artifacts)

And at last count, pieces of the Great Isaiah Scroll have been carbon dated at least four times, giving calibrated date ranges between 335-324 B.C. and 202-107 B.C.



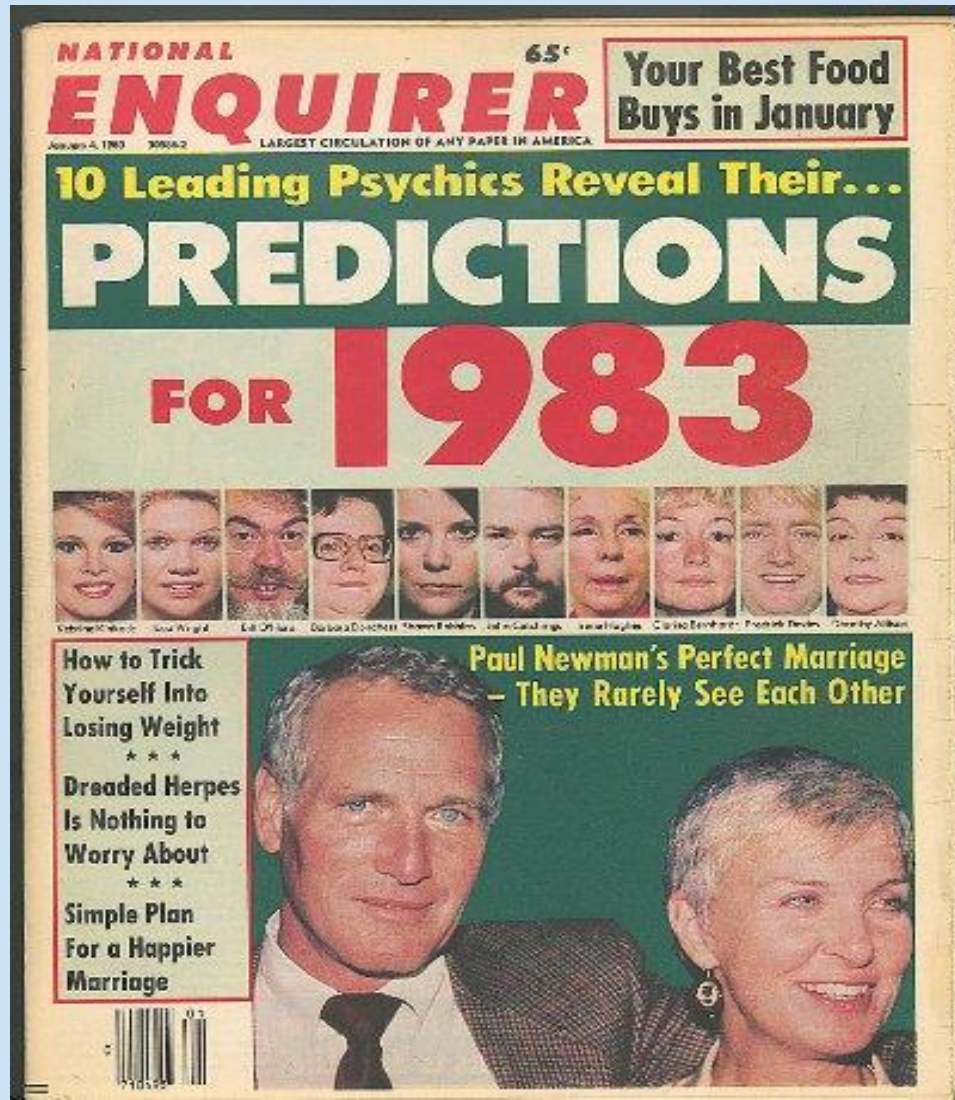
So thanks to carbon dating we now have scientific proof that Isaiah's prophecies that the Messiah would be whipped, crucified, killed with criminals and buried in a rich man's tomb were made hundreds of years before (not after) Jesus was born



It's A FACT!

Okay, so
we know that
the prophecies were
made before Jesus
lived, but so
what?

What makes the Old Testament prophets so special? After all, people have been making wild guesses for thousands of years, so how are the Old Testament prophets any different?



Well make no mistake, there are definitely differences. First, just making guesses (which anyone can do) is not enough. You have to actually make the right guess



But even that is not enough. To understand, let's look at pro football. It's estimated that over \$1 billion is bet on pro football each week



With so many people betting each way on the games, it's not surprising there will always be some winners and, unfortunately for them, some losers (which is why you should never bet!)



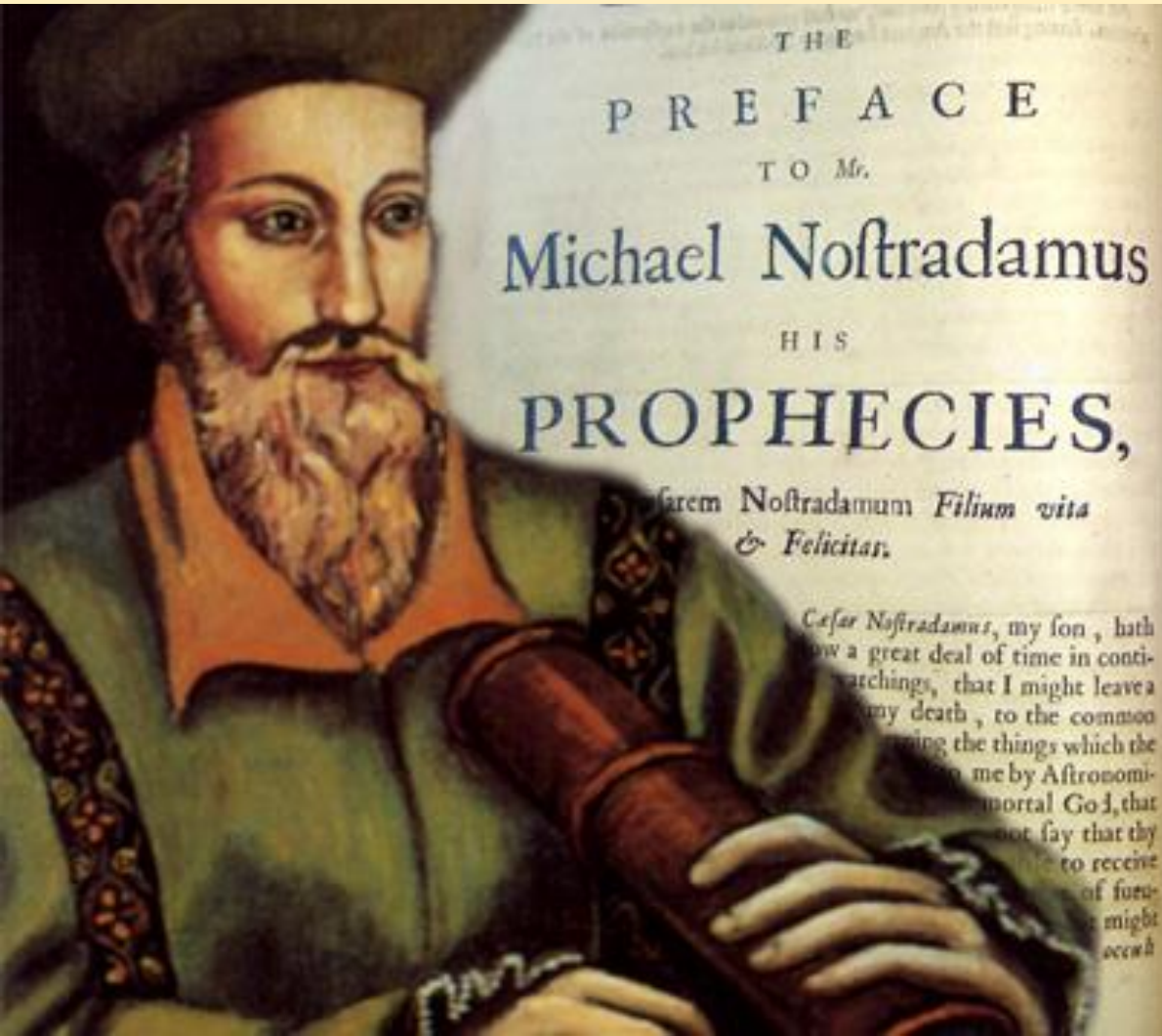
As for the winners, the mere fact that they guessed the winner of one game certainly wouldn't make us think they somehow have a direct line to God



After all, we know a guess made minutes or weeks before hand with a 50/50 chance of being right (win or lose, heads or tail) is a matter of luck and not some connection to a higher power



So we know the Old Testament prophets weren't like people just making random guesses on current events, but it does raise the question, were the prophets any different than other famous figures in history who some people claim also had a psychic connection to some higher power?



come to pass, and in particular Regions, acknowledging all have been done by Divine Vertue and Inspiration, being willing to hold my peace by reason of the injury, not onely of the present time; but also of the future, and to put them in Writing, because the Kingdoms, Sects, and Regions shall be so Diametrically opposed, that if I should relate what shall happen hereafter, those the present Reign, Sect, Religion and Faith, would find it to disagreeing with their fancies, that they would condemn that which future Ages shall find and know to be true; considering also the saying of our Saviour, *Nolite Sanctis dare canibus ut comedant pedibus & conversi disceperant eor*, which hath been the cause that I have withdrawn my tongue from the Vulgar, and my Pen from Paper. But afterwards I was willing for the common good to enlarge my self in dark and abstruse Sentences, declaring the future Events, chiefly the most urgent, and those which I foresaw (which ever humane mutation happened) would not offend the hearers, under dark figures more then Propheticall, for although, *Abfcondisti haec a sapientibus & prudentibus, i. e. potentibus & Regibus ecclesiasticis & saecularibus*, and the Prophets by means onely of the immortal God and good Angels, have received the Spirit of Prophecy, by which they foresee things, and foretell future events for nothing is perfect without him, whose power and goodness is great to his Creatures, that though they are but men, nevertheless by the likeness of our good Genius to the Angels, this bear a Propheticall power draws near us; as it happens by the Beams of the Sun, which cast their influence both on Elementary and on Elementary bodies; as for us who are men, we cannot attain a thing by our natural knowledge, of the secrets of God our Creator, *Quia non est nostrum nosse tempora nec momenta, &c.*

Besides, although there is, or may come some persons, to whom God Almighty will reveal by impressions made on his understandings some secrets of the future, according to the Judicial Astrology, it hath happened in former times, that a certain power and volu

Nostradamus

- Let's discuss that, using Nostradamus as an example. Nostradamus (Michel De Notredame or Nostredame) was born in France and lived from 1503 to 1566 A.D.
- He claimed he had visions during meditation sessions of future events, which he began recording and publishing around 1550 A.D., and since that time Nostradamus has captured the world's attention
- Many people say he predicted some of the future's greatest events, including the great fire of London in 1666, the French Revolution in 1789 and the rise of Napoleon and Adolf Hitler, among others
- Others, however, claim that his writings are so mysterious and cryptic that they could be interpreted to mean just about anything

Nostradamus (con't)

- Let's consider two famous examples and you be the judge:
 - “Volcanic fire from the center of the earth will cause trembling around the new city. Two great rocks will make war for a long time. Then Arethusa will redden a new river”

(this supposedly predicted the 9-11 attacks on New York City)

- “Near the gates and within the cities there will be two scourges the like of which was never seen, famine within plague, people put out by steel, crying to the great immortal God for relief”

(and this supposedly predicted the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II)

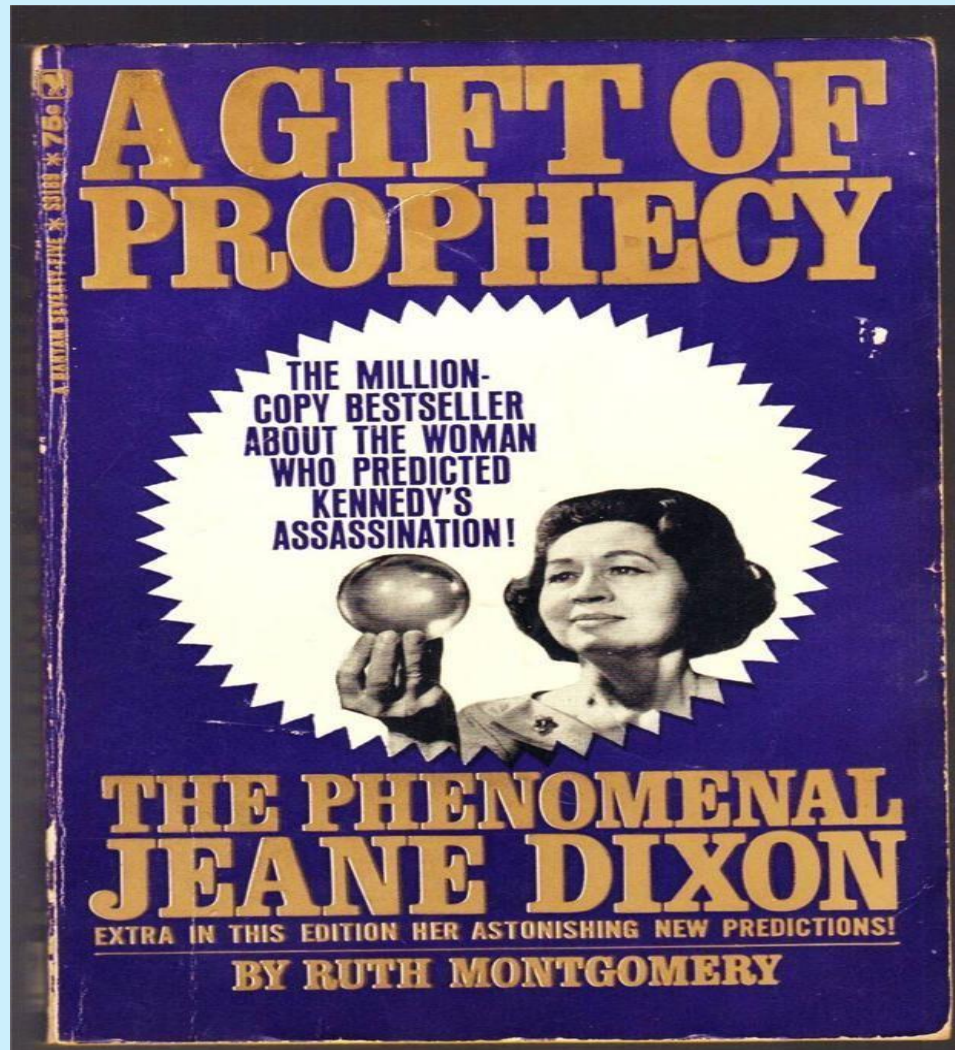
Nostradamus (con't)

- To be fair, maybe Nostradamus really did have a vision of those two horrible events, or maybe not, but either way it's pretty clear that his predictions aren't clear or unambiguous
- They certainly aren't specific like Old Testament prophecies such as the name of the city where the Messiah would be born, where you can clearly tell what was predicted and whether it came true
- Which is why many people think his predictions were so broad that they can be interpreted to mean anything you want them to mean and that he didn't really predict future events before they happened
- And that what's really happening is that people are taking events that already happened and then, after the fact and for no good reason, are claiming the events were foretold by one of his vague predictions

Nostradamus (con't)

- And even if those predictions were in fact true, there are many predictions that Nostradamus made that clearly failed, including:
 - There would be a ban on astrology in 1607 (false)
 - The Catholic priesthood would fall in 1609 (false)
 - Persecution would arise against the Catholic church in 1792 (false)
 - China would subdue the northern part of the world by 1700 (false)
 - French king Charles IX would live to 90 (he died at 24); and
 - The world population in the 18th century would decrease due to famine and disease (it increased due to the Industrial Revolution)
- In other words, even if Nostradamus did get some predictions right, it's pretty clear that he got a lot of them wrong

For another example of a person that some think maybe really did have a connection to a higher power, let's take a look at Jeane Dixon, arguably the most famous American “psychic” who has ever lived



Jeane Dixon

- Jeane Dixon was born in 1904 in Wisconsin and died in 1997
- She was a self-proclaimed psychic who claimed she got the gift of prophecy from a vision she had in 1952 while she was praying
- After rising to fame, she went on to be an advisor to many famous celebrities, including President Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan
- Her rise began with a 1956 article in Parade magazine where she predicted that a Democrat would win the 1960 Presidential election and he would be assassinated or die in office

This prediction catapulted her to national prominence when John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas on November 22, 1963



Jeane Dixon (con't)

- But before anyone gets too excited over that prediction, it's probably worthwhile to note a few things
- First, by 1956, every President who died or was assassinated while in office had won the Presidency in an election year that ended in zero
- This happened like clockwork every 20 years from 1840 to 1940. In other words, the Presidents elected in 1840, 1860, 1880, 1900, 1920 and 1940 (with 1960 obviously being next) all died in office
- So while it's possible Jeane Dixon made an inspired prediction, it's also definitely possible she was just a good student of history who made a clever guess

Jeane Dixon (con't)

- But whether or not her assassination prediction was just luck, check out some of her other predictions and see how she did. She predicted:
 - Nixon, not JFK, would win the 1960 election (**JFK won**)
 - World War III would begin in 1958 (**didn't happen**)
 - There would be a cure for cancer in 1967 (**still no cure**)
 - Russia would send the first man to the moon (**America did it first in 1969**)
 - There would be a holocaust in the 1980s when Rome would be the leading city in the world (**didn't happen**)
 - George Bush would be re-elected in 1992 (**Bill Clinton won**)

She also predicted peace starting in the year 2000 (if you remember what happened on 9-11-2001, then I'm pretty sure I don't need to tell you how that one turned out)

Jeane Dixon sees peace in 2000, defines mystic talent as 'God-given'

by Kathy Streed

Internationally known prophetess Jeane Dixon, in an appearance Sept. 12 at Morris Civic Auditorium, spoke of her extra sensory perceptions, the world's future, and man's purpose on earth.

Mrs. Dixon, a Washington D.C. real estate broker whose prophecies brought her national attention in the '50's, believes peace will come to the world in the year 2000, but will be preceded by "great trouble" in 1998-99. She says, "Peace will be ours by divine intervention."

A deeply religious woman, Mrs. Dixon advises all men to "use the talents given you by God to make the best of your life. Faith will push you the last inch beyond mediocrity--God and one is a majority.

Receives 'vibrations'

She classifies her perceptions as "revelations" and "telepathy." Revelations come to her from God, says Mrs. Dixon, and are His will, which cannot be changed by man's will. She experienced her first revelation

when she was seven.

Mrs. Dixon says she has heard the voices of Christ and angels in her revelations. Her foresight of John F. Kennedy's assassination was a revelation.

Telepathy describes the vibration and thoughts Mrs. Dixon receives from men. Through telepathy, she knew of Martin Luther King's and Robert F. Kennedy's impending assassinations.

Through telepathy, Mrs. Dixon has decided that the majority of Americans consider today's most serious concerns to be economic well-being, war, and politics.

"This talent is not something you turn on and off like a water faucet," says Mrs. Dixon. She explains that she cannot always, at will, "predict" an event's outcome or some future happening.

'A God-given talent'

Mrs. Dixon regards her "gift of prophecy" as a God-given talent, and feels her life's purpose is to develop and use her ability as fully as possible.

Speaking of today's youth, in an



Mrs. Jeane Dixon as she appeared last Friday at Morris Civic Auditorium. (photo by Gene Zehring)

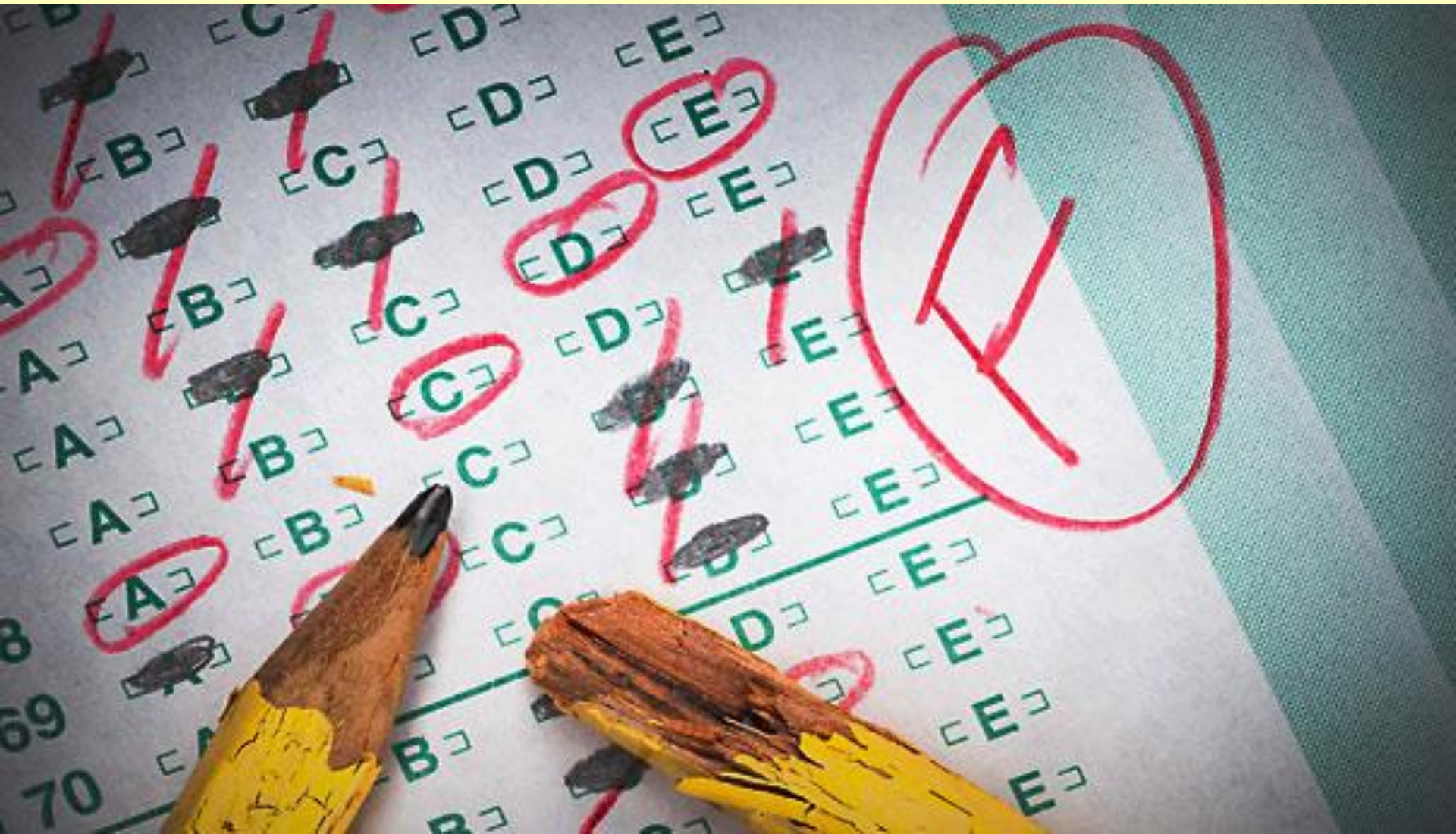
Old Hickory interview, Mrs. Dixon said she believes there is "great hope" for most of the younger generation. However, she says "many will not make it because they refuse to listen to and benefit from the voices

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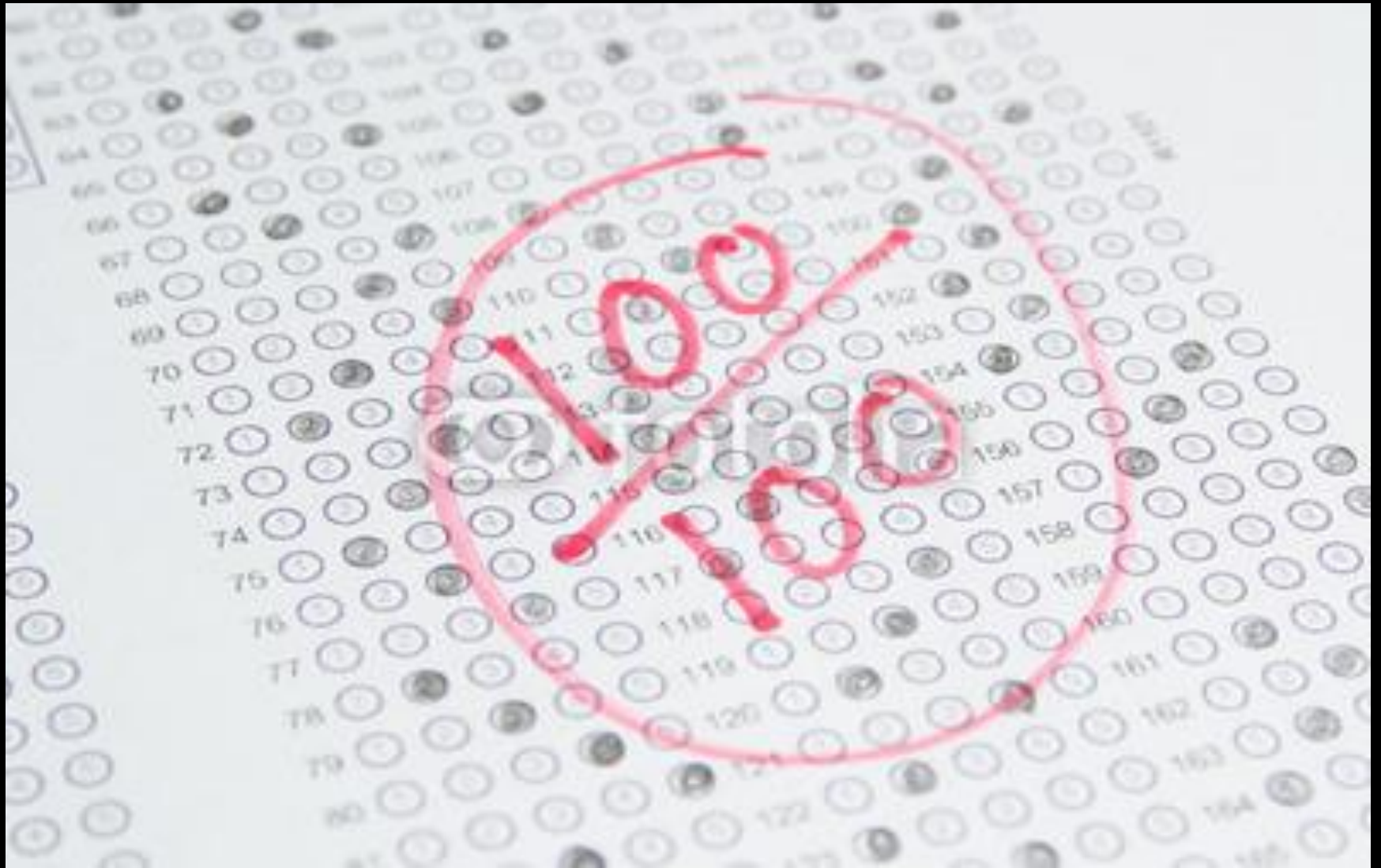
Jeane Dixon (con't)

- And she is not alone in being wrong on so many predictions. In 1975, The People's Almanac did a study of 25 of the best so-called psychics and found that 66 of their 72 predictions (or 92%) were totally wrong
- This led one person to coin a new term, the “Dixon effect”, where self-proclaimed psychics make a few accurate predictions, but people ignore the hundreds of predictions they make that end up wrong
- So just making a bunch of wild guesses is not enough, and being right just one time is not enough, and making predictions only a month or a few years ahead of time is not impressive enough
- To really stand out, you need to make a lot of predictions and you need to do it hundreds of years before hand and you need to be right all of the time, not just some of the time

So for those who downplay that Jesus fulfilled so many prophecies by claiming anyone can make predictions, it's pretty obvious when normal people try to predict the future, they don't do so well



But when the Old Testament prophets made hundreds of predictions over hundreds of years, especially about Jesus as the Messiah, they got it right every time!



Test of an Old Testament Prophet

- And the Old Testament prophets needed to get it right every time, not just some of the time, for a pretty good reason. In the Bible, there are many passages warning people about false prophets
- Deuteronomy 18:22 says “If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken.”
- The Bible also tells us what the penalty is for being a false prophet
- “But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.” (Deuteronomy 18:20)

So if the penalty for false prophecies was death, it's no surprise the Old Testament prophets made sure they were being inspired by God before they put pen to paper



And when you look at the amazing accuracy of the Old Testament prophets, it should certainly be no surprise if it turns out that they had help from some special friends



But what about the last objection we tend to hear, that despite everything we've seen, maybe it was just pure luck and sheer random chance that Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies



Well does everyone remember Peter Stoner,
our math expert with the silver dollars

What Part Of

$$\pi^{-\frac{s}{2}} \Gamma\left(\frac{s}{2}\right) \zeta(s) =$$

$$\pi^{-\frac{1-s}{2}} \Gamma\left(\frac{1-s}{2}\right) \zeta(1-s)$$

Didn't You Understand?

He looked at **8 key prophecies**
about the Messiah and calculated
the odds of just those **8 prophecies**
being fulfilled in all of human history
by any **one person** to be

1 in 100 million billion

Compare those odds to the odds of winning the average mega million or power ball lottery

**ODDS OF WINNING THE LOTTERY
1 IN 259,000,000**

**ODDS OF A MAN FULFILLING 8 PROPHECIES
1 IN
100,000,000,000,000,000
(THAT'S A LOT OF ZEROES)**

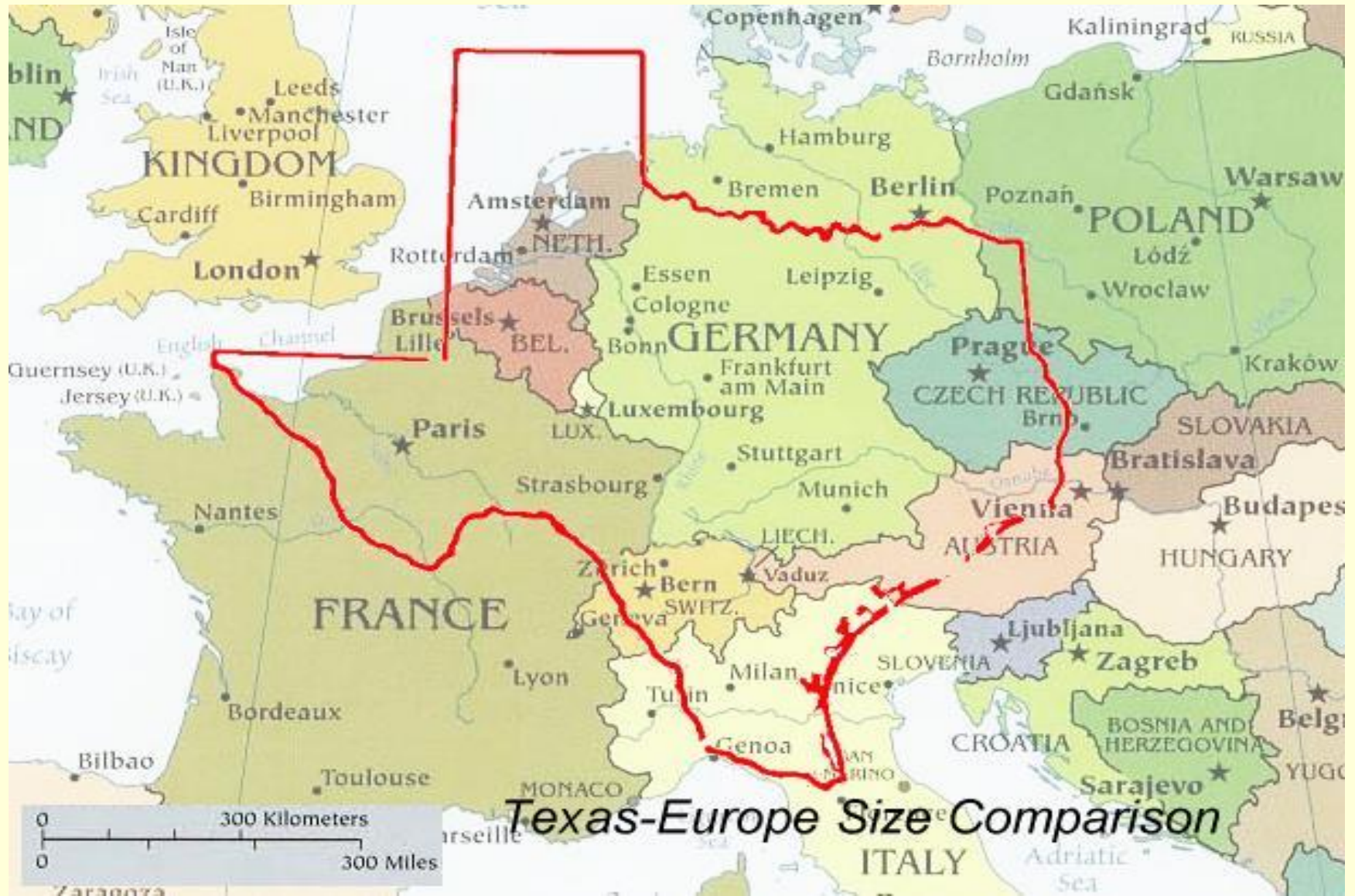
JESUS DID.*

*** ACTUALLY HE FULFILLED OVER 300**

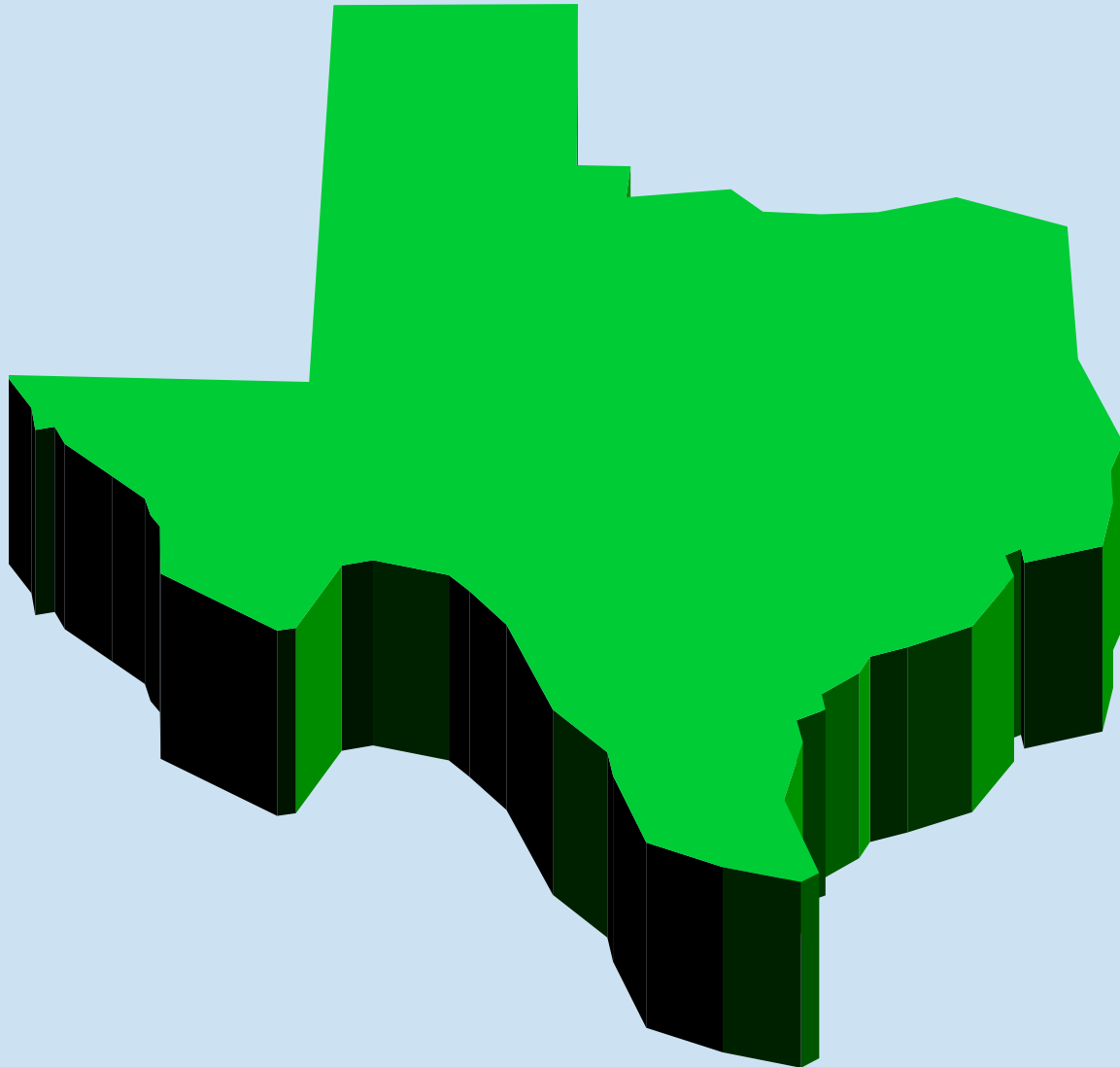
In other words, you are 386,100,000 times more likely to win the lottery than you are to fulfill just the 8 prophecies that Peter Stoner analysed



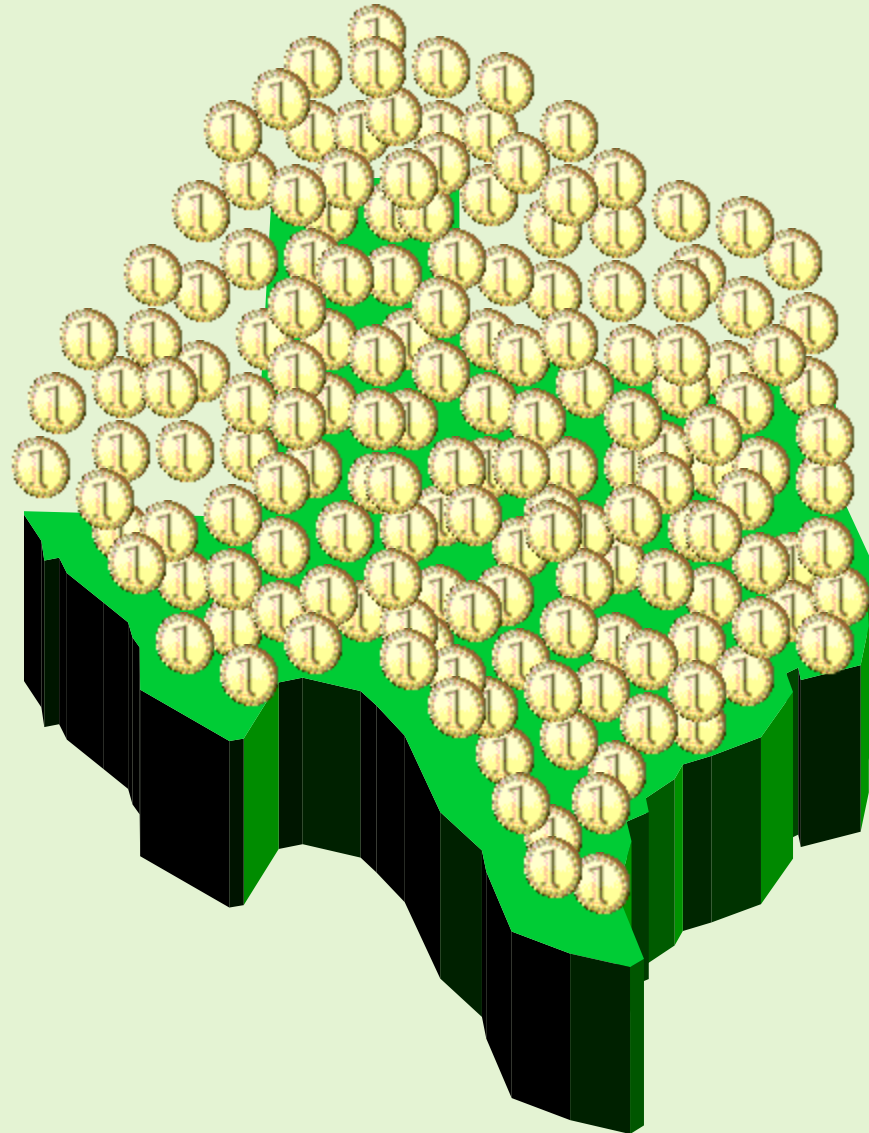
Let's look at another example. Think about how big the state of Texas is



Let's say you could clear off the state of Texas the way you clean your plate at dinner so it is just one flat land mass



If I then gave you 100 million billion silver dollars,
you could cover the entire state of Texas two feet deep



Now assume there

is one black coin



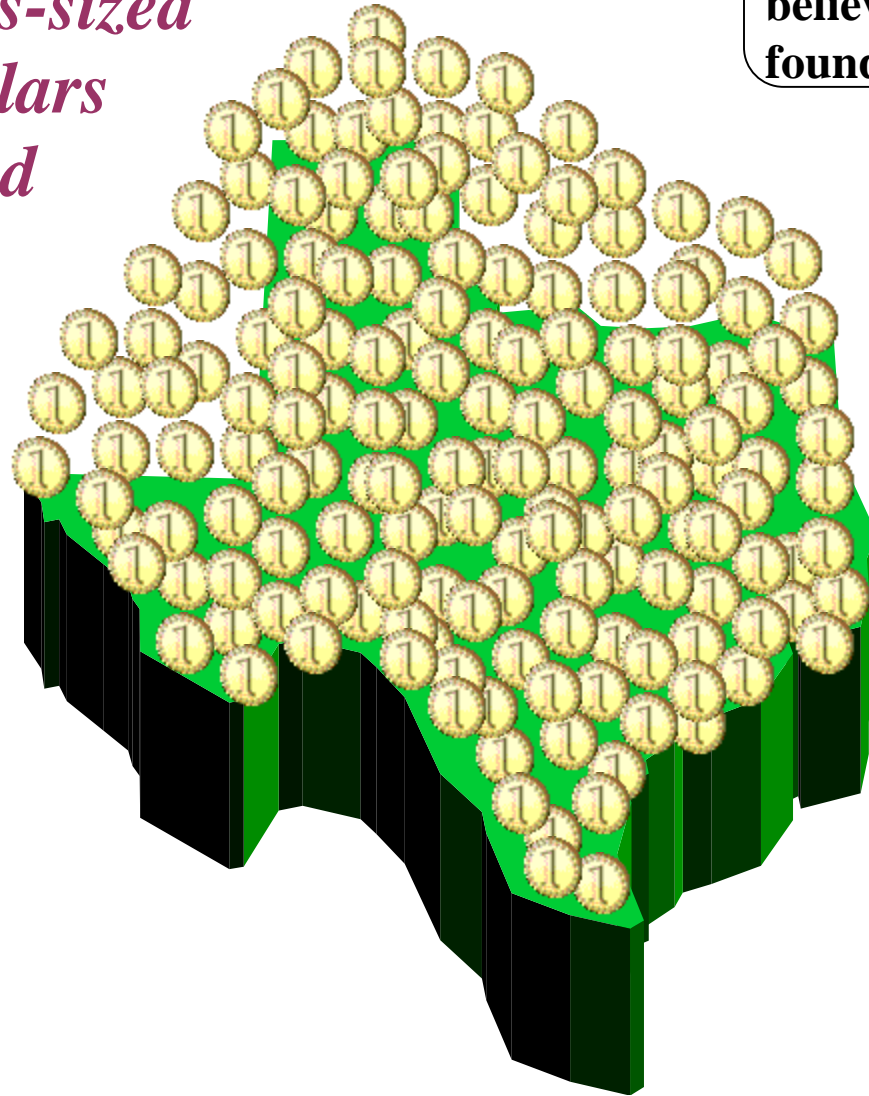
buried among all those

100,000,000,000,000,000

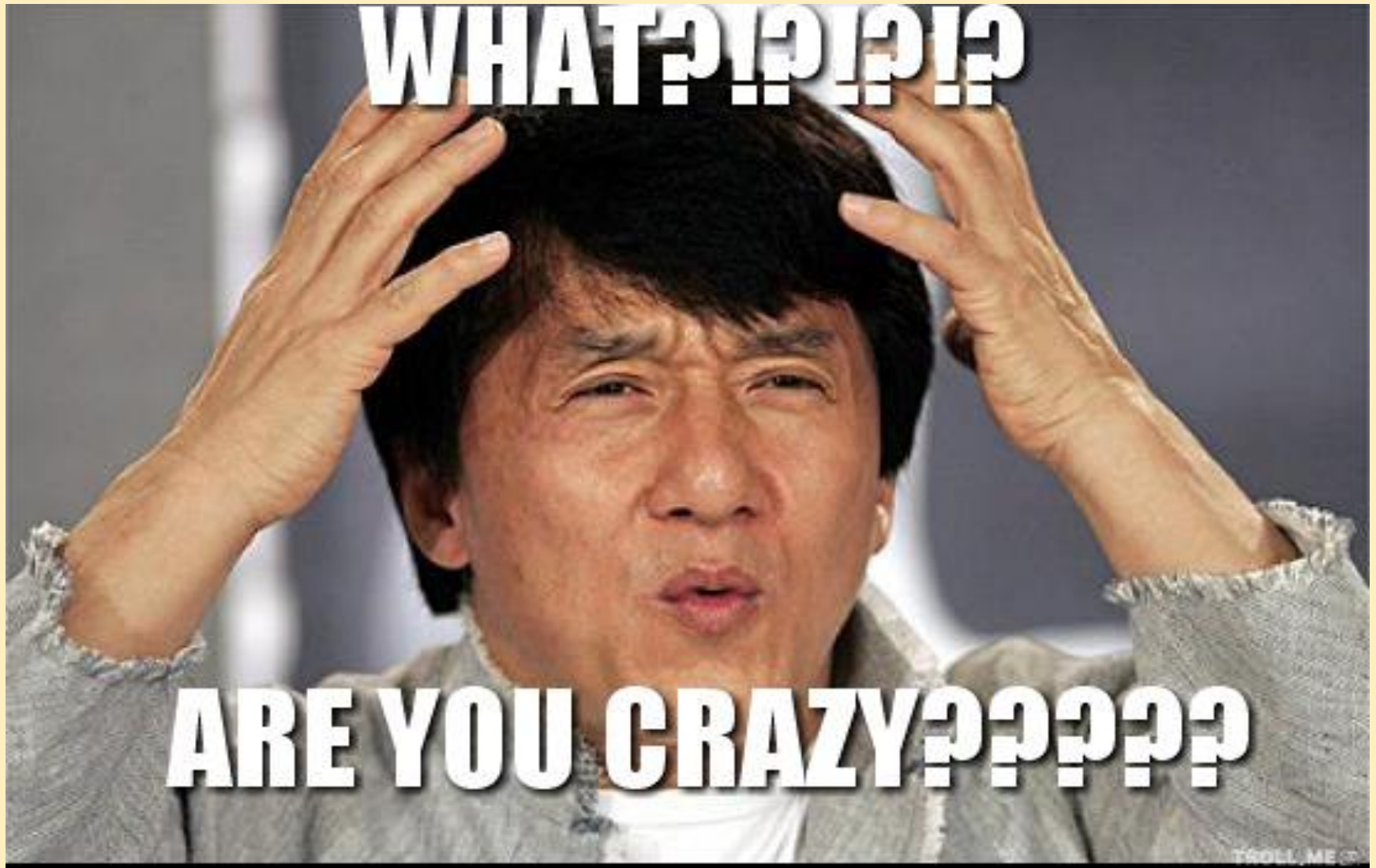
silver dollars

the odds of a blindfolded man
finding that one black coin among
100,000,000,000,000,000 silver dollars
with just one try is the same
as 8 prophecies coming
true in one man

*Does anyone really believe
any normal person could
dive into a Texas-sized
pile of silver dollars
two feet deep and
find the black
coin on the
first try?*



Because if you say Jesus was just a normal person who fulfilled even just **8 prophecies** by random chance, then you're basically claiming you could find that black coin with just one try



We all know
that's impossible,
which I think gives
us pretty compelling
evidence that Jesus
was far more than
just a normal
person



No One Can Be That Lucky

- And that is just 8 prophecies. Peter Stoner also calculated the odds of one person fulfilling 48 prophecies about the Messiah and found it was 1 in 10¹⁵⁷ (that's a one with 157 zeroes)
- This means that a normal person without God's assistance would need this many chances to fulfill those 48 prophecies:

10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

- And don't forget Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies! As you add up prophecies, the odds climb so shockingly high you realize any claim Jesus fulfilled prophecies by random chance is a total denial of reality

As we finish up, let's go back to where we started.
Does anyone remember what we said about
what bear tracks in the snow tell us?



Well I think we can all agree that it's evidence
that there were bears who made those tracks



And what about fingerprints left
at a crime scene, what do they tell us?



Well, I think we can all agree that it's evidence that there was a bad guy who left those fingerprints



So when hundreds of prophecies come true many hundreds of years later, with odds so staggering we know we are seeing something impossible, then what does that tell us?



Well I think we can all agree that it's “finger print” evidence for the existence of Someone who can (and did) do the impossible



Which means not only does God exist, but the amazing prophecies in the Old Testament plus the New Testament accounts of all the prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus are compelling evidence that the Bible is the inspired word of God



So what does God look like?

- But wait, we're not quite done yet. There is still one last crucial thing that the evidence of Old Testament prophecies tells us
- When we look at the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, not only do we know that God exists and that the Bible is His inspired word, we know who God is
- After all, we know that bear tracks lead us to bears and we know what bears look like, and we know that fingerprints lead us to people and we can see what those people look like
- Well that same way, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah leads us directly to God and, even more, lets us see the very face of God himself

*And one day we'll all be looking up in wonder at that face,
the face of Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords*

